

**THE HISTORY OF
SPIRITUALISM
VOL. I y II**

**BY
ARTHUR CONAN DOYLE**

1926

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PREFACE

THIS work has grown from small disconnected chapters into a narrative which covers in a way the whole history of the Spiritualistic movement. This genesis needs some little explanation. I had written certain studies with no particular ulterior object save to gain myself, and to pass on to others, a clear view of what seemed to me to be important episodes in the modern spiritual development of the human race. These included the chapters on Swedenborg, on Irving, on A. J. Davis, on the Hydesville incident, on the history of the Fox sisters, on the Eddys and on the life of D.D. Home. These were all done before it was suggested to my mind that I had already gone some distance in doing a fuller history of the Spiritualistic movement than had hitherto seen the light—a history which would have the advantage of being written from the inside and with intimate personal knowledge of those factors which are characteristic of this modern development.

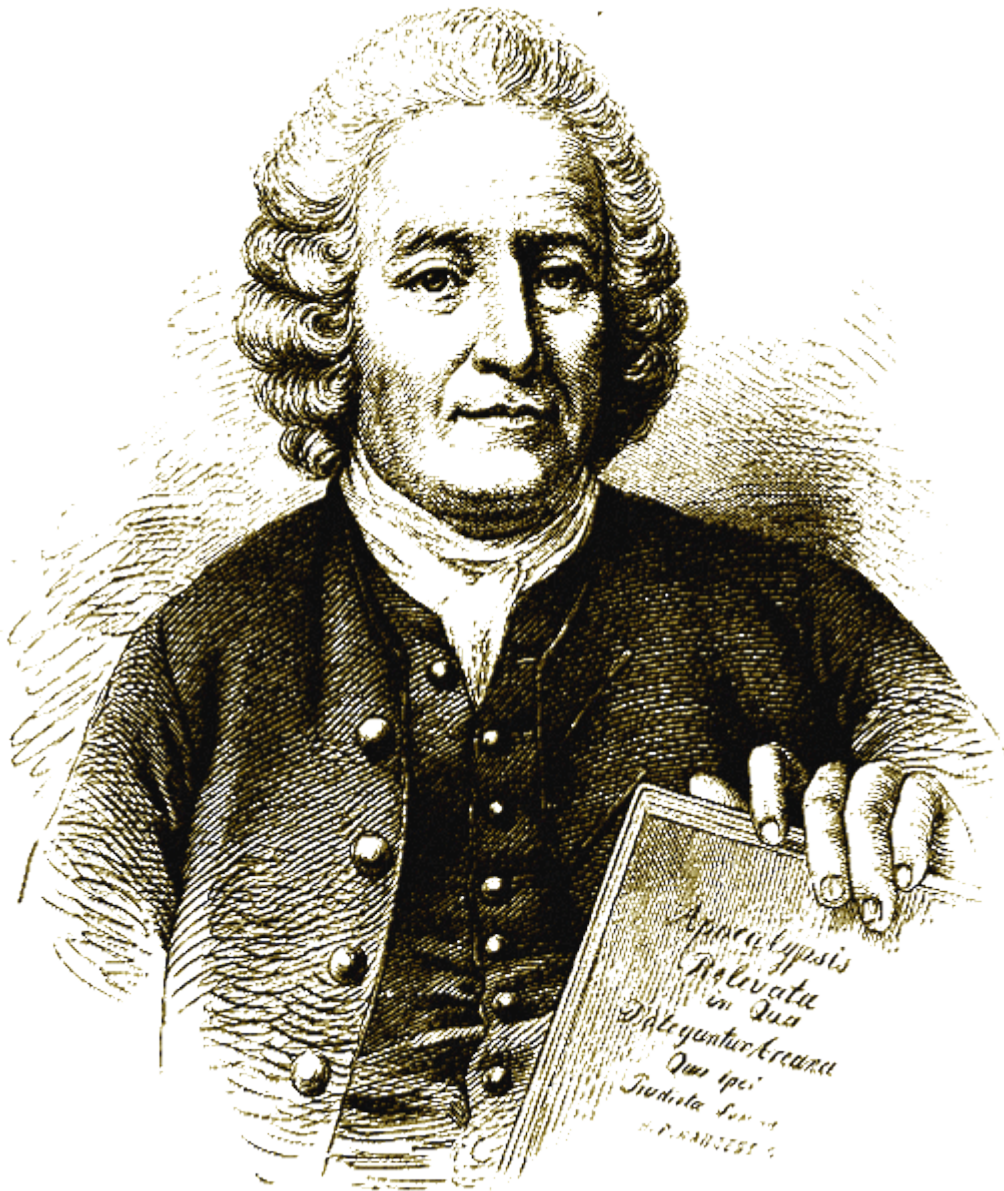
It is indeed curious that this movement, which many of us regard as the most important in the history of the world since the Christ episode, has never had a historian from those who were within it, and who had large personal experience of its development. Mr. Frank Podmore brought together a large number of the facts, and, by ignoring those which did not suit his purpose, endeavoured to suggest the worthlessness of most of the rest, especially the physical phenomena, which in his view were mainly the result of fraud. There is a history of Spiritualism by Mr. McCabe which turns everything to fraud, and which is itself a misnomer, since the public would buy a book with such a title under the impression that it was a serious record instead of a travesty. There is also a history by J. Arthur Hill which is written from a strictly psychic research point of view, and is far behind the real provable facts. Then we have "Modern American Spiritualism: A Twenty Years' Record," and "Nineteenth Century Miracles," by that great woman and splendid propagandist, Mrs. Emma Hardinge Britten, but these deal only with phases, though they are exceedingly valuable. Finally—and best of all—there is "Man's Survival After Death," by the Rev. Charles L. Tweedale; but this is rather a very fine connected exposition of the truth of the cult than a deliberate

consecutive history. There are general histories of mysticism, like those of Ennemoser and Howitt, but there is no clean-cut, comprehensive story of the successive developments of this world-wide movement. Just before going to press a book has appeared by Campbell-Holms which is a very useful compendium of psychic facts, as its title, "The Facts of Psychic Science and Philosophy," implies, but here again it cannot claim to be a connected history.

It was clear that such a work needed a great deal of research—far more than I in my crowded life could devote to it. It is true that my time was in any case dedicated to it, but the literature is vast, and there were many aspects of the movement which claimed my attention. Under these circumstances I claimed and obtained the loyal assistance of Mr. W. Leslie Curnow, whose knowledge of the subject and whose industry have proved to be invaluable. He has dug assiduously into that vast quarry; he has separated out the ore from the rubbish, and in every way he has been of the greatest assistance. I had originally expected no more than raw material, but he has occasionally given me the finished article, of which I have gladly availed myself, altering it only to the extent of getting my own personal point of view. I cannot admit too fully the loyal assistance which he has given me, and if I have not conjoined his name with my own upon the title-page it is for reasons which he understands and in which he acquiesces.

Arthur Conan Doyle. The Psychic Bookshop, Abbey House, Victoria Street, S.W.

1. THE STORY OF SWEDENBORG



Emanuel Swedenborg.

IT is impossible to give any date for the early appearances of external intelligent power of a higher or lower type impinging upon the affairs of men. Spiritualists are in the habit of taking March 31, 1848, as the

beginning of all psychic things, because their own movement dates from that day. There has, however, been no time in the recorded history of the world when we do not find traces of preternatural interference and a tardy recognition of them from humanity. The only difference between these episodes and the modern movement is that the former might be described as a case of stray wanderers from some further sphere, while the latter bears the sign of a purposeful and organized invasion. But as an invasion might well be preceded by the appearance of pioneers who search out the land, so the spirit influx of recent years was heralded by a number of incidents which might well be traced to the Middle Ages or beyond them. Some term must be fixed for a commencement of the narrative, and perhaps no better one can be found than the story of the great Swedish seer, Emanuel Swedenborg, who has some claim to be the father of our new knowledge of supernal matters.

When the first rays of the rising sun of spiritual knowledge fell upon the earth they illuminated the greatest and highest human mind before they shed their light on lesser men. That mountain peak of mentality was this great religious reformer and clairvoyant medium, as little understood by his own followers as ever the Christ has been.

In order fully to understand Swedenborg one would need to have a Swedenborg brain, and that is not met with once in a century. And yet by our power of comparison and our experience of facts of which Swedenborg knew nothing, we can realize some part of his life more clearly than he could himself. The object of this study is not to treat the man as a whole, but to endeavour to place him in the general scheme of psychic unfolding treated in this work, from which his own Church in its narrowness would withhold him.

Swedenborg was a contradiction in some ways to our psychic generalizations, for it has been the habit to say that great intellect stands in the way of personal psychic experience. The clean slate is certainly most apt for the writing of a message. Swedenborg's mind was no clean slate, but was criss-crossed with every kind of exact learning which mankind is capable of acquiring. Never was there such a concentration of information. He was primarily a great mining engineer and authority on metallurgy. He was a military engineer who helped to turn the fortunes of one of the many campaigns of Charles XII of Sweden. He was a great

authority upon astronomy and physics, the author of learned works upon the tides and the determination of latitude. He was a zoologist and an anatomist. He was a financier and political economist who anticipated the conclusions of Adam Smith. Finally, he was a profound Biblical student who had sucked in theology with his mother's milk, and lived in the stern Evangelical atmosphere of a Lutheran pastor during the most impressionable years of his life. His psychic development, which occurred when he was fifty-five, in no way interfered with his mental activity, and several of his scientific pamphlets were published after that date.

With such a mind it is natural enough that he should be struck by the evidence for extra-mundane powers which comes in the way of every thoughtful man, but what is not natural is that he should himself be the medium for such powers. There is a sense in which his mentality was actually detrimental and vitiated his results, and there was another in which it was to the highest degree useful. To illustrate this one has to consider the two categories into which his work may be divided.

The first is the theological. This seems to most people outside the chosen flock a useless and perilous side of his work. On the one hand he accepts the Bible as being in a very particular sense the work of God. Upon the other he contends that its true meaning is entirely different from its obvious meaning, and that it is he, and only he, who, by the help of angels, is able to give the true meaning. Such a claim is intolerable. The infallibility of the Pope would be a trifle compared with the infallibility of Swedenborg if such a position were admitted. The Pope is at least only infallible when giving his verdict on points of doctrine *ex cathedra* with his cardinals around him. Swedenborg's infallibility would be universal and un restricted. Nor do his explanations in the least commend themselves to one's reason. When, in order to get at the true sense of a God-given message, one has to suppose that a horse signifies intellectual truth, an ass signifies scientific truth, a flame signifies improvement, and so on and on through countless symbols, we seem to be in a realm of make-believe which can only be compared with the ciphers which some ingenious critics have detected in the plays of Shakespeare. Not thus does God send His truth into the world. If such a view were accepted the Swedenborgian creed could only be the mother of a thousand heresies, and we should find ourselves back again amid the hair-splittings and the

sylogisms of the mediaeval schoolmen. All great and true things are simple and intelligible. Swedenborg's theology is neither simple nor intelligible, and that is its condemnation.

When, however, we get behind his tiresome exegesis of the Scriptures, where everything means something different from what it obviously means, and when we get at some of the general results of his teaching, they are not inharmonious with liberal modern thought or with the teaching which has been received from the Other Side since spiritual communication became open. Thus the general proposition that this world is a laboratory of souls, a forcing-ground where the material refines out the spiritual, is not to be disputed. He rejects the Trinity in its ordinary sense, but rebuilds it in some extraordinary sense which would be equally objectionable to a Unitarian. He admits that every system has its divine purpose and that virtue is not confined to Christianity. He agrees with the Spiritualist teaching in seeking the true meaning of Christ's life in its power as an example, and he rejects atonement and original sin. He sees the root of all evil in selfishness, yet he admits that a healthy egoism, as Hegel called it, is essential. In sexual matters his theories are liberal to the verge of laxity. A Church he considered an absolute necessity, as if no individual could arrange his own dealings with his Creator. Altogether, it is such a jumble of ideas, poured forth at such length in so many great Latin volumes, and expressed in so obscure a style, that every independent interpreter of it would be liable to found a new religion of his own. Not in that direction does the worth of Swedenborg lie.

That worth is really to be found in his psychic powers and in his psychic information which would have been just as valuable had no word of theology ever come from his pen. It is these powers and that information to which we will now turn.

Even as a lad young Swedenborg had visionary moments, but the extremely practical and energetic manhood which followed submerged that more delicate side of his nature. It came occasionally to the surface, however, all through his life, and several instances have been put on record which show that he possessed those powers which are usually called "travelling clairvoyance," where the soul appears to leave the body, to acquire information at a distance, and to return with news of what is

occurring elsewhere. It is a not uncommon attribute of mediums, and can be matched by a thousand examples among Spiritualistic sensitives, but it is rare in people of intellect, and rare also when accompanied by an apparently normal state of the body while the phenomenon is proceeding. Thus, in the oft-quoted example of Gothenburg, where the seer observed and reported on a fire in Stockholm, 300 miles away, with perfect accuracy, he was at a dinner-party with six teen guests, who made valuable witnesses. The story was investigated by no less a person than the philosopher Kant, who was a contemporary.

These occasional incidents were, however, merely the signs of latent powers which came to full fruition quite suddenly in London in April of the year 1744. It may be remarked that though the seer was of a good Swedish family and was elevated to the Swedish nobility, it was none the less in London that his chief books were published, that his illumination was begun and finally that he died and was buried. From the day of his first vision he continued until his death, twenty-seven years later, to be in constant touch with the other world. "The same night the world of spirits, hell and heaven, were convincingly opened to me, where I found many persons of my acquaintance of all conditions. Thereafter the Lord daily opened the eyes of my spirit to see in perfect wakefulness what was going on in the other world, and to converse, broad awake, with angels and spirits."

In his first vision Swedenborg speaks of "a kind of vapour steaming from the pores of my body. It was a most visible watery vapour and fell downwards to the ground upon the carpet." This is a close description of that ectoplasm which we have found to be the basis of all physical phenomena. The substance has also been called "ideoplasm," because it takes on in an instant any shape with which it is impressed by the spirit. In this case it changed, according to his account, into vermin, which was said to be a sign from his Guardians that they disapproved of his diet, and was accompanied by a clairaudient warning that he must be more careful in that respect.

What can the world make of such a narrative? They may say that the man was mad, but his life in the years which followed showed no sign of mental weakness. Or they might say that he lied. But he was a man who was famed for his punctilious veracity. His friend Cuno, a banker of

Amsterdam, said of him, "When he gazed upon me with his smiling blue eyes it was as if truth itself was speaking from them." Was he then self-deluded and honestly mistaken? We have to face the fact that in the main the spiritual observations which he made have been confirmed and extended since his time by innumerable psychic observers. The true verdict is that he was the first and in many ways the greatest of the whole line of mediums, that he was subject to the errors as well as to the privileges which mediumship brings, that only by the study of mediumship can his powers be really understood, and that in endeavouring to separate him from Spiritualism his New Church has shown a complete misapprehension of his gifts, and of their true place in the general scheme of Nature. As a great pioneer of the Spiritual movement his position is both intelligible and glorious. As an isolated figure with incomprehensible powers, there is no place for him in any broad comprehensive scheme of religious thought.

It is interesting to note that he considered his powers to be intimately connected with a system of respiration. Air and ether being all around us, it is as if some men could breathe more ether and less air and so attain a more etheric state. This, no doubt, is a crude and clumsy way of putting it, but some such idea runs through the work of many schools of psychic thought. Laurence Oliphant, who had no obvious connexion with Swedenborg, wrote his book "Sympneumata" in order to explain it. The Indian system of Yoga depends upon the same idea. But anyone who has seen an ordinary medium go into trance is aware of the peculiar hissing intakes with which the process begins and the deep expirations with which it ends. A fruitful field of study lies there for the Science of the future. Here, as in other psychic matters, caution is needed. The author has known several cases where tragic results have followed upon an ignorant use of deep-breathing psychic exercises. Spiritual, like electrical power, has its allotted use, but needs some knowledge and caution in handling.

Swedenborg sums up the matter by saying that when he communed with spirits he would for an hour at a time hardly draw a breath, "taking in only enough air to serve as a supply to his thoughts." Apart from this peculiarity of respiration, Swedenborg was normal during his visions, though he naturally preferred to be secluded at such times. He seems to have been privileged to examine the other world through several of its

spheres, and though his theological habit of mind may have tintured his descriptions, on the other hand the vast range of his material knowledge gave him unusual powers of observation and comparison. Let us see what were the main facts which he brought back from his numerous journeys, and how far they coincide with those which have been obtained since his day by psychic methods.

He found, then, that the other world, to which we all go after death, consisted of a number of different spheres representing various shades of luminosity and happiness, each of us going to that for which our spiritual condition has fitted us. We are judged in automatic fashion, like going to like by some spiritual law, and the result being determined by the total result of our life, so that absolution or a death-bed repentance can be of little avail. He found in these spheres that the scenery and conditions of this world were closely reproduced, and so also was the general framework of society. He found houses in which families lived, temples in which they worshipped, halls in which they assembled for social purposes, palaces in which rulers might dwell.

Death was made easy by the presence of celestial beings who helped the new-comer into his fresh existence. Such new-comers had an immediate period of complete rest. They regained consciousness in a few days of our time.

There were both angels and devils, but they were not of another order to ourselves. They were all human beings who had lived on earth and who were either undeveloped souls, as devils, or highly developed souls, as angels.

We did not change in any way at death. Man lost nothing by death, but was still a man in all respects, though more perfect than when in the body. He took with him not only his powers but also his acquired modes of thought, his beliefs and his prejudices.

All children were received equally, whether baptized or not. They grew up in the other world. Young women mothered them until the real mother came across.

There was no eternal punishment. Those who were in the hells could work their way out if they had the impulse. Those in the heavens were

also in no permanent place, but were working their way to something higher.

There was marriage in the form of spiritual union in the next world. It takes a man and a woman to make a complete human unit. Swedenborg, it may be remarked, was never married in life.

There was no detail too small for his observation in the spirit spheres. He speaks of the architecture, the artisans' work, the flowers and fruits, the scribes, the embroidery, the art, the music, the literature, the science, the schools, the museums, the colleges, the libraries and the sports. It may all shock conventional minds, though why harps, crowns and thrones should be tolerated and other less material things denied, it is hard to see.

Those who left this world old, decrepit, diseased, or deformed, renewed their youth, and gradually assumed their full vigour. Married couples continued together if their feelings towards each other were close and sympathetic. If not, the marriage was dissolved. "Two real lovers are not separated by the death of one, since the spirit of the deceased dwells with the spirit of the survivor, and this even to the death of the latter, when they again meet and are reunited, and love each other more tenderly than before."

Such are some gleanings out of the immense store of information which God sent to the world through Swedenborg. Again and again they have been repeated by the mouths and the pens of our own Spiritualistic illuminates. The world has so far disregarded it, and clung to outworn and senseless conceptions. Gradually the new knowledge is making its way, however, and when it has been entirely accepted the true greatness of the mission of Swedenborg will be recognized, while his Biblical exegesis will be forgotten.

The New Church, which was formed in order to sustain the teaching of the Swedish master, has allowed itself to become a backwater instead of keeping its rightful place as the original source of psychic knowledge. When the Spiritualistic movement broke out in 1848, and when men like Andrew Jackson Davis supported it with philosophic writings and psychic powers which can hardly be distinguished from those of Swedenborg, the New Church would have been well advised to hail this

development as being on the lines indicated by their leader. Instead of doing so, they have preferred, for some reason which is difficult to understand, to exaggerate every point of difference and ignore every point of resemblance, until the two bodies have drifted into a position of hostility. In point of fact, every Spiritualist should honour Swedenborg, and his bust should be in every Spiritualist temple, as being the first and greatest of modern mediums. On the other hand, the New Church should sink any small differences and join heartily in the new movement, contributing their churches and organization to the common cause.

It is difficult on examining Swedenborg's life to discover what are the causes which make his present-day followers look askance at other psychic bodies. What he did then is what they do now. Speaking of Polhem's death the seer says: "He died on Monday and spoke with me on Thursday. I was invited to the funeral. He saw the hearse and saw them let down the coffin into the grave. He conversed with me as it was going on, asking me why they had buried him when he was alive. When the priest pronounced that he would rise again at the Day of judgment he asked why this was, when he had risen already. He wondered that such a belief could obtain, considering that he was even now alive."

This is entirely in accord with the experience of a present-day medium. If Swedenborg was within his rights, then the medium is so also.

Again: "Brahe was beheaded at 10 in the morning and spoke to me at 10 that night. He was with me almost without interruption for several days."

Such instances show that Swedenborg had no more scruples about converse with the dead than the Christ had when He spoke on the mountain with Moses and Elias.

Swedenborg has laid down his own view very clearly, but in considering it one has to remember the time in which he lived and his want of experience of the trend and object of the new revelation. This view was that God, for good and wise purposes, had separated the world of spirits from ours and that communication was not granted except for cogent reasons—among which mere curiosity should not be counted. Every earnest student of the psychic would agree with it, and every earnest Spiritualist is averse from turning the most solemn thing upon earth into a sort of pastime. As to having a cogent reason, our main reason is that

in such an age of materialism as Swedenborg can never have imagined, we are endeavouring to prove the existence and supremacy of spirit in so objective a way that it will meet and beat the materialists on their own ground. It would be hard to imagine any reason more cogent than this, and therefore we have every right to claim that if Swedenborg were now living he would have been a leader in our modern psychic movement.

Some of his followers, notably Dr. Garth Wilkinson, have put forward another objection thus: "The danger of man in speaking with spirits is that we are all in association with our likes, and being full of evil these similar spirits, could we face them, would but confirm us in our own state of views."

To this we can only reply that though it is specious it is proved by experience to be false. Man is not naturally bad. The average human being is good. The mere act of spiritual communication in its solemnity brings out the religious side. Therefore as a rule it is not the evil but the good influence which is encountered, as the beautiful and moral records of séances will show. The author can testify that in nearly forty years of psychic work, during which he has attended innumerable séances in many lands, he has never on any single occasion heard an obscene word or any message which could offend the ears of the most delicate female. Other veteran Spiritualists bring the same testimony. Therefore, while it is undoubtedly true that evil spirits are attracted to an evil circle, in actual practice it is a very rare thing for anyone to be incommoded thereby. When such spirits come the proper procedure is not to repulse them, but rather to reason gently with them and so endeavour to make them realize their own condition and what they should do for self-improvement. This has occurred many times within the author's personal experience and with the happiest results.

Some little personal account of Swedenborg may fitly end this brief review of his doctrines, which is primarily intended to indicate his position in the general scheme. He must have been a most frugal, practical, hard-working and energetic young man, and a most lovable old one. Life seems to have mellowed him into a very gentle and venerable creature. He was placid, serene, and ever ready for conversation which did not take a psychic turn unless his companions so desired. The material of such conversations was always remarkable, but he was

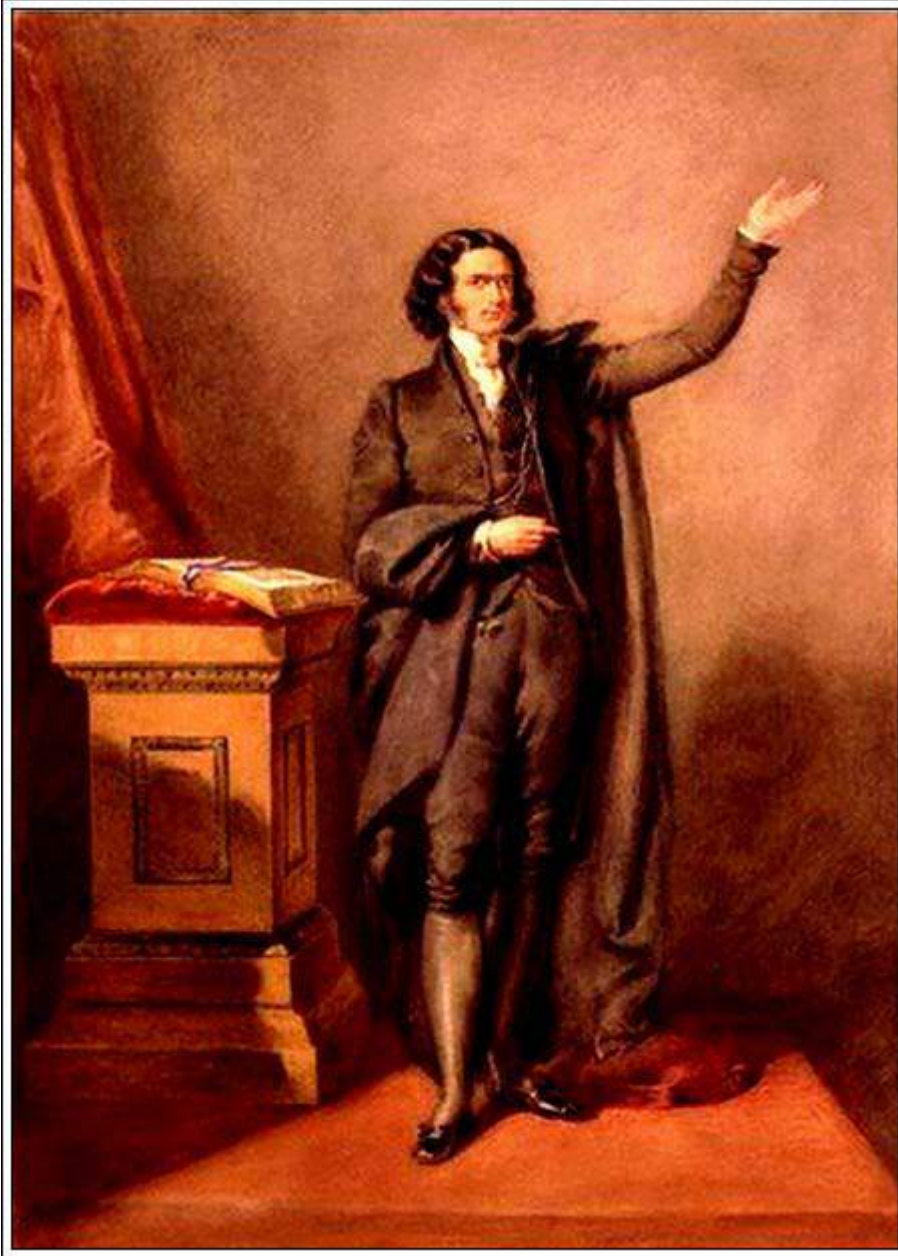
afflicted with a stammer which hindered his enunciation. In person he was tall and spare, with a spiritual face, blue eyes, a wig to his shoulders, dark clothing, knee-breeches, buckles, and a cane.

Swedenborg claimed that a heavy cloud was formed round the earth by the psychic grossness of humanity, and that from time to time there was a judgment and a clearing up, even as the thunderstorm clears the material atmosphere. He saw that the world, even in his day, was drifting into a dangerous position owing to the unreason of the Churches on the one side and the reaction towards absolute want of religion which was caused by it. Modern psychic authorities, notably Vale Owen, have spoken of this ever-accumulating cloud, and there is a very general feeling that the necessary cleansing process will not be long postponed.

A notice of Swedenborg from the Spiritualistic standpoint may be best concluded by an extract from his own diary. He says: "All confirmations in matters pertaining to theology are, as it were, glued fast into the brains, and can with difficulty be removed, and while they remain, genuine truths can find no place." He was a very great seer, a great pioneer of psychic knowledge, and his weakness lay in those very words which he has written.

The general reader who desires to go further will find Swedenborg's most characteristic teachings in his "Heaven and Hell," "The New Jerusalem," and "Arcana Coelestia." His life has been admirably done by Garth Wilkinson, Trobridge, and Brayley Hodgetts, the present president of the English Swedenborg Society. In spite of all his theological symbolism, his name must live eternally as the first of all modern men who has given a description of the process of death, and of the world beyond, which is not founded upon the vague ecstatic and impossible visions of the old Churches, but which actually corresponds with the descriptions which we ourselves obtain from those who endeavour to convey back to us some clear idea of their new existence.

2. EDWARD IRVING: — THE SHAKERS



Edward Irving (1792-1834)

THE story of Edward Irving and his experience of spiritual manifestations in the years from 1830 to 1833 are of great interest to the psychic student, and help to bridge the gap between Swedenborg on one side and Andrew Jackson Davis on the other. The facts are as follows:

Edward Irving was of that hard-working poorer-class Scottish stock which has produced so many great men. Of the same stock and at the same time and district came Thomas Carlyle. Irving was born in Annan in the year 1792. After a hard, studious youth, he developed into a very singular man. In person he was a giant and a Hercules in strength, his splendid physique being only marred by a bad outward cast of one eye—a defect which, like Byron's lame foot, seemed in some sort to present an analogy to the extremes in his character. His mind, which was virile, broad and courageous, was warped by early training in the narrow school of the Scottish Church, where the hard, crude views of the old Covenanters—an impossible Protestantism which represented a reaction against an impossible Catholicism—still poisoned the human soul. His mental position was strangely contradictory, for while he had inherited this cramped theology he had failed to inherit much which is the very birthright of the poorer Scot. He was opposed to all that was liberal, and even such obvious measures of justice as the Reform Bill of 1832 found in him a determined opponent.

This strange, eccentric, and formidable man had his proper environment in the 17th century, when his prototypes were holding moorland meetings in Gallo way and avoiding, or possibly even attacking with the arms of the flesh, the dragoons of Claverhouse. But, live when he might, he was bound to write his nacre in some fashion on the annals of his time. We read of his strenuous youth in Scotland, of his rivalry with his friend Carlyle in the affections of the clever and vivacious Jane Welsh, of his enormous walks and feats of strength, of his short career as a rather violent school-teacher at Kirkcaldy, of his marriage to the daughter of a minister in that town, and finally of his becoming curate or assistant to the great Dr. Chalmers, who was, at that time, the most famous clergyman in Scotland, and whose administration of his parish in Glasgow is one of the outstanding chapters in the history of the Scottish Church. In this capacity he gained that man-to-man acquaintance with the poorer classes which is the best and most practical of all preparations for the work of life. Without it, indeed, no man is complete.

There was at that time a small Scottish church in Hatton Garden, off Holborn, in London, which had lost its pastor and was in a poor position, both spiritually and financially. The vacancy was offered to Dr. Chalmers's assistant, and after some heart-searchings was accepted by

him. Here his sonorous eloquence and his thoroughgoing delivery of the Gospel message began to attract attention, and suddenly the strange Scottish giant became the fashion. The humble street was blocked by carriages on a Sunday morning, and some of the most distinguished men and women in London scrambled for a share of the very scanty accommodation. There is evidence that this extreme popularity did not last, and possibly the preacher's habit of expounding a text for an hour and a half was too much for the English weakling, however acceptable north of the Tweed. Finally a move was made to a larger church in Regent Square which could hold two thousand people, and there were sufficient stalwarts to fill this in decent fashion, though the preacher had ceased to excite the interest of his earlier days. Apart from his oratory, Irving seems to have been a conscientious and hardworking pastor, striving assiduously for the temporal needs of the more humble of his flock, and ever ready at all hours of the day or night to follow the call of duty.

Soon, however, there came a rift between him and the authorities of his Church. The matter in dispute made a very fine basis for a theological quarrel of the type which has done more harm in the world than the smallpox. The question was whether the Christ had in Him the possibility of sin, or whether the Divine portion of His being was a complete and absolute bar to physical temptations. The assessors contended that the association of such ideas as sin and Christ was a blasphemy. The obdurate clergyman, however, replied with some show of reason that unless the Christ had the capacity for sin, and successfully resisted it, His earthly lot was not the same as ours, and His virtues deserved less admiration. The matter was argued out in London with immense seriousness and at intolerable length, with the result that the presbytery declared its unanimous disapproval of the pastor's views. As, however, his congregation in turn expressed their unqualified approval, he was able to disregard the censure of his official brethren.

But a greater stumbling-block lay ahead, and Irving's encounter with it has made his name live as all names live which associate themselves with real spiritual issues. It should first be understood that Irving was deeply interested in Biblical prophecy, especially the vague and terrible images of St. John, and the strangely methodical forecasts of Daniel. He brooded much over the years and the days which were fixed as the allotted time

before the days of wrath should precede the Second Coming of the Lord. There were others at that time—1830 and onwards—who were deeply immersed in the same sombre speculations. Among these was a wealthy banker named Drummond, who had a large country house at Albury, near Guildford. At this house these Biblical students used to assemble from time to time, discussing and comparing their views with such thoroughness that it was not unusual for their sittings to extend over a week, each day being fully taken up from breakfast to supper. This band was called the "Albury Prophets." Excited by the political portents which led up to the Reform Bill, they all considered that the foundations of the deep had been loosened. It is hard to imagine what their reaction would have been had they lived to witness the Great War. As it was, they were convinced that the end of all things was at hand, and they looked out eagerly for signs and portents, twisting the vague and sinister words of the prophets into all manner of fantastic interpretations.

Finally, above the monotonous horizon of human happenings there did actually appear a strange manifestation. There had been a legend that the spiritual gifts of earlier days would reassert themselves before the end, and here apparently was the forgotten gift of tongues coming back into the experience of mankind. It had begun in 1830 on the western side of Scotland, where the names of the sensitives, Campbell and MacDonald, spoke of that Celtic blood which has always been more alive to spiritual influences than the heavier Teutonic strain. The Albury Prophets were much exercised in their minds, and an emissary was sent from Mr. Irving's church to investigate and report. He found that the matter was very real. The people were of good repute, one of them, indeed, a woman whose character could best be described as saintly. The strange tongues in which they both talked broke out at intervals, and the manifestation was accompanied by healing miracles and other signs of power. Clearly it was no fraud or pretence, but a real influx of some strange force which carried one back to apostolic times. The faithful waited eagerly for further developments.

These were not long in coming, and they broke out in Irving's own church. It was in July, 1831, that it was rumoured that certain members of the congregation had been seized in this strange way in their own homes, and discreet exhibitions were held in the vestry and other secluded places. The pastor and his advisers were much puzzled as to

whether a more public demonstration should be tolerated. The matter settled itself, however, after the fashion of affairs of the spirit, and in October of the same year the prosaic Church of Scotland service was suddenly interrupted by the strange outcry of the possessed. It came so suddenly and with such vehemence, both at the morning and afternoon service, that a panic set in in the church, and had it not been for their giant pastor thundering out, "Oh, Lord, still the tumult of the people!" a tragedy might have followed. There was also a good deal of hissing and uproar from those who were conservative in their tastes. Altogether the sensation was a considerable one, and the newspapers of the day were filled with it, though their comments were far from respectful or favourable.

The sounds came from both women and men, and consisted in the first instance of unintelligible noises which were either mere gibberish, or some entirely unknown language. "Sudden, doleful, and unintelligible sounds," says one witness. "There was a force and fulness of sound," said another description, "of which the delicate female organs would seem incapable." "It burst forth with an astounding and terrible crash," says a third. Many, however, were greatly impressed by these sounds, and among them was Irving himself. "There is a power in the voice to thrill the heart and overawe the spirit after a manner which I have never felt. There is a march and majesty and sustained grandeur of which I have never heard the like. It is likest to one of the simplest and most ancient chants in the cathedral service in so much that I have been led to think that these chants, which can be traced as high as Ambrose, are recollections of the inspired utterances of the primitive Church."

Soon, moreover, intelligible English words were added to the strange outbursts. These usually consisted of ejaculations and prayers, with no obvious sign of any supernormal character save that they broke out at unseasonable hours and independently of the will of the speaker. In some cases, however, these powers developed until the gifted one was able, while under the influence, to give long harangues, to lay down the law in most dogmatic fashion over points of doctrine, and to issue reproofs which occasionally were turned even in the direction of the longsuffering pastor.

There may have been—in fact, there probably was—a true psychic origin to these phenomena, but they had developed in a soil of narrow bigoted theology, which was bound to bring them to ruin. Even Swedenborg's religious system was too narrow to receive the full undistorted gifts of the spirit, so one can imagine what they became when contracted within the cramped limits of a Scottish church, where every truth must be shorn or twisted until it corresponds with some fantastic text. The new good wine will not go into the old narrow bottles. Had there been a fuller revelation, then doubtless other messages would have been received in other fashions which would have presented the matter in its just proportions, and checked one spiritual gift by others. But there was no development save towards chaos. Some of the teaching received could not be reconciled with orthodoxy, and was therefore obviously of the devil. Some of the sensitives condemned others as heretics. Voice was raised against voice. Worst of all, some of the chief speakers became convinced themselves that their own speeches were diabolical. Their chief reason seems to have been that they did not accord with their own spiritual convictions, which would seem to some of us rather an indication that they were angelic. They entered also upon the slippery path of prophecy, and were abashed when their own prophecies did not materialize.

Some of the statements which came through these sensitives, and which shocked their religious sensibilities, might seem to deserve serious consideration by a more enlightened generation. Thus one of these Bible-worshippers is recorded as saying, concerning the Bible Society, "That it was the curse going through the land, quenching the Spirit of God, by the letter of the Word of God." Right or wrong, such an utterance would seem to be independent of him who uttered it, and it is in close accord with many of the spiritual teachings which we receive to-day. So long as the letter is regarded as sacred, just so long can anything, even pure materialism, be proved from that volume.

One of the chief mouthpieces of the spirit was a certain Robert Baxter — not to be confused with the Baxter who some thirty years later was associated with certain remarkable prophecies. This Robert Baxter seems to have been a solid, earnest, prosaic citizen who viewed the Scriptures much as a lawyer views a legal document, with an exact valuation of every phrase —especially of such phrases as fitted into his

own hereditary scheme of religion. He was an honest man with a restless conscience, which continually worried him over the smaller details, while leaving him quite unperturbed as to the broad platform upon which his beliefs were constructed. This man was powerfully affected by the influx of spirit—to use his own phrase, "his mouth was opened in power." According to him, January 14, 1832, was the beginning of those mystical 1,260 days which were to precede the Second Coming and the end of the world. Such a prediction must have been particularly sympathetic to Irving with his millennial dreams. But long before the days were fulfilled Irving was in his grave, and Baxter had forsworn those voices which had, in this instance at least, deceived him.

Baxter has written a pamphlet with the portentous title, "Narrative of Facts, Characterising the Supernatural Manifestations, in Members of Mr. Irving's Congregation, and other Individuals, in England and Scotland, and formerly in the Writer Himself." Spiritual truth could no more come through such a mind than white light could come through a prism, and yet in this account he has to admit the occurrence of many things which seem clearly preternatural, mixed up with much that is questionable, and some things which are demonstrably false. The object of the pamphlet is mainly to forswear his evil and invisible guides, so that he may return to the safe if flattish bosom of the Scottish Church. It is noticeable, however, that a second member of Irving's congregation wrote an answering pamphlet with an even longer title, which showed that Baxter was right so long as he was prompted by the spirit, and wrong in his Satanic inferences. This pamphlet is interesting as containing letters from various people who possessed the gift of tongues, showing that they were earnest-minded folk who were incapable of any conscious deception.

What is an impartial psychic student who is familiar with more modern phases to say to this development? Personally it seems to the author to have been a true psychic influx, blanketed and smothered by a petty sectarian theology of the letter-perfect description for which the Pharisees were reprov'd. If he may venture his individual opinion, it is that the perfect recipient of spiritual teaching is the earnest man who has worked his way through all the orthodox creeds, and whose mind, eager and receptive, is a blank surface ready to register a new impression

exactly as received. He becomes the true child and pupil of other-world teaching, and all other types of Spiritualist appear to be compromises.

This does not alter the fact that personal nobility of character may make the honest compromiser a far higher type than the pure Spiritualist, but it applies only to the actual philosophy. The field of Spiritualism is infinitely broad, and on it every variety of Christian, as well as the Moslem, the Hindu or the Parsee, can dwell in brotherhood. But a mere acceptance of spirit return and communion is not enough. Many savages have that. We need a moral code as well, and whether we regard Christ as a benevolent teacher or as a divine ambassador, His actual ethical teaching in one form or another, even if not coupled with His name, is an essential thing for the upliftment of mankind. But always it must be checked by reason, and acted upon in the spirit and not according to the letter.

This, however, is digression. In the voices of 1831 there are the signs of real psychic power. It is a recognized spiritual law that all psychic manifestations become distorted when seen through the medium of narrow sectarian religion. It is also a law that pompous, inflated persons attract mischievous entities and are the butts of the spirit world, being made game of by the use of large names and by prophecies which make the prophet ridiculous. Such were the guides who descended upon the flock of Mr. Irving, and produced various effects, good or bad, according to the instrument used.

The unity of the Church, which had been shaken by the previous censure of the presbytery, dissolved under this new trial. There was a large secession, and the building was claimed by the trustees. Irving and the stalwarts who were loyal to him wandered forth in search of new premises, and found them in the hall used by Robert Owen, the Socialist, philanthropist, and free-thinker, who was destined twenty years later to be one of the pioneer converts to Spiritualism. Here, in Gray's Inn Road, Irving rallied the faithful. It cannot be denied that the Church, as he organized it, with its angel, its elders, its deacons, its tongues, and its prophecies, was the best reconstruction of a primitive Christian Church that has ever been made. If Peter or Paul reincarnated in London they would be bewildered, and possibly horrified, by St. Paul's or by Westminster Cathedral, but they would certainly have been in a perfectly

familiar atmosphere in the gathering over which Irving presided. A wise man recognizes that God may be approached from innumerable angles. The minds of men and the spirit of the times vary in their reaction to the great central cause, and one can only insist upon a broad charity both in oneself and in others. It was in this that Irving seems to have been wanting. It was always by the standard of that which was a sect among sects that he would measure the universe. There were times when he was vaguely conscious of this, and it may be that those wrestlings with Apollyon, of which he complains, even as Bunyan and the Puritans of old used to come plain, had a strange explanation. Apollyon was really the Spirit of Truth, and the inward struggle was not between Faith and Sin, but was really between the darkness of inherited dogma, and the light of inherent and instinctive reason, God-given, and rising for ever in revolt against the absurdities of man.

But Irving lived very intensely and the successive crises through which he had passed had broken him down. These contests with argumentative theologians and with recalcitrant members of his flock may seem trivial things to us when viewed far off down the vista of years, but to him, with his eager, earnest, storm-torn soul, they were vital and terrible. To the unfettered mind this sect or that seems a matter of indifference, but to Irving, both from heredity and from education, the Scottish Church was the ark of God, and yet he, its zealous, faithful son, driven by his own conscience, had rushed forth and had found the great gates which contained Salvation slammed and barred behind him. He was a branch cut from the tree, and he withered. It is a true simile, and it is more than a simile, for it became an actual physical fact. This giant in early middle age wilted and shrank. His great frame stooped. His cheeks became hollow and wan. His eyes shone with the baleful fever which was consuming him. And so, working to the very end and with the words, "If I die, I die with the Lord," upon his lips, his soul passed forth into that clearer and more golden light where the tired brain finds rest and the anxious spirit enters into a peace and assurance which life has never given.

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Apart from this isolated incident of Irving's Church, there was one other psychic manifestation of those days which led more directly to the

Hydesville revelation. This was the outbreak of spiritual phenomena among the Shaker communities in the United States, which has received less attention than it deserves.

These good people seem to have had affiliations on the one side with the Quakers, and, on the other, with the refugees from the Cevennes, who came to England to escape the persecution of Louis XIV. Even in England their harmless lives did not screen them from the persecution of the bigots, and they were forced to emigrate to America about the time of the War of Independence.

There they founded settlements in various parts, living simple cleanly lives upon communistic principles, with sobriety and chastity as their watchword. It is not surprising that as the psychic cloud of other-world power slowly settled upon the earth it should have found its first response from such altruistic communities. In 1837 there were sixty such bodies in existence, and all of them responded in various degrees to the new power. They kept their experiences very strictly to themselves at the time, for as their elders subsequently explained, they would certainly have been all consigned to Bedlam had they told what had actually occurred. Two books, however, "Holy Wisdom" and "The Sacred Roll," which arose from their experiences, appeared afterwards.

The phenomena seem to have begun with the usual warning noises, and to have been followed by the obsession from time to time of nearly all the community. Everyone, man and woman, proved to be open to spirit possession. The invaders only came, however, after asking permission, and at such intervals as did not interfere with the work of the community. The chief visitants were Red Indian spirits, who came collectively as a tribe. "One or two elders might be in the room below, and there would be a knock at the door and the Indians would ask whether they might come in. Permission being given, a whole tribe of Indian spirits would troop into the house, and in a few minutes you would hear 'Whoop!' here and 'Whoop!' there all over the house." The whoops emanated, of course, from the vocal organs of the Shakers themselves, but while under the Indian control they would talk Indian among themselves, dance Indian dances, and in all ways show that they were really possessed by the Redskin spirits.

One may well ask why should these North American aborigines play so large a part not only in the inception, but in the continuance of this movement? There are few physical mediums in this country, as well as in America, who have not a Red Indian guide, whose photograph has not infrequently been obtained by psychic means, still retaining his scalp-locks and his robes. It is one of the many mysteries which we have still to solve. We can only say for certain, from our own experience, that such spirits are powerful in producing physical phenomena, but that they never present the higher teaching which comes to us either from European or from Oriental spirits. The physical phenomena are still, however, of very great importance, as calling the attention of sceptics to the matter, and therefore the part assigned to the Indians is a very vital one. Men of the rude open-air type seem in spirit life to be especially associated with the crude manifestations of spirit activity, and it has been repeatedly asserted, though it is hard to say how it could be proved, that their chief organizer was an adventurer who in life was known as Henry Morgan, and died as Governor of Jamaica, a post to which he had been appointed in the time of Charles II. Such unproved assertions are, it must be admitted, of no value in our present state of knowledge, but they should be put on record as further information may in time shed some new light upon them. John King, which is the spirit name of the alleged Henry Morgan, is a very real being, and there are few Spiritualists of experience who have not seen his heavily-bearded face and heard his masterful voice. As to the Indians who are his colleagues or his subordinates, one can but hazard the conjecture that they are children of Nature who are nearer perhaps to the primitive secrets than other more complex races. It may be that their special work is of the nature of an expiation and atonement—an explanation which the author has heard from their lips.

These remarks may well seem a digression from the actual experience of the Shakers, but the difficulties raised in the mind of the inquirer arise largely from the number of new facts, without any order or explanation, which he is forced to encounter. His mind has no possible pigeon-hole into which they can be fitted. Therefore, the author will endeavour in these pages to provide so far as possible from his own experience, or from that of those upon whom he can rely, such sidelights as may make the matter more intelligible, and give at least a hint of those laws which

lie behind, and are as binding upon spirits as upon ourselves. Above all, the inquirer must cast away for ever the idea that the discarnate are necessarily wise or powerful entities. They have their individuality and their limitations, even as we have, and these limitations become the more marked when they have to manifest themselves through so foreign a substance as matter.

The Shakers had among them a man of outstanding intelligence named F. W. Evans, who gave a very clear and entertaining account of all this matter, which may be sought by the curious in the *New York Daily Graphic* of November 24, 1874, and has been largely copied into Colonel Olcott's work, "People From the Other World."

Mr. Evans and his associates after the first disturbance, physical and mental, caused by this spirit irruption, settled down to study what it really meant. They came to the conclusion that the matter could be divided into three phases. The first phase was the actual proving to the observer that the thing was real. The second phase was one of instruction, as even the humblest spirit can bring information as to his own experience of after-death conditions. The third phase was called the missionary phase and was the practical application. The Shakers came to the unexpected conclusion that the Indians were there not to teach but to be taught. They proselytized them, therefore, exactly as they would have done in life. A similar experience has occurred since then in very many Spiritualistic circles, where humble and lowly spirits have come to be taught that which they should have learned in this world had true teachers been available. One may well ask why the higher spirits over there do not supply this want? The answer given to the author upon one notable occasion was, "These people are very much nearer to you than to us. You can reach theta where we fail."

It is clear from this that the good Shakers were never in touch with the higher guides—possibly they did not need guidance—and that their visitors were on a low plane. For seven years these visitations continued. When the spirits left they informed their hosts that they were going, but that presently they would return, and that when they did so they would pervade the world and enter the palace as well as the cottage. It was just four years later that the Rochester knockings broke out. When they did so, Elder Evans and another Shaker visited Rochester and saw the Fox

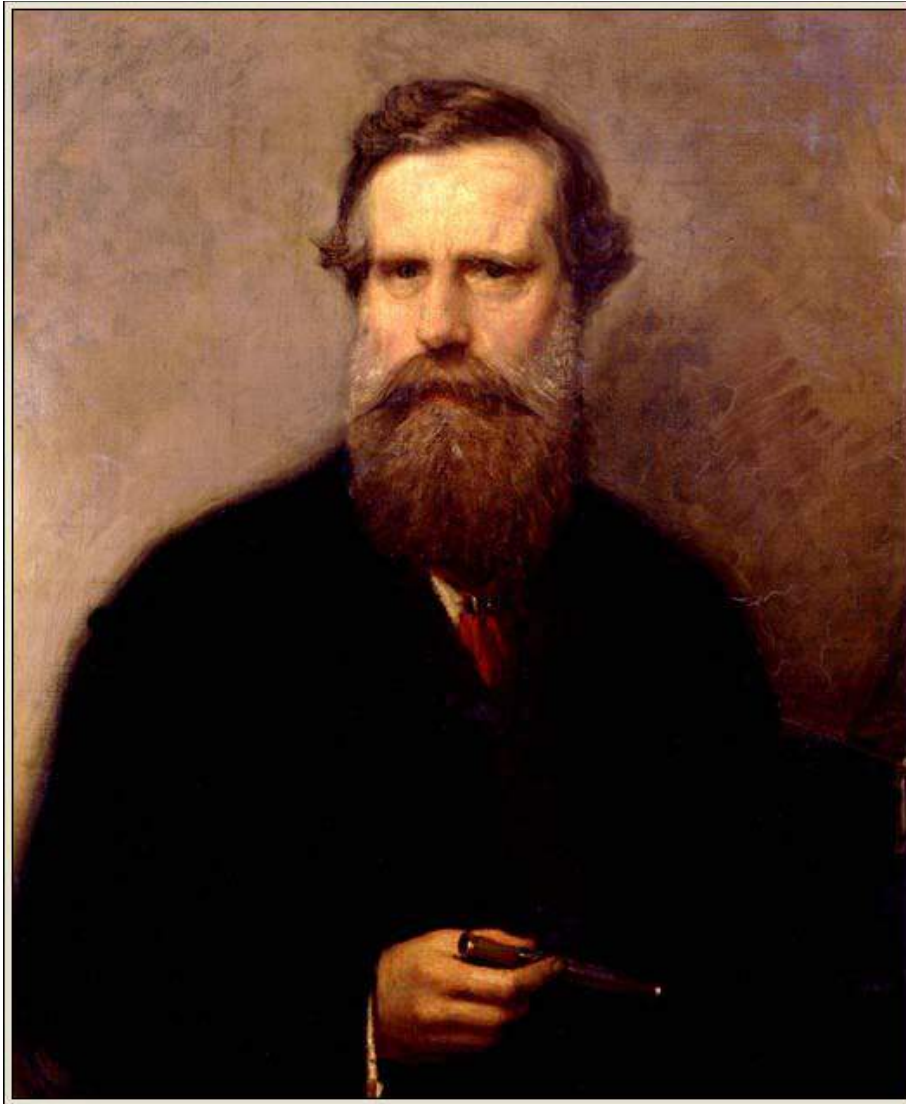
sisters. Their arrival was greeted with great enthusiasm from the unseen forces, who proclaimed that this was indeed the work which had been foretold.

One remark of Elder Evans is worth transcribing. When asked, "Don't you think your experience is much the same as that of monks and nuns in the Middle Ages?" he did not answer. "Ours were angelic but these others were diabolical," as would have been said had the situation been reversed, but he replied with fine candour and breadth of mind, "Certainly. That is the proper explanation of them through all the ages. The visions of Saint Theresa were Spiritualistic visions just such as we have frequently had vouchsafed to the members of our society." When further asked whether magic and necromancy did not belong to the same category, he answered, "Yes. That is when Spiritualism is used for selfish ends." It is clear that there were men living nearly a century ago who were capable of instructing our wise men of to-day.

That very remarkable woman, Mrs. Hardinge Britten, has recorded in her "Modern American Spiritualism" how she came in close contact with the Shaker community, and was shown by them the records, taken at the time, of their spiritual visitation. In them it was stated that the new era was to be inaugurated by an extraordinary discovery of material as well as of spiritual wealth. This is a most remarkable prophecy, as it is a matter of history that the goldfields of California were discovered within a very short time of the psychic outburst. A Swedenborg with his doctrine of correspondences might perhaps contend that the one was complementary to the other.

This episode of the Shaker manifestations is a very distinct link between the Swedenborg pioneer work and the period of Davis and the Fox sisters. We shall now consider the career of the former, which is intimately associated with the rise and progress of the modern psychic movement.

3. THE PROPHET OF THE NEW REVELATION



Andrew Jackson Davis.

ANDREW JACKSON DAVIS was one of the most remarkable men of whom we have any exact record. Born in 1826 on the banks of the Hudson, his mother was an uneducated woman, with a visionary turn which was allied to vulgar superstition, while his father was a drunken worker in leather. He has written the details of his own childhood in a curious book, "The Magic Staff," which brings home to us the primitive

and yet forceful life of the American provinces in the first half of last century. The people were rude and uneducated, but their spiritual side was very much alive, and they seem to have been reaching out continually for some new thing. It was in these country districts of New York in the space of a few years that both Mormonism and modern Spiritualism were evolved.

There never could have been a lad with fewer natural advantages than Davis. He was feeble in body and starved in mind. Outside an occasional school primer he could only recall one book that he had ever read up to his sixteenth year. Yet in that poor entity there lurked such spiritual forces that before he was twenty he had written one of the most profound and original books of philosophy ever produced. Could there be a clearer proof that nothing came from himself, and that he was but a conduit pipe through which flowed the knowledge of that vast reservoir which finds such inexplicable outlets? The valour of a Joan of Arc, the sanctity of a Theresa, the wisdom of a Jackson Davis, the supernormal powers of a Daniel Home, all come from the same source.

In his later boyhood, Davis's latent psychic powers began to develop. Like Joan, he heard voices in the fields—gentle voices which gave him good advice and comfort. Clairvoyance followed this clairaudience. At the time of his mother's death, he had a striking vision of a lovely home in a land of brightness which he conjectured to be the place to which his mother had gone. His full capacity was tapped, however, by the chance that a travelling showman who exhibited the wonders of mesmerism came to the village and experimented upon Davis, as well as on many other young rustics who desired to experience the sensation. It was soon found that Davis had very remarkable clairvoyant powers.

These were developed not by the peripatetic mesmerist, but by a local tailor named Levingston, who seems to have been a pioneer thinker. He was so intrigued by the wonderful gifts of his subject, that he abandoned his prosperous business and devoted his whole time to working with Davis and to using his clairvoyant powers for the diagnosis of disease. Davis had developed the power, common among psychics, of seeing without the eyes, including things which could not be seen in any case by human vision. At first, the gift was used as a sort of amusement in reading the letters or the watches of the assembled rustics when his eyes

were bandaged. In such cases all parts of the body can assume the function of sight, and the reason probably is that the etheric or spiritual body, which possesses the same organs as the physical, is wholly or partially disengaged, and that it registers the impression. Since it might assume any posture, or might turn completely round, one would naturally get vision from any angle, and an explanation is furnished of such cases as the author met in the north of England, where Tom Tyrrell, the famous medium, used to walk round a room, admiring the pictures, with the back of his head turned towards the walls on which they were hung. Whether in such cases the etheric eyes see the picture, or whether they see the etheric duplicate of the picture, is one of the many problems which we leave to our descendants.

Levingston used Davis at first for medical diagnosis. He described how the human body became transparent to his spirit eyes, which seemed to act from the centre of his forehead. Each organ stood out clearly and with a special radiance of its own which was dimmed in case of disease. To the orthodox medical mind, with which the author has much sympathy, such powers are suspect as opening a door for quackery, and yet he is bound to admit that all that was said by Davis has been corroborated within his own experience by Mr. Bloomfield, of Melbourne, who described to him the amazement which he felt when this power came suddenly upon him in the street, and revealed the anatomy of two persons who were walking in front of him. So well attested are such powers that it has been not unusual for medical men to engage clairvoyants as helpers in diagnosis. Hippocrates says, "The affections suffered by the body the soul sees with shut eyes." Apparently, then, the ancients knew something of such methods. Davis's ministrations were not confined to those who were in his presence, but his soul or etheric body could be liberated by the magnetic manipulation of his employer, and could be sent forth like a carrier pigeon with the certainty that it would come home again bearing any desired information. Apart from the humanitarian mission on which it was usually engaged it would sometimes roam at will, and he has described in wonderful passages how he would see a translucent earth beneath him, with the great veins of mineral beds shining through like masses of molten metal, each with its own fiery radiance.

It is notable that at this earlier phase of Davis's psychic experience he had no memory when he returned from trance of what his impressions had been. They were registered, however, upon his subconscious mind, and at a later date he recalled them all clearly. For the time he was a source of instruction to others but remained ignorant himself.

Until then his development had been on lines which are not uncommon, and which could be matched within the experience of every psychic student. But then there occurred an episode which was entirely novel and which is described in close detail in the autobiography. Put briefly, the facts were these. On the evening of March 6, 1844, Davis was suddenly possessed by some power which led him to fly from the little town of Poughkeepsie, where he lived, and to hurry off, in a condition of semi-trance, upon a rapid journey. When he regained his clear perceptions he found himself among wild mountains, and there he claims to have met two venerable men with whom he held intimate and elevating communion, the one upon medicine and the other upon morals. All night he was out, and when he inquired his whereabouts next morning he was told that he was in the Catskill Mountains and forty miles from his home. The whole narrative reads like a subjective experience, a dream or a vision, and one would not hesitate to place it as such were it not for the details of his reception and the meal he ate upon his return. It is a possible alternative that the flight into the mountains was a reality and the interviews a dream. He claims that he afterwards identified his two mentors as Galen and Swedenborg, which is interesting as being the first contact with the dead which he had ever recognized. The whole episode seems visionary, and had no direct bearing upon the lad's remarkable future.

He felt higher powers stirring within him, and it was remarked to him that when he was asked profound questions in the mesmeric trance he always replied, "I will answer that in my book." In his nineteenth year he felt that the hour for writing the book had come. The mesmeric influence of Levingston did not, for some reason, seem suited for this, and a Dr. Lyon was chosen as the new mesmerist. Lyon threw up his practice and went with his singular protege to New York, where they presently called upon the Rev. William Fishbough to come and act as amanuensis. The intuitional selection seems to have been justified, for he also at once gave up his work and obeyed the summons. Then, the apparatus being ready,

Lyon threw the lad day after day into the magnetic trance, and his utterances were taken down by the faithful secretary. There was no money and no publicity in the matter, and even the most sceptical critic cannot but admit that the occupation and objects of these three men were a wonderful contrast to the money-making material world which surrounded them. They were reaching out to the beyond, and what can man do that is nobler?

It is to be understood that a pipe can carry no more than its own diameter permits. The diameter of Davis was very different from that of Swedenborg. Each got knowledge while in an illuminated state. But Swedenborg was the most learned man in Europe, while Davis was as ignorant a young man as could be found in the State of New York. Swedenborg's revelation was perhaps the greater, though more likely to be tinged by his own brain. The revelation of Davis was incomparably the greater miracle.

Dr. George Bush, Professor of Hebrew in the University of New York, who was one of those present while the trance orations were being taken down, writes:

I can solemnly affirm that I have heard Davis correctly quote the Hebrew language in his lectures, and display a knowledge of geology which would have been astonishing in a person of his age, even if he had devoted years to the study. He has discussed, with the most signal ability, the profoundest questions of historical and biblical archeology, of mythology, of the origin and affinity of language, and the progress of civilization among the different nations of the globe, which would do honour to any scholar of the age, even if in reaching them he had the advantage of access to all the libraries in Christendom. Indeed, if he had acquired all the information he gives forth in these lectures, not in the two years since he left the shoemaker's bench, but in his whole life, with the most assiduous study, no prodigy of intellect of which the world has ever heard would be for a moment compared with him, yet not a single volume or page has he ever read.

Davis has a remarkable pen-picture of himself at that moment. He asks us to take stock of his equipment. "The circumference of his head is unusually small," says he. "If size is the measure of power, then this youth's mental capacity is unusually limited. His lungs are weak and

unexpanded. He had not dwelt amid refining influences—manners ungentle and awkward. He has not read a book save one. He knows nothing of grammar or the rules of language, nor associated with literary or scientific persons." Such was the lad of nineteen from whom there now poured a perfect cataract of words and ideas which are open to the criticism not of simplicity, but of being too complex and too shrouded in learned terms, although always with a consistent thread of reason and method beneath them.

It is very well to talk of the subconscious mind, but this has usually been taken as the appearance of ideas which have been received and then submerged. When, for example, the developed Davis could recall what had happened in his trances during his undeveloped days, that was a clear instance of the emerging of the buried impressions. But it seems an abuse of words to talk of the unconscious mind when we are dealing with something which could never by normal means have reached any stratum of the mind, whether conscious or not.

Such was the beginning of Davis's great psychic revelation which extended eventually over many books and is all covered by the name of the "Harmonica Philosophy." Of its nature and its place in psychic teaching we shall treat later.

In this phase of his life Davis claims still to have been under the direct influence of the person whom he afterwards identified as Swedenborg—a name quite unfamiliar to him at the time. From time to time he received a clairaudient summons to "go up into the mountain." This mountain was a hill on the farther bank of the Hudson opposite Poughkeepsie. There on the mountain he claims that he met and spoke with a venerable figure. There seems to have been none of the details of a materialization, and the incident has no analogy in our psychic experience, save indeed—and one speaks with all reverence—when the Christ also went up into a mountain and communed with the forms of Moses and Elias. There the analogy seems complete.

Davis does not appear to have been at all a religious man in the ordinary conventional sense, although he was drenched with true spiritual power. His views, so far as one can follow them, were very critical as regards Biblical revelation, and, to put it at the lowest, he was no believer in

literal interpretation. But he was honest, earnest, unvenal, anxious to get the truth and conscious of his responsibility in spreading it.

For two years the unconscious Davis continued to dictate his book upon the secrets of Nature, while the conscious Davis did a little self-education in New York with occasional restorative visits to Poughkeepsie. He had begun to attract the attention of some serious people, Edgar Allan Poe being one of his visitors. His psychic development went on, and before he reached his twenty-first year he had attained a state when he needed no second person to throw him into trance but could do it for himself. His subconscious memory too was at last opened, and he was able to go over the whole long vista of his experiences. It was at this time that he sat by a dying woman and observed every detail of the soul's departure, a wonderful description of which is given in the first volume of the "Great Harmonia." Although this description has been issued as a separate pamphlet it is not as well known as it should be, and a short epitome of it may interest the reader.

He begins by the consoling reflection that his own soul-flights, which were death in everything save duration, had shown him that the experience was "interesting and delightful," and that those symptoms which appear to be signs of pain are really the unconscious reflexes of the body, and have no significance. He then tells how, having first thrown himself into what he calls the "Superior condition," he thus observed the stages from the spiritual side. "The material eye can only see what is material, and the spiritual what is spiritual," but as everything would seem to have a spiritual counterpart the result is the same. Thus when a spirit comes to us it is not us that it perceives but our etheric bodies, which are, however, duplicates of our real ones.

It was this etheric body which Davis saw emerging from its poor outworn envelope of protoplasm, which finally lay empty upon the bed like the shrivelled chrysalis when the moth is free. The process began by an extreme concentration in the brain, which became more and more luminous as the extremities became darker. It is probable that man never thinks so clearly, or is so intensely conscious, as he becomes after all means of indicating his thoughts have left him. Then the new body begins to emerge, the head disengaging itself first. Soon it has completely freed itself, standing at right-angles to the corpse, with its feet near the

head, and with some luminous vital band between which corresponds to the umbilical cord. When the cord snaps a small portion is drawn back into the dead body, and it is this which preserves it from instant putrefaction. As to the etheric body, it takes some little time to adapt itself to its new surroundings, and in this instance it then passed out through the open doors. "I saw her pass through the adjoining room, out of the door and step from the house into the atmosphere. Immediately upon her emergence from the house she was joined by two friendly spirits from the spiritual country, and after tenderly recognizing and communing with each other the three, in the most graceful manner, began ascending obliquely through the ethereal envelopment of our globe. They walked so naturally and fraternally together that I could scarcely realize the fact that they trod the air—they seemed to be walking on the side of a glorious but familiar mountain. I continued to gaze upon them until the distance shut them from my view."

Such is the vision of Death as seen by A. J. Davis—a very different one from that dark horror which has so long obsessed the human imagination. If this be the truth, then we can sympathize with Dr. Hodgson in his exclamation, "I can hardly bear to wait." But is it true? We can only say that there is a great deal of corroborative evidence.

Many who have been in the cataleptic condition, or who have been so ill that they have sunk into deep coma, have brought back impressions very consistent with Davis's explanation, though others have returned with their minds completely blank. The author, when at Cincinnati in 1923, was brought into contact with a Mrs. Monk, who had been set down as dead by her doctors, and for an hour or so had experienced a post-mortem existence before some freak of fate restored her to life. She wrote a short account of her experience, in which she had a vivid remembrance of walking out of the room, just as Davis described, and also of the silver thread which continued to unite her living soul to her comatose body. A remarkable case was reported in *Light*, also (March 25, 1922), in which the five daughters of a dying woman, all of them clairvoyant, watched and reported the process of their mother's death. There again the description of the process was very analogous to that given, and yet there is sufficient difference in this and other accounts to suggest that the sequence of events is not always regulated by the same laws. Another variation of extreme interest is to be found in a drawing

done by a child medium which depicts the soul leaving the body and is described in Mrs. De Morgan's "From Matter to Spirit" (p. 121). This book, with its weighty preface by the celebrated mathematician Professor De Morgan, is one of the pioneer works of the spiritual movement in Great Britain. When one reflects that it was published in 1863 one's heart grows heavy at the success of those forces of obstruction, reflected so strongly in the Press, which have succeeded for so many years in standing between God's message and the human race.

The prophetic power of Davis can only be got over by the sceptic if he ignores the record. Before 1856 he prophesied in detail the coining of the motor car and of the typewriter. In his book, "The Penetralia," appears the following:

"Question: Will utilitarianism make any discoveries in other locomotive directions?"

"Yes; look out about these days for carriages and travelling saloons on country roads—without horses, without steam, without any visible motive power moving with greater speed and far more safety than at present. Carriages will be moved by a strange and beautiful and simple admixture of aqueous and atmospheric gases—so easily condensed, so simply ignited, and so imparted by a machine somewhat resembling our engines, as to be entirely concealed and manageable between the forward wheels. These vehicles will prevent many embarrassments now experienced by persons living in thinly populated territories. The first requisite for these land-locomotives will be good roads, upon which with your engine, without your horses, you may travel with great rapidity. These carriages seem to me of uncomplicated construction."

"He was next asked:

"Do you perceive any plan by which to expedite the art of writing?"

"Yes; I am almost moved to invent an automatic psychographer—that is, an artificial soul-writer. It may be constructed something like a piano, one brace or scale of keys to represent the elementary sounds; another and lower tier to represent a combination, and still another for a rapid re-combination; so that a person, instead of playing a piece of music, may touch off a sermon or a poem."

So, too, this seer, in reply to a query regarding what was then termed "atmospheric navigation," felt "deeply impressed" that "the necessary mechanism—to transcend the adverse currents of air, so that we may sail as easily and safely and pleasantly as birds—is dependent on a new motive power. This power will come. It will not only move the locomotive on the rail, and the carriage on the country road, but the aerial cars also, which will move through the sky from country to country."

He predicted the coming of Spiritualism in his "Principles of Nature," published in 1847, where he says:

It is a truth that spirits commune with one another while one is in the body and the other in the higher spheres—and this, too, when the person in the body is unconscious of the influx, and hence cannot be convinced of the fact; and this truth will ere long present itself in the form of a living demonstration. And the world will hail with delight the ushering-in of that era when the interiors of men will be opened, and the spiritual communion will be established such as is now being enjoyed by the inhabitants of Mars, Jupiter and Saturn.

In this matter Davis's teaching was definite, but it must be admitted that in a good deal of his work he is indefinite and that it is hard reading, for it is disfigured by the use of long words, and occasionally he even invents a vocabulary of his own. It was, however, on a very high moral and intellectual level, and might be best described as an up-to-date Christianity with Christ's ethics applied to modern problems and entirely freed from all trace of dogma. "Documentary Religion," as Davis called it, was not in his opinion religion at all. That name could only be applied to the personal product of reason and spirituality. Such was the general line of teaching, mixed up with many revelations of Nature, which was laid down in the successive books of the "Harmonial Philosophy" which succeeded "Nature's Divine Revelations," and occupied the next few years of his life. Much of the teaching appeared in a strange paper called "The Univercoelum," and much was spread by lectures in which he laid before the public the results of his revelations.

In his spiritual vision Davis saw an arrangement of the universe which corresponds closely with that which Swedenborg had already noted, and with that afterwards taught by the spirits and accepted by the Spiritualists. He saw a life which resembled that of earth, a life that may

be called semi-material, with pleasures and pursuits that would appeal to our natures which had been by no means changed by death. He saw study for the studious, congenial tasks for the energetic, art for the artistic, beauty for the lover of Nature, rest for the weary ones. He saw graduated phases of spiritual life, through which one slowly rose to the sublime and the celestial. He carried his magnificent vision onward beyond the present universe, and saw it dissolve once more into the fire-mist from which it had consolidated, and then consolidate once more to form the stage on which a higher evolution could take place, the highest class here starting as the lowest class there. This process he saw renew itself innumerable times, covering trillions of years, and ever working towards refinement and purification. These spheres he pictured as concentric rings round the world, but as he admits that neither time nor space define themselves clearly in his visions, we need not take their geography in too literal a sense. The object of life was to qualify for advancement in this tremendous scheme, and the best method of human advancement was to get away from sin—not only the sins which are usually recognized, but also those sins of bigotry, narrowness and hardness, which are very especially blemishes not of the ephemeral flesh but of the permanent spirit. For this purpose the return to simple life, simple beliefs, and primitive brotherhood was essential. Money, alcohol, lust, violence and priestcraft—in its narrow sense—were the chief impediments to racial progress.

It must be admitted that Davis, so far as one can follow his life, lived up to his own professions. He was very humble-minded, and yet he was of the stuff that saints are made of. His autobiography extends only to 1857, so that he was little over thirty when he published it, but it gives a very complete and sometimes an involuntary insight into the man. He was very poor, but he was just and charitable. He was very earnest, and yet he was patient in argument and gentle under contradiction. The worst motives were imputed to him, and he records them with a tolerant smile. He gives a full account of his first two marriages, which were as unusual as everything else about him, but which reflect nothing but credit upon him. From the date at which "The Magic Staff" finishes he seems to have carried on the same life of alternate writing and lecturing, winning more and more the ear of the world, until he died in the year 1910 at the age of eighty-four. The last years of his life he spent as keeper of some small

book-store in Boston. The fact that his "Harmonial Philosophy" has now passed through some forty editions in the United States is a proof that the seed which he scattered so assiduously has not all fallen upon barren ground.

What is of importance to us is the part played by Davis at the commencement of the spiritual revelation. He began to prepare the ground before that revelation occurred. He was clearly destined to be closely associated with it, for he was aware of the material demonstration at Hydesville upon the very day when it occurred. From his notes there is quoted the sentence, under the vital date of March 31, 1848: "About daylight this morning a warm breathing passed over my face and I heard a voice, tender and strong, saying, 'Brother, the good work has begun— behold, a living demonstration is born.' I was left wondering what could be meant by such a message." It was the beginning of the mighty movement in which he was to act as prophet. His own powers were themselves supernormal upon the mental side, just as the physical signs were upon the material side. Each supplemented the other. He was, up to the limit of his capacity, the soul of the movement, the one brain which had a clear vision of the message which was heralded in so novel and strange a way. No man can take the whole message, for it is infinite, and rises ever higher as we come into contact with higher beings, but Davis interpreted it so well for his day and generation that little can be added even now to his conception.

He had advanced one step beyond Swedenborg, though he had not Swedenborg's mental equipment with which to marshal his results. Swedenborg had seen a heaven and hell, even as Davis saw it and has described it with fuller detail. Swedenborg did not, however, get a clear vision of the position of the dead and the true nature of the spirit world with the possibility of return as it was revealed to the American seer. This knowledge came slowly to Davis. His strange interviews with what he described as "materialized spirits" were exceptional things, and he drew no common conclusions from them. It was later when he was brought into contact with actual spiritual phenomena that he was able to see the full meaning of them. This contact was not established at Rochester, but rather at Stratford in Connecticut, where Davis was a witness of the Poltergeist phenomena which broke out in the household of a clergyman, Dr. Phelps, in the early months of 1850. A study of these

led him to write a pamphlet, "The Philosophy of Spiritual Intercourse," expanded afterwards to a book which contains much which the world has not yet mastered. Some of it, in its wise restraint, may also be commended to some Spiritualists. "Spiritualism is useful as a living demonstration of a future existence," he says. "Spirits have aided me many times, but they do not control either my person or my reason. They can and do perform kindly offices for those on earth. But benefits can only be secured on the condition that we allow them to become our teachers and not our masters—that we accept them as companions, not as gods to be worshipped." Wise words—and a modern restatement of the vital remark of Saint Paul that the prophet must not be subject to his own gifts.

In order to explain adequately the life of Davis one has to ascend to supernormal conditions. But even then there are alternative explanations. When one considers the following undeniable facts:

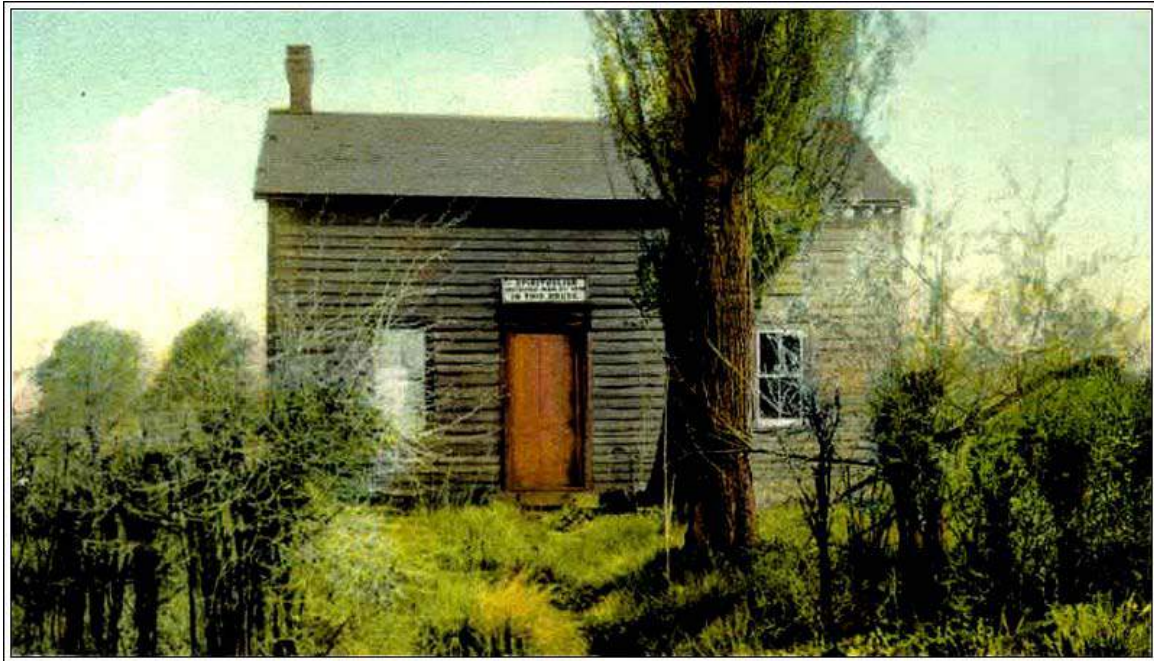
1. That he claims to have seen and heard the materialized form of Swedenborg before he knew anything of his teachings.
2. That *something* possessed this ignorant youth, which gave him great knowledge.
3. That this knowledge took the same broad sweeping universal lines which were characteristic of Swedenborg.
4. But that they went one step farther, having added just that knowledge of spirit power which Swedenborg may have attained after his death.

Considering these four points, then, is it not a feasible hypothesis that the power which controlled Davis was actually Swedenborg? It would be well if the estimable but very narrow and limited New Church took such possibilities into account. But whether Davis stood alone, or whether he was the reflection of one greater than himself, the fact remains that he was a miracle man, the inspired, learned, uneducated apostle of the new dispensation. So permanent has been his influence that the well-known artist and critic Mr. E. Wake Cook, in his remarkable book "Retgression in Art,"¹ harks back to Davis's teaching as the one modern influence which could recast the world. Davis left his mark deep

¹ Hutchinson's, 1924. *Occult Review*, February, 1925.

upon Spiritualism. "Summerland," for example, as a name for the modern Paradise, and the whole system of Lyceum schools with their ingenious organization, are of his devising. As Mr. Baseden Butt has remarked, "Even to-day the full and final extent of his influence is extremely difficult, if not impossible, to assess."

4. THE HYDESVILLE EPISODE



The Hydesville Cottage

WE have now traced various disconnected and irregular uprushes of psychic force in the cases which have been set forth, and we come at last to the particular episode which was really on a lower level than those which had gone before, but which occurred within the ken of a practical people who found means to explore it thoroughly and to introduce reason and system into what had been a mere object of aimless wonder. It is true that the circumstances were lowly, the actors humble, the place remote, and the communication sordid, being based on no higher motive than revenge. When, however, in the everyday affairs of this world one wishes to test whether a telegraphic wire is in operation, one notices whether a message comes through, and the high or low nature of that message is quite a secondary consideration. It is said that the first message which actually came through the Transatlantic cable was a commonplace inquiry from the testing engineer. None the less, kings and presidents have used it since. So it is that the humble spirit of the murdered peddler of Hydesville may have opened a gap into which the angels have thronged. There is good and bad and all that is intermediate

on the Other Side as on this side of the veil. The company you attract depends upon yourself and your own motives.

Hydesville is a typical little hamlet of New York State, with a primitive population which was, no doubt, half-educated, but was probably, like the rest of those small American centres of life, more detached from prejudice and more receptive of new ideas than any other set of people at that time. This particular village, situated about twenty miles from the rising town of Rochester, consisted of a cluster of wooden houses of a very humble type. It was in one of these, a residence which would certainly not pass the requirements of a British district council surveyor, that there began this development which is already, in the opinion of many, by far the most important thing that America has given to the commonweal of the world. It was inhabited by a decent farmer family of the name of Fox—a name which, by a curious coincidence, has already been registered in religious history as that of the apostle of the Quakers. Besides the father and mother, who were Methodists in religion, there were two children resident in the house at the time when the manifestations reached such a point of intensity that they attracted general attention. These children were the daughters – Margaret, aged fourteen, and Kate, aged eleven. There were several other children out in the world, of whom only one, Leah, who was teaching music in Rochester, need come into this narrative.

The little house had already established a somewhat uncanny reputation. The evidence to this effect was collected and published very shortly after the event, and seems to be as reliable as such evidence can be. In view of the extreme importance of everything which bears upon the matter, some extracts from these depositions must be inserted, but to avoid dislocation of the narrative the evidence upon this point has been relegated to the Appendix. We will therefore pass at once to the time of the tenancy of the Fox family, who took over the house on December 11, 1847. It was not until the next year that the sounds heard by the previous tenants began once more. These sounds consisted of rapping noises. A rap would seem to be the not unnatural sound to be produced by outside visitors when they wished to notify their presence at the door of human life and desired that door to be opened for them. Just such raps (all unknown to these unread farmers) had occurred in England in 1661 at

the house of Mr. Mompesson, at Tedworth.¹ Raps, too, are recorded by Melancthon as having occurred at Oppenheim, in Germany, in 1520, and raps were heard at the Epworth Vicarage in 1716. Here they were once more, and at last they were destined to have the closed door open.

The noises do not seem to have incommoded the Fox family until the middle of March, 1848. From that date onwards they continually increased in intensity. Sometimes they were a mere knocking; at other times they sounded like the movement of furniture. The children were so alarmed that they refused to sleep apart and were taken into the bedroom of their parents. So vibrant were the sounds that the beds thrilled and shook. Every possible search was made, the husband waiting on one side of the door and the wife on the other, but the rappings still continued. It was soon noticed that daylight was inimical to the phenomena, and this naturally strengthened the idea of trickery, but every possible solution was tested and failed. Finally, upon the night of March 31 there was a very loud and continued outbreak of inexplicable sounds. It was on this night that one of the great points of psychic evolution was reached, for it was then that young Kate Fox challenged the unseen power to repeat the snaps of her fingers. That rude room, with its earnest, expectant, half-clad occupants with eager upturned faces, its circle of candlelight, and its heavy shadows lurking in the corners, might well be made the subject of a great historical painting. Search all the palaces and chancelleries of 1848, and where will you find a chamber which has made its place in history as secure as this little bedroom of a shack?

The child's challenge, though given with flippant words, was instantly answered. Every snap was echoed by a knock. However humble the operator at either end, the spiritual telegraph was at last working, and it was left to the patience and moral earnestness of the human race to determine how high might be the uses to which it was put in the future. Unexplained forces were many in the world, but here was a force claiming to have independent intelligence at the back of it. That was the supreme sign of a new departure.

Mrs. Fox was amazed at this development, and at the further discovery that the force could apparently see as well as hear, for when Kate

¹ *Saducismus Triumphatus*, by Rev. Joseph Glanvil

snapped her fingers without sound the rap still responded. The mother asked a series of questions, the answers to which, given in numerals, showed a greater knowledge of her own affairs than she herself possessed, for the raps insisted that she had had seven children, whereas she protested that she had borne only six, until one who had died early came back to her mind. A neighbour, Mrs. Redfield, was called in, and her amusement was changed to wonder, and finally to awe, as she also listened to correct answers to intimate questions.

The neighbours came flocking in as some rumours of these wonders got about, and the two children were carried off by one of them, while Mrs. Fox went to spend the night at Mrs. Redfield's. In their absence the phenomena went on exactly the same as before, which disposes once for all of those theories of cracking toes and dislocating knees which have been so frequently put forward by people unaware of the true facts.

Having formed a sort of informal committee of investigation, the crowd, in shrewd Yankee fashion, spent a large part of the night of March 31 in playing question and answer with the unseen intelligence. According to its own account he was a spirit; he had been injured in that house; he rapped out the name of a former occupant who had injured him; he was thirty-one years old at the time of death (which was five years before); he had been murdered for money; he had been buried in the cellar ten feet deep. On descending to the cellar, dull, heavy thumps, coming apparently from under the earth, broke out when the investigator stood at the centre. There was no sound at other times. That, then, was the place of burial! It was a neighbour named Duesler who, first of all modern men, called over the alphabet and got answers by raps on the letters. In this way the name of the dead man was obtained – Charles B. Rosma. The idea of connected messages was not developed until four months later, when Isaac Post, a Quaker, of Rochester, was the pioneer. These, in very brief outline, were the events of March 31, which were continued and confirmed upon the succeeding night, when not fewer than a couple of hundred people had assembled round the house. Upon April 2 it was observed that the raps came in the day as well as at night.

Such is a synopsis of the events of the night of March 31, 1848, but as it was the small root out of which sprang so great a tree, and as this whole volume may be said to be a monument to its memory, it would seem

fitting that the story should be given in the very words of the two original adult witnesses. Their evidence was taken within four days of the occurrence, and forms part of that admirable piece of psychic research upon the part of the local committee which will be described and commented upon later. Mrs. Fox deposed:

On the night of the first disturbance we all got up, lighted a candle and searched the entire house, the noises continuing during the time, and being heard near the same place. Although not very loud, it produced a jar of the bedsteads and chairs that could be felt when we were in bed. It was a tremulous motion, more than a sudden jar. We could feel the jar when standing on the floor. It continued on this night until we slept. I did not sleep until about twelve o'clock. On March 30th we were disturbed all night. The noises were heard in all parts of the house. My husband stationed himself outside of the door while I stood inside, and the knocks came on the door between us. We heard footsteps in the pantry, and walking downstairs; we could not rest, and I then concluded that the house must be haunted by some unhappy restless spirit. I had often heard of such things, but had never witnessed anything of the kind that I could not account for before.

On Friday night, March 31st, 1848, we concluded to go to bed early and not permit ourselves to be disturbed by the noises, but try and get a night's rest. My husband was here on all these occasions, heard the noises, and helped search. It was very early when we went to bed on this night – hardly dark. I had been so broken of my rest I was almost sick. My husband had not gone to bed when we first heard the noise on this evening. I had just lain down. It commenced as usual. I knew it from all other noises I had ever heard before. The children, who slept in the other bed in the room, heard the rapping, and tried to make similar sounds by snapping their fingers.

My youngest child, Cathie, said: "Mr. Splitfoot, do as I do," clapping her hands. The sound instantly followed her with the same number of raps. When she stopped, the sound ceased for a short time. Then Margaretta said, in sport, "Now, do just as I do. Count one, two, three, four," striking one hand against the other at the same time; and the raps came as before. She was afraid to repeat them. Then Cathie said in her childish

simplicity, "Oh, mother, I know what it is. To-morrow is April-fool day, and it's somebody trying to fool us."

I then thought I could put a test that no one in the place could answer. I asked the noise to rap my different children's ages, successively. Instantly, each one of my children's ages was given correctly, pausing between them sufficiently long to individualize them until the seventh, at which a longer pause was made, and then three more emphatic raps were given, corresponding to the age of the little one that died, which was my youngest child.

I then asked: "Is this a human being that answers my questions so correctly?" There was no rap. I asked: "Is it a spirit? If it is, make two raps." Two sounds were given as soon as the request was made. I then said "If it was an injured spirit, make two raps," which were instantly made, causing the house to tremble. I asked: "Were you injured in this house?" The answer was given as before. "Is the person living that injured you?"

Answered by raps in the same manner. I ascertained by the same method that it was a man, aged thirty-one years, that he had been murdered in this house, and his remains were buried in the cellar; that his family consisted of a wife and five children, two sons and three daughters, all living at the time of his death, but that his wife had since died. I asked: "Will you continue to rap if I call my neighbours that they may hear it too?" The raps were loud in the affirmative.

My husband went and called in Mrs. Redfield, our nearest neighbour. She is a very candid woman. The girls were sitting up in bed clinging to each other, and trembling with terror. I think I was as calm as I am now. Mrs. Redfield came immediately (this was about half-past seven), thinking she would have a laugh at the children. But when she saw them pale with fright, and nearly speechless, she was amazed, and believed there was something more serious than she had supposed. I asked a few questions for her, and was answered as before. He told her age exactly. She then called her husband, and the same questions were asked and answered.

Then Mr. Redfield called in Mr. Duesler and wife, and several others. Mr. Duesler then called in Mr. and Mrs. Hyde, also Mr. and Mrs. Jewell. Mr.

Duesler asked many questions, and received answers. I then named all the neighbours I could think of, and asked if any of them had injured him, and received no answer. Mr. Duesler then asked questions and received answers. He asked: "Were you murdered?" Raps affirmative. "Can your murderer be brought to justice?" No sound. "Can he be punished by the law?" No answer. He then said: "If your murderer cannot be punished by the law, manifest it by raps," and the raps were made clearly and distinctly. In the same way, Mr. Duesler ascertained that he was murdered in the east bedroom about five years ago and that the murder was committed by a Mr. on a Tuesday night at twelve o'clock; that he was murdered by having his throat cut with a butcher knife; that the body was taken down to the cellar; that it was not buried until the next night; that it was taken through the buttry, down the stairway, and that it was buried ten feet below the surface of the ground. It was also ascertained that he was murdered for his money, by raps affirmative.

"How much was it—one hundred?" No rap. "Was it two hundred?" etc., and when he mentioned five hundred the raps replied in the affirmative.

Many called in who were fishing in the creek, and all heard the same questions and answers. Many remained in the house all night. I and my children left the house.

My husband remained in the house with Mr. Redfield all night. On the next Saturday the house was filled to overflowing. There were no sounds heard during day, but they commenced again in the evening. It was said that there were over three hundred persons present at the time. On Sunday morning the noises were heard throughout the day by all who came to the house.

On Saturday night, April 1st, they commenced digging in the cellar; they dug until they came to water, and then gave it up. The noise was not heard on Sunday evening nor during the night. Stephen B. Smith and wife (my daughter Marie), and my son David S. Fox and wife, slept in the room this night.

I have heard nothing since that time until yesterday. In the forenoon of yesterday there were several questions answered in the usual way by rapping. I have heard the noise several times to-day.

I am not a believer in haunted houses or supernatural appearances. I am very sorry that there has been so much excitement about it. It has been a great deal of trouble to us. It was our misfortune to live here at this time; but I am willing and anxious that the truth should be known, and that a true statement should be made. I cannot account for these noises; all that I know is that they have been heard repeatedly, as I have stated. I have heard this rapping again this (Tuesday) morning, April 4. My children also heard it.

I certify that the foregoing statement has been read to me, and that the same is true; and that I should be willing to take my oath that it is so, if necessary."

(Signed) MARGARET FOX.

April 11, 1848.

Statement by John D. Fox

I have heard the above statement of my wife, Margaret Fox, read, and hereby certify that the same is true in all its particulars. I heard the same rappings which she has spoken of, in answer to the questions, as stated by her. There have been a great many questions besides those asked, and answered in the same way. Some have been asked a great many times, and they have always received the same answers. There has never been any contradiction whatever.

I do not know of any way to account for those noises, as being caused by any natural means. We have searched every nook and corner in and about the house, at different times, to ascertain, if possible, whether anything or anybody was secreted there that could make the noise, and have not been able to find anything which would or could explain the mystery. It has caused a great deal of trouble and anxiety.

Hundreds have visited the house, so that it is impossible for us to attend to our daily occupations; and I hope that, whether caused by natural or supernatural means, it will be ascertained soon. The digging in the cellar will be resumed as soon as the water settles, and then it can be

ascertained whether there are any indications of a body ever having been buried there; and if there are, I shall have no doubt but that it is of supernatural origin.

(Signed) JOHN D. FOX.

April 11, 1848

The neighbours had formed themselves into a committee of investigation, which for sanity and efficiency might be a lesson to many subsequent re searchers. They did not begin by imposing their own conditions, but they started without prejudice to record the facts exactly as they found them. Not only did they collect and record the impressions of everyone concerned, but they actually had the evidence in printed form within a month of the occurrence. The author has in vain attempted to get an original copy of the pamphlet, "A Report of the Mysterious Noises heard in the House of Mr. John D. Fox," published at Canandaigua, New York, but he has been presented with a facsimile of the original, and it is his considered opinion that the fact of human survival and power of communication was definitely proved to any mind capable of weighing evidence from the day of the appearance of that document. 71

The statement made by Mr. Duesler, chief of the committee, gives important testimony to the occurrence of the noises and jars in the absence of the Fox girls from the house, and disposes once and for ever of all suspicion of their complicity in these events. Mrs. Fox, as we have seen, referring to the night of Friday, March 31, said: "I and my children left the house." Part of Mr. Duesler's statement reads:

I live within a few rods of the house in which these sounds have been heard. The first I heard anything about them was a week ago last Friday evening (March 31st). Mrs. Redfield came over to my house to get my wife to go over to Mrs. Fox's. Mrs. R. appeared to be very much agitated. My wife wanted me to go over with them, and I accordingly went . This was about nine o'clock in the evening. There were some twelve or fourteen persons present when I left them. Some were so frightened that they did not want to go into the room.

I went into the room and sat down on the bed. Mr. Fox asked a question and I heard the rapping, which they had spoken of, distinctly. I felt the bedstead jar when the sounds were produced.

The Hon. Robert Dale Owen,² a member of the United States Congress, and formerly American Minister to Naples, supplies a few additional particulars in his narrative, written after conversations with Mrs. Fox and her daughters, Margaret and Catharine. Describing the night of March 31, 1848, he says ("Footfalls, etc.," p. 287):

*The parents had had the children's beds removed into their bedroom, and strictly enjoined them not to talk of noises even if they heard them. But scarcely had the mother seen them safely in bed and was retiring to rest herself when the children cried out, "Here they are again!" The mother chid them, and lay down. Thereupon the noises became louder and more startling. The children sat up in bed. Mrs. Fox called in her husband. The night being windy, it suggested itself to him that it might be the rattling of the sashes. He tried several, shaking them to see if they were loose. Kate, the youngest girl, happened to remark that as often as her father shook a window-sash the noises seemed to reply. Being a lively child, and in a measure accustomed to what was going on, she turned to where the noise was, snapped her fingers, and called out, "Here, old Splitfoot, do as I do." **The knocking instantly responded.** That was the very commencement. Who can tell where the end will be? . Mr. Mompesson, in bed with his little daughter (about Kate's age) whom the sound seemed chiefly to follow, "observed that it would exactly answer, in drumming, anything that was beaten or called for." But his curiosity led him no further. Not so Kate Fox. She tried, by silently bringing together her thumb and forefinger, whether she could still obtain a response. Yes! It could see, then, as well as hear! She called her mother. "Only look, mother!" she said, bringing together her finger and thumb as before. And as often as she repeated the noiseless motion, just so often responded the raps.*

In the summer of 1848 Mr. David Fox, with the assistance of Mr. Henry Bush, Mr. Lyman Granger, of Rochester, and others, resumed digging in the cellar. At a depth of five feet they found a plank, and further digging disclosed charcoal and quicklime, and finally human hair and bones,

² Author of *Footfalls On The Boundary Of Another World* (1860), and *The Debatable Land* (1871).

which were pronounced by expert medical testimony to belong to a human skeleton. It was not until fifty-six years later that a further discovery was made which proved beyond all doubt that someone had really been buried in the cellar of the Fox house.

This statement appeared in *The Boston Journal* (a non-Spiritualistic paper) of November 23, 1904, and runs as follows:

Rochester, N.Y., Nov. 22nd, 1904: The skeleton of the man supposed to have caused the rappings first heard by the Fox sisters in 1848 has been found in the walls of the house occupied by the sisters, and clears them from the only shadow of doubt held concerning their sincerity in the discovery of spirit communication.

The Fox sisters declared they learned to communicate with the spirit of a man, and that he told them he had been murdered and buried in the cellar. Repeated excavations failed to locate the body and thus give proof positive of their story.

The discovery was made by school-children playing in the cellar of the building in Hydesville known as the "Spook House," where the Fox sisters heard the wonderful rappings. William H. Hyde, a reputable citizen of Clyde, who owns the house, made an investigation and found an almost entire human skeleton between the earth and crumbling cellar walls, undoubtedly that of the wandering peddler who, it was claimed, was murdered in the east room of the house, and whose body was hidden in the cellar.

Mr. Hyde has notified relatives of the Fox sisters, and the notice of the discovery will be sent to the National Order of Spiritualists, many of whom remember having made pilgrimage to the "Spook House," as it is commonly called. The finding of the bones practically corroborates the sworn statement made by Margaret Fox, April 11, 1848.

There was discovered a peddler's tin box as well as the bones, and this box is now preserved at Lilydale, the central country head-quarters of the American Spiritualists, to which also the old Hydesville house has been transported.

These discoveries settle the question for ever and prove conclusively that there was a crime committed in the house, and that this crime was

indicated by psychic means. When one examines the result of the two diggings one can reconstruct the circumstances. It is clear that in the first instance the body was buried with quicklime in the centre of the cellar. Later the criminal was alarmed by the fact that this place was too open to suspicion and he had dug up the body, or the main part of it, and reburied it under the wall where it would be more out of the way. The work had been done so hurriedly, however, or in such imperfect light, that some clear traces were left, as has been seen, of the original grave.

Was there independent evidence of such a crime? In order to find it we have to turn to the deposition of Lucretia Pulver, who served as help during the tenancy of Mr. and Mrs. Bell, who occupied the house four years before. She describes how a peddler came to the house and how he stayed the night there with his wares. Her employers told her that she might go home that night.

I wanted to buy some things off the peddler but had no money with me, and he said he would call at our house next morning and sell them to me. I never saw him after this. About three days after this they sent for me to come back. I accordingly came back .

I should think this peddler of whom I have spoken was about thirty years of age. I heard him conversing with Mrs. Bell about his family. Mrs. Bell told me that he was an old acquaintance of theirs—that she had seen him several times before. One evening, about a week after this, Mrs. Bell sent me down to the cellar to shut the outer door. In going across the cellar I fell down near the centre of it. It appeared to be uneven and loose in that part. After I got upstairs, Mrs. Bell asked me what I screamed for and I told her. She laughed at me being frightened, and said it was only where the rats had been at work in the ground. A few days after this, Mr. Bell carried a lot of dirt into the cellar just at night and was at work there some time. Mrs. Bell told me that he was filling up the rat-holes.

A short time after this Mrs. Bell gave me a thimble which she said she had bought of this peddler. About three months after this I visited her and she said the peddler had been there again and she showed me another thimble which she said she had bought from him. She showed me some other things which she said she had bought from him.

It is worth noting that a Mrs. Lape in 1847 had claimed to have actually *seen* an apparition in the house, and that this vision was of a middle- sized man who wore grey pants, a black frock-coat and black cap. Lucretia Pulver deposed that the peddler in life wore a black frock-coat and light-coloured pants.

On the other hand, it is only fair to add that the Mr. Bell who occupied the house at that time was not a man of notorious character, and one would willingly concede that an accusation founded entirely upon psychic evidence would be an unfair and intolerable thing. It is very different, however, when the proofs of a crime have actually been discovered, and the evidence then centres merely upon which tenant was in possession at that particular time. The deposition of Lucretia Pulver assumes vital importance in its bearing upon this matter.

There are one or two points about the case which would bear discussion. One is that a man with so remarkable a name as Charles B. Rosma should never have been traced, considering all the publicity which the case acquired. This would certainly at the time have appeared a formidable objection, but with our fuller knowledge we appreciate how very difficult it is to get names correctly across. A name apparently is a purely conventional thing, and as such very different from an idea. Every practising Spiritualist has received messages which were correct coupled with names which were mistaken. It is possible that the real name was Ross, or possibly Rosmer, and that this error prevented identification. Again, it is curious that he should not have known that his body had been moved from the centre of the cellar to the wall, where it was eventually found. We can only record the fact without attempting to explain it.

Again, granting that the young girls were the mediums and that the power was drawn from them, how came the phenomena when they had actually been removed from the house? To this one can only answer that though the future was to show that the power did actually emanate from these girls, none the less it seemed to have permeated the house and to have been at the disposal of the manifesting power for a time at least when the girls were not present.

The Fox family were seriously troubled by the disturbances—Mrs. Fox's hair turned white in a week—and as it became apparent that these were

associated with the two young daughters, these were sent from home. But in the house of her brother, David Fox, where Margaret went, and in that of her sister Leah, whose married name was Mrs. Fish, at Rochester, where Catharine was staying, the same sounds were heard. Every effort was made to conceal these manifestations from the public, but they soon became known. Mrs. Fish, who was a teacher of music, was unable to continue her profession, and hundreds of people flocked to her house to witness the new marvels. It should be stated that either this power was contagious, or else it was descending upon many individuals independently from some common source. Thus Mrs. Leah Fish, the elder sister, received it, though in a less degree than Kate or Margaret. But it was no longer confined to the Fox family. It was like some psychic cloud descending from on high and showing itself on those persons who were susceptible. Similar sounds were heard in the home of Rev. A. H. Jervis, a Methodist minister, living in Rochester. Strong physical phenomena also began in the family of Deacon Hale, of Greece, a town close to Rochester. A little later Mrs. Sarah A. Tamlin and Mrs. Benedict, of Auburn, developed remarkable mediumship. Mr. Capron, the first historian of the movement, describes Mrs. Tamlin as one of the most reliable mediums he had ever met, and says that though the sounds occurring in her presence were not so loud as those with the Fox family, the messages were equally trustworthy.

It speedily became evident, then, that these unseen forces were no longer attached to any building, but that they had transferred themselves to the girls. In vain the family prayed with their Methodist friends that relief would come. In vain also were exorcisms performed by the clergy of various creeds. Beyond joining with loud raps in the Amens, the unseen presences took no notice of these religious exercises.

The danger of blindly following alleged spirit guidance was clearly shown some months later in the neighbouring town of Rochester, where a man disappeared under suspicious circumstances. An enthusiastic Spiritualist had messages by raps which announced a murder. The canal was dragged and the wife of the missing man was actually ordered to enter the canal, which nearly cost her her life. Some months later the absentee returned, having fled to Canada to avoid a writ for debt. This, as may well be imagined, was a blow to the young cult. The public did not then understand what even now is so little understood, that death causes no

change in the human spirit, that mischievous and humorous entities abound, and that the inquirer must use his own instincts and his own common sense at every turn. "Try the spirits that ye may know them." In the same year, in the same district, the truth of this new philosophy upon the one side, and its limitations and dangers on the other, were most clearly set forth. These dangers are with us still. The silly man, the arrogant inflated man, the cocksure man, is always a safe butt. Every observer has had some trick played upon him. The author has himself had his faith sorely shaken by deception until some compensating proof has come along to assure him that it was only a lesson which he had received, and that it was no more fiendish or even remarkable that disembodied intelligences should be hoaxers than that the same intelligence inside a human body should find amusement in the same foolish way.

The whole course of the movement had now widened and taken a more important turn. It was no longer a murdered man calling for justice. The peddler seemed to have been used as a pioneer, and now that he had found the opening and the method, a myriad of Intelligences were swarming at his back. Isaac Post had instituted the method of spelling by raps, and messages were pouring through. According to these the whole system had been devised by the contrivance of a band of thinkers and inventors upon the spirit plane, foremost among whom was Benjamin Franklin, whose eager mind and electrical knowledge in earth life might well qualify him for such a venture. Whether this claim was true or not, it is a fact that Rosma dropped out of the picture at this stage, and that the intelligent knockings purported to be from the deceased friends of those inquirers who were prepared to take a serious interest in the matter and to gather in reverent mood to receive the messages. That they still lived and still loved was the constant message from the beyond, accompanied by many material tests, which confirmed the wavering faith of the new adherents of the movement. When asked for their methods of working and the laws which governed them, the answers were from the beginning exactly what they are now: that it was a matter concerned with human and spirit magnetism; that some who were richly endowed with this physical property were mediums; that this endowment was not necessarily allied to morality or intelligence; and that the condition of harmony was especially necessary to secure good results. In seventy odd

years we have learned very little more; and after all these years the primary law of harmony is invariably broken at the so-called test séances, the members of which imagine that they have disproved the philosophy when they obtain negative or disordered results, whereas they have actually confirmed it.

In one of the early communications the Fox sisters were assured that "these manifestations would not be confined to them, but would go all over the world." This prophecy was soon in a fair way to be fulfilled, for these new powers and further developments of them, which included the discerning and hearing of spirits and the movement of objects without contact, appeared in many circles which were independent of the Fox family. In an incredibly short space of time the movement, with many eccentricities and phases of fanaticism, had swept over the Northern and Eastern States of the Union, always retaining that solid core of actual tangible fact, which might be occasionally simulated by impostors, but always reasserted itself to the serious investigator who could shake himself free from preconceived prejudice. Disregarding for the moment these wider developments, let us continue the story of the original circles at Rochester.

The spirit messages had urged upon the small band of pioneers a public demonstration of their powers in an open meeting at Rochester—a proposition which was naturally appalling to two shy country girls and to their friends. So incensed were the discarnate Guides by the opposition of their earthly agents that they threatened to suspend the whole movement for a generation, and did actually desert them completely for some weeks. At the end of that time communication was restored and the believers, chastened by this interval of thought, put themselves unreservedly into the hands of the outside forces, promising that they would dare all in the cause. It was no light matter. A few of the clergy, notably the Methodist minister, the Rev. A. H. Jervis, rallied to their aid, but the majority thundered from their pulpits against them, and the snob eagerly joined in the cowardly sport of heretic-baiting. On November 14, 1849, the Spiritualists held their first meeting at the Corinthian Hall, the largest available in Rochester. The audience, to its credit, listened with attention to the exposition of facts from Mr. Capron, of Auburn, the principal speaker. A committee of five representative citizens was then selected to examine into the matter and to report upon the following

evening, when the meeting would reassemble. So certain was it that this report would be unfavourable that the *Rochester Democrat* is stated to have had its leading article prepared, with the headline: "Entire Exposure of the Rapping Humbug." The result, however, caused the editor to hold his hand. The committee reported that the raps were undoubted facts, though the information was not entirely correct, that is, the answers to questions were "not altogether right nor altogether wrong." They added that these raps came on walls and doors some distance from the girls, causing a sensible vibration. "They entirely failed to find any means by which it could be done."

This report was received with disapproval by the audience, and a second committee from among the dissentients was formed. This investigation was conducted in the office of a lawyer. Kate, for some reason, was away, and only Mrs. Fish and Margaret were present. None the less, the sounds continued as before, though a Dr. Langworthy was introduced to test the possibility of ventriloquism. The final report was that "the sounds were heard, and their thorough investigation had conclusively shown them to be produced neither by machinery nor ventriloquism, though what the agent is they were unable to determine."

Again the audience turned down the report of their own committee, and again a deputation was chosen from among the most extreme opponents, one of whom vowed that if he could not find out the trick he would throw himself over the falls of the Genesee River. Their examination was thorough to the length of brutality, and a committee of ladies was associated with it. The latter stripped the frightened girls, who wept bitterly under their afflictions. Their dresses were then tied tightly round their ankles and they were placed upon glass and other insulators. The committee was forced to report, "when they were standing on pillows with a handkerchief tied round the bottom of their dresses, tight to the ankles, we all heard the rapping on the wall and floor distinctly." The committee further testified that their questions, some of them mental, had been answered correctly.

So long as the public looked upon the movement as a sort of joke it was prepared to be tolerantly amused, but when these successive reports put the matter in a more serious light, a wave of blackguardism swept over the town, which reached such a pitch that Mr. Willetts, a gallant Quaker,

was compelled at the fourth public meeting to declare that "the mob of ruffians who designed to lynch the girls should do so, if they attempted it, over his dead body." There was a disgraceful riot, the young women were smuggled out by a back door, and reason and justice were for the moment clouded over by force and folly. Then, as now, the minds of the average men of the world were so crammed with the things that do not matter that they had no space for the things that do matter. But Fate is never in a hurry, and the movement went on. Many accepted the findings of the successive committees as being final, and indeed, it is difficult to see how the alleged facts could have been more severely tested. At the same time, this strong, new, fermenting wine began to burst some of the old bottles into which it was poured to the excusable disgust of the public.

The many discreet, serious and religious circles were for a season almost obscured by swollen-headed ranters who imagined themselves to be in touch with every high entity from the Apostles downwards, some even claiming the direct afflatus of the Holy Ghost and emitting messages which were only saved from being blasphemous by their crudity and absurdity. One community of these fanatics, who called themselves the Apostolic Circle of Mountain Cove, particularly distinguished themselves by their extreme claims and furnished good material for the enemies of the new dispensation. The great body of Spiritualists turned away in disapproval from such exaggerations, but were unable to prevent them. Many well-attested supernormal phenomena came to support the failing spirits of those who were distressed by the so excesses of the fanatics. On one occasion, which is particularly convincing and well-reported, two bodies of investigators in separate rooms, at Rochester, on February 20, 1850, received the same message simultaneously from some central force which called itself Benjamin Franklin. This double message was: "There will be great changes in the nineteenth century. Things that now look dark and mysterious to you will be laid plain before your sight. Mysteries are going to be revealed. The world will be en lightened." It must be admitted that, up to now, the prophecy has been only partially fulfilled, and it may at the same time be conceded that, with some startling exceptions, the forecasts of the spirit people have not been remarkable for accuracy, especially where the element of time is concerned.

The question has often been asked: "What was the purpose of so strange a movement at this particular time, granting that it is all that it claims to be?" Governor Tallmadge, a United States senator of repute, was one of the early converts to the new cult, and he has left it upon record that he asked this question upon two separate occasions in two different years from different mediums. The answer in each case was almost identical. The first said: "It is to draw mankind together in harmony, and to convince sceptics of the immortality of the soul." The second said: "To unite mankind and to convince sceptical minds of the immortality of the soul." Surely this is no ignoble ambition and does not justify those narrow and bitter attacks from ministers and the less progressive of their flocks from which Spiritualists have up to the present day had to suffer. The first half of the definition is particularly important, for it is possible that one of the ultimate results of this movement will be to unite religion upon a common basis so strong, and, indeed, so self-sufficient, that the quibbles which separate the Churches of to-day will be seen in their true proportions and will be swept away or disregarded. One could even hope that such a movement might spread beyond the bounds of Christianity and throw down some of the barriers which stand between great sections of the human race.

Attempts to expose the phenomena were made from time to time. In February, 1851, Dr. Austin Flint, Dr. Charles A. Lee, and Dr. C. B. Coventry of the University of Buffalo, published a statement [Capron "Modern Spiritualism, etc.," pp. 310-31.] showing to their own satisfaction that the sounds occurring in the presence of the Fox sisters were caused by the snapping of knee joints. It called forth a characteristic reply in the Press from Mrs. Fish and Margaret Fox, addressed to the three doctors:

As we do not feel willing to rest under the imputation of being impostors, we are very willing to undergo a proper and decent examination, provided we can select three male and three female friends who shall be present on the occasion. We can assure the public that there is no one more anxious than ourselves to discover the origin of these mysterious manifestations. If they can be explained on "anatomical" or "physiological" principles, it is due to the world that the investigation be made, and that the "humbug" be exposed. As there seems to be much interest manifested by the public on that subject, we

would suggest that as early an investigation as is convenient would be acceptable to the undersigned.

Ann L. Fish. Margaretta Fox.

The investigation was held, but the results were negative. In an appended note to the doctors' report in the *New York Tribune*, the editor (Horace Greeley) observes:

The doctors, as has already appeared in our columns, commenced with the assumption that the origin of the "rapping" sounds must be physical, and their primary cause the volition of the ladies aforesaid—in short, that these ladies were "The Rochester impostors." They appear, therefore, in the above statement, as the prosecutors of an impeachment, and ought to have selected other persons as judges and reporters of the trial. It is quite probable that we shall have another version of the matter.

Much testimony in support of the Fox sisters was quickly forthcoming, and the only effect of the professors' "exposure" was to redouble the public interest in the manifestations.

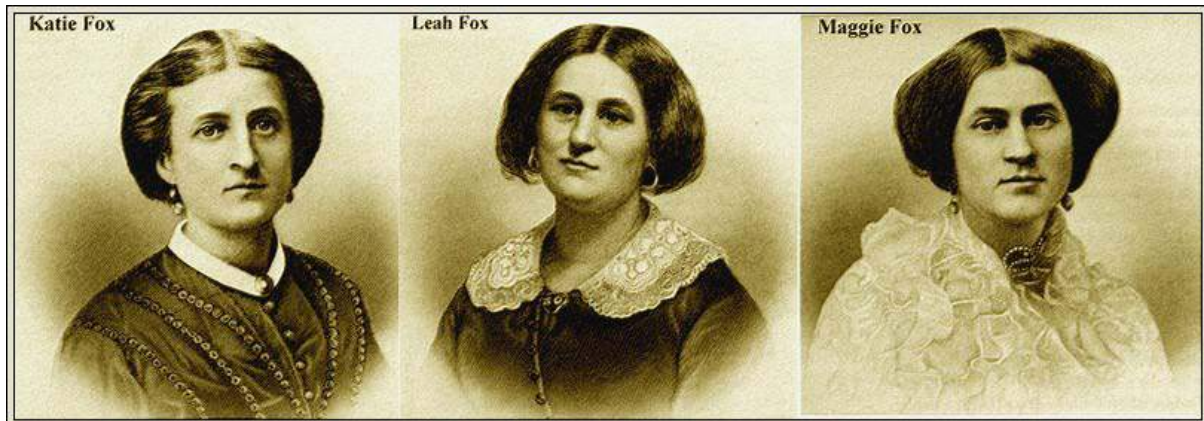
There was also the alleged confession of Mrs. Norman Culver, who deposed, on April 17, 1851, that Catharine Fox had revealed to her the whole secret of how the raps were produced. It was an entire fabrication, and Mr. Capron published a crushing answer, showing that on the date when Catharine Fox was supposed to have made the confession to Mrs. Culver, she was residing at his house seventy miles distant.

Mrs. Fox and her three daughters began public sittings in New York in the spring of 1850, at Barnum's Hotel, and they attracted many curious visitors. The Press was almost unanimous in denunciation of them. A brilliant exception to this was found in Horace Greeley, already quoted, who wrote an appreciative article in his paper under his own initials. A portion of this will be found in the Appendix.

After a return to Rochester, the Fox family made a tour of the Western States, and then paid a second visit to New York, when the same intense public interest was displayed. They had obeyed the spirits' mandate to proclaim these truths to the world, and the new era that had been announced was now ushered in. When one reads the detailed accounts of

some of these American sittings, and considers the brain power of the sitters, it is amazing to think that people, blinded by prejudice, should be so credulous as to imagine that it was all the result of deception. At that time was shown moral courage which has been conspicuously lacking since the reactionary forces in science and in religion combined to stifle the new knowledge and to make it dangerous for its professors. Thus in a single sitting in New York in 1850 we find that there were gathered round the table the Rev. Dr. Griswold, Fenimore Cooper the novelist, Bancroft the historian, Rev. Dr. Hawks, Dr. J. W. Francis, Dr. Marcy, Willis the Quaker poet, Bryant the poet, Bigelow of *The Evening Post*, and General Lyman. All of these were satisfied as to the facts, and the account winds up "The manners and bearing of the ladies" (I.E. the three Fox sisters) "are such as to create a prepossession in their favour." The world since then has dug up much coal and iron; it has erected great structures and it has invented terrible engines of war, but can we say that it has advanced in spiritual knowledge or reverence for the unseen? Under the guidance of materialism the wrong path has been followed, and it becomes increasingly clear that the people must return or perish.

5. THE CAREER OF THE FOX SISTERS



Katie Fox-Jencken, Leah Underhill (née Fox), Margaretta Fox-Kane.

FOR the sake of continuity the subsequent history of the Fox sisters will now be given after the events at Hydesville. It is a remarkable, and to Spiritualists a painful, story, but it bears its own lesson and should be faithfully recorded. When men have an honest and whole-hearted aspiration for truth there is no development which can ever leave them abashed or find no place in their scheme.

For some years the two younger sisters, Kate and Margaret, gave séances at New York and other places, successfully meeting every test which was applied to them. Horace Greeley, afterwards a candidate for the United States presidency, was, as already shown, deeply interested in them and convinced of their entire honesty. He is said to have furnished the funds by which the younger girl completed her very imperfect education.

During these years of public mediumship, when the girls were all the rage among those who had no conception of the religious significance of this new revelation, and who concerned themselves with it purely in the hope of worldly advantage, the sisters exposed themselves to the enervating influences of promiscuous séances in a way which no earnest Spiritualist could justify. The dangers of such practices were not then so clearly realized as now, nor had it occurred to people that it is unlikely that high spirits would descend to earth in order to advise as to the state of railway stocks or the issue of love affairs. The ignorance was universal,

and there was no wise mentor at the elbow of these poor pioneers to point the higher and the safer path. Worst of all, their jaded energies were renewed by the offer of wine at a time when one at least of them was hardly more than a child. It is said that there was some family predisposition towards alcoholism, but even without such a taint their whole procedure and mode of life were rash to the last degree. Against their moral character there has never been a breath of suspicion, but they had taken a road which leads to degeneration of mind and character, though it was many years before the more serious effects were manifest.

Some idea of the pressure upon the Fox girls at this time may be gathered from Mrs. Hardinge Britten's¹ description from her own observation. She talks of "pausing on the first floor to hear poor patient Kate Fox, in the midst of a captious, grumbling crowd of investigators, repeating hour after hour the letters of the alphabet, while the no less poor, patient spirits rapped out names, ages and dates to suit all comers." Can one wonder that the girls, with vitality sapped, the beautiful, watchful influence of the mother removed, and harassed by enemies, succumbed to a gradually increasing temptation in the direction of stimulants?

A remarkably clear light is thrown upon Margaret at this period in that curious booklet, "The Love Letters of Dr. Elisha Kane." It was in 1852 that Dr. Kane, afterwards the famous Arctic explorer, met Margaret Fox, who was a beautiful and attractive girl. To her Kane wrote those love letters which record one of the most curious courtships in literature. Elisha Kane, as his first name might imply, was a man of Puritan extraction, and Puritans, with their belief that the Bible represents the absolutely final word in spiritual inspiration and that they understand what that last word means, are instinctively antagonistic to a new cult which professes to show that new sources and new interpretations are still available.

He was also a doctor of medicine, and the medical profession is at the same time the most noble and the most cynically incredulous in the world. From the first Kane made up his mind that the young girl was involved in fraud, and formed the theory that her elder sister Leah was,

¹ *Autobiography*, p. 40.

for purposes of gain, exploiting the fraud. The fact that Leah shortly afterwards married a wealthy man named Underhill, a Wall Street insurance magnate, does not appear to have modified Kane's views as to her greed for illicit earnings. The doctor formed a close friendship with Margaret, put her under his own aunt for purposes of education whilst he was away in the Arctic, and finally married her under the curious Gretna Green kind of marriage law which seems to have prevailed at the time. Shortly afterwards he died (in 1857), and the widow, now calling herself Mrs. Fox-Kane, forswore all phenomena for a time, and was received into the Roman Catholic Church.

In these letters Kane continually reproaches Margaret with living in deceit and hypocrisy. We have very few of her letters, so that we do not know how far she defended herself. The compiler of the book, though a non-Spiritualist, says: "Poor girl, with her simplicity, ingenuousness and timidity, she could not, had she been so inclined, have practised the slightest deception with any chance of success." This testimony is valuable, as the writer was clearly intimately acquainted with everyone concerned. Kane himself, writing to the younger sister Kate, says: "Take my advice and never talk of the spirits either to friends or strangers. You know that with all my intimacy with Maggie after a whole month's trial I could make nothing of them. Therefore they are a great mystery."

Considering their close relations, and that Margaret clearly gave Kane every demonstration of her powers, it is inconceivable that a trained medical man would have to admit after a month that he could make nothing of it, if it were indeed a mere cracking of a joint. One can find no evidence for fraud in these letters, but one does find ample proof that these two young girls, Margaret and Kate, had not the least idea of the religious implications involved in these powers, or of the grave responsibilities of mediumship, and that they misused their gift in the direction of giving worldly advice, receiving promiscuous sitters, and answering comic or frivolous questions. If in such circumstances both their powers and their character were to deteriorate, it would not surprise any experienced Spiritualist. They deserved no better, though their age and ignorance furnished an excuse.

To realize their position one has to remember that they were little more than children, poorly educated, and quite ignorant of the philosophy of

the subject. When a man like Dr. Kane assured Margaret that it was very wrong, he was only saying what was dinned into her ears from every quarter, including half the pulpits of New York. Probably she had an uneasy feeling that it was wrong, without in the least knowing why, and this may account for the fact that she does not seem to remonstrate with him for his suspicions. Indeed, we may admit that *au fond* Kane was right, and that the proceedings were in some ways unjustifiable. At that time they were very unvenal themselves, and had they used their gift, as D.D. Home used his, with no relation to worldly things, and for the purpose only of proving immortality and consoling the afflicted, then, indeed, they would have been above criticism. He was wrong in doubting their gift, but right in looking askance at some examples of their use of it.

In some ways Kane's position is hopelessly illogical. He was on most intimate and affectionate terms with the mother and the two girls, although if words have any meaning he thought them to be swindlers living on the credulity of the public. "Kiss Katie for me," he says, and he continually sends love to the mother. Already, young as they were, he had a glimpse of the alcoholic danger to which they were exposed by late hours and promiscuous company. "Tell Katie to drink no champagne, and do you follow the same advice," said he. It was sound counsel, and it would have been well for themselves and for the movement if they had both followed it; but again we must remember their inexperienced youth and the constant temptations.

Kane was a curious blend of the hero and the prig. Spirit-rapping, unfortified by any of the religious or scientific sanctions which came later, was a low-down thing, a superstition of the illiterate, and was he, a man of repute, to marry a spirit-rapper? He vacillated over it in an extraordinary way, beginning a letter with claims to be her brother, and ending by reminding her of the warmth of his kisses. "Now that you have given me your heart, I will be a brother to you," he says. He had a vein of real superstition running through him which was far below the credulity which he ascribed to others. He frequently alludes to the fact that by raising his right hand he had powers of divination and that he had learned it "from a conjurer in the Indies." Occasionally he is a snob as well as a prig. "At the very dinner-table of the President I thought of you"; and again: "You could never lift yourself up to my thoughts and my objects. I could never bring myself down to yours." As a matter of fact,

the few extracts given from her letters show an intelligent and sympathetic mind. On at least one occasion we find Kane suggesting deceit to her, and she combating the idea.

There are four fixed points which can be established by the letters:

1. That Kane thought in a vague way that there was trickery; 2. That in the years of their close intimacy she never admitted it; 3. That he could not even suggest in what the trickery lay; 4. That she did use her powers in a way which serious Spiritualists would deplore.

She really knew no more of the nature of these forces than those around her did. The editor says: "She had always averred that she never fully believed the rappings to be the work of spirits, but imagined some occult laws of nature were concerned." This was her attitude later in life, for on her professional card she printed that people must judge the nature of the powers for themselves.

It is natural that those who speak of the danger of mediumship, and especially of physical mediumship, should point to the Fox sisters as an example. But their case must not be exaggerated. In the year 1871, after more than twenty years of this exhausting work, we find them still receiving the enthusiastic support and admiration of many leading men and women of the day. It was only after forty years of public service that adverse conditions were manifested in their lives, and therefore, without in any way glossing over what is evil, we can fairly claim that their record hardly justifies those who allude to mediumship as a soul-destroying profession.

It was in this year 1871 that Kate Fox's visit to England was brought about through the generosity of Mr. Charles F. Livermore, a prominent banker of New York, in gratitude for the consolation he had received from her wonderful powers, and to advance the cause of Spiritualism. He provided for all her needs, and thus removed any necessity for her to give professional sittings. He also arranged for her to be accompanied by a congenial woman companion.

In a letter [*The Spiritual Magazine*, 1871, pp. 525-6.] to Mr. Benjamin Coleman, a well-known worker in the Spiritualist movement, Mr. Livermore says:

Miss Fox, taken all in all, is no doubt the most wonderful living medium. Her character is irreproachable and pure. I have received so much through her powers of mediumship during the past ten years which is solacing, instructive and astounding, that I feel greatly indebted to her, and desire to have her taken good care of while absent from her home and friends.

His further remarks have some bearing possibly on the later sad events of her life:

That you may the more thoroughly understand her idiosyncrasies, permit me to explain that she is a sensitive of the highest order and of childlike simplicity; she feels keenly the atmospheres of everyone with whom she is brought in contact, and to that degree that at times she becomes exceedingly nervous and apparently capricious.

For this reason I have advised her not to sit in dark séances, that she may avoid the irritation arising from the suspicion of sceptics, mere curiosity-mongers, and lovers of the marvellous.

*The perfection of the manifestations to be obtained through her depends upon her surroundings, and in proportion as she is in rapport or sympathy with you does she seem receptive of spiritual power. The communications through her are very remarkable, and have come to me frequently from my wife (Estelle), in perfect idiomatic French, and sometimes in Spanish and Italian, whilst she herself is not acquainted with any of these languages. You will understand all this, but these explanations may be necessary for others. As I have said, **she will not give séances as a professional medium**, but I hope she will do all the good she can in furtherance of the great truth, in a quiet way, while she remains in England.*

Mr. Coleman, who had a sitting with her in New York, says that he received one of the most striking evidences of spirit identity that had ever occurred to him in his experience of seventeen years. Mr. Cromwell F. Varley, the electrician who laid the Atlantic cable, in his evidence before the London Dialectical Society in 1869, spoke of interesting electrical experiments he made with this medium.

The visit of Kate Fox to England was evidently regarded as a mission, for we find Mr. Coleman advising her to choose only those sitters who are

not afraid to have their names published in confirmation of the facts they have witnessed. This course seems to have been adopted to some extent, for there is preserved a fair amount of testimony to her powers from, among others, Professor William Crookes, Mr. S. C. Hall, Mr. W. H. Harrison (editor of *The Spiritualist*), Miss Rosamund Dale Owen (who afterwards married Laurence Oliphant), and the Rev. John Page Hopps.

The new-comer began to hold sittings soon after her arrival. At one of the first of these, on November 24, 1871, a representative of *The Times* was present, and he published a detailed account of the séance, which was held jointly with D.D. Home, a close friend of the medium. This appeared in an article entitled "Spiritualism and Science," occupying three and a half columns of leading type. *The Times* Commissioner speaks of Miss Fox taking him to the door of the room and inviting him to stand by her and to hold her hands, which he did, "when loud thumps seemed to come from the panels, as if done with the fist. These were repeated at our request any number of times." He mentioned that he tried every test that he could think of, that Miss Fox and Mr. Home gave every opportunity for examination, and that their feet and hands were held.

In the course of a leading article on the above report and the correspondence that came from it, *The Times* (January 6, 1873) declared that there was no case for scientific inquiry:

Many sensible readers, we fear, will think we owe them an apology for opening our columns to a controversy on such a subject as Spiritualism and thus treating as an open or debatable question what should rather be dismissed at once as either an imposture or a delusion. But even an imposture may call for unmasking, and popular delusions however-absurd, are often too important to be neglected by the wiser portion of mankind. Is there, in reality, anything, as lawyers would say, to go to a jury with? Well, on the one hand, we have abundance of alleged experience which can hardly be called evidence, and a few depositions of a more notable and impressive character. On the other hand, we have many accounts of convicted impostors, and many authentic reports of precisely such disappointments or discoveries as we should be led to expect.

On December 14, 1872, Miss Fox married Mr. H. D. Jencken, a London barrister-at-law, author of "A Compendium of Modern Roman Law," etc., and honorary general secretary of the Association for the Reform and Codification of the Law of Nations. He was one of the earliest Spiritualists in England.

The Spiritualist, in its account of the ceremony, says that the spirit people took part in the proceedings, for at the wedding breakfast loud raps were heard coming from various parts of the room, and the large table on which stood the wedding-cake was repeatedly raised from the floor.

A contemporary witness states that Mrs. Kate Fox-Jencken (as she came to be known) and her husband were to be met in the early 'seventies in good social circles in London. Her services were eagerly sought after by investigators.

John Page Hopps describes her at this time as "a small, thin, very intelligent, but rather simpering little woman, with nice, gentle manners and a quiet enjoyment of her experiments which entirely saved her from the slightest touch of self-importance or affectation of mystery."

Her mediumship consisted chiefly of raps (often of great power), spirit lights, direct writing, and the appearance of materialized hands. Full form materializations, which had been an occasional feature of her sittings in America, were rare with her in England. On a number of occasions objects in the séance-room were moved by spirit agency, and in some cases brought from another room.

It was about this time that Professor William Crookes conducted his inquiries into the medium's powers, and issued that whole-hearted report which is dealt with later when Crookes's early connexion with Spiritualism comes to be discussed. These careful observations show that the rappings constituted only a small part of Kate Fox's psychic powers, and that if they could be adequately explained by normal means they would still leave us amid mysteries. Thus Crookes recounts how, when the only people present besides himself and Miss Fox were his wife and a lady relative "I was holding the medium's two hands in one of mine, while her feet were resting on my feet. Paper was on the table before us, and my disengaged hand was holding a pencil.

"A luminous hand came down from the upper part of the room, and after hovering near me for a few seconds, took the pencil from my hand, rapidly wrote on a sheet of paper, threw the pencil down, and then rose over our heads, gradually fading into darkness.

Many other observers describe similar phenomena with this medium on various occasions.

A very extraordinary phase of Mrs. Fox-Jensen's mediumship was the production of luminous substances. In the presence of Mrs. Makdougall Gregory, Mr. W. H. Harrison, the editor of a London newspaper, and others, a hand appeared carrying some phosphorescent material, about four inches square, with which the floor was struck and a sitter's face touched.² The light proved to be cold. Miss Rosamund Dale Owen, in her account of this phenomenon, describes the objects as "illuminated crystals," and says that she has seen no materialization which gave so realistic a feeling of spirit nearness as did these graceful lights. The author can also corroborate the fact that these lights are usually cold, as on one occasion, with another medium, such a light settled for some seconds upon his face. Miss Owen also speaks of books and small ornaments being carried about, and a heavy musical box, weighing about twenty-five pounds, being brought from a side-table. A peculiarity of this instrument was that it had been out of order for months and could not be used until the unseen forces repaired it and wound it themselves.

Mrs. Jencken's mediumship was interwoven in the texture of her daily life. Professor Butlerof says that when he paid a morning social call on her and her husband in company with M. Aksakof he heard raps upon the floor. Spending an evening at the Jenckens' house, he reports that raps were numerous during tea. Miss Rosamund Dale Owen also refers³ to the incident of the medium standing in the street at a shop window with two ladies, when raps joined in the conversation, the pavement vibrating under their feet. The raps are described as having been loud enough to attract the attention of passers by. Mr. Jencken relates many cases of spontaneous phenomena in their home life.

² *The Spiritualist*, Vol. VIII, p. 299. *Light*, 1884, p. 170.

³ *Light*, 1884, p. 39. *The Spiritualist*, IV, p. 138, and VII, p. 66. *Light*, 1882, pp. 439-40.

A volume could be filled with details of the séances of this medium, but with the exception of one further record we must be content with agreeing with the dictum of Professor Butlerof, of the University of St. Petersburg, who, after investigating her powers in London, wrote in *The Spiritualist* (February 4, 1876):

From all that I was able to observe in the presence of Mrs. Jencken, I am forced to come to the conclusion that the phenomena peculiar to that medium are of a strongly objective and convincing nature, and they would, I think, be sufficient for the most pronounced but Honest sceptic to cause him to reject ventriloquism, muscular action, and every such artificial explanation of the phenomena.

Mr. H. D. Jencken died in 1881, and his widow was left with two sons. These children showed wonderful mediumship at a very early age, particulars of which will be found in contemporary records.

Mr. S. C. Hall, a well-known literary man and a prominent Spiritualist, describes a sitting at his house in Kensington on his birthday, May 9, 1882, at which his deceased wife manifested her presence:

Many interesting and touching messages were conveyed to me by the usual writing of Mrs. Jencken. We were directed to put out the light. Then commenced a series of manifestations such as I have not often seen equalled, and very seldom surpassed. I removed a small handbell from the table and held it in my own hand. I felt a hand take it from me, when it was rung in all parts of the room during at least five minutes. I then placed an accordion under the table, whence it was removed, and at a distance of three or four feet from the table round which we were seated, tunes were played. The accordion was played and the bell was rung in several parts of the room, while two candles were lit on the table. It was not, therefore, what is termed a dark sitting, although occasionally the lights were put out. During all the time Mr. Stack held one of the hands of Mrs. Jencken and I held the other—each frequently saying, "I have Mrs. Jencken's hand in mine."

About fifty flowers of heartsease were placed on a sheet of paper before me. I had received some heartsease flowers from a friend in the morning, but the vase that contained them was not in the sitting-room. I sent for it and found it intact. The bouquet had not been in the least

disturbed. In what is called "Direct Writing" I found these words written in pencil in a very small hand, on a sheet of paper that lay before me, "I have brought you my token of love." At a sitting some days previously (when alone with Mrs. Jencken) I had received this message, "On your birthday I will bring you a token of love."

Mr. Hall adds that he had marked the sheet of paper with his initials, and, as an extra precaution, had torn off one of the corners in such a manner as to ensure recognition.

It is evident that Mr. Hall was greatly impressed by what he had seen. He writes: "I have witnessed and recorded many wonderful manifestations; I doubt if I have seen any more convincing than this; certainly none more refined; none that gave more conclusive evidence that pure and good and holy spirits alone were communicating." He states that he has consented to become Mrs. Jencken's "banker," presumably for funds for the education of her two boys. In view of what afterwards happened to this gifted medium, there is a sad interest in his concluding words:

I feel confidence approaching certainty that, in all respects, she will so act as to increase and not lessen her power as a medium while retaining the friendship and trust of the many who cannot but feel for her a regard in some degree resembling (as arising from the same source) that which the New Church accords to Emanuel Swedenborg, and the Methodists render to John Wesley. Assuredly Spiritualists owe to this lady a huge debt for the glad tidings she was largely the instrument, selected by Providence, to convey to them.

We have given this account in some detail because it shows that the gifts of the medium were at this time of a high and powerful order. A few years earlier, at a séance at her house on December 14, 1873, on the occasion of the first anniversary of her wedding, a spirit message was rapped out: "When shadows fall upon you, think of the brighter side." It was a prophetic message, for the end of her life was all shadows.

Margaret (Mrs. Fox-Kane) had joined her sister Kate in England in 1876, and they remained together for some years until the very painful incident occurred which has now to be discussed. It would appear that a very bitter quarrel broke out between the elder sister Leah (now Mrs. Underhill) and the two younger ones. It is probable that Leah may have

heard that there was now a tendency to alcoholism, and may have interfered with more energy than tact. Some Spiritualists interfered also, and incurred the fury of the two sisters by some suggestion that Kate's children should be separated from her.

Looking round for some weapon—any weapon—with which they could injure those whom they so bitterly hated, it seems to have occurred to them—or, according to their subsequent statement, to have been suggested to them, with promises of pecuniary reward—that if they injured the whole cult by an admission of fraud they would wound Leah and her associates in their most sensitive part. On the top of alcoholic excitement and the frenzy of hatred there was added religious fanaticism, for Margaret had been lectured by some of the leading spirits of the Church of Rome and persuaded, as Home had been also for a short time, that her own powers were evil. She mentions Cardinal Manning as having influenced her mind in this way, but her statements are not to be taken too seriously. At any rate, all these causes combined and reduced her to a state which was perilously near madness. Before leaving London she had written to *The New York Herald* denouncing the cult, but stating in one sentence that the rappings were "the only part of the phenomena that is worthy of notice." On reaching New York, where, according to her own subsequent statement, she was to receive a sum of money for the newspaper sensation which she promised to produce, she broke out into absolute raving against her elder sister.

It is a curious psychological study, and equally curious is the mental attitude of the people who could imagine that the assertions of an unbalanced woman, acting not only from motives of hatred but also from—as she herself stated—the hope of pecuniary reward, could upset the critical investigation of a generation of observers.

None the less, we have to face the fact that she did actually produce rappings, or enable raps to be produced, at a subsequent meeting in the New York Academy of Music. This might be discounted upon the grounds that in so large a hall any prearranged sound might be attributed to the medium. More important is the evidence of the reporter of the Herald, who had a previous private performance. He describes it thus:

I heard first a rapping under the floor near my feet, then under the chair in which I was seated, and again under a table on which I was leaning. She led me to the door and I heard the same sound on the other side of it. Then when she sat down on the piano stool the instrument reverberated more loudly and the tap-tap resounded throughout its hollow structure.

This account makes it clear that she had the noises under control, though the reporter must have been more unsophisticated than most pressmen of my acquaintance, if he could believe that sounds varying both in quality and in position all came from some click within the medium's foot. He clearly did not know how the sounds came, and it is the author's opinion that Margaret did not know either. That she really had something which she could exhibit is proved, not only by the experience of the reporter but by that of Mr. Wedgwood, a London Spiritualist, to whom she gave a demonstration before she started for America. It is vain, therefore, to contend that there was no basis at all in Margaret's exposure. What that basis was we must endeavour to define.

The Margaret Fox-Kane sensation was in August and September, 1888 – a welcome boon for the enterprising paper which had exploited it. In October Kate came over to join forces with her sister. It should be explained that the real quarrel, so far as is known, was between Kate and Leah, for Leah had endeavoured to get Kate's children taken from her on the grounds that the mother's influence was not for good. Therefore, though Kate did not rave, and though she volunteered no exposures in public or private, she was quite at one with her sister in the general plot to "down" Leah at all costs.

She was the one who caused my arrest last spring (she said) and the bringing of the preposterous charge that I was cruel to my children. I don't know why it is she has always been jealous of Maggie and me; I suppose because we could do things in Spiritualism that she couldn't.

She was present at the Hall of Music meeting on October 21, when Margaret made her repudiation and produced the raps. She was silent on that occasion, but that silence may be taken as a support of the statements to which she listened.

If this were indeed so, and if she spoke as reported to the interviewer, her repentance must have come very rapidly. Upon November 17, less than a month after the famous meeting, she wrote to a lady in London, Mrs. Cottell, who was the tenant of Carlyle's old house, this remarkable letter from New York (*Light*, 1888, p. 619):

I would have written to you before this but my surprise was so great on my arrival to hear of Maggie's exposure of Spiritualism that I had no heart to write to anyone.

The manager of the affair engaged the Academy of Music, the very largest place of entertainment in New York City; it was filled to overflowing.

They made fifteen hundred dollars clear. I have often wished I had remained with you, and if I had the means I would now return to get out of all this.

I think now I could make money in proving that the knockings are not made with the toes. So many people come to me to ask me about this exposure of Maggie's that I have to deny myself to them.

They are hard at work to expose the whole thing if they can; but they certainly cannot.

Maggie is giving public exposures in all the large places in America, but I have only seen her once since I arrived.

This letter of Kate's points to pecuniary temptation as playing a large part in the transaction. Maggie, however, seems to have soon found that there was little money in it, and could see no profit in telling lies for which she was not paid, and which had only proved that the Spiritualistic movement was so firmly established that it was quite unruffled by her treachery. For this or other reasons—let us hope with some final twinges of conscience as to the part she had played—she now admitted that she had been telling falsehoods from the lowest motives. The interview was reported in the *New York Press*, November 20, 1889, about a year after the onslaught.

"Would to God," she said, in a voice that trembled with intense excitement, "that I could undo the injustice I did the cause of

Spiritualism when, under the strong psychological influence of persons inimical to it, I gave expression to utterances that had no foundation in fact. This retraction and denial has not come about so much from my own sense of what is right as from the silent impulse of the spirits using my organism at the expense of the hostility of the treacherous horde who held out promises of wealth and happiness in return for an attack on Spiritualism, and whose hopeful assurances were so deceitful .

"Long before I spoke to any person on this matter, I was unceasingly reminded by my spirit control what I should do, and at last I have come to the conclusion that it would be useless for me further to thwart their promptings ."

"Has there been no mention of a monetary consideration for this statement?"

"Not the smallest; none whatever."

"Then financial gain is not the end which you are looking to?"

"Indirectly, yes. You know that even a mortal instrument in the hands of the spirit must have the maintenance of life. This I propose to derive from my lectures. Not one cent has passed to me from any person because I adopted this course."

"What cause led up to your exposure of the spirit rappings?"

"At that time I was in great need of money, and persons—who for the present I prefer not to name—took advantage of the situation; hence the trouble. The excitement, too, helped to upset my mental equilibrium."

"What was the object of the persons who induced you to make the confession that you and all other mediums traded on the credulity of people?"

"They had several objects in view. Their first and paramount idea was to crush Spiritualism, to make money for themselves, and to get up a great excitement, as that was an element in which they flourish."

"Was there any truth in the charges you made against Spiritualism?"

"Those charges were false in every particular. I have no hesitation in saying that ."

"No, my belief in Spiritualism has undergone no change. When I made those dreadful statements I was not responsible for my words. Its genuineness is an incontrovertible fact. Not all the Herrmans that ever breathed can duplicate the wonders that are produced through some mediums. By deftness of fingers and smartness of wits they may produce writing on papers and slates, but even this cannot bear close investigation. Materialization is beyond their mental calibre to reproduce, and I challenge anyone to make the 'rap' under the same conditions which I will. There is not a human being on earth can produce the 'raps' in the same way as they are through me."

"Do you propose to hold séances?"

"No, I will devote myself entirely to platform work, as that will find me a better opportunity to refute the foul slanders uttered by me against Spiritualism."

"What does your sister Kate say of your present course?"

"She is in complete sympathy with me. She did not approve my course in the past ."

"Will you have a manager for your lecture tour?" "No, sir. I have a horror of them. They, too, treated me most outrageously. Frank Stechen acted shamefully with me. He made considerable money through his management for me, and left me in Boston without a cent. All I got from him was five hundred and fifty dollars, which was given to me at the beginning of the contract."

To give greater authenticity to the interview, at her suggestion the following open letter was written to which she placed her signature:

*128, West Forty-third Street, New York City,
November 16, 1889.*

TO THE PUBLIC.

The foregoing interview having been read over to me I find nothing contained therein that is not a correct record of my words and truthful expression of my sentiments. I have not given a detailed account of the ways and means which were devised to bring me under subjection, and so extract from me a declaration that the spiritual phenomena as

exemplified through my organism were a fraud. But I shall fully atone for this incompleteness when I get upon the platform.

The exactness of this interview was testified to by the names of a number of witnesses, including J. L. O'Sullivan, who was U.S. Minister to Portugal for twenty-five years. He said, "If ever I heard a woman speak truth, it was then."

So it may have been, but the failure of her lecture-agent to keep her in funds seems to have been the determining factor.

The statement would settle the question if we could take the speaker's words at face value, but unfortunately the author is compelled to agree with Mr. Isaac Funk, an indefatigable and impartial researcher, that Margaret at this period of her life could not be relied upon.

What is a good deal more to the purpose is that Mr. Funk sat with Margaret, that he heard the raps "all round the room" without detecting their origin, and that they spelt out to him a name and address which were correct and entirely beyond the knowledge of the medium. The information given was wrong, but, on the other hand, abnormal power was shown by reading the contents of a letter in Mr. Funk's pocket. Such mixed results are as puzzling as the other larger problem discussed in this chapter.

There is one factor which has been scarcely touched upon in this examination. It is the character and career of Mrs. Fish, afterwards Mrs. Underhill, who as Leah, the elder sister, plays so prominent a part in the matter. We know her chiefly by her book, "The Missing Link in Modern Spiritualism" (Knox & Co., New York, 1885). This book was written by a friend, but the facts and documents were provided by Mrs. Underhill, who checked the whole narrative. It is simply and even crudely put together, and the Spiritualist is bound to conclude that the entities with whom the Fox circle were at first in contact were not always of the highest order. Perhaps on another plane, as on this, it is the plebeians and the lowly who carry out spiritual pioneer work in their own rough way and open the path for other and more refined agencies. With this sole criticism, one may say that the book gives a sure impression of candour and good sense, and as a personal narrative of one who was so nearly concerned in these momentous happenings, it is destined to

outlive most of our current literature and to be read with close attention and even with reverence by generations unborn. Those humble folk who watched over the new birth—Capron, of Auburn, who first lectured upon it in public; Jervis, the gallant Methodist minister, who cried, "I know it is true, and I will face the frowning world!"; George Willetts, the Quaker; Isaac Post, who called the first spiritual meeting; the gallant band who testified upon the Rochester platform while the rowdies were heating the tar—all of them are destined to live in history. Of Leah it can truly be said that she recognized the religious meaning of the movement far more clearly than her sisters were able to do, and that she set her face against that use of it for purely worldly objects which is a degradation of the celestial. The following passage is of great interest as showing how the Fox family first regarded this visitation, and must impress the reader with the sincerity of the writer:

The general feeling of our family was strongly adverse to all this strange and uncanny thing. We regarded it as a great misfortune which had fallen upon us; how, whence or why we knew not. We resisted it, struggled against it, and constantly and earnestly prayed for deliverance from it, even while a strange fascination attached to these marvellous manifestations thus forced upon us, against our will, by invisible agencies and agents whom we could neither resist, control nor understand. If our will, earnest desires and prayers could have prevailed or availed, the whole thing would have ended then and there, and the world outside of our little neighbourhood would never have heard more of the Rochester Rappings, or of the unfortunate Fox family.

These words give the impression of sincerity, and altogether Leah stands forth in her book, and in the evidence of the many witnesses quoted, as one who was worthy to play a part in a great movement.

Both Kate Fox Jencken and Margaret Fox-Kane died in the early 'nineties, and their end was one of sadness and gloom. The problem which they present is put fairly before the reader, avoiding the extremes of the too sensitive Spiritualist who will not face the facts, and the special-pleading sceptics who lay stress upon those parts of the narrative which suit their purpose and omit or minimize everything else. Let us see, at the cost of a break in our narrative, if any sort of explanation can

be found which covers the double fact that what these sisters could do was plainly abnormal, and yet that it was, to some extent at least, under their control. It is not a simple problem, but an exceedingly deep one which exhausts, and more than exhausts, the psychic knowledge which is at this date available, and was altogether beyond the reach of the generation in which the Fox sisters were alive.

The simple explanation which was given by the Spiritualists of the time is not to be set aside readily—and least readily by those who know most. It was that a medium who ill-uses her gifts and suffers debasement of moral character through bad habits, becomes accessible to evil influences which may use her for false information or for the defilement of a pure cause. That may be true enough as a *causa causans*. But we must look closer to see the actual how and why.

The author is of opinion that the true explanation will be found by coupling all these happenings with the recent investigations of Dr. Crawford upon the means by which physical phenomena are produced. He showed very clearly, as is detailed in a subsequent chapter, that raps (we are dealing at present only with that phase) are caused by a protrusion from the medium's person of a long rod of a substance having certain properties which distinguish it from all other forms of matter. This substance has been closely examined by the great French physiologist, Dr. Charles Richet, who has named it "ectoplasm." These rods are invisible to the eye, partly visible to the sensitive plate, and yet conduct energy in such a fashion as to make sounds and strike blows at a distance.

Now, if Margaret produced the raps in the same fashion as Crawford's medium, we have only to make one or two assumptions which are probable in them selves, and which the science of the future may definitely prove in order to make the case quite clear. The one assumption is that a centre of psychic force is formed in some part of the body from which the ectoplasm rod is protruded. Supposing that centre to be in Margaret's foot, it would throw a very clear light upon the evidence collected in the Seybert inquiry. In examining Margaret and endeavouring to get raps from her, one of the committee, with the permission of the medium, placed his hand upon her foot. Raps at once followed. The investigator cried: "This is the most wonderful thing of all,

Mrs. Kane. I distinctly feel them in your foot. There is not a particle of motion in your foot, but there is an unusual pulsation."

This experiment by no means bears out the idea of joint dislocation or snapping toes. It is, however, exactly what one could imagine in the case of a centre from which psychic power was projected. This power is in material shape and is drawn from the body of the medium, so that there must be some nexus. This nexus may vary. In the case quoted it was in Margaret's foot. It was observed by the Buffalo doctors that there was a subtle movement of a medium at the moment of a rap. The observation was correct, though the inference was wrong. The author has himself distinctly seen in the case of an amateur medium a slight general pulsation when a rap was given—a recoil, as it were, after the discharge of force.

Granting that Margaret's power worked in this way, we have now only to discuss whether ectoplasmic rods can under any circumstances be protruded at will. So far as the author knows, there are no observations which bear directly upon the point. Crawford's medium seems always to have manifested when in trance, so that the question did not arise. In other physical phenomena there is some reason to think that in their simpler form they are closely connected with the medium, but that as they progress they pass out of her control and are swayed by forces outside herself. Thus the ectoplasm pictures photographed by Madame Bisson and Dr. Schrenck Notzing (as shown in his recent book) may in their first forms be ascribed to the medium's thoughts or memories taking visible shape in ectoplasm, but as she becomes lost in trance they take the form of figures which in extreme cases are endowed with independent life. If there be a general analogy between the two classes of phenomena, then it is entirely possible that Margaret had some control over the expulsion of ectoplasm which caused the sound, but that when the sound gave forth messages which were beyond her possible knowledge, as in the case instanced by Funk, the power was no longer used by her but by some independent intelligence.

It is to be remembered that no one is more ignorant of how effects are produced than the medium, who is the centre of them. One of the greatest physical mediums in the world told the author once that he had never witnessed a physical phenomenon, as he was himself always in

trance when they occurred; the opinion of any one of the sitters would be more valuable than his own. Thus in the case of these Fox sisters, who were mere children when the phenomena began, they knew little of the philosophy of the subject, and Margaret frequently said that she did not understand her own results. If she found that she had herself some power of producing the raps, however obscure the way by which she did it, she would be in a frame of mind when she might well find it impossible to contradict Dr. Kane when he accused her of being concerned in it. Her confession, too, and that of her sister, would to that extent be true, but each would be aware, as they afterwards admitted, that there was a great deal more which could not be explained and which did not emanate from themselves.

There remains, however, one very important point to be discussed – the most important of all to those who accept the religious significance of this movement. It is a most natural argument for those who are unversed in the subject to say, "Are these your fruits? Can a philosophy or religion be good which has such an effect upon those who have had a prominent place in its establishment?" No one can cavil at such an objection, and it calls for a clear answer, which has often been made and yet is in need of repetition.

Let it then be clearly stated that there is no more connexion between physical mediumship and morality than there is between a refined ear for music and morality. Both are purely physical gifts. The musician might interpret the most lovely thoughts and excite the highest emotions in others, influencing their thoughts and raising their minds. Yet in himself he might be a drug-taker, a dipsomaniac, or a pervert. On the other hand, he might combine his musical powers with an angelic personal character. There is simply no connexion at all between the two things, save that they both have their centre in the same human body.

So it is in physical mediumship. We all, or nearly all, exude a certain substance from our bodies which has very peculiar properties. With most of us, as is shown by Crawford's weighing chairs, the amount is negligible. With one in 100,000 it is considerable. That person is a physical medium. He or she gives forth a raw material which can, we hold, be used by independent external forces. The individual's character

has nothing to do with the matter. Such is the result of two generations of observation.

If it were exactly as stated, then, the physical medium's character would be in no way affected by his gift. Unfortunately, that is to understate the case. Under our present unintelligent conditions, the physical medium is subjected to certain moral risks which it takes a strong and well-guarded nature to withstand. The failures of these most useful and devoted people may be likened to those physical injuries, the loss of fingers and hands, incurred by those who have worked with the X-rays before their full properties were comprehended. Means have been taken to overcome these physical dangers after a certain number have become martyrs for science, and the moral dangers will also be met when a tardy reparation will be made to the pioneers who have injured themselves in forcing the gates of knowledge. These dangers lie in the weakening of the will, in the extreme debility after phenomenal sittings, and the temptation to gain temporary relief from alcohol, in the temptation to fraud when the power wanes, and in the mixed and possibly noxious spirit influences which surround a promiscuous circle, drawn together from motives of curiosity rather than of religion. The remedy is to segregate mediums, to give them salaries instead of paying them by results, to regulate the number of their sittings and the character of the sitters, and thus to remove them from influences which overwhelmed the Fox sisters as they have done other of the strongest mediums in the past. On the other hand, there are physical mediums who retain such high motives and work upon such religious lines that they are the salt of the earth. It is the same power which is used by the Buddha and by the Woman of Endor. The objects and methods of its use are what determine the character.

The author has said that there is little connexion between physical mediumship and morality. One could imagine the ectoplasmic flow being as brisk from a sinner as from a saint, impinging upon material objects in the same way and producing results which would equally have the good effect of convincing the materialist of forces outside his ken. This does not apply, however, to internal mediumship, taking the form not of phenomena but of teaching and messages, given either by spirit voice, human voice, automatic writing, or any other device. Here the vessel is chosen that it may match what it contains. One could not imagine a small nature giving temporary habitation to a great spirit. One must be a

Vale Owen before one gets Vale Owen messages. If a high medium degenerated in character, I should expect to find the messages cease or else share in the degeneration. Hence, too, the messages of a divine spirit such as is periodically sent to cleanse the world, of a mediaeval saint, of Joan of Arc, of Swedenborg, of Andrew Jackson Davis, or of the humblest automatic writer in London, provided that the impulse is a true one, are really the same thing in various degrees. Each is a genuine breath from beyond, and yet each intermediary tinges with his or her personality the message which comes through. So, as in a glass darkly, we see this wondrous mystery, so vital and yet so undefined. It is its very greatness which prevents it from being defined. We have done a little, but we hand back many a problem to those who march behind us. They may look upon our own most advanced speculation as elementary, and yet may see vistas of thought before them which will stretch to the uttermost bounds of their mental vision.

6. FIRST DEVELOPMENTS IN AMERICA

"Mrs. Benedict's Glimpse of the Future."



*"The Chicago Times-Herald,"
October 25, 1896,*

HAVING dealt with the history of the Fox family and the problems which that history raises, we shall now return to America and note the first effects of this invasion from another sphere of being.

These effects were not entirely excellent. There were follies on the part of individuals and extravagances on that of communities.

One of these, based on communications received through the mediumship of Mrs. Benedict, was the Apostolic Circle. It was started by a small group of men, strong believers in a second advent, who sought through spirit communications to confirm that belief. They obtained what they proclaimed to be communications from Apostles and prophets of the Bible. In 1849 James L. Scott, a Seventh Day Baptist minister of Brooklyn, joined this circle at Auburn, which now became known as the Apostolic Movement, and its spiritual leader was said to be the Apostle Paul. Scott was joined by the Rev. Thomas Lake Harris, and they established at Mountain Cove the religious community which attracted a strong following, until after some years their dupes became disillusioned and deserted their autocratic leaders.

This man, Thomas Lake Harris, is certainly one of the most curious personalities of whom we have any record, and it is hard to say whether Jekyll or Hyde predominated in his character. He was compounded of extremes, and everything which he did was outstanding for good or for evil. He was originally a Universalist minister, whence he derived the "Rev." which he long used as a prefix. He broke away from his associates, adopted the teachings of Andrew Jackson Davis, became a fanatical Spiritualist, and finally, as already stated, claimed to be one of the autocratic rulers of the souls and purses of the colonists of Mountain Cove. There came a time, however, when the said colonists concluded that they were quite capable of looking after their own affairs both spiritual and material, so Harris found his vocation gone. He then came to New York and threw himself violently into the Spiritualistic movement, preaching at Dodworth Hall, the head-quarters of the cult, and gaining a great and deserved reputation for remarkable eloquence. His megalomania—possibly an obsession—broke out once more, and he made extravagant claims which the sane and sober Spiritualists around him would not tolerate. There was one claim, however, which he could go to some length in making good, and that was inspiration from a very true and high poetic afflatus, though whether inborn or from without it is impossible to say. While at this stage of his career he, or some power through him, produced a series of poems, "A Lyric of the Golden Age," "The Morning Land," and others, which do occasionally touch the stars.

Piqued by the refusal of the New York Spiritualists to admit his supernal claims, Harris then (1859) went to England, where he gained fame by his eloquence, shown in lectures which consisted of denunciations of his own former colleagues in New York. Each successive step in the man's life was accompanied by a defilement of the last step from which he had come.

In 1860, in London, Harris's life suddenly assumes a closer interest to Britons, especially to those who have literary affinities. Harris lectured at Steinway Hall, and while there Lady Oliphant listened to his wild eloquence, and was so affected by it that she brought the American preacher into touch with her son, Laurence Oliphant, one of the most brilliant men of his generation. It is difficult to see where the attraction lay, for the teaching of Harris at this stage had nothing uncommon in its matter, save that he seems to have adopted the Father-God and Mother-Nature idea which was thrown out by Davis. Oliphant placed Harris high as a poet, referring to him as "the greatest poet of the age as yet unknown to fame." Oliphant was no mean judge, and yet in an age which included Tennyson, Longfellow, Browning, and so many more, the phrase seems extravagant. The end of the whole episode was that, after delays and vacillations, both mother and son surrendered themselves entirely to Harris, and went forth to manual labour in a new colony at Brocton in New York, where they remained in a condition which was virtual slavery save that it was voluntary. Whether such self-abnegation is saintly or idiotic is a question for the angels. It certainly seems idiotic when we learn that Laurence Oliphant had the greatest difficulty in getting leave to marry, and expressed humble gratitude to the tyrant when he was at last allowed to do so. He was set free to report the Franco-German War of 1870, which he did in the brilliant manner that might be expected of him, and then he returned to his servitude once more, one of his duties being to sell strawberries in baskets to the passing trains, while he was arbitrarily separated from his young wife, she being sent to Southern California and he retained at Brocton. It was not until the year 1882, twenty years from his first entanglement, that Oliphant, his mother being then dead, broke these extraordinary bonds, and after a severe struggle, in the course of which Harris took steps to have him incarcerated in an asylum, rejoined his wife, recovered some of his property, and resumed his normal life. He drew the prophet Harris in his

book "Masollam," written in his later years, and the result is so characteristic both of Oliphant's brilliant word-painting and of the extraordinary man whom he painted, that the reader will perhaps be glad to refer to it in the Appendix.

Such developments as Harris and others were only excrescences on the main Spiritualistic movement, which generally speaking was sane and progressive. The freaks stood in the way of its acceptance, however, as the communistic or free love sentiments of some of these wild sects were unscrupulously exploited by the opposition as being typical of the whole.

We have seen that though the spiritual manifestations obtained wide public notice through the Fox girls, they were known long before this. To the preceding testimony to this effect we may add that of Judge Edmonds, who says:¹ "It is about five years since the subject first attracted public attention, though we discover now that for the previous ten or twelve years there had been more or less of it in different parts of the country, but it had been kept concealed, either from fear of ridicule or from ignorance of what it was." This explains the surprising number of mediums who began to be heard of immediately after the publicity obtained through the Fox family. It was no new gift they exhibited, it was only that their courageous action in making it widely known made others come forward and confess that they possessed the same power. Also this universal gift of mediumistic faculties now for the first time began to be freely developed. The result was that mediums were heard of in ever-increasing numbers. In April, 1849, manifestations occurred in the family of the Rev. A. H. Jervis, the Methodist minister of Rochester, in that of Mr. Lyman Granger, also of Rochester, and in the home of Deacon Hale, in the neighbouring town of Greece. So, too, six families in the adjoining town of Auburn began to develop mediumship. In none of these cases had the Fox girls any connexion with what took place. So these leaders simply blazed the trail along which others followed.

Outstanding features of the next succeeding years were the rapid growth of mediums on every side, and the conversion to a belief in Spiritualism of great public men like Judge Edmonds, ex-Governor Tallmadge, Professor Robert Hare, and Professor Mapes. The public support of such well-known men gave enormous publicity to the subject, while at the

¹ *Spiritualism*, by John W. Edmonds and George T. Dexter, M.D., New York, 1853, p. 36.

same time it increased the virulence of the opposition, which now perceived it had to deal with more than a handful of silly, deluded people. Men such as these could command a hearing in the Press of the day. There was also a change in the character of the spiritual phenomena. In the years 1851-2 Mrs. Hayden and D.D. Home were instrumental in making many converts. We shall have more to say about these mediums in later chapters.

In a communication addressed "To the Public," published in the *New York Courier* and dated New York, August 1, 1853, Judge Edmonds, a man of high character and clear intellect, gave a convincing account of his own experience. It is a curious thing that the United States, which at that time gave conspicuous evidence of moral courage in its leading citizens, has seemed to fall behind in recent years in this respect, for the author in his recent journeys there found many who were aware of psychic truth and yet shrank in the face of a jeering Press from publishing their convictions.

Judge Edmonds, in the article alluded to, began by detailing the train of events which caused him to form his opinions. It is dwelt upon here in some detail, because it is very important as showing the basis on which a highly educated man received the new teaching:

It was January 1851 that my attention was first called to the subject of "spiritual intercourse." I was at the time withdrawn from general society; I was labouring under great depression of spirits. I was occupying all my leisure in reading on the subject of death and man's existence afterward. I had, in the course of my life, read and heard from the pulpit so many contradictory and conflicting doctrines on the subject, that I hardly knew what to believe. I could not, if I would, believe what I did not understand, and was anxiously seeking to know, if, after death, we should again meet with those whom we had loved here, and under what circumstances. I was invited by a friend to witness the "Rochester Knockings." I complied more to oblige her, and to while away a tedious hour. I thought a good deal on what I witnessed, and I determined to investigate the matter and find out what it was. If it was a deception, or a delusion, I thought that I could detect it. For about four months I devoted at least two evenings in a week and sometimes more to witnessing the phenomena in all its phases. I kept

careful records of all I witnessed, and from time to time compared them with each other, to detect inconsistencies and contradictions. I read all I could lay my hands on on the subject, and especially all the professed "exposures of the humbug." I went from place to place, seeing different mediums, meeting with different parties of persons—often with persons whom I had never seen before, and sometimes where I was myself entirely unknown—sometimes in the dark and sometimes in the light—often with inveterate unbelievers, and more frequently with zealous believers.

In fine, I availed myself of every opportunity that was afforded, thoroughly to sift the matter to the bottom. I was all this time an unbeliever, and tried the patience of believers sorely by my scepticism, my captiousness, and my obdurate refusal to yield my belief. I saw around me some who yielded a ready faith on one or two sittings only; others again, under the same circumstances, avowing a determined unbelief; and some who refused to witness it at all, and yet were confirmed unbelievers. I could not imitate either of these parties, and refused to yield unless upon most irrefragable testimony. At length the evidence came, and in such force that no sane man could withhold his faith.

It will thus be seen that this, the earliest outstanding convert to the new revelation, took the utmost pains before he allowed the evidence to convince him of the validity of the claims of the spirit. General experience shows that a facile acceptance of these claims is very rare among earnest thinkers, and that there is hardly any prominent Spiritualist whose course of study and reflection has not involved a novitiate of many years. This forms a striking contrast to those negative opinions which are founded upon initial prejudice and the biased or scandalous accounts of partisan authors.

Judge Edmonds, in the excellent summary of his position given in the article already quoted—an article which should have converted the whole American people had they been ready for assimilation—proceeds to show the solid basis of his beliefs. He points out that he was never alone when these manifestations occurred, and that he had many witnesses. He also shows the elaborate precautions which he took:

After depending upon my senses, as to these various phases of the phenomenon, I invoked the aid of science, and, with the assistance of an accomplished electrician and his machinery, and eight or ten intelligent, educated, shrewd persons, examined the matter. We pursued our inquiries many days, and established to our satisfaction two things: first, that the sounds were not produced by the agency of any person present or near us; and, second, that they were not forthcoming at our will and pleasure.

He deals faithfully with the alleged "exposures" in newspapers, some of which at long intervals are true indictments of some villain, but which usually are greater deceptions, conscious or unconscious, of the public than the evils which they profess to attack. Thus:

While these things were going on, there appeared in the newspapers various explanations and "exposures of the humbug," as they were termed. I read them with care, in the expectation of being assisted in my researches, and I could not but smile at once at the rashness and the futility of the explanations. For instance, while certain learned professors in Buffalo were congratulating themselves on having detected it in the toe and knee joints, the manifestations in this city changed to ringing a bell placed under the table. They were like the solution lately given by a learned professor in England, who attributes the tipping of tables to a force in the hands which are laid upon them, overlooking the material fact that tables quite as frequently move when there is no hand upon them.

Having dealt with the objectivity of the phenomena, the judge next touched upon the more important question of their source. He commented upon the fact that he had answers to mental questions and found that his own secret thoughts were revealed, and that purposes which he had privily entertained had been made manifest. He notes also that he had heard the mediums use Greek, Latin, Spanish, and French, when they were ignorant of these languages.

This drives him to the consideration of whether these things may not be explained as the reflection of the mind of some other living human being. These considerations have been exhausted by every inquirer in turn, for Spiritualists do not accept their creed in one bound, but make the journey step by step, with much timid testing of the path. Judge

Edmonds's epitome of his course is but that which many others have followed. He gives the following reasons for negating this question of other human minds:

Facts were communicated which were unknown then, but afterward found to be true; like this, for instance when I was absent last winter in Central America, my friends in town heard of my whereabouts and of the state of my health seven times; and on my return, by comparing their information with the entries in my journal it was found to be invariably correct. So, in my recent visit to the West my whereabouts and my condition were told to a medium in this city, while I was travelling on the railroad between Cleveland and Toledo. So thoughts have been uttered on subjects not then in my mind, and utterly at variance with my own notions. This has often happened to me and to others, so as fully to establish the fact that it was not our minds that gave birth to or affected the communication.

He then deals with the object of this marvellous development, and he points out its overwhelming religious significance on the general lines with which it is defined in a subsequent chapter of this work. Judge Edmonds's brain was indeed a remarkable one, and his judgment clear, for there is very little which we can add to his statement, and perhaps it has never been so well expressed in so small a compass. As we point to it one can claim that Spiritualism has been consistent from the first, and that the teachers and guides have not mixed their message. It is a strange and an amusing reflection that the arrogant science which endeavoured by its mere word and glare to crush this upstart knowledge in 1850 has been proved to be essentially wrong on its own ground. There are hardly any scientific axioms of that day, the finality of the element, the indivisibility of the atom, the separate origin of species, which have not been controverted, whereas the psychic knowledge which was so derided has steadily held its own, adding fresh facts but never contradicting those which were originally put forward.

Writing of the beneficent effects of this knowledge the judge says:

There is that which comforts the mourner and binds up the broken-hearted; that which smooths the passage to the grave and robs death of its terrors; that which enlightens the atheist and cannot but reform the vicious; that which cheers and encourages the virtuous amid all the

trials and vicissitudes of life; and that which demonstrates to man his duty and his destiny, leaving it no longer vague and uncertain.

The matter has never been better summed up than that.

There is, however, one final passage in this remarkable document which causes some sadness. Speaking of the progress which the movement had made within four years in the United States, he says: "There are ten or twelve newspapers and periodicals devoted to the cause and the spiritual library embraces more than one hundred different publications, some of which have already attained a circulation of more than 10,000 copies. Besides the undistinguished multitude there are many men of high standing and talent ranked among them—doctors, lawyers, and clergymen in great numbers, a Protestant bishop, the learned and reverend president of a college, judges of our higher courts, members of Congress, foreign ambassadors and ex-members of the United States Senate." In four years the spirit force had done as much as this. How does the matter stand to-day? The "undistinguished multitude" has carried bravely on and the hundred publications have grown into many more, but where are the men of light and leading who point the path? Since the death of Professor Hyslop it is difficult to point to one man of eminence in the United States who is ready to stake his career and reputation upon the issue. Those who would have never feared the tyranny of man have shrank from the cat-calling of the public Press. The printing-machine has succeeded where the rack would have failed. The worldly loss in reputation and in business sustained by Judge Edmonds himself, who had to resign his seat upon the Supreme Court of New York, and by many others who testified to the truth, established a reign of terror which warns the intellectual classes from the subject. So the matter stands at present.

But the Press, for the moment, was well-disposed and Judge Edmonds's famous summing-up, perhaps the finest and most momentous that any judge has ever delivered, met with respect, if not with concurrence. *The New York Courier* wrote:

The letter from Judge Edmonds, published by us on Saturday, with regard to the so-called spiritual manifestations, coming as it did from an eminent jurist, a man remarkable for his clear common sense in the practical affairs of life, and a gentleman of irreproachable character,

arrested the attention of the community, and is regarded by many persons as one of the most remarkable documents of the day.

The *New York Evening Mirror* said:

John W. Edmonds, the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court for this district, is an able lawyer, an industrious judge and a good citizen. For the last eight years occupying without interruption the highest judicial stations, whatever may be his faults no one can justly accuse him of lack of ability, industry, honesty or fearlessness. No one can doubt his general saneness, or can believe for a moment that the ordinary operations of his mind are not as rapid, accurate and reliable as ever. Both by the practitioners and suitors at his bar he is recognized as the head, in fact and in merit, of the Supreme Court for this District.

The experience of Dr. Robert Hare, Professor of Chemistry in the University of Pennsylvania, is also of interest, because he was one of the first eminent men of science who, setting out to expose the delusion of Spiritualism, became finally a firm believer. It was in 1853 that, in his own words, he "felt called upon, as an act of duty to his fellow creatures, to bring whatever influence he possessed to the attempt to stem the tide of popular madness which, in defiance of reason and science, was fast setting in favour of the gross delusion called Spiritualism." A denunciatory letter of his published in the newspapers of Philadelphia, where he lived, was copied by other newspapers all over the country, and it was made the text of numerous sermons. But, as with Sir William Crookes many years later, the jubilation was premature. Professor Hare, though a strong sceptic, was induced to experiment for himself, and after a period of careful testing he became entirely convinced of the spiritual origin of the manifestations. Like Crookes, he devised apparatus for use with mediums. Mr. S. B. Brittan, editor of *The Spiritual Telegraph*, gives the following condensed account of some of Hare's experiments:

First, to satisfy himself that the movements were not the works of mortals, he took brass billiard balls, placed them on zinc plates and placed the hands of the mediums on the balls and, to his very great astonishment the tables moved. He next arranged a table to slide backward and forward, to which attachments were made, causing a disc to revolve containing the alphabet, hidden from the view of the mediums. The letters were variously arranged, out of their regular

consecutive order, and the spirit was required to place them consecutively or in their regular places. And behold, it was done! Then followed intelligent sentences which the medium could not see or know the import of till they were told him.

Again he tried another capital test. The long end of a lever was placed on spiral scales with an index attached and the weight marked; the medium's hand rested on the short end of the beam, where it was impossible to give pressure downward, but if pressed it would have a contrary effect and raise the long end; and yet, most astounding, the weight was increased several pounds on the scale.

Professor Hare embodied his careful researches and his views on Spiritualism in an important book published in New York in 1855, entitled "Experimental Investigation of the Spirit Manifestations." In this (p. 55) he sums up the results of his early experiments as follows:

The evidence of the manifestations adduced in the foregoing narrative does not rest upon myself only, since there have been persons present when they were observed, and they have in my presence been repeated essentially under various modifications in many instances not specially alluded to.

The evidence may be contemplated under various phases; first, those in which rappings or other noises have been made which could not be traced to any mortal agency; secondly, those in which sounds were so made as to indicate letters forming grammatical, well-spelt sentences, affording proof that they were under the guidance of some rational being; thirdly, those in which the nature of the communication has been such as to prove that the being causing them must, agreeably to accompanying allegations, be some known acquaintance, friend, or relative of the inquirer.

Again, cases in which movements have been made of ponderable bodies of a nature to produce intellectual communications resembling those obtained, as abovementioned, by sounds.

Although the apparatus by which these various proofs were attained with the greatest possible precaution and precision, modified them as to the manner, essentially all the evidence which I have obtained tending to the conclusions above mentioned, has likewise been

substantially obtained by a great number of observers. Many who never sought any spiritual communication and have not been induced to enroll themselves as Spiritualists, will nevertheless not only affirm the existence of the sounds and movements, but also admit their inscrutability.

Mr. James J. Mapes, LL.D., of New York, an agricultural chemist and member of various learned societies, commenced his investigation into Spiritualism in order to rescue, as he said, his friends, who were "running to imbecility" over the new craze. Through the mediumship of Mrs. Cora Hatch, afterwards Mrs. Richmond, he received what are described as marvellous scientific answers to his questions. He ended by becoming a thorough believer, and his wife, who had no artistic talent, became a drawing and painting medium. His daughter had, unknown to him, become a writing medium, and when she spoke to him about this development he asked her to give him an exhibition of her power. She took a pen and rapidly wrote what professed to be a message from Professor Mapes's father. The Professor asked for a proof of identity. His daughter's hand at once wrote: "You may recollect that I gave you, among other books, an Encyclopaedia; look at page 120 of that book, and you will find my name written there, which you have never seen." The book referred to was stored with others at a warehouse. When Professor Mapes opened the case, which had been undisturbed for twenty-seven years, to his astonishment he found his father's name written on page 120. It was this incident which first led him to make a serious investigation, for, like his friend Professor Hare, he had up till that time been a strong materialist.

In April, 1854, the Hon. James Shields presented a memorial,² praying for inquiry, to the United States legislature, with thirteen thousand signatures attached, and with the name of Governor Tallmadge at the head of the list. After a frivolous discussion, in which Mr. Shields, who presented the petition, referred to the belief held by the petitioners as due to a delusion arising from defective education or deranged mental faculties, it was formally agreed that the petition should lie upon the table. Mr. E. W. Capron has this comment³:

² See Capron, *Modern Spiritualism*, pp. 359- 363.

³ *Modern Spiritualism*, p. 375. *Modern Spiritualism*, p. 197.

It is not probable that any of the memorialists expected more favourable treatment than they received. The carpenters and fishermen of the world are the ones to investigate new truths and make Senates and Crowns believe and respect them. It is in vain to look for the reception or respect of new truths by men in high places.

The first regular Spiritualist organization was formed in New York on June 10, 1854. It was entitled the "Society for the Diffusion of Spiritual Knowledge," and included among its members such prominent people as Judge Edmonds and Governor Tallmadge, of Wisconsin.

Among the activities of the society was the establishment of a newspaper called *The Christian Spiritualist*, and the engagement of Miss Kate Fox to hold daily séances, to which the public were admitted free each morning from ten till one o'clock.

Writing in 1855 Capron says:

It would be impossible to state particulars in regard to the spread of Spiritualism in New York up to the present time. It has become diffused throughout the city, and has almost ceased to be a curiosity or a wonder to any. Public meetings are regularly held, and the investigation is constantly going on, but the days of excitement on the subject have passed away, and all parties look upon it as, at least, something more than a mere trick. It is true that religious bigotry denounces it, but without disputing the occurrences, and occasionally a pretended expose' is made for purposes of speculation; but the fact of spiritual intercourse has become an acknowledged fact in the Empire city.

Perhaps the most significant fact of the period we have been considering was the development of mediumship in prominent people, as, for instance, Judge Edmonds and Professor Hare. The latter writes⁴:

Having latterly acquired the powers of a medium in a sufficient degree to interchange ideas with my spirit friends, I am no longer under the necessity of defending media from the charge of falsehood and deception. It is now my own character only that can be in question.

⁴ *Experimental Investigation Of The Spirit Manifestations*, p. 54.

Thus, dismissing the Fox girls from the field altogether, we have the private mediumship of Rev. A. H. Jervis, Deacon Hale, Lyman Granger, Judge Edmonds, Professor Hare, Mrs. Mapes, Miss Mapes, and the public mediumship of Mrs. Tamlin, Mrs. Benedict, Mrs. Hayden, D.D. Home, and dozens of others.

It is not within the scope of this work to deal with the great number of individual cases of mediumship, some of them most dramatic and interesting, which occurred during this first period of demonstration. The reader is referred to Mrs. Hardinge Britten's two important compilations, "Modern American Spiritualism" and "Nineteenth Century Miracles," books which will always be a most valuable record of early days. The series of phenomenal cases was so great that Mrs. Britten has counted over five thousand separate instances recorded in the Press in the first few years, which probably represents some hundreds of thousands not so recorded. Religion so-called and Science so-called united for once in an unholy attempt to misrepresent and persecute the new truth and its supporters, while the Press unfortunately found that its interest lay in playing up to the prejudices of the majority of its subscribers. It was easy to do this, for naturally, in so vital and compelling a movement, there were some who became fanatical, some who threw discredit upon their opinions by their actions, and some who took advantage of the general interest to imitate, with more or less success, the real gifts of the spirit. These fraudulent rascals were sometimes mere cold-blooded swindlers, and sometimes seem to have been real mediums whose psychic power had for a time deserted them. There were scandals and exposures, some real and some pretended. These exposures were then, as now, due often to the Spiritualists themselves, who strongly objected to their sacred ceremonies being a screen for the hypocrisies and blasphemies of those villains who, like human hyenas, tried to make a fraudulent living out of the dead. The general result was to take the edge off the first fine enthusiasm, and to set back the acceptance of what was true by an eternal harping on what was false.

The brave report of Professor Hare led to a disgraceful persecution of that venerable savant, who was at that moment, with the exception of Agassiz, the best-known man of science in America. The professors of Harvard—a university which has a most unenviable record in psychic

matters – passed a resolution denouncing him and his "insane adherence to a gigantic humbug." He could not lose his professorial chair at Pennsylvania University because that had been already resigned, but he suffered much in loss of reputation.

The crowning and most absurd instance of scientific intolerance—an intolerance which has always been as violent and unreasonable as that of the mediaeval Church—was shown by the American Scientific Association. This learned body howled down Professor Hare when he attempted to address them, and put it on record that the subject was unworthy of their attention. It was remarked, however, by the Spiritualists, that the same society at the same session held an animated debate as to why cocks crow between twelve and one at night, coming finally to the conclusion that at that particular hour a wave of electricity passes over the earth from north to south, and that the fowls, disturbed out of their slumbers and "being naturally of a crowing disposition," register the event in this fashion. It had not then been learned—and perhaps it has hardly been learned yet—that a man, or a body of men, may be very wise upon those subjects on which they are experts, and yet show an extraordinary want of common sense when faced with a new proposition which calls for a complete readjustment of ideas. British science and, indeed, science the whole world over, have shown the same intolerance and want of elasticity which marked those early days in America.

These days have been drawn so fully by Mrs. Hardinge Britten, who herself played a large part in them, that those who are interested can always follow them in her pages. Some notes about Mrs. Britten herself may, however, be fitly introduced at this place, for no history of Spiritualism could be complete without an account of this remarkable woman who has been called the female St. Paul of the movement. She was a young Englishwoman who had gone to New York with a theatrical company, and had then, with her mother, remained in America. Being strictly Evangelical she was much repelled by what she considered the unorthodox views of Spiritualists, and fled in horror from her first séance. Later, in 1856, she was again brought into contact with the subject and received proofs which made it impossible for her to doubt its truth. She soon discovered that she was herself a powerful medium, and one of the best attested and most sensational cases in the early history of

the movement was that in which she received intimation that the mail steamer *Pacific* had gone down in mid-Atlantic with all souls, and was threatened with prosecution by the owners of the boat for repeating what had been told her by the returning spirit of one of the crew. The information proved to be only too true, and the vessel was never heard of again.

Mrs. Emma Hardinge—who became, by a second marriage, Mrs. Hardinge Britten—threw her whole enthusiastic temperament into the young movement and left a mark upon it which is still visible. She was an ideal propagandist, for she combined every gift. She was a strong medium, an orator, a writer, a well-balanced thinker and a hardy traveller. Year after year she travelled the length and breadth of the United States proclaiming the new doctrine amid much opposition, for she was militant and anti-Christian in the views which she professed to get straight from her spirit guides. As these views were, however, that the morals of the Churches were far too lax and that a higher standard was called for, it is not likely that the Founder of Christianity would have been among her critics. These opinions of Mrs. Hardinge Britten had more to do with the broadly Unitarian view of the official Spiritualist bodies, which still exists, than any other cause.

In 1866 she returned to England, where she worked indefatigably, producing her two great chronicles, "Modern American Spiritualism" and, later, "Nineteenth Century Miracles," both of which show an amazing amount of research together with a very clear and logical mind. In 1870 she married Dr. Britten, as strong a Spiritualist as herself. The marriage seems to have been an ideally happy one. In 1878 they went together as missionaries for Spiritualism to Australia and New Zealand, and stayed there for several years, founding various churches and societies which the author found still holding their own when he visited the Antipodes forty years later upon the same errand. While in Australia she wrote her "Faiths, Facts and Frauds of Religious History," a book which still influences many minds. There was at that time undoubtedly a close connexion between the free thought movement and the new spirit revelation. The Hon. Robert Stout, Attorney-General of New Zealand, was both President of the Free Thought Association and an ardent Spiritualist. It is more clearly understood now, however, that spirit intercourse and teaching are too wide to be fitted into any system,

whether negative or positive, and that it is possible for a Spiritualist to profess any creed so long as he has the essentials of reverence to the unseen and unselfishness to those around him.

Among other monuments of her energy, Mrs. Hardinge Britten founded *The Two Worlds* of Manchester, which has still as large a circulation as any Spiritualistic paper in the world. She passed onwards in 1899, having left her mark deep upon the religious life of three continents.

This has been a long but necessary digression from the account of the early days of American progress. Those early days were marked by great enthusiasm, much success, and also considerable persecution. All the leaders who had anything to lose lost it. Mrs. Hardinge says:

Judge Edmonds was pointed at in the streets as a crazy Spiritualist. Wealthy merchants were compelled to assert their claims to be considered sane and maintain their commercial rights by the most firm and determined action. Professional men and tradesmen were reduced to the limits of ruin, and a relentless persecution, originated by the Press and maintained by the pulpit, directed the full flow of its evil tides against the cause and its representatives. Many of the houses where circles were being held were disturbed by crowds who would gather together after nightfall and with yells, cries, whistles and occasional breaking of windows try to molest the quiet investigators in their unholy work of "waking the dead," as one of the papers piously denominated the act of seeking for the "Ministry of Angels."

Passing the smaller ebb and flow of the movement, the rising of new true mediums, the exposure of occasional false ones, the committees of inquiry (negatived often by the want of perception of the inquirers that a psychic circle depends for success upon the psychic condition of *all* its members), the development of fresh phenomena and the conversion of new initiates, there are a few outstanding incidents of those early days which should be particularly noted. Prominent among them is the mediumship of D.D. Home, and of the two Davenport boys, which form such important episodes, and attracted public attention to such a degree and for so long a time, that they are treated in separate chapters. There are, however, certain lesser mediumships which call for a shorter notice.

One of these was that of Linton, the blacksmith, a man who was quite illiterate and yet, like A. J. Davis, wrote a remarkable book under alleged spirit control. This book of 530 pages, called "The Healing of the Nations," is certainly a remarkable production whatever its source, and it is obviously impossible that it could have been normally produced by such an author. It is adorned by a very long preface from the pen of Governor Tallmadge, which shows that the worthy senator was no mean student of antiquity. The case from the point of view of the classics and the early Church has seldom been better stated.

In 1857 Harvard University again made itself notorious by the persecution and expulsion of a student named Fred Willis, for the practice of medium ship. It would almost seem that the spirit of Cotton Mather and the old witch-finders of Salem had descended upon the great Boston seat of learning, for in those early days it was constantly at issue with those unseen forces which no one can hope to conquer. This matter began by an intemperate attempt upon the part of a Professor Eustis to prove that Willis was fraudulent, whereas all the evidence shows clearly that he was a true sensitive, who shrank greatly from any public use of his powers. The matter caused considerable excitement and scandal at the time. This and other cases of hard usage may be cited, but it must nevertheless be acknowledged that the hope of gain on the one hand, and the mental effervescence caused by so terrific a revelation on the other, did at this period lead to a degree of dishonesty in some so-called mediums, and to fanatical excesses and grotesque assertions in others, which held back that immediate success which the more sane and steady Spiritualists expected and deserved.

One curious phase of mediumship which attracted much attention was that of a farmer, Jonathan Koons and his family, living in a wild district of Ohio. The phenomena obtained by the Eddy brothers are discussed at some length in a subsequent chapter, and as those of the Koons family were much on the same lines they need not be treated in detail. The use of musical instruments came largely into the demonstrations of spirit force, and the Koons's log-house became celebrated through all the adjoining states—so celebrated that it was constantly crowded, although it was situated some seventy miles from the nearest town. It would appear to have been a case of true physical mediumship of a crude quality, as might be expected where a rude uncultured farmer was the

physical centre of it. Many investigations were held, but the facts always remained untouched by criticism. Eventually, however, Koons and his family were driven from their home by the persecution of the ignorant people among whom they lived. The rude open-air life of the farmer seems to be particularly adapted to the development of strong physical mediumship. It was in an American farmer's household that it first developed, and Koons in Ohio, the Eddys in Vermont, Foss in Massachusetts, and many others, have shown the same powers.

We may fitly end this short review of the early days in America by an event where spirit intervention proved to be of importance in the world's history. This was the instance of the inspired messages which determined the action of Abraham Lincoln at the supreme moment of the Civil War. The facts are beyond dispute, and are given with the corroborative evidence in Mrs. Maynard's book on Abraham Lincoln. Mrs. Maynard's maiden name was Nettie Colburn, and she was herself the heroine of the story.

The young lady was a powerful trance medium, and she visited Washington in the winter of 1862 in order to see her brother who was in the hospital of the Federal Army. Mrs. Lincoln, the wife of the President, who was interested in Spiritualism, had a sitting with Miss Colburn, was enormously impressed by the result, and sent a carriage next day to bring the medium to see the President. She describes the kindly way in which the great man received her in the parlour of the White House, and mentions the names of those who were present. She sat down, passed into the usual trance, and remembered no more. She continued thus:

For more than an hour I was made to talk to him, and I learned from my friends afterwards that it was upon matters that he seemed fully to understand, while they comprehended very little until that portion was reached that related to the forthcoming Emancipation Proclamation. He was charged with the utmost solemnity and force of manner not to abate the terms of its issue and not to delay its enforcement as a law beyond the opening of the year; and he was assured that it was to be the crowning event of his administration and his life; and that while he was being counselled by strong parties to defer the enforcement of it, hoping to supplant it by other measures and to delay action, he must in no wise heed such counsel, but stand firm to his convictions and

fearlessly perform the work and fulfil the mission for which he had been raised up by an overruling Providence. Those present declared that they lost sight of the timid girl in the majesty of the utterance, the strength and force of the language, and the importance of that which was conveyed, and seemed to realize that some strong masculine spirit force was giving speech to almost divine commands.

I shall never forget the scene around me when I regained consciousness. I was standing in front of Mr. Lincoln, and he was sitting back in his chair, with his arms folded upon his breast, looking intently at me. I stepped back, naturally confused at the situation—not remembering at once where I was; and glancing around the group where perfect silence reigned. It took me a moment to remember my whereabouts.

A gentleman present then said in a low tone, "Mr. President, did you notice anything peculiar in the method of address?" Mr. Lincoln raised himself, as if shaking off his spell. He glanced quickly at the full-length portrait of Daniel Webster that hung above the piano, and replied: "Yes, and it is very singular, very!" with a marked emphasis.

Mr. Somes said: "Mr. President, would it be improper for me to inquire whether there has been any pressure brought to bear upon you to defer the enforcement of the Proclamation?" To which the President replied "Under these circumstances that question is perfectly proper, as we are all friends." (Smiling upon the company). "It is taking all my nerve and strength to withstand such a pressure." At this point the gentlemen drew around him and spoke together in low tones, Mr. Lincoln saying least of all. At last he turned to me, and laying his hand upon my head, uttered these words in a manner I shall never forget. "My child, you possess a very singular gift, but that it is of God I have no doubt. I thank you for coming here to-night. It is more important than perhaps anyone present can understand. I must leave you all now, but I hope I shall see you again." He shook me kindly by the hand, bowed to the rest of the company, and was gone. We remained an hour longer, talking with Mrs. Lincoln and her friends, and then returned to Georgetown. Such was my first interview with Abraham Lincoln, and the memory of it is as clear and vivid as the evening on which it occurred.

This was one of the most important instances in the history of Spiritualism, and may also have been one of the most important in the history of the United States, as it not only strengthened the President in taking a step which raised the whole moral tone of the Northern armies and put something of the crusading spirit into the men, but a subsequent message urged Lincoln to visit the camps, which he did with the best effect upon the *morale* of the army. And yet the reader might, I fear, search every history of the great struggle and every life of the President without finding a mention of this vital episode. It is all part of that unfair treatment which Spiritualism has endured so long.

It is impossible that the United States, if it appreciated the truth, would allow the cult which proved its value at the darkest moment of its history to be persecuted and repressed by ignorant policemen and bigoted magistrates in the way which is now so common, or that the Press should continue to make mock of the movement which produced the Joan of Arc of their country.

7. THE DAWN IN ENGLAND

THE early Spiritualists have frequently been compared with the early Christians, and there are indeed many points of resemblance. In one respect, however, the Spiritualists had an advantage. The women of the older dispensation did their part nobly, living as saints and dying as martyrs, but they did not figure as preachers and missionaries. Psychic power and psychic knowledge are, however, as great in one sex as in another, and therefore many of the great pioneers of the spiritual revelation were women. Especially may this be claimed for Emma Hardinge Britten, one whose name will grow more famous as the years roll by. There have, however, been several other women missionaries outstanding, and the most important of these from the British point of view is Mrs. Hayden, who first in the year 1852 brought the new phenomena to these shores. We had of old the Apostles of religious faith. Here at last was an apostle of religious fact.

Mrs. Hayden was a remarkable woman as well as an excellent medium. She was the wife of a respectable New England journalist who accompanied her in her mission, which had been organized by one Stone, who had some experience of her powers in America.

At the time of her visit she was described as being "young, intelligent, and at the same time simple and candid in her manners." Her British critic added:

She disarmed suspicion by the unaffected artlessness of her address, and many who came to amuse themselves at her expense were shamed into respect and even cordiality by the patience and good temper which she displayed. The impression invariably left by an interview with her was that if, as Mr. Dickens contended, the phenomena developed by her were attributed to art, she herself was the most perfect artist, as far as acting went, that had ever presented herself before the public.

The ignorant British Press treated Mrs. Hayden as a common American adventuress. Her real mental calibre, however, may be judged from the fact that some years later, after her return to the United States, Mrs. Hayden graduated as a doctor of medicine and practised for fifteen

years. Dr. James Rodes Buchanan, the famous pioneer in psychometry, speaks of her as "one of the most skilful and successful physicians I have ever known." She was offered a medical professorship in an American college, and was employed by the Globe Insurance Company in protecting the company against losses in insurance on lives. A feature of her success was what Buchanan describes as her psychometric genius. He adds a unique tribute to the effect that her name was almost forgotten at the Board of Health because for years she had not a single death to report.

This sequel, however, was beyond the knowledge of the sceptics of 1852, and they cannot be blamed for insisting that these strange claims of other-world intervention should be tested with the utmost rigour before they could be admitted. No one could contest this critical attitude. But what does seem strange is that a proposition which, if true, would involve such glad tidings as the piercing of the wall of death and a true communion of the saints, should arouse not sober criticism, however exacting, but a storm of insult and abuse, inexcusable at any time, but particularly so when directed against a lady who was a visitor in our midst. Mrs. Hardinge Britten says that Mrs. Hayden no sooner appeared upon the scene than the leaders of the Press, pulpit and college levelled against her a storm of ribaldry, persecution and insult, alike disgraceful to themselves and humiliating to the boasted liberalism and scientific acumen of their age. She added that her gentle womanly spirit must have been deeply pained, and the harmony of mind so essential to the production of good psychological results constantly destroyed, by the cruel and insulting treatment she received at the hands of many of those who came, pretending to be investigators, but in reality burning to thwart her, and laying traps to falsify the truths of which Mrs. Hayden professed to be the instrument. Sensitively alive to the animus of her visitors, she could feel, and often writhed under the crushing force of the antagonism brought to bear upon her, without—at that time – knowing how to repel or resist it.

At the same time, the whole nation was not involved in this irrational hostility, which in a diluted form we still see around us. Brave men arose who were not afraid to imperil their worldly career, or even their reputation for sanity, by championing an unpopular cause with no possible motive save the love of truth and that sense of chivalry which

revolted at the persecution of a woman. Dr. Ashburner, one of the Royal physicians, and Sir Charles Isham, were among those who defended the medium in the public Press.

Mrs. Hayden's mediumship seems, when judged by modern standards, to have been strictly limited in type. Save for the raps, we hear little of physical phenomena, nor is there any question of lights, materializations or Direct Voices. In harmonious company, however, the answers as furnished by raps were very accurate and convincing. Like all true mediums, she was sensitive to discord in her surroundings, with the result that the contemptible crew of practical jokers and ill-natured researchers who visited her found her a ready victim. Deceit is repaid by deceit and the fool is answered according to his folly, though the intelligence behind the words seems to care little for the fact that the passive instrument employed may be held accountable for the answer. These pseudo-researchers filled the Press with their humorous accounts of how they had deceived the spirits, when as a fact they had rather deceived themselves. George Henry Lewes, afterwards consort of George Eliot, was one of these cynical investigators. He recounts with glee how he had asked the control in writing: "Is Mrs. Hayden an impostor?" to which the control rapped out: "Yes." Lewes was dishonest enough to quote this afterwards as being a confession of guilt from Mrs. Hayden. One would rather draw from it the inference that the raps were entirely independent of the medium, and also that questions asked in a spirit of pure frivolity met with no serious reply.

It is, however, by the positives and not by the negatives that such questions must be judged, and the author must here use quotations to a larger extent than is his custom, for in no other way can one bring home how those seeds were first planted in England which are destined to grow to such a goodly height. Allusion has already been made to the testimony of Dr. Ashburner, the famous physician, and it would be well perhaps to add some of his actual words. He says¹:

Sex ought to have protected her from injury, if you gentlemen of the Press have no regard to the hospitable feelings due to one of your own cloth, for Mrs. Hayden is the wife of a former editor and proprietor of a journal in Boston having a most extensive circulation in New England.

¹ *The Leader*, March 14, 1853; June 1 and 8, 1853.

I declare to you that Mrs. Hayden is no impostor, and he who has the daring to come to an opposite conclusion must do so at the peril of his character for truth.

Again, in a long letter to *The Reasoner*, after admitting that he visited the medium in a thoroughly incredulous frame of mind, expecting to witness "the same class of transparent absurdities" he had previously encountered with other so-called mediums, Ashburner writes: "As for Mrs. Hayden, I have so strong a conviction of her perfect honesty that I marvel at anyone who could deliberately accuse her of fraud," and at the same time he gives detailed accounts of veridical communications he received.

Among the investigators was the celebrated mathematician and philosopher, Professor De Morgan. He gives some account of his experiences and conclusions in his long and masterly preface to his wife's book, "From Matter to Spirit," 1863, as follows:

*Ten years ago Mrs. Hayden, the well-known American medium, came to my house **alone**. The sitting began immediately after her arrival. Eight or nine persons of all ages, and of all degrees of belief and unbelief in the whole thing being imposture, were present. The raps began in the usual way. They were to my ear clean, clear, faint sounds such as would be said to ring, had they lasted. I likened them at the time to the noise which the ends of knitting-needles would make, if dropped from a small distance upon a marble slab, and instantly checked by a damper of some kind; and subsequent trial showed that my description was tolerably accurate. At a late period in the evening, after nearly three hours of experiment, Mrs. Hayden having risen, and talking at another table while taking refreshment, a child suddenly called out, "Will all the spirits who have been here this evening rap together?" The words were no sooner uttered than a hailstorm of knitting-needles was heard, crowded into certainly less than two seconds; the big needle sounds of the men, and the little ones of the women and children, being clearly distinguishable, but perfectly disorderly in their arrival.*

After a remark to the effect that for convenience he intends to speak of the raps as coming from spirits, Professor De Morgan goes on:

On being asked to put a question to the first spirit, I begged that I might be allowed to put my question mentally—that is, without speaking it, or writing it, or pointing it out to myself on an alphabet—and that Mrs. Hayden might hold both arms extended while the answer was in progress. Both demands were instantly granted by a couple of raps. I put the question and desired the answer might be in one word, which I assigned; all mentally.

I then took the printed alphabet, put a book upright before it, and, bending my eyes upon it, proceeded to point to the letters in the usual way. The word "chess" was given by a rap at each letter. I had now a reasonable certainty of the following alternative: either some thought-reading of a character wholly inexplicable, or such superhuman acuteness on the part of Mrs. Hayden that she could detect the letter I wanted by my bearing, though she (seated six feet from the book which hid my alphabet) could see neither my hand nor my eye, nor at what rate I was going through the letters. I was fated to be driven out of the second alternative before the sitting was done.

As the next incident of the sitting, which he goes on to relate, is given with extra details in a letter written ten years earlier to the Rev. W. Heald, we quote this version published in his wife's "Memoir of Augustus De Morgan" (pp. 221-2):

Presently came my father (OB., 1816), and after some conversation I went on as follows:

"Do you remember a periodical I have in my head?" "Yes." "Do you remember the epithets therein applied to yourself?" "Yes." "Will you give me the initials of them by the card?" "Yes." I then began pointing to the alphabet, with a book to conceal the card, Mrs. H. being at the opposite side of a round table (large), and a bright lamp between us. I pointed letter by letter till I came to F, which I thought should be the first initial. No rapping. The people round me said, "You have passed it; there was a rapping at the beginning." I went back and heard the rapping distinctly at C. This puzzled me, but in a moment I saw what it was. The sentence was begun by the rapping agency earlier than I intended. I allowed C to pass, and then got D T F O C, being the initials of the consecutive words which I remembered to have been applied to my father in an old review published in 1817, which no one in the room

had ever heard of but myself. C D T F O C was all right, and when I got so far I gave it up, perfectly satisfied that something, or somebody, or some spirit, was reading my thoughts. This and the like went on for nearly three hours, during a great part of which Mrs. H. was busy reading the "Key to Uncle Tom's Cabin," which she had never seen before, and I assure you she set to it with just as much avidity as you may suppose an American lady would who saw it for the first time, while we were amusing ourselves with the raps in our own way. All this I declare to be literally true. Since that time I have seen it in my house frequently, various persons presenting themselves. The answers are given mostly by the table, on which a hand or two is gently placed, tilting up at the letters. There is much which is confused in the answers, but every now and then comes something which surprises us. I have no theory about it, but in a year or two something curious may turn up. I am, however, satisfied of the reality of the phenomenon. A great many other persons are as cognizant of these phenomena in their own houses as myself. Make what you can of it if you are a philosopher.

When Professor De Morgan says that some spirit was reading his thoughts, he omits to observe that the incident of the first letter was evidence of something that was not in his mind. Also, from Mrs. Hayden's attitude throughout the séance, it is clear that it was her atmosphere rather than her actual conscious personality which was concerned. Some further important evidence from the De Morgans is relegated to the Appendix.

Mrs. Fitzgerald, a well-known figure in the early days of Spiritualism in London, gives, in *The Spiritualist* of November 22, 1878, the following very striking experience with Mrs. Hayden:

My first introduction to Spiritualism commenced at the time of the first visit of the well-known medium, Mrs. Hayden, to this country nearly thirty years ago. I was invited to meet her at a party given by a friend in Wimpole Street, London. Having made a pre-engagement for that evening, which I could not avoid, I arrived late, after what appeared an extraordinary scene, of which they were all talking with great animation. My look of blank disappointment was noticed, and Mrs. Hayden, whom I then met for the first time, came most kindly forward, expressed her regrets, and suggested that I should sit at a small table

by myself apart from the others, and she would ask the spirits if they would communicate with me. All this appeared so new and surprising I scarcely understood what she was talking about, or what I had to expect. She placed before me a printed alphabet, a pencil, and a piece of paper. Whilst she was in the act of doing this, I felt extraordinarily rappings all over the table, the vibrations from which I could feel on the sole of my foot as it rested against the table's leg. She then directed me to note down each letter at which I heard a distinct rap, and with this short explanation she left me to myself. I pointed as desired—a distinct rap came at the letter E—others followed, and a name that I could not fail to recognize was spelt out. The date of death was given, which I had not before known, and a message added which brought back to my memory the almost last dying words of an old friend—namely, "I shall watch over you." And then the recollection of the whole scene was brought vividly before me. I confess I was startled and somewhat awed.

I carried the paper upon which all this was written at the dictation of my spirit friend to his former legal adviser, and was assured by him that the dates, etc., were perfectly correct. They could not have been in my mind because I was not aware of them.

It is interesting to note that Mrs. Fitzgerald stated that she believed that Mrs. Hayden's first séance in England was held with Lady Combermere, her son, Major Cotton, and Mr. Henry Thompson, of York.

In the same volume of *The Spiritualist* (p. 264) there appears an account of a séance with Mrs. Hayden, taken from the life of Charles Young, the well-known tragedian, written by his son, the Rev. Julian Young:

1853, April 19th. I went up to London this day for the purpose of consulting my lawyers on a subject of some importance to myself, and having heard much of a Mrs. Hayden, an American lady, as a spiritual medium, I resolved, as I was in town, to discover her whereabouts, and judge of her gifts for myself. Accidentally meeting an old friend, Mr. H., I asked him if he could give me her address. He told me that it was 22, Queen Anne Street, Cavendish Square. As he had never been in her company, and had a great wish to see her, and yet was unwilling to pay his guinea for the treat, I offered to frank him, if he would go with me. He did so gladly. Spirit-rapping has been so common since 1853 that I should irritate my reader's patience by describing the

conventional mode of communicating between the living and the dead. Since the above date I have seen very much of spirit-rapping; and though my organs of wonder are largely developed, and I have a weakness for the mystic and supernatural, yet I cannot say that I have ever witnessed any spiritual phenomena which were not explicable on natural grounds, except in the instance I am about to give, in which collusion appeared to be out of the question, the friend who accompanied me never having seen Mrs. Hayden, and she knowing neither his name nor mine. The following dialogue took place between Mrs. H. and myself:

Mrs. H.: Have you, sir, any wish to communicate with the spirit of any departed friend?

J. C. Y.: Yes.

Mrs. H.: Be pleased then to ask your questions in the manner prescribed by the formula, and I dare say you will get satisfactory replies.

J. C. Y.: (Addressing himself to one invisible yet supposed to be present): Tell me the name of the person with whom I wish to communicate.

The letters written down according to the dictation of the taps when put together spelt "George William Young."

J. C. Y.: On whom are my thoughts now fixed?

A.: Frederick William Young.

J. C. Y.: What is he suffering from?

A.: Tic douloureux.

J. C. Y.: Can you prescribe anything for him?

A.: Powerful mesmerism.

J. C. Y.: Who should be the administrator?

A.: Someone who has strong sympathy with the patient.

J. C. Y.: Should I succeed?

A.: No.

J. C. Y.: *Who would?*

A.: *Joseph Ries. (A gentleman whom my uncle much respected.)*

J. C. Y.: *Have I lost any friend lately?*

A.: Yes.

J. C. Y.: *Who is it? (I thinking of a Miss Young, a distant cousin.)*

A.: *Christiana Lane.*

J. C. Y.: *Can you tell me where I sleep to-night?*

A.: *James B.'s, Esq., 9 Clarges Street.*

J. C. Y.: *Where do I sleep to-morrow?*

A.: *Colonel Weymouth's, Upper Grosvenor Street.*

I was so astounded by the correctness of the answers I received to my inquiries that I told the gentleman who was with me that I wanted particularly to ask a question to the nature of which I did not wish him to be privy, and that I should be obliged to him if he would go into the adjoining room for a few minutes. On his doing so I resumed my dialogue with Mrs. Hayden.

J. C. Y.: *I have induced my friend to withdraw because I did not wish him to know the question I want to put, but I am equally anxious that you should not know it either, and yet, if I understand rightly, no answer can be transmitted to me except through you. What is to be done under these circumstances?*

Mrs. H.: *Ask your question in such a form that the answer returned shall represent by one word the salient idea in your mind.*

J. C. Y.: *I will try. Will what I am threatened with take place?*

A.: No.

J. C. Y.: *That is unsatisfactory. It is easy to say Yes or No, but the value of the affirmation or negation will depend on the conviction I have that*

you know what I am thinking of. Give me one word which shall show that you have the clue to my thoughts.

A.: Will.

Now, a will by which I had benefited was threatened to be disputed. I wished to know whether the threat would be carried out. The answer I received was correct.

It may be added that Mr. Young had no belief, before or after this séance, in spirit agency, which surely, after such an experience, is no credit to his intelligence or capacity for assimilating fresh knowledge.

The following letter in *The Spiritualist* from Mr. John Malcom, of Clifton, Bristol, mentions some well-known sitters. Discussing the question that had been raised as to where the first séance in England was held and who were the witnesses present at it, he says:

I do not remember the date; but calling on my friend Mrs. Crowe, authoress of "The Night Side of Nature," she invited me to accompany her to a spiritual séance at the house of Mrs. Hayden in Queen Anne Street, Cavendish Square. She informed me that Mrs. Hayden had just arrived from America to exhibit the phenomena of Spiritualism to people in England who might feel interested in the subject. There were present Mrs. Crowe, Mrs. Milner Gibson, Mr. Colley Grattan (author of "High Ways and Bye Ways"), Mr. Robert Chambers, Dr. Daniels, Dr. Samuel Dickson, and several others whose names I did not hear. Some very remarkable manifestations occurred on that occasion. I afterwards had frequent opportunities of visiting Mrs. Hayden, and, though at first disposed to doubt the genuineness of the phenomena, such convincing evidence was given me of spirit communion that I became a firm believer in the truth of it.

The battle in the British Press raged furiously. In the columns of *The London Critic*, Mr. Henry Spicer (author of "Sights and Sounds") replied to the critics in *Household Words*, *The Leader*, and *The Zoist*. There followed in the same newspaper a lengthy contribution from a Cambridge clergyman, signing himself "M.A.," considered to be the Rev. A. W. Hobson, of St. John's College, Cambridge.

This gentleman's description is graphic and powerful, but too long for complete transcription. The matter is of some importance, as the writer is, so far as is known, the first English clergyman who had gone into the matter. It is strange, and perhaps characteristic of the age, how little the religious implications appear to have struck the various sitters, and how entirely occupied they were by inquiries as to their grandmother's second name or the number of their uncles. Even the more earnest seem to have been futile in their questions, and no one shows the least sense of realization of the real possibilities of such commerce, or that a firm foundation for religious belief could at last be laid. This clergyman did, however, in a purblind way, see that there was a religious side to the matter. He finishes his report with the paragraph:

I will conclude with a few words to the numerous clerical readers of the Critic. Being myself a clergyman of the Church of England, I consider that the subject is one in which my brother clergy must, sooner or later, take some interest, however reluctant they may be to have anything to do with it. And my reasons are briefly as follow: If such excitement become general in this country as already exists in America—and what reason have we to suppose that it will not?—then the clergy throughout the kingdom will be appealed to on all sides, will have to give an opinion, and may probably be obliged, by their very duties, to interfere and endeavour to prevent the delusions to which, in many cases, this "mystery" has already led. One of the most sensible and able writers on the subject of these spirit manifestations in America, viz., Adin Ballou, in his work has expressly cautioned his readers not to believe all these spirits communicate, nor allow themselves to give up their former opinions and religious creeds (as so many thousands have done) at the bidding of these rappers. The thing has scarcely begun in England as yet; but already, within the few months since Mr. and Mrs. Hayden arrived in London, it has spread like wild-fire, and I have good reason for saying that the excitement is only commencing. Persons who at first treated the whole affair as a contemptible imposture and humbug, on witnessing these strange things for themselves, become first startled and astonished, then rush blindly into all sorts of mad conclusions—as, for instance, that it is all the work of the devil, or (in the opposite degree) that it is a new revelation from Heaven. I see scores of the most able and intelligent

people whom I know utterly and completely mystified by it; and no one knows what to make of it. I am ready to confess, for my own part, that I am equally mystified. That it is not imposture, I feel perfectly and fully convinced. In addition to the tests, etc., above-named, I had a long conversation in private with both Mr. and Mrs. Hayden separately, and everything they said bore the marks of sincerity and good faith. Of course, this is no evidence to other people, but it is to me. If there is any deception, they are as much deceived as any of their dupes.

It was not the clergy but the Free Thinkers who perceived the real meaning of the message, and that they must either fight against this proof of life eternal, or must honestly confess, as so many of us have done since, that their philosophy was shattered, and that they had been beaten on their own ground. These men had called for proofs in transcendent matters, and the more honest and earnest were forced to admit that they had had them. The noblest of them all was Robert Owen, as famous for his humanitarian works as for his sturdy independence in religious matters. This brave and honest man declared publicly that the first rays of this rising sun had struck him and had gilded the drab future which he had pictured. He said:

I have patiently traced the history of these manifestations, investigated the facts connected with them (testified to in innumerable instances by persons of high character), have had fourteen séances with the medium Mrs. Hayden, during which she gave me every opportunity to ascertain if it were possible there could be any deception on her part.

I am not only convinced that there is no deception with truthful media in these proceedings, but that they are destined to effect, at this period, the greatest class="quote" moral revolution in the character and condition of the human race.

Mrs. Emma Hardinge Britten comments on the interest and astonishment created by the conversion of Robert Owen, the influence of whose purely materialistic belief was regarded as exerting an injurious effect on religion. She says that one of England's most prominent statesmen declared "that Mrs. Hayden deserved a monument, if only for the conversion of Robert Owen."

Shortly afterwards the famous Dr. Elliotson, who was the president of the Secular Society, was also converted after, like St. Paul, violently assailing the new revelation. He and Dr. Ashburner had been two of the most prominent supporters of mesmerism in the days when even that obvious phenomenon had to fight for its existence, and when every medical man who affirmed it was in danger of being called a quack. It was painful to both of them, therefore, when Dr. Ashburner threw himself into this higher subject with enthusiasm, while his friend was constrained not only to reject but actively to attack it. However, the breach was healed by the complete conversion of Elliotson, and Mrs. Hardinge Britten relates how in his declining years he insisted upon her coming to him, and how she found him a "warm adherent of Spiritualism, a faith which the venerable gentleman cherished as the brightest revelation that had ever been vouchsafed to him, and one which finally smoothed the dark passage to the life beyond, and made his transition a scene of triumphant faith and joyful anticipation."

As might have been expected, it was not long before the rapid growth of table phenomena compelled scientific sceptics to recognize their existence, or at least to take steps to expose the delusion of those who attributed to the movements an external origin. Braid, Carpenter, and Faraday stated publicly that the results obtained were due simply to unconscious muscular action. Faraday devised ingenious apparatus which he considered conclusively proved his assertion. But, like so many other critics, Faraday had had no experience with a good medium, and the well-attested fact of the movement of tables without contact is sufficient to demolish his pretty theories. If one could imagine a layman without a telescope contradicting with jeers and contempt the conclusions of those astronomers who had used telescopes, it would present some analogy to those people who have ventured to criticize psychic matters without having had any personal psychic experience.

The contemporary spirit is no doubt voiced by Sir David Brewster. Speaking of an invitation from Monckton Milnes to meet Mr. Galla, the African traveller, "who assured him that Mrs. Hayden told him the names of persons and places in Africa which nobody but himself knew," Sir David comments, "The world is obviously going mad."

Mrs. Hayden remained in England about a year, returning to America towards the close of 1853. Some day, when these matters have found their true proportion to other events, her visit will be regarded as historical and epoch-making. Two other American mediums were in England during her visit —Mrs. Roberts and Miss Jay—having followed shortly after, but they appear to have had little influence on the movement, and seem to have been very inferior in psychic power.

A contemporary sidelight on those early days is afforded by this extract from an article on Spiritualism in *The Yorkshireman* (October 25, 1856), a non-Spiritualist journal:

The English public in general, we believe, are but imperfectly acquainted with the nature of the Spiritualist doctrines, and many of our readers are, doubtless, unprepared to believe that they prevail to any extent in this country. The ordinary phenomena of table-moving, etc., are, it is true, familiar to most of us. Some two or three years ago there was not an evening party which did not essay the performance of a Spiritualist miracle. In those days you were invited to "Tea and Table Moving" as a new excitement, and made to revolve with the family like mad round articles of furniture.

After declaring that Faraday's attack made "the spirits suddenly subside," so that for a time no more was heard of their doings, the journal continues:

We have ample evidence, however, that Spiritualism as a vital and active belief is not confined to the United States, but that it has found favour and acceptance among a considerable class of enthusiasts in our own country.

But the general attitude of the influential Press was much the same then as now—ridicule and denial of the facts, and the view that even if the facts were true, of what use were they? *The Times*, for instance (a paper which has been very ill-informed and reactionary in psychic matters), in a leading article of a little later date suggests:

It would be something to get one's hat off the peg by an effort of volition, without going to fetch it, or troubling a servant.

If table-power could be made to turn even a coffee-mill, it would be so much gained.

Let our mediums and clairvoyants, instead of finding out what somebody died of fifty years ago, find out what figure the Funds will be at this day three months.

When one reads such comments in a great paper one wonders whether the movement was not really premature, and whether in so base and material an age the idea of outside intervention was not impossible to grasp. Much of this opposition was due, however, to the frivolity of inquirers who had not as yet realized the full significance of these signals from beyond, and used them, as the Yorkshire paper states, as a sort of social recreation and a new excitement for jaded worldlings.

But while in the eyes of the Press the death-blow had been given to a discredited movement, investigation went on quietly in many quarters. People of common sense, as Howitt points out, "were successfully testing those angels, under their own mode of advent, and finding them real," for, as he well says, public mediums have never done more than inaugurate the movement."

If one were to judge from the public testimony of the time, Mrs. Hayden's influence might be considered to have been limited in extent. To the public at large she was only a nine days' wonder, but she scattered much seed which slowly grew. The fact is, she opened the subject up, and people, mostly in the humbler walks of life, began to experiment and to discover the truth for themselves, though, with a caution born of experience, they kept their discoveries for the most part to themselves. Mrs. Hayden, without doubt, fulfilled her ordained task.

The history of the movement may well be compared to an advancing sea with its successive crests and troughs, each crest gathering more volume than the last. With every trough the spectator has thought that the waves had ended, and then the great new billow gathered. The time between the leaving of Mrs. Hayden in 1853 until the advent of D.D. Home in 1855 represents the first lull in England. Superficial critics thought it was the end. But in a thousand homes throughout the land experiments were being carried on; many who had lost all faith in the things of the spirit, in what was perhaps the deadest and most material age in the world's

history, had begun to examine the evidence and to understand with relief or with awe that the age of faith was passing and that the age of knowledge, which St. Peter has said to be better, was at hand. Devout students of the Scriptures remember the words of their Master: "I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now," and wondered whether these strange stirrings of outside forces might not be part of that new knowledge which had been promised.

Whilst Mrs. Hayden had thus planted the first seeds in London, a second train of events had brought spiritual phenomena under the notice of the people of Yorkshire.

This was due to a visit of a Mr. David Richmond, an American Shaker, to the town of Keighley, when he called upon Mr. David Weatherhead and interested him in the new development. Table manifestations were obtained and local mediums discovered, so that a flourishing centre was built up which still exists. From Yorkshire the movement spread over Lancashire, and it is an interesting link with the past that Mr. Wolstenholme, of Blackburn, who died in 1925 at a venerable age, was able as a boy to secrete himself under a table at one of these early séances, where he witnessed, though we will hope that he did not aid, the phenomena. A paper, *The Yorkshire Spiritual Telegraph*, was started at Keighley in 1855, this and other expenses being borne by David Weatherhead, whose name should be honoured as one who was the first to throw his whole heart into the movement. Keighley is still an active centre of psychic work and knowledge.

8. CONTINUED PROGRESS IN ENGLAND

MRS. DE MORGAN'S account of ten years' experience of Spiritualism covers the ground from 1853 to 1863. The appearance of this book, with the weighty preface by Professor De Morgan, was one of the first signs that the new movement was spreading upwards as well as among the masses. Then came the work of D.D. Home and of the Davenports, which is detailed elsewhere. The examination of the Dialectical Society began in 1869, which is also dealt with in a later chapter. The year 1870 was the date of the first researches of William Crookes, which he undertook after remarking upon the scandal caused by the refusal of scientific men "to investigate the existence and nature of facts asserted by so many competent and credible witnesses." In the same periodical, the Quarterly journal of Science, he spoke of this belief being shared by millions, and added: "I wish to ascertain the laws governing the appearance of very remarkable phenomena, which, at the present time, are occurring to an almost incredible extent."

The story of his research was given in full in 1874, and caused such a tumult among the more fossilized men of science—those who may be said to have had their minds subdued to that at which they worked—that there was some talk of depriving him of his Fellowship of the Royal Society. The storm blew over, but Crookes was startled by its violence, and it was noticeable that for many years, until his position was impregnable, he was very cautious in any public expression of his views. In 1872-73, the Rev. Stainton Moses appeared as a new factor, and his automatic writings raised the subject to a more spiritual plane in the judgment of many. The phenomenal side may attract the curious, but when over-emphasized it is likely to repel the judicious mind.

Public lectures and trance addresses became a feature. Mrs. Emma Hardinge Britten, Mrs. Cora L. V. Tappan, and Mr. J. J. Morse gave eloquent orations, purporting to come from spirit influence, and large gatherings were deeply interested. Mr. Gerald Massey, the well-known poet and writer, and Dr. George Sexton, also delivered public lectures. Altogether, Spiritualism had much publicity given to it.

The establishment of the British National Association of Spiritualists in 1873 gave the movement an impetus, because many well-known public men and women joined it. Among them may be mentioned the Countess of Caithness, Mrs. Makdougall Gregory (widow of Professor Gregory, of Edinburgh), Dr. Stanhope Speer, Dr. Gully, Sir Charles Isham, Dr. Maurice Davies, Mr. H. D. Jencken, Dr. George Sexton, Mrs. Ross Church (Florence Marryat), Mr. Newton Crosland, and Mr. Benjamin Coleman.

Mediumship of a high order in the department of physical phenomena was supplied by Mrs. Jencken (Kate Fox) and Miss Florence Cook. Dr. J. R. Newton, the famous healing medium from America, arrived in 1870, and numbers of extraordinary cures were registered at free treatments. From 1870 Mrs. Everitt's wonderful mediumship exercised, like that of D.D. Home, without charge, convinced many influential people. Herne and Williams, Mrs. Guppy, Eglinton, Slade, Lottie Fowler, and others, secured many converts through their mediumship. In 1872 Hudson's spirit photographs created enormous interest, and in 1875 Dr. Alfred Russel Wallace published his famous book, "On Miracles and Modern Spiritualism."

A good means of tracing the growth of Spiritualism at this period is to examine the statements of worthy contemporary witnesses, especially those qualified by position and experience to give an opinion. But before we glance at the period we are considering, let us look at the situation in 1866, as viewed by Mr. William Howitt in a few paragraphs which are so admirable that the author is constrained to quote thetas verbatim. He says:

The present position of Spiritualism in England, were the Press, with all its influence, omnipotent, would be hopeless. After having taken every possible means to damage and sneer down Spiritualism; after having opened its columns to it, in the hope that its emptiness and folly would be so apparent that its clever enemies would soon be able to knock it on the head by invincible arguments, and then finding that all the advantages of reason and fact were on its side; after having abused and maligned it to no purpose, the whole Press as by one consent, or by one settled plan, has adopted the system of opening its columns and pages to any false or foolish story about it, and hermetically closing

them to any explanation, refutation, or defence. It is, in fact, resolved, all other means of killing it having failed, to burke it. To clap a literary pitch-plaster on its mouth, and then let anyone that likes cut its throat if he can. By this means it hopes to stamp it out like the rinderpest....

If anything could annihilate Spiritualism, its present estimation by the English public, its treatment by the Press and the courts of law, its attempted suppression by all the powers of public intelligence, its hatred by the heroes of the pulpits of all churches and creeds, the simple acceptance of even the public folly and wickedness attributed to it by the Press, its own internal divisions—in a word, its pre-eminent unpopularity would put it out of existence. But does it? On the contrary, it never was more firmly rooted into the mass of advanced minds; its numbers never more rapidly increased; its truths were never more earnestly and eloquently advocated; the enquiries after it never more abundant or more anxious. The soirees in Harley Street have, through the whole time that Press and horsehair wig have been heaping every reproach and every scorn upon it, been crowded to excess by ladies and gentlemen of the middle and higher classes, who have listened in admiration to the eloquent and ever-varied addresses of Emma Hardinge. Meantime, the Davenports, a thousand times denounced as impostors, and exposed impostors, have a thousand times shown that their phenomena remain as unexplainable as ever on any but a spiritual theory.

What means all this? What does it indicate? That Press and pulpit, and magistrate and law courts, have all tried their powers, and have failed. They stand nonplussed before the thing which they themselves have protested is poor and foolish and false and unsubstantial. If it be so poor and foolish and false and unsubstantial, how is it that all their learning, their unscrupulous denunciation, their vast means of attack and their not less means of prevention of fair defence, their command of the ears and the opinions of the multitude—how happens it that all their wit and sarcasm and logic and eloquence cannot touch it? So far from shaking and diminishing it, they do not even ruffle a hair on its head, or a fringe of its robe.

Is it not about time for these combined hosts of the great and wise, the scientific, the learned, the leaders of senates and colleges and courts of

law, the eloquent favourites of Parliament, the magnates of the popular Press, furnished with all the intellectual artillery which a great national system of education, and great national system of Church and State and aristocracy, accustomed to proclaim what shall be held to be true and of honourable repute by all honourable men and women—is it not time, I say, that all this great and splendid world of wit and wisdom should begin to suspect that they have something solid to deal with? That there is something vital in what they have treated as a phantom?

I do not say to these great and world-commanding bodies, powers and agencies, open your eyes and see that your efforts are fruitless, and acknowledge your defeat, for probably they never will open their eyes and confess their shame; but I say to the Spiritualists themselves, dark as the day may seem to you, never was it more cheering. Leagued as all the armies of public instructors and directors are against it, never was its bearing more anticipatory of ultimate victory. It has upon it the stamp of all the conquering influences of the age. It has all the legitimatism of history on its head. It is but fighting the battle that every great reform – social or moral or intellectual or religious—has fought and eventually won.

As showing the change that occurred after Mr. Howitt wrote in 1866, we find *The Times* of December 26, 1872, publishing an article entitled "Spiritualism and Science," occupying three and a half columns, in which the opinion is expressed that now "it is high time competent hands undertook the unravelling of this Gordian Knot," though why the existing hands of Crookes, Wallace or De Morgan were incompetent is not explained.

The writer, speaking of Lord Adare's little book (privately printed) on his experiences with D.D. Home, seems to be impressed by the social status of the various witnesses. Clumsy humour and snobbishness are the characteristics of the article:

A volume now lying before us may serve to show how this folly has spread throughout society. It was lent to us by a distinguished Spiritualist, under the solemn promise that we should not divulge a single name of those concerned. It consists of about 150 pages of reports of séances, and was privately printed by a noble Earl, who has lately passed beyond the House of Lords; beyond also, we trust, the spirit-

peopled chairs and tables which in his lifetime he loved, not wisely, but too well. In this book things more marvellous than any we have set down are circumstantially related, in a natural way, just as though they were ordinary, everyday matters of fact. We shall not fatigue the reader by quoting any of the accounts given, and no doubt he will take our word when we say that they range through every species of "manifestation," from prophesyings downwards.

What we more particularly wish to observe is, that the attestation of fifty respectable witnesses is placed before the title-page. Among them are a Dowager Duchess and other ladies of rank, a Captain in the Guards, a nobleman, a Baronet, a Member of Parliament, several officers of our scientific and other corps, a barrister, a merchant, and a doctor. Upper and upper middle-class society is represented in all its grades, and by persons who, to judge by the position they hold and the callings they follow, ought to be possessed of intelligence and ability.

Dr. Alfred Russel Wallace, the eminent naturalist, in the course of a letter to *The Times* (January 4, 1873), describing his visit to a public medium, said:

I consider it no exaggeration to say that the main facts are now as well established and as easily verifiable as any of the more exceptional phenomena of Nature which are not yet reduced to law. They have a most important bearing on the interpretation of history, which is full of narratives of similar facts, and on the nature of life and intellect, on which physical science throws a very feeble and uncertain light; and it is my firm and deliberate belief that every branch of philosophy must suffer till they are honestly and seriously investigated, and dealt with as constituting an essential portion of the phenomena of human nature.

One becomes bemused by ectoplasm and laboratory experiments which lead the thoughts away from the essential. Wallace was one of the few whose great, sweeping, unprejudiced mind saw and accepted the truth in its wonderful completeness from the humble physical proofs of outside power to the highest mental teaching which that power could convey, teaching that far surpasses in beauty and in credibility any which the modern mind has known.

The public acceptance and sustained support of this great scientific man, one of the first brains of his age, were the more important since he had the wit to understand the complete religious revolution which lay at the back of these phenomena. It has been a curious fact that with some exceptions in these days, as of old, the wisdom has been given to the humble and withheld from the learned. Heart and intuition have won to the goal where brain has missed it. One would think that the proposition was a simple one. It may be expressed in a series of questions after the Socratic form: "Have we established connexion with the intelligence of those who have died?" *The Spiritualist* says: "Yes." "Have they given us information of the new life in which they find themselves, and of how it has been affected by their earth life?" Again "Yes." "Have they found it correspond to the account given by any religion upon earth?" "No." Then if this be so, is it not clear that the new information is of vital religious import? The humble Spiritualist sees this and adapts his worship to the facts.

Sir William (then Professor) Barrett brought the subject of Spiritualism before the British Association for the Advancement of Science in 1876. His paper was entitled "On Some Phenomena associated with Abnormal Conditions of Mind." He had difficulty in obtaining a hearing. The Biological Committee refused to accept the paper and passed it on to the Anthropological Sub-section, who only accepted it on the casting vote of the chairman, Dr. Alfred Russel Wallace. Colonel Lane Fox helped to overcome the opposition by asking why, as they had discussed ancient witchcraft the previous year, they should not examine modern witchcraft that year. The first part of Professor Barrett's paper dealt with mesmerism, but in the second part he related his experiences of Spiritualistic phenomena, and urged that further scientific examination should be given to the subject. He gave the convincing details of a remarkable experience he had had of raps occurring with a child.¹

In the ensuing discussion Sir William Crookes spoke of the levitations he had witnessed with D.D. Home, and said of levitation: "The evidence in favour of it is stronger than the evidence in favour of almost any natural phenomenon the British Association could investigate." He also made the following remarks concerning his own method of psychic research:

¹ *The Spiritualist*, Sept. 22, 1876, Vol. IX, pp. 87-88.

I was asked to investigate when Dr. Slade first came over, and I mentioned my conditions. I have never investigated except under these conditions. It must be at my own house, and my own selection of friends and spectators, under my own conditions, and I may do whatever I like as regards apparatus. I have always tried, where it has been possible, to make the physical apparatus test the things themselves, and have not trusted more than is possible to my own senses. But when it is necessary to trust to my senses, I must entirely dissent from Mr. Barrett, when he says a trained physical inquirer is no match for a professional conjurer. I maintain a physical inquirer is more than a match.

An important contribution to the discussion was made by Lord Rayleigh, the distinguished mathematician, who said:

I think we are much indebted to Professor Barrett for his courage, for it requires some courage to come forward in this matter, and to give us the benefit of his careful experiments. My own interest in the subject dates back two years. I was first attracted to it by reading Mr. Crookes's investigations. Although my opportunities have not been so good as those enjoyed by Professor Barrett, I have seen enough to convince me that those are wrong who wish to prevent investigation by casting ridicule on those who may feel inclined to engage in it.

The next speaker, Mr. Groom Napier, was greeted with laughter when he described verified psychometric descriptions of people from their handwriting enclosed in sealed envelopes, and when he went on to describe spirit lights that he had seen, the uproar forced him to resume his seat. Professor Barrett, in replying to his critics, said:

It certainly shows the immense advance that this subject has made within the last few years, that a paper on the once laughed-at phenomena of so-called Spiritualism should have been admitted into the British Association, and should have been permitted to receive the full discussion it has had to-day.

The *London Spectator*, in an article entitled "The British Association on Professor Barrett's Paper," opened with the following broad-minded view:

Now that we have before us a full report of Professor Barrett's paper, and of the discussion upon it, we may be permitted to express our hope that the British Association will really take some action on the subject of the paper, in spite of the protests of the party which we may call the party of superstitious incredulity. We say superstitious incredulity because it is really a pure superstition, and nothing else, to assume that we are so fully acquainted with the laws of Nature, that even carefully-examined facts, attested by an experienced observer, ought to be cast aside as utterly unworthy of credit, only because they do not at first sight seem to be in keeping with what is most clearly known already.

Sir William Barrett's views steadily progressed until he accepted the Spiritualistic position in unequivocal terms before his lamented death in 1925. He lived to see the whole world ameliorate its antagonism to such subjects, though little difference perhaps could be observed in the British Association which remained as obscurantist as ever. Such a tendency, however, may not have been an unmixed evil, for, as Sir Oliver Lodge has remarked, if the great pressing material problems had been complicated by psychic issues, it is possible that they would not have been solved. It may be worth remarking that Sir William Barrett in conversation with the author recalled that of the four men who supported him upon that historical and difficult occasion, every one lived to receive the Order of Merit—the greatest honour which their country could bestow. The four were Lord Rayleigh, Crookes, Wallace and Huggins.

It was not to be expected that the rapid growth of Spiritualism would be without its less desirable features. These were of at least two kinds. First the cry of fraudulent mediumship was frequently heard. In the light of our later, fuller knowledge we know that much that bears the appearance of fraud is not necessarily fraud at all. At the same time, the unbounded credulity of a section of Spiritualists undoubtedly provided an easy field for charlatans. In the course of a paper read before the Cambridge University Society for Psychological Investigation in 1879, the President of the Society, Mr. J. A. Campbell, said²:

Since the advent of Mr. Home, the number of media has increased yearly, and so has the folly and the imposture. Every spook has become, in the eyes of fools, a divine angel; and not even every spook, but every

² *The Spiritualist*, April 11, 1879, p. 170.

rogue, dressed up in a sheet, who has chosen or shall choose to call himself a materialized "spirit." A so-called religion has been founded in which the honour of the most sacred names has been transferred to the ghosts of pickpockets. Of the characters of which divinities, and of the doctrines taught by them, I shall not insult you by speaking; so it ever is when folly and ignorance get into their hands the weapon of an eternal fact, abuse, distortion, crime itself; such were ever the results of children playing with edged tools, but who but an ignoramus would cry, naughty knife? Gradually the movement is clearing itself of such excretions, gradually is it becoming more sober and pure, and strong, and as sensible men and educated men study and pray and work, striving to make good use of their knowledge, will it become more so.

The second feature was the apparent increase of what may be termed anti-Christian, though not antireligious, Spiritualism. This led to William Howitt and other stalwart supporters ceasing their connexion with the movement. Powerful articles against this tendency were contributed to *The Spiritual Magazine* by Howitt and others.

A suggestion of the need for caution and balance is afforded in the remarks of Mr. William Stainton Moses, who said in a paper read before the British National Association of Spiritualists on January 26, 1880³:

We are emphatically in need of discipline and education. We have hardly yet settled down after our rapid growth. The child, born just thirty years ago, has increased in stature (if not in wisdom) at a very rapid rate. It has grown so fast that its education has been a little neglected. In the expressive phraseology of its native country, it has been "dragged up" rather promiscuously; and its phenomenal growth has absorbed all other considerations. The time has now come when those who have regarded it as an ugly monster which was born by one of Nature's freaks only to die an early death, begin to recognize their mistake. The ugly brat means to live; and beneath its ugliness the least sympathetic gaze detects a coherent purpose in its existence. It is the presentation of a principle inherent in man's nature, a principle which his wisdom has improved away until it is wellnigh eliminated altogether, but which crops out again and again in spite of him—the principle of Spirit as opposed to Matter, of Soul acting and existing

³ *The Psychological Review*, Vol. II, p. 546.

independently of the body which enshrines it. Long years of denial of aught but the properties of matter have landed the chief lights of modern science in pure Materialism. To them, therefore, this Spiritualism is a portent and a problem. It is a return to superstition; a survival of savagery; a blot on nineteenth century intelligence. Laughed at, it laughs back; scorned, it gives back scorn for scorn.

In 1881, *Light*, a high-class weekly Spiritualist newspaper, was begun, and 1882 saw the formation of the Society for Psychical Research.

Speaking generally, it may be said that the attitude of organized science during these thirty years was as unreasonable and unscientific as that of Galileo's cardinals, and that if there had been a Scientific Inquisition, it would have brought its terrors to bear upon the new knowledge. No serious attempt of any sort, up to the formation of the S.P.R. was made to understand or explain a matter which was engaging the attention of millions of minds. Faraday in 1853 put forward the theory that table-moving was caused by muscular pressure, which may be true enough in some cases, but bears no relation to the levitation of tables, and in any case applies only to the one limited class of psychic phenomena. The usual "scientific" objection was that nothing occurred at all, which neglected the testimony of thousands of credible witnesses. Others argued that what did happen was capable of being exposed by a conjurer, and any clumsy imitation such as Maskelyne's parody of the Davenport's was eagerly hailed as an exposure, with no reference to the fact that the whole mental side of the question with its overwhelming evidence was untouched thereby.

The "religious" people, furious at being shaken out of their time-honoured ruts, were ready, like savages, to ascribe any new thing to the devil. Roman Catholics and the Evangelical sects, alike, found themselves for once united in their opposition. That low spirits may be reached, and low, lying messages received, is beyond all doubt, since every class of spirit exists around us, and like attracts like; but the lofty, sustaining and philosophic teaching which comes to every serious and humble-minded inquirer shows that it is Angelism and not Diabolism which is within our reach. Dr. Carpenter put forward some complex theory, but seems to have been in a minority of one in its acceptance or even in its comprehension. The doctors had an explanation founded

upon the cracking of joints, which is ludicrous to anyone who has had personal experience of those percussive sounds which vary in range from the tick of a watch to the blow of a sledge-hammer.

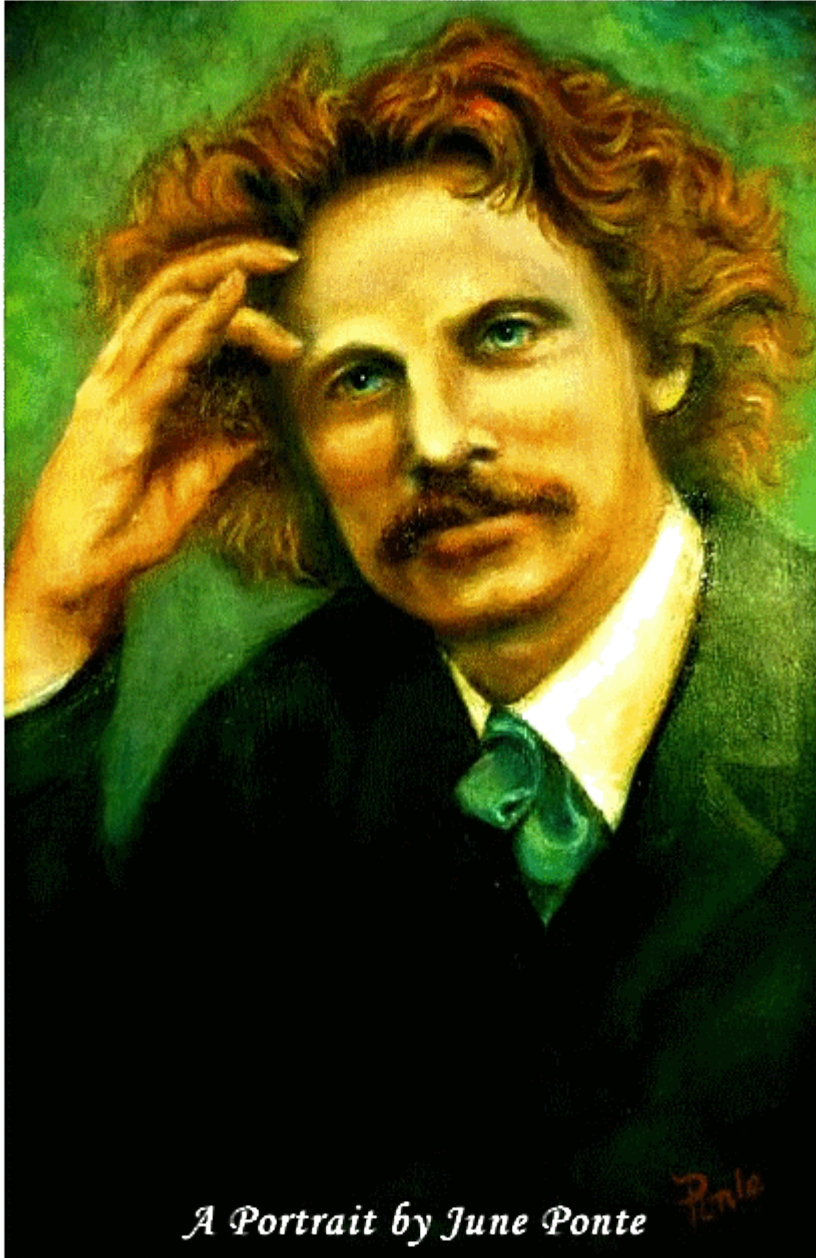
Further explanations, either then or later, included the Theosophic doctrine, which admitted the facts but depreciated the spirits, describing them as astral shells with a sort of dreamy half-consciousness, or possibly an attenuated conscience which made them sub-human in their intelligence or morality. Certainly the quality of spirit communion does vary greatly, but the highest is so high that we can hardly imagine that we are in touch with only a fraction of the speaker. As it is asserted, however, that even in this world our subliminal self is far superior to our normal workaday individuality, it would seem only fair that the spirit world should confront us with something less than its full powers.

Another theory postulates the *Anima Mundi*, a huge reservoir or central bank of intelligence, with a clearing-house in which all inquiries are honoured. The sharp detail which we receive from the Other Side is incompatible with any vague grandiose idea of the sort. Finally, there is the one really formidable alternative, that man has an etheric body with many unknown gifts, among which a power of external manifestation in curious forms may be included. It is to this theory of Cryptesthesia that Richet and others have clung, and up to a point there is an argument in its favour. The author has satisfied himself that there is a preliminary and elementary stage in all psychic work which depends upon the innate and possibly unconscious power of the medium. The reading of concealed script, the production of raps upon demand, the description of scenes at a distance, the remarkable effects of psychometry, the first vibrations of the Direct Voice—each and all of these on different occasions have seemed to emanate from the medium's own power. Then in most cases there would appear an outside intelligence which was able to appropriate that force and use it for its own ends. An illustration might be given in the experiments of Bisson and Schrenck Notzing with Eva, where the ectoplasmic forms were at first undoubtedly reflections of newspaper illustrations, somewhat muddled by their passage through the medium's mind. Yet there came a later and deeper stage where an ectoplasmic form was evolved which was capable of movement and even of speech. Richet's great brain and close power of observation have been largely centred upon the physical phenomena, and he does not seem to

have been brought much in contact with those personal mental and spiritual experiences which would probably have modified his views. It is fair to add, however, that those views have continually moved in the direction of the Spiritualistic explanation.

There only remains the hypothesis of complex personality, which may well influence certain cases, though it seems to the author that such cases might be explained equally well by obsession. These instances, however, can only touch the fringe of the subject, and ignore the whole phenomenal aspect, so that the matter need not be taken very seriously. It cannot be too often repeated, however, that the inquirer should exhaust every possible normal explanation to his own complete satisfaction before he adopts the Spiritualistic view. If he has done this his platform is stable—if he has not done it he can never be conscious of its solidity. The author can say truly, that year after year he clung on to every line of defence until he was finally compelled, if he were to preserve any claim to mental honesty, to abandon the materialistic position.

9. THE CAREER OF D.D. HOME



Daniel Dunglas Home.

DANIEL DUNGLAS HOME was born in 1833 at Currie, a village near Edinburgh. There was a mystery about his parentage, and it has been both asserted and denied that he was related in some fashion to the family of the Earl of Home. Certainly he was a man who inherited elegance of figure, delicacy of feature, sensitiveness of disposition and

luxury in taste, from whatever source he sprang. But for his psychic powers, and for the earnestness which they introduced into his complex character, he might have been taken as the very type of the aristocratic younger son who inherits the tendencies, but not the wealth, of his forbears.

Home went from Scotland to New England, at the age of nine years, with his aunt who had adopted him, a mystery still surrounding his existence. When he was thirteen he began to show signs of the psychic faculties he had inherited, for his mother, who was descended from an old Highland family, had the characteristic second-sight of her race. His mystical trend had shown itself in a conversation with his boy friend, Edwin, about a short story where, as the result of a compact, a lover, after his death, manifested his presence to his lady-love. The two boys pledged themselves that whoever died first would come and show himself to the other. Home removed to another district some hundreds of miles distant, and about a month later, just after going to bed one night, he saw a vision of Edwin and announced to his aunt his death, news of which was received a day or two after. A second vision in 1850 concerned the death of his mother, who with her husband had gone to live in America. The boy was ill in bed at the time, and his mother away on a visit to friends at a distance. One evening he called loudly for help, and when his aunt came she found him in great distress. He said that his mother had died that day at twelve o'clock; that she had appeared to him and told him so. The vision proved to be only too true. Soon loud raps began to disturb the quiet household, and furniture to be moved by invisible agency. His aunt, a woman of a narrow religious type, declared the boy had brought the Devil into her house, and turned him out of doors.

He took refuge with friends, and in the next few years moved among them from town to town. His mediumship had become strongly developed, and at the houses where he stopped he gave frequent séances, sometimes as many as six or seven a day, for the limitations of power and the reactions between physical and psychic were little understood at that time. These proved a great drain on his strength, and he was frequently laid up with illness. People flocked from all directions to witness the marvels which occurred in Home's presence. Among those who investigated with him at this time was the American poet Bryant,

who was accompanied by Professor Wells, of Harvard University. In New York he met many distinguished Americans, and three—Professor Hare, Professor Mapes, and Judge Edmonds, of the New York Supreme Court—had sittings with him. All three became, as already stated, convinced Spiritualists.

In these early years the charm of Home's personality, and the deep impression created by his powers, led to his receiving many offers. Professor George Bush invited him to stay with him and study for the Swedenborgian ministry; and Mr. and Mrs. Elmer, a rich and childless couple, who had grown to cherish a great affection for him, offered to adopt him and make him their heir on condition of his changing his name to Elmer.

His remarkable healing powers had excited wonder and, yielding to the persuasion of friends, he began to study for the medical profession. But his general delicate health, coupled with actual lung trouble, forced him to abandon this project and, acting under medical advice, he left New York for England.

He arrived in Liverpool on April 9, 1855, and has been described as a tall, slim youth with a marked elegance of bearing and a fastidious neatness of dress, but with a worn, hectic look upon his very expressive face which told of the ravages of disease. He was blue-eyed and auburn-haired, of a type which is peculiarly liable to the attack of tubercle, and the extreme emaciation of his frame showed how little power remained with him by which he might resist it. An acute physician watching him closely would probably have gauged his life by months rather than years in our humid climate, and of all the marvels which Home wrought, the prolongation of his own life was perhaps not the least. His character had already taken on those emotional and religious traits which distinguished it, and he has recorded how, before landing, he rushed down to his cabin and fell upon his knees in prayer. When one considers the astonishing career which lay before him, and the large part which he played in establishing those physical foundations which differentiate this religious development from any other, it may well be claimed that this visitor was among the most notable missionaries who has ever visited our shores.

His position at that moment was a very singular one. He had hardly a relation in the world. His left lung was partly gone. His income was

modest, though sufficient. He had no trade or profession, his education having been interrupted by his illness. In character he was shy, gentle, sentimental, artistic, affectionate, and deeply religious. He had a strong tendency both to Art and the Drama, so that his powers of sculpture were considerable, and as a reciter he proved in later life that he had few living equals. But on the top of all this, and of an unflinching honesty which was so uncompromising that he often offended his own allies, there was one gift so remarkable that it threw everything else into insignificance. This lay in those powers, quite independent of his own volition, coming and going with disconcerting suddenness, but proving to all who would examine the proof, that there was something in this man's atmosphere which enabled forces outside himself and outside our ordinary apprehension to manifest themselves upon this plane of matter. In other words, he was a medium—the greatest in a physical sense that the modern world has ever seen.

A lesser man might have used his extraordinary powers to found some special sect of which he would have been the undisputed high priest, or to surround himself with a glamour of power and mystery. Certainly most people in his position would have been tempted to use it for the making of money. As to this latter point, let it be said at once that never in the course of the thirty years of his strange ministry did he touch one shilling as payment for his gifts. It is on sure record that as much as two thousand pounds was offered to him by the Union Club in Paris in the year 1857 for a single séance, and that he, a poor man and an invalid, utterly refused it. "I have been sent on a mission," he said. "That mission is to demonstrate immortality. I have never taken money for it and I never will." There were certain presents from Royalty which cannot be refused without boorishness: rings, scarf-pins, and the like—tokens of friendship rather than recompense; for before his premature death there were few monarchs in Europe with whom this shy youth from the Liverpool landing-stage was not upon terms of affectionate intimacy. Napoleon the Third provided for his only sister. The Emperor of Russia sponsored his marriage. What novelist would dare to invent such a career?

But there are more subtle temptations than those of wealth. Home's uncompromising honesty was the best safeguard against those. Never for a moment did he lose his humility and his sense of proportion. "I have

these powers," he would say; "I shall be happy, up to the limit of my strength, to demonstrate them to you, if you approach me as one gentleman should approach another. I shall be glad if you can throw any further light upon them. I will lend myself to any reasonable experiment. I have no control over them. They use me, but I do not use them. They desert me for months and then come back in redoubled force. I am a passive instrument—no more." Such was his unvarying attitude. He was always the easy, amiable man of the world, with nothing either of the mantle of the prophet or of the skull-cap of the magician. Like most truly great men, there was no touch of pose in his nature. An index of his fine feeling is that when confirmation was needed for his results he would never quote any names unless he was perfectly certain that the owners would not suffer in any way through being associated with an unpopular cult. Sometimes even after they had freely given leave he still withheld the names, lest he should unwittingly injure a friend. When he published his first series of "Incidents in my Life," *The Saturday Review* waxed very sarcastic over the anonymous "evidence of Countess O—, Count B—, Count de K—, Princess de B— and Mrs. S—, who were quoted as having witnessed manifestations. In his second volume, Home, having assured himself of the concurrence of his friends, filled the blanks with the names of the Countess Orsini, Count de Beaumont, Count de Komar, Princess de Beauveau, and the well-known American hostess, Mrs. Henry Senior. His Royal friends he never quoted at all, and yet it is notorious that the Emperor Napoleon, the Empress Eugenie, the Tsar Alexander, the Emperor William the First of Germany, and the Kings of Bavaria and Wurtemberg were all equally convinced by his extraordinary powers. Never once was Home convicted of any deception, either in word or in deed.

On first landing in England he took up his quarters at Cox's Hotel in Jermyn Street, and it is probable that he chose that hostelry because he had learned that through Mrs. Hayden's ministry the proprietor was already sympathetic to the cause. However that may be, Mr. Cox quickly discovered that his young guest was a most remarkable medium, and at his invitation some of the leading minds of the day were asked to consider those phenomena which Home could lay before them. Among others, Lord Brougham came to a séance and brought with him his scientific friend, Sir David Brewster. In full daylight they investigated the

phenomena, and in his amazement at what happened Brewster is reported to have said: "This upsets the philosophy of fifty years." If he had said "fifteen hundred" he would have been within the mark. He described what took place in a letter written to his sister at the time, but published long after.¹ Those present were Lord Brougham, Sir David Brewster, Mr. Cox and the medium.

"We four," said Brewster, "sat down at a moderately-sized table, the structure of which we were invited to examine. In a short time the table struggled, and a tremulous motion ran up all our arms; at our bidding these motions ceased and returned. The most unaccountable rappings were produced in various parts of the table, and the table actually rose from the ground when no hand was upon it. A larger table was produced, and exhibited similar movements.

"A small hand-bell was laid down with its mouth upon the carpet, and after lying for some time, it actually rang when nothing could have touched it." He adds that the bell came over to him and placed itself in his hand, and it did the same to Lord Brougham; and concludes "These were the principal experiments. We could give no explanation of them, and could not conjecture how they could be produced by any kind of mechanism."

The Earl of Dunraven states that he was induced to investigate the phenomena by what Brewster had told him. He describes meeting the latter, who said that the manifestations were quite inexplicable by fraud, or by any physical laws with which we were acquainted. Home sent an account of this sitting in a letter to a friend in America, where it was published with comments. When these were reproduced in the English Press, Brewster became greatly alarmed. It was one thing to hold certain views privately, it was quite another to face the inevitable loss of prestige that would occur in the scientific circles in which he moved. Sir David was not the stuff of which martyrs or pioneers are made. He wrote to *The Morning Advertiser*, stating that though he had seen several mechanical effects which he could not explain, yet he was satisfied that they could all be produced by human hands and feet. At the time had, of course, never occurred to him that his letter to his sister, just quoted, would ever see the light.

¹ *Home Life Of Sir David Brewster*, by Mrs. Gordon (his daughter), 1869.

When the whole correspondence came to be published, *The Spectator* remarked of Sir David Brewster:

It seems established by the clearest evidence that he felt and expressed, at and immediately after his séances with Mr. Home, a wonder and almost awe, which he afterwards wished to explain away. The hero of science does not acquit himself as one could wish or expect.

We have dwelt a little on this Brewster incident because it was typical of the scientific attitude of the day, and because its effect was to excite a wider public interest in Home and his phenomena, and to bring hundreds of fresh investigators. One may say that scientific men may be divided into three classes: those who have not examined the matter at all (which does not in the least prevent them from giving very violent opinions); those who know that it is true but are afraid to say so; and finally the gallant minority of the Lodges, the Crookes, the Barretts and the Lombrosos, who know it is true and who dare all in saying so.

From Jermyn Street, Home went to stay with the Rymer family in Ealing, where many séances were held. Here he was visited by Lord Lytton, the famous novelist, who, although he received striking evidence, never publicly avowed his belief in the medium's powers, though his private letters, and indeed his published novels, are evidence of his true feeling. This was the case with scores of well-known men and women. Among his early sitters were Robert Owen the Socialist, T. A. Trollope the author, and Dr. J. Garth Wilkinson the alienist.

In these days, when the facts of psychic phenomena are familiar to all save those who are wilfully ignorant, we can hardly realize the moral courage which was needed by Home in putting forward his powers and upholding them in public. To the average educated Briton in the material Victorian era a man who claimed to be able to produce results which upset Newton's law of gravity, and which showed invisible mind acting upon visible matter, was *prima facie* a scoundrel and an impostor. The view of Spiritualism pronounced by Vice-Chancellor Giffard at the conclusion of the Home-Lyon trial was that of the class to which he belonged. He knew nothing of the matter, but took it for granted that anything with such claims must be false. No doubt similar things were reported in far-off lands and ancient books, but that they could occur in prosaic, steady old England, the England of bank-rates and free imports,

was too absurd for serious thought. It has been recorded that at this trial Lord Giffard turned to Home's counsel and said: "Do I understand you to state that your client claims that he has been levitated into the air?"

Counsel assented, on which the judge turned to the jury and made such a movement as the high priest may have made in ancient days when he rent his garments as a protest against blasphemy. In 1868 there were few of the jury who were sufficiently educated to check the judge's remarks, and it is just in that particular that we have made some progress in the fifty years between. Slow work—but Christianity took more than three hundred years to come into its own.

Take this question of levitation as a test of Home's powers. It is claimed that more than a hundred times in good light before reputable witnesses he floated in the air. Consider the evidence. In 1857, in a chateau near Bordeaux, he was lifted to the ceiling of a lofty room in the presence of Madame Ducos, widow of the Minister of Marine, and of the Count and Countess de Beaumont. In 1860 Robert Bell wrote an article, "Stranger than Fiction," in *The Cornhill*. "He rose from his chair," says Bell, "four or five feet from the ground. We saw his figure pass from one side of the window to the other, feet foremost, lying horizontally in the air." Dr. Gully, of Malvern, a well-known medical man, and Robert Chambers, the author and publisher, were the other witnesses. Is it to be supposed that these men were lying confederates, or that they could not tell if a man were floating in the air or pretending to do so? In the same year Home was raised at Mrs. Milner Gibson's house in the presence of Lord and Lady Clarence Paget, the former passing his hands underneath him to assure himself of the fact. A few months later Mr. Wason, a Liverpool solicitor, with seven others, saw the same phenomenon. "Mr. Home," he says, "crossed the table over the heads of the persons sitting around it." He added: "I reached his hand seven feet from the floor, and moved along five or six paces as he floated above me in the air." In 1861 Mrs. Parkes, of Cornwall Terrace, Regent's Park, tells how she was present with Bulwer Lytton and Mr. Hall when Home in her own drawing-room was raised till his hand was on the top of the door, and then floated horizontally forward. In 1866 Mr. and Mrs. Hall, Lady Dunsany, and Mrs. Senior, in Mr. Hall's house saw Home, his face transfigured and shining, twice rise to the ceiling, leaving a cross marked in pencil upon

the second occasion, so as to assure the witnesses that they were not the victims of imagination.

In 1868 Lord Adare, Lord Lindsay, Captain Wynne, and Mr. Smith Barry saw Home levitate upon many occasions. A very minute account has been left by the first three witnesses of the occurrence of December 16² of this year, when at Ashley House Home, in a state of trance, floated out of the bedroom and into the sitting-room window, passing seventy feet above the street. After his arrival in the sitting-room he went back into the bedroom with Lord Adare, and upon the latter remarking that he could not understand how Home could have fitted through the window which was only partially raised, "he told me to stand a little distance off. He then went through the open space head first quite rapidly, his body being nearly horizontal and apparently rigid. He came in again feet foremost." Such was the account given by Lords Adare and Lindsay. Upon its publication Dr. Carpenter, who earned an unenviable reputation by a perverse opposition to every fact which bore upon this question, wrote exultantly to point out that there had been a third witness who had not been heard from, assuming without the least justification that Captain Wynne's evidence would be contradictory. He went the length of saying "a single honest sceptic declares that Mr. Home was sitting in his chair all the time" a statement which can only be described as false. Captain Wynne at once wrote corroborating the others and adding: "If you are not to believe the corroborative evidence of three unimpeached witnesses, there would be an end to all justice and courts of law."

To show how hard put to it the critics have been to find some loophole of escape from the obvious, they have made much of the fact that Lord Lindsay, writing some time after the event, declared that it was seen by moonlight; whereas the calendar shows that the moon was not at that time visible. Mr. Andrew Lang remarks: "Even in a fog, however, people in a room can see a man coming in by the window, and go out again, head first, with body rigid."³ It would seem to most of us that if we saw so marvellous a sight we would have little time to spare to determine whether we viewed it by the light of the moon or by that of the street lamps. It must be admitted, however, that Lord Lindsay's account is

² The almanac shows it to be Sunday the 13th.

³ *Historical Mysteries*, p. 236.

clumsily worded—so clumsily that there is some excuse for Mr. Joseph McCabe's reading of it that the spectators looked not at the object itself and its shadow on the window-sill, but that they stood with their backs to it and viewed the shadow on the wall. When one considers, however, the standing of the three eye-witnesses who have testified to this, one may well ask whether in ancient or modern times any preternatural event has been more clearly proved.

So many are the other instances of Home's levitations that a long article might easily be written upon this single phase of his mediumship. Professor Crookes was again and again a witness to the phenomenon, and refers to fifty instances which had come within his knowledge. But is there any fair-minded person who has read the incident here recorded who will not say, with Professor Challis: "Either the facts must be admitted to be such as are reported, or the possibility of certifying facts by human testimony must be given up."

"Are we, then, back in the age of miracles?" cries the reader. There is no miracle. Nothing on this plane is supernatural. What we see now, and what we have read of in ages past, is but the operation of law which has not yet been studied and defined. Already we realize something of its possibilities and of its limitations, which are as exact in their way as those of any purely physical power. We must hold the balance between those who would believe nothing and those who would believe too much. Gradually the mists will clear and we will chart the shadowy coast. When the needle first sprang up at the magnet it was not an infraction of the laws of gravity. It was that there had been the local intervention of another stronger force. Such is the case also when psychic powers act upon the plane of matter. Had Home's faith in this power faltered, or had his circle been unduly disturbed, he would have fallen. When Peter lost faith he sank into the waves. Across the centuries the same cause still produced the same effect. Spiritual power is ever with us if we do not avert our faces, and nothing has been vouchsafed to Judma which is withheld from England.

It is in this respect, as a confirmation of the power of the unseen, and as a final answer to materialism as we now understand it, that Home's public career is of such supreme importance. He was an affirmative witness of the truth of those so-called "miracles" which have been the

stumbling-block for so many earnest minds, and are now destined to be the strong solid proof of the accuracy of the original narrative. Millions of doubting souls in the agony of spiritual conflict had cried out for definite proof that all was not empty space around us, that there were powers beyond our grasp, that the ego was not a mere secretion of nervous tissue, and that the dead did really carry on their personal unbroken existence. All this was proved by this greatest of modern missionaries to anyone who could observe or reason. It is easy to poke superficial fun at rising tables and quivering walls, but they were the nearest and most natural objects which could record in material terms that power which was beyond our human ken. A mind which would be unmoved by an inspired sentence was struck into humility and into new paths of research in the presence of even the most homely of these inexplicable phenomena. It is easy to call them puerile, but they effected the purpose for which they were sent by shaking to its foundations the complaisance of those material men of science who were brought into actual contact with them. They are to be regarded not as ends in themselves, but as the elementary means by which the mind should be diverted into new channels of thought. And those channels of thought led straight to the recognition of the survival of the spirit. "You have conveyed incalculable joy and comfort to the hearts of many people," said Bishop Clark, of Rhode Island. "You have made dwelling-places light that were dark before." "Mademoiselle," said Home to the lady who was to be his wife, "I have a mission entrusted to me. It is a great and a holy one." The famous Dr. Elliotson, immortalized by Thackeray under the name of Dr. Goodenough, was one of the leaders of British materialism. He met Home, saw his powers, and was able soon to say that he had lived all his life in darkness and had thought there was nothing in existence but the material, but he now had a firm hope which he trusted he would hold while on earth.

Innumerable instances could be quoted of the spiritual value of Home's work, but it has never been better summed up than in a paragraph from Mrs. Webster, of Florence, who saw much of his ministry. "He is the most marvellous missionary of modern times in the greatest of all causes, and the good that he has done cannot be reckoned. When Mr. Home passes he bestows around him the greatest of all blessings, the certainty of a future life."

Now that the details of his career can be read, it is to the whole wide world that he brings this most vital of all messages. His attitude as to his own mission was expressed in a lecture given in London in Willis's Rooms on February 15, 1866. He said: "I believe in my heart that this power is being spread more and more every day to draw us nearer to God. You ask if it makes us purer? My only answer is that we are but mortals, and as such liable to err; but it does teach that the pure in heart shall see God. It teaches us that He is love, and that there is no death. To the aged it comes as a solace, when the storms of life are nearly over and rest cometh. To the young it speaks of the duty we owe to each other, and that as we sow so shall we reap. To all it teaches resignation. It comes to roll away the clouds of error, and bring the bright morning of a never-ending day."

It is curious to see how his message affected those of his own generation. Reading the account of his life written by his widow—a most convincing document, since she of all living mortals must have known the real man—it would appear that his most utterly whole-hearted support and appreciation came from those aristocrats of France and Russia with whom he was brought into contact. The warm glow of personal admiration and even reverence in their letters is such as can hardly be matched in any biography. In England he had a close circle of ardent supporters, a few of the upper classes, with the Halls, the Howitts, Robert Chambers, Mrs. Milner Gibson, Professor Crookes, and others. But there was a sad lack of courage among those who admitted the facts in private and stood aloof in public. Lord Brougham and Bulwer Lytton were of the type of Nicodemus, the novelist being the worst offender. "Intelligentsia" on the whole came badly out of the matter, and many an Honoured name suffers in the story. Faraday and Tyndall were fantastically unscientific in their methods of prejudging a question first, and offering to examine it afterwards on the condition that their prejudgment was accepted. Sir David Brewster, as already shown, said some honest things, and then in a panic denied that he had said them, forgetting that the evidence was on actual record. Browning wrote a long poem—if such doggerel can be called poetry—to describe an exposure which had never taken place. Carpenter earned an unenviable notoriety as an unscrupulous opponent, while proclaiming some strange Spiritualistic thesis of his own. The secretaries of the Royal Society

refused to take a cab-drive in order to see Crookes's demonstration of the physical phenomena, while they pronounced roundly against them.

Lord Giffard inveighed from the Bench against a subject the first elements of which he did not understand.

As to the clergy, such an order might not have existed during the thirty years that this, the most marvellous spiritual outpouring of many centuries, was before the public. One cannot recall the name of one British clergyman who showed any intelligent interest; and when in 1872 a full account of the St. Petersburg séances began to appear in *The Times*, it was cut short, according to Mr. H. T. Humphreys, "on account of strong remonstrances to Mr. Delane, the editor, by certain of the higher clergy of the Church of England." Such was the contribution of our official spiritual guides. Dr. Elliotson the Rationalist, was far more alive than they. The rather bitter comment of Mrs. Home is: "The verdict of his own generation was that of the blind and deaf upon the man who could hear and see."

Home's charity was among his more beautiful characteristics. Like all true charity it was secret, and only comes out indirectly and by chance. One of his numerous traducers declared that he had allowed a bill for £50 to be sent in to his friend, Mr. Rymer. In self-defence it came out that it was not a bill but a cheque most generously sent by Home to help this friend in a crisis. Considering his constant poverty, fifty pounds probably represented a good part of his bank balance. His widow dwells with pardonable pride upon the many evidences found in his letters after his death. "Now it is an unknown artist for whose brush Home's generous efforts had found employment; now a distressed worker writes of his sick wife's life saved by comforts that Home provided; now a mother thanks him for a start in life for her son.

How much time and thought he devoted to helping others when the circumstance of his own life would have led most men to think only of their own needs and cares."

"Send me a word from the heart that has known so often how to cheer a friend!" cries one of his proteges.

"Shall I ever prove worthy of all the good you have done me?" says another letter.

We find him roaming the battlefields round Paris, often under fire, with his pockets full of cigars for the wounded. A German officer writes affectionately to remind him how he saved him from bleeding to death, and carried him on his own weak back out of the place of danger. Truly Mrs. Browning was a better judge of character than her spouse, and Sir Galahad a better name than Sludge.

At the same time, it would be absurd to depict Home as a man of flawless character. He had the weakness of his temperament, and something feminine in his disposition which showed itself in many ways. The author, while in Australia, came across a correspondence dating from 1856 between Home and the elder son of the Rymer family. They had travelled together in Italy, and Home had deserted his friend under circumstances which showed inconstancy and ingratitude. It is only fair to add that his health was so broken at the time that he could hardly be called normal. "He had the defects of an emotional character," said Lord Dunraven, "with vanity highly developed, perhaps wisely to enable him to hold his own against the ridicule that was then poured out on Spiritualism and everything connected with it. He was liable to fits of great depression and to nervous crises difficult to understand, but he was withal of a simple, kindly, humorous, loving disposition that appealed to me. My friendship remained without change or diminution to the end."

There are few of the varied gifts which we call "mediumistic" and St. Paul "of the spirit" which Home did not possess—indeed, the characteristic of his psychic power was its unusual versatility. We speak usually of a Direct Voice medium, of a trance speaker, of a clairvoyant or of a physical medium, but Home was all four. So far as can be traced, he had little experience of the powers of other mediums, and was not immune from that psychic jealousy which is a common trait of these sensitives. Mrs. Jencken, formerly Miss Kate Fox, was the only other medium with whom he was upon terms of friendship. He bitterly resented any form of deception, and carried this excellent trait rather too far by looking with eyes of suspicion upon all forms of manifestations which did not exactly correspond with his own. This opinion, expressed in an uncompromising manner in his last book, "Lights and Shadows of Spiritualism," gave natural offence to other mediums who claimed to be as honest as himself. A wider acquaintance with phenomena would have made him more charitable. Thus he protested strongly against any séance being

held in the dark, but this is certainly a counsel of perfection, for experiments upon the ectoplasm which is the physical basis of all materializations show that it is usually affected by light unless the light is tinted red. Home had no large experience of complete materializations such as were obtained in those days by Miss Florence Cook, or Madame d'Esperance, or in our own time, by Madame Bisson's medium, and therefore he could dispense with complete darkness in his own ministry. Thus, his opinion was unjust to others. Again, Home declared roundly that matter could not pass through matter, because his own phenomena did not take that form; and yet the evidence that matter can in certain cases be passed through matter seems to be overwhelming. Even birds of rare varieties have been brought into séance rooms under circumstances which seem to preclude fraud, and the experiments of passing wood through wood, as shown before Zollner and the other Leipzig professors, were quite final as set forth in the famous physicist's account in "Transcendental Physics" of his experiences with Slade. Thus, it may count as a small flaw in Home's character that he decried and doubted the powers which he himself did not happen to possess.

Some also might count it as a failing that he carried his message rather to the leaders of society and of life than to the vast toiling masses. It is probable that Home had, in fact, the weakness as well as the graces of the artistic nature and that he was most at ease and happiest in an atmosphere of elegance and refinement, with a personal repulsion from all that was sordid and ill-favoured. If there were no other reason the precarious state of his health unfitted him for any sterner mission, and he was driven by repeated hemorrhages to seek the pleasant and refined life of Italy, Switzerland and the Riviera. But for the prosecution of his mission, as apart from personal self-sacrifice, there can be no doubt that his message carried to the laboratory of a Crookes or to the Court of a Napoleon was more useful than if it were laid before the crowd. The assent of science and of character was needed before the public could gain assurance that such things were true. If it was not fully gained the fault lies assuredly with the hidebound men of science and thinkers of the day, and by no means with Home, who played his part of actual demonstration to perfection, leaving it to other and less gifted men to analyse and to make public that which he had shown them. He did not profess to be a man of science, but he was the raw material of science,

willing and anxious that others should learn from him all that he could convey to the world, so that science should itself testify to religion while religion should be buttressed upon science. When Home's message has been fully learned an unbelieving man will not stand convicted of impiety, but of ignorance.

There was something pathetic in Home's efforts to find some creed in which he could satisfy his own gregarious instinct—for he had no claims to be a strong-minded individualist—and at the same time find a niche into which he could fit his own precious packet of assured truth. His pilgrimage vindicates the assertion of some Spiritualists that a man may belong to any creed and carry with him the spiritual knowledge, but it also bears out those who reply that perfect harmony with that spiritual knowledge can only be found, as matters now stand, in a special Spiritualist community. Alas! that it should be so, for it is too big a thing to sink into a sect, however great that sect might become. Home began in his youth as a Wesleyan, but soon left them for the more liberal atmosphere of Congregationalism. In Italy the artistic atmosphere of the Roman Catholic Church, and possibly its record of so many phenomena akin to his own, caused him to become a convert with an intention of joining a monastic Order—an intention which his common sense caused him to abandon. The change of religion was at a period when his psychic powers had deserted him for a year, and his confessor assured him that as they were of evil origin they would certainly never be heard of again now that he was a son of the true Church. None the less, on the very day that the year expired they came back in renewed strength. From that time Home seems to have been only nominally a Catholic, if at all, and after his second marriage—both his marriages were to Russian ladies—he was strongly drawn towards the Greek Church, and it was under their ritual that he was at last laid to rest at St. Germain in 1886. "To another discerning of Spirits" (I Cor. xii. 10) is the short inscription upon that grave, of which the world has not yet heard the last.

If proof were needed of the blamelessness of Home's life, it could not be better shown than by the fact that his numerous enemies, spying ever for some opening to attack, could get nothing in his whole career upon which to comment save the wholly innocent affair which is known as the Home-Lyon case. Any impartial judge reading the depositions in this case—they are to be found verbatim in the second series of "Incidents in

My Life" – would agree that it is not blame but commiseration which was owing to Home. One could desire no higher proof of the nobility of his character than his dealings with this unpleasant freakish woman, who first insisted upon settling a large sum of money upon him, and then, her whim having changed and her expectations of an immediate introduction into high society being disappointed, stuck at nothing in order to get it back again. Had she merely asked for it back there is little doubt that Home's delicate feelings would have led him to return it, even though he had been put to much trouble and expense over the matter, which had entailed a change of his name to Home-Lyon, to meet the woman's desire that he should be her adopted son. Her request, however, was so framed that he could not honourably agree to it, as it would have implied an admission that he had done wrong in accepting the gift. If one consults the original letters—which few of those who comment upon the case seem to have done—one finds that Home, S. C. Hall as his representative and Mr. Wilkinson as his solicitor, implored the woman to moderate the unreasonable benevolence which was to change so rapidly into even more unreasonable malevolence. She was absolutely determined that Home should have the money and be her heir. A less mercenary man never lived, and he begged her again and again to think of her relatives, to which she answered that the money was her own to do what she pleased with, and that no relatives were dependent upon it. From the time that he accepted the new situation he acted and wrote as a dutiful son, and it is not uncharitable to suppose that this entirely filial attitude may not have been that which this elderly lady had planned out in her scheming brain. At any rate, she soon tired of her fad and reclaimed her money upon the excuse—a monstrous one to anyone who will read the letters and consider the dates—that spirit messages had caused her to take the action she had done.

The case was tried in the Court of Chancery, and the judge alluded to Mrs. Lyon's "innumerable misstatements on many important particulars – misstatements upon oath so perversely untrue that they have embarrassed the Court to a great degree and quite discredited the plaintiff's testimony." In spite of this caustic comment, and in spite also of elementary justice, the verdict was against Home on the general ground that British law put the burden of disproof upon the defendant in such a case, and complete disproof is impossible when assertion is met

by counter-assertion. Lord Giffard might, no doubt, have risen superior to the mere letter of the law had it not been that he was deeply prejudiced against all claims to psychic power, which were from his point of view manifestly absurd and yet were persisted in by the defendant under his nose in his own Court of Chancery. Even Home's worst enemies were forced to admit that the fact that he had retained the money in England and had not lodged it where it would have been beyond recovery proved his honest intentions in this the most unfortunate episode of his life. Of all the men of honour who called him friend, it is not recorded that he lost one through the successful machinations of Mrs. Lyon. Her own motives were perfectly obvious. As all the documents were in order, her only possible way of getting the money back was to charge Home with having extorted it from her by misrepresentation, and she was cunning enough to know what chance a medium—even an amateur unpaid medium—would have in the ignorant and material atmosphere of a mid-Victorian court of law. Alas! that we can omit the "mid-Victorian" and the statement still holds good.

The powers of Home have been attested by so many famous observers, and were shown under such frank conditions, that no reasonable man can possibly doubt them. Crookes's evidence alone is conclusive.⁴ There is also the remarkable book, reprinted at a recent date, in which Lord Dunraven gives the story of his youthful connexion with Home. But apart from these, among those in England who investigated in the first few years and whose public testimony or letters to Home show they were not only convinced of the genuineness of the phenomena, but also of their spiritual origin, may be mentioned the Duchess of Sutherland, Lady Shelley, Lady Gomm, Dr. Robert Chambers, Lady Otway, Miss Catherine Sinclair, Mrs. Milner Gibson, Mr. and Mrs. William Howitt, Mrs. De Burgh, Dr. Gully (of Malvern), Sir Charles Nicholson, Lady Dunsany, Sir Daniel Cooper, Mrs. Adelaide Senior, Mr. and Mrs. S. C. Hall, Mrs. Makdougall Gregory, Mr. Pickersgill, R.A., Mr. E. L. Blanchard, and Mr. Robert Bell.

Others who went so far as to admit that the theory of imposture was insufficient to account for the phenomena were: Mr. Ruskin, Mr. Thackeray (then editor of *The Cornhill Magazine*), Mr. John Bright,

⁴ *Researches In The Phenomena Of Spiritualism*, and *S.P.R. Proceedings*, VI., p. 98.

Lord Dufferin, Sir Edwin Arnold, Mr. Heaphy, Mr. Durham (sculptor), Mr. Nassau Senior, Lord Lyndhurst, Mr. J. Hutchinson (ex-Chairman of the Stock Exchange), and Dr. Lockhart Robertson.

Such were his witnesses and such his works. And yet, when his most useful and unselfish life had come to an end, it must be recorded to the eternal disgrace of our British Press that there was hardly a paper which did not allude to him as an impostor and a charlatan. The time is coming, however, when he will be recognized for what he was, one of the pioneers in the slow and arduous advance of Humanity into that jungle of ignorance which has encompassed it so long.

10. THE DAVENPORT BROTHERS



The Davenport Brothers.

IN order to present a consecutive story the career of D.D. Home has been traced in its entirety. It is necessary now to return to earlier days in America and consider the development of the two Davenports. Home and the Davenports both played an international part, and their history helps to cover the movement both in England and in the States. The Davenports worked upon a far lower level than Home, making a profession of their remarkable gifts, and yet by their crude methods they got their results across to the multitude in a way which a more refined mediumship could not have done. If one considers this whole train of events as having been engineered by a wise but by no means infallible or omnipotent force upon the Other Side, one observes how each occasion

is met by the appropriate instrument, and how as one demonstration fails to impress some other one is substituted.

The Davenports have been fortunate in their chroniclers. Two writers have published books¹ describing the events of their life, and the periodical literature of the time is full of their exploits.

Ira Erastus Davenport and William Henry Davenport were born at Buffalo in the State of New York, the former on September 17, 1839, and the latter on February 1, 1841. Their father, who was descended from the early English settlers in America, occupied a position in the police department of Buffalo. Their mother was born in Kent, England, and went to America when a child. Some indications of psychic gifts were observed in the mother's life. In 1846 the family were disturbed in the middle of the night by what they described as "raps, thumps, loud noises, snaps, crackling noises." This was two years before the outbreak in the Fox family. But it was the Fox manifestations which, in this case as in so many others, led them to investigate and discover their mediumistic powers.

The two Davenport boys and their sister Elizabeth, the youngest of the three, experimented by placing their hands on a table. Loud and violent noises were heard and messages were spelt out. The news leaked abroad, and as with the Fox girls, hundreds of curious and incredulous people flocked to the house. Ira developed automatic writing, and handed to those present messages written with extraordinary rapidity and containing information he could not have known. Levitation quickly followed, and the boy was floated in the air above the heads of those in the room at a distance of nine feet from the floor. Next, the brother and sister were influenced in the same way, and the three children floated high up in the room. Hundreds of respectable citizens of Buffalo are reported to have seen these occurrences. Once when the family was at breakfast the knives, forks, and dishes danced about and the table was raised in the air. At a sitting soon after this a lead pencil was seen to write in broad daylight, with no human contact. Seances were now held regularly, lights began to appear, and musical instruments floated and

¹ *A Biography Of The Brothers Davenport*, by T. L. Nichols, M.D., London, 1864. *Supramundane Facts In The Life Of Rev. J. B. Ferguson, LL.D.*, by T. L. Nichols, M.D., London, 1865. *Spiritual Experiences: Including Seven Months with the Brothers Davenport*, by Robert Cooper, London, 1867.

played above the heads of the company. The Direct Voice and other extraordinary manifestations too numerous to mention followed. Yielding to requests from the communicating intelligences, the brothers started journeying to various places and holding public séances. Among strangers, tests were insisted upon. At first the boys were held by persons selected from those present, but this being found unsatisfactory because it was thought that those holding them were confederates, the plan of tying them with ropes was adopted. To read the list of ingenious tests successively proposed, and put into operation without interfering with the manifestations, shows how almost impossible it is to convince resolute sceptics. As soon as one test succeeded another was proposed, and so on. The professors of Harvard University in 1857 conducted an examination of the boys and their phenomena. Their biographer writes²:

The professors exercised their ingenuity in proposing tests. Would they submit to be handcuffed? Yes. Would they allow men to hold them? Yes. A dozen propositions were made, accepted, and then rejected by those who made them. If any test was adopted by the brothers, that was reason enough for not trying it. They were supposed to be prepared for that, so some other must be found.

Finally, the professors bought five hundred feet of new rope, bored with holes the cabinet set up in one of their rooms, and trussed the boys in what is described as a brutal manner. All the knots in the rope were tied with linen thread, and one of their number, Professor Pierce, took his place in the cabinet between the two brothers. At once a phantom hand was shown, instruments were rattled and were felt by the professor about his head and face. At every movement he felt for the boys with his hands, only to find them still securely bound. The unseen operators at last released the boys from their bindings, and when the cabinet was opened the ropes were found twisted round the neck of the professor! After all this, the Harvard professors made no report. It is instructive also to read the account of the really ingenious test-apparatus consisting of what may be described as wooden sleeves and trousers, securely fastened, devised by a man named Darling, in Bangor (U.S.A.). Like other tests, it proved incapable of preventing instant manifestations. It is to be remembered that many of these tests were applied at a time when

² *A Biography Of The Brothers Davenport*, by T. L. Nichols, M.D., pp. 87-8.

the brothers were mere boys, too young to have learned any elaborate means of deception.

It is not strange to read that the phenomena raised violent opposition almost everywhere, and the brothers were frequently denounced as jugglers and humbugs. It was after ten years of public work in the largest cities and towns in the United States that the Davenport Brothers came to England. They had submitted successfully to every test that human ingenuity could devise, and no one had been able to say how their results were obtained. They had won for themselves a great reputation. Now they had to begin all over again.

The two brothers, Ira and William, at this time were aged twenty-five and twenty-three years respectively. *The New York World* thus describes them:

They looked remarkably like each other in almost every particular, both quite handsome with rather long, curly black hair, broad, but not high foreheads, dark keen eyes, heavy eyebrows, moustache and "goatee," firm-set lips, muscular though well-proportioned frame. They were dressed in black with dress-coats, one wearing a watch-chain.

Dr. Nichols, their biographer, gives this first impression of them:

The young men, with whom I have had but a brief personal acquaintance, and whom I never saw until their arrival in London, appear to me to be in intellect and character above the average of their young countrymen, they are not remarkable for cleverness, though of fair abilities, and Ira has some artistic talent. The young men seem entirely honest, and singularly disinterested and unmercenary—far more anxious to have people satisfied of their integrity and the reality of their manifestations than to make money. They have an ambition, without doubt, which is gratified in their having been selected as the instruments of what they believe will be some great good to mankind.

They were accompanied to England by the Rev. Dr. Ferguson, formerly pastor of a large church at Nashville, Tennessee, at which Abraham Lincoln attended, Mr. D. Palmer, a well-known operatic manager, who acted as secretary, and Mr. William M. Fay, who was also a medium.

Mr. P. B. Randall, in his biography of the Davenports (Boston 1869, published anonymously), points out that their mission to England was "to meet on its own low ground and conquer, by appropriate means, the hard materialism and scepticism of England." The first step to knowledge, he says, is to be convinced of ignorance, and adds:

If the manifestations given by the aid of the Brothers Davenport can prove to the intellectual and scientific classes that there are forces—and intelligent forces, or powerful intelligences—beyond the range of their philosophies, and that what they consider physical impossibilities are readily accomplished by invisible, and to them unknown, intelligences, a new universe will be open to human thought and investigation.

There is little doubt that the mediums had this effect on many minds.

The manifestations of Mrs. Hayden's mediumship were quiet and unobtrusive, and while those of D.D. Home were more remarkable, they were confined entirely to exclusive sets of people to whom no fees were charged. Now these two brothers hired public halls and challenged the world at large to come and witness phenomena which passed the bounds of all ordinary belief. It needed no foresight to predict for them a strenuous time of opposition, and so it proved. But they attained the end which the unseen directors undoubtedly had in view. They roused public attention as it had never been roused before in England on this subject. No better testimony in proof of that could be had than that of their strongest opponent, Mr. J. N. Maskelyne, the celebrated conjurer.

He writes³: "Certain it is, England was completely taken aback for a time by the wonders presented by these jugglers." He further adds:

The Brothers did more than all other men to familiarize England with the so-called Spiritualism, and before crowded audiences and under varied conditions, they produced really wonderful feats. The hole-and-corner séances of other media, where with darkness or semi-darkness, and a pliant, or frequently a devoted assembly, manifestations are occasionally said to occur, cannot be compared with the Davenport exhibitions in their effect upon the public mind.

³ *Modern Spiritualism*, p. 65.

Their first séance in London, a private one, was held on September 28, 1864, at the residence in Regent Street of Mr. Dion Boucicault, the famous actor and author, in the presence of leading newspaper men and distinguished men of science. The Press reports of the séance were remarkably full and, for a wonder, fair.

The account in the *Morning Post* the next day says that the guests were invited to make the most critical examination and to take all needful precautions against fraud or deception, and continues:

The party invited to witness the manifestations last night consisted of some twelve or fourteen individuals, all of whom are admitted to be of considerable distinction in the various professions with which they are connected. The majority have never previously witnessed anything of the kind. All, however, were determined to detect and if possible expose any attempt at deception. The Brothers Davenport are slightly built, gentleman-like in appearance, and about the last persons in the world from whom any great muscular performances might be expected. Mr. Fay is apparently a few years older, and of more robust constitution.

After describing what occurred, the writer goes on:

All that can be asserted is, that the displays to which we have referred took place on the present occasion under conditions and circumstances that preclude the presumption of fraud.

The Times, The Daily Telegraph, and other newspapers published long and honest reports. We omit quotations from them because the following important statement from Mr. Dion Boucicault, which appeared in The Daily News as well as in many other London journals, covers all the facts. It describes a later séance at Mr. Boucicault's house on October 11, 1864, at which were present, among others Viscount Bury, M.P., Sir Charles Wyke, Sir Charles Nicholson, the Chancellor of the University of Sydney, Mr. Robert Chambers, Charles Reade, the novelist, and Captain Inglefield, the Arctic explorer.

SIR,

A séance by the Brothers Davenport and Mr. W. Fay took place in my house yesterday in the presence of... (here he mentions twenty-four names including all those already quoted)...

At three o'clock our party was fully assembled... We sent to a neighbouring music-seller for six guitars and two tambourines, so that the implements to be used should not be those with which the operators were familiar.

At half-past three the Davenport Brothers and Mr. Fay arrived, and found that we had altered their arrangements by changing the room which they had previously selected for their manifestations.

The séance then began by an examination of the dress and persons of the Brothers Davenport, and it was certified that no apparatus or other contrivance was concealed on or about their persons. They entered the cabinet, and sat facing each other. Captain Inglefield then, with a new rope provided by ourselves, tied Mr. W. Davenport hand and foot, with his hands behind his back, and then bound him firmly to the seat where he sat. Lord Bury, in like manner, secured Mr. I. Davenport. The knots on these ligatures were then fastened with sealing-wax, and a seal was affixed. A guitar, violin, tambourine, two bells, and a brass trumpet were placed on the floor of the cabinet. The doors were then closed, and a sufficient light was permitted in the room to enable us to see what followed.

I shall omit any detailed account of the babel of sounds which arose in the cabinet, and the violence with which the doors were repeatedly burst open and the instruments expelled; the hands appearing, as usual, at a lozenge-shaped orifice in the centre door of the cabinet. The following incidents seem to us particularly worthy of note:

While Lord Bury was stooping inside the cabinet, the door being open and the two operators seen to be sealed and bound, a detached hand was clearly observed to descend upon him, and he started back, remarking that a hand had struck him. Again, in the full light of the gas chandelier and during an interval in the séance, the doors of the cabinet being open, and while the ligatures of the Brothers Davenport were being examined, a very white, thin, female hand and wrist quivered for several seconds in the air above. This appearance drew a general exclamation from all the party.

Sir Charles Wyke now entered the cabinet and sat between the two young men —his hands being right and left on each, and secured to

them. The doors were then closed, and the babel of sounds recommenced. Several hands appeared at the orifice—among them the hand of a child. After a space, Sir Charles returned amongst us and stated that while he held the two brothers, several hands touched his face and pulled his hair; the instruments at his feet crept up, played round his body and over his head—one of them lodging eventually on his shoulders. During the foregoing incidents the hands which appeared were touched and grasped by Captain Inglefield, and he stated that to the touch they were apparently human hands, though they passed away from his grasp.

I omit mentioning other phenomena, an account of which has already been rendered elsewhere.

The next part of the séance was performed in the dark. One of the Messrs. Davenport and Mr. Fay seated themselves amongst us. Two ropes were thrown at their feet, and in two minutes and a half they were tied hand and foot, their hands behind their backs bound tightly to their chairs, and their chairs bound to an adjacent table. While this process was going on, the guitar rose from the table and swung or floated round the room and over the heads of the party, and slightly touching some. Now a phosphoric light shot from side to side over our heads; the laps and hands and shoulders of several were simultaneously touched, struck, or pawed by hands, the guitar meanwhile sailing round the room, now near the ceiling, and then scuffling on the head and shoulders of some luck less Wight. The bells whisked here and there, and a light thrumming was maintained on the violin. The two tambourines seemed to roll hither and thither on the floor, now shaking violently, and now visiting the knees and hands of our circle—all these foregoing actions, audible or tangible, being simultaneous. Mr. Rideout, holding a tambourine, requested it might be plucked from his hand; it was almost instantaneously taken from him. At the same time, Lord Bury made a similar request, and a forcible attempt to pluck a tambourine from his grasp was made which he resisted. Mr. Fay then asked that his coat should be removed. We heard instantly a violent twitch, and here occurred the most remarkable fact. A light was struck before the coat had quite, left Mr. Fay's person, and it was seen quitting him, plucked off him upwards. It flew up to the chandelier, where it hung for a moment and then fell to the ground. Mr.

Fay was seen meanwhile bound hand and foot as before. One of our party now divested himself of his coat, and it was placed on the table. The light was extinguished and this coat was rushed on to Mr. Fay's back with equal rapidity. During the above occurrences in the dark, we placed a sheet of paper under the feet of these two operators, and drew with a pencil an outline around them, to the end that if they moved it might be detected. They of their own accord offered to have their hands filled with flour, or any other similar substance, to prove they made no use of them, but this precaution was deemed unnecessary; we required them, however, to count from one to twelve repeatedly, that their voices constantly heard might certify to us that they were in the places where they were tied. Each of our own party held his neighbour firmly, so that no one could move without two adjacent neighbours being aware of it.

At the termination of this séance, a general conversation took place on the subject of what we had heard and witnessed. Lord Bury suggested that the general opinion seemed to be that we should assure the Brothers Davenport and Mr. W. Fay that after a very stringent trial and strict scrutiny of their proceedings, the gentlemen present could arrive at no other conclusion than that there was no trace of trickery in any form, and certainly there were neither confederates nor machinery, and that all those who had witnessed the results would freely state in the society in which they moved that, so far as their investigations enabled them to form an opinion, the phenomena which had taken place in their presence were not the product of legerdemain. This suggestion was promptly acceded to by all present.

There is a concluding paragraph in which Mr. Dion Boucicault states that he is not a Spiritualist, and at the close of the report his name and the date are affixed.

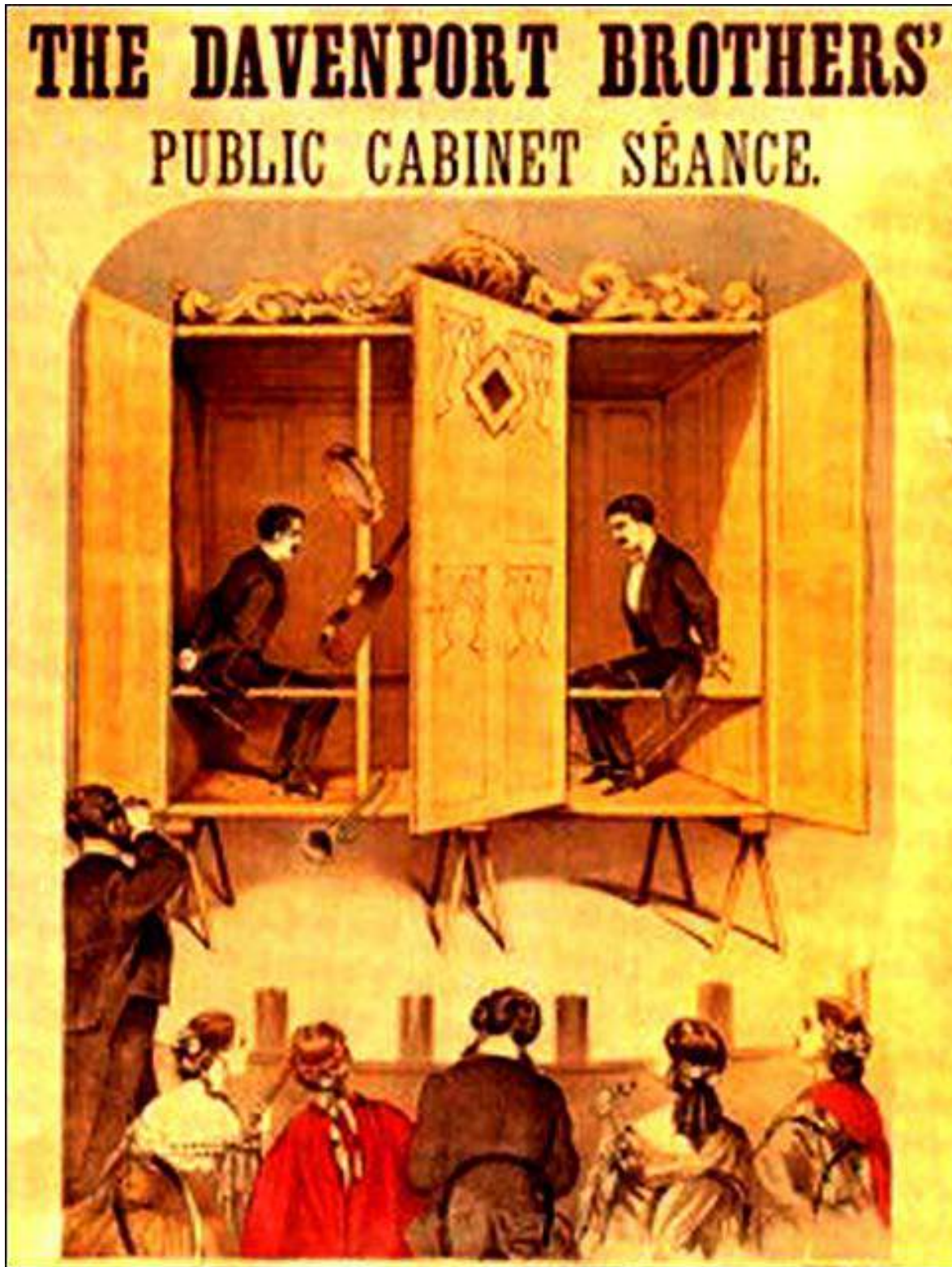
This wonderfully full and lucid account is given without abbreviation because it supplies the answer to many objections, and because the character of the narrator and the witnesses cannot be questioned. It surely must be accepted as quite final so far as honesty is concerned. All subsequent objections are mere ignorance of the facts.

In October, 1864, the Davenports began to give public séances at the Queen's Concert Rooms, Hanover Square. Committees were appointed from the audience, and every effort made to detect how it was all done,

but without avail. These séances, interspersed with private ones, were continued almost nightly until the close of the year. The daily Press was full of accounts of them, and the brothers' names were on everyone's lips. Early in 1865 they toured the English provinces, and in Liverpool, Huddersfield, and Leeds they suffered violence at the hands of excited mobs. At Liverpool, in February, two members of the audience tied their hands so brutally that blood flowed, and Mr. Ferguson cut the rope and released them. The Davenports refused to continue, and the mob rushed the platform and smashed up the cabinet. The same tactics were resorted to at Huddersfield on February 21, and then at Leeds with increased violence, the result of organized opposition. These riots led to the Davenports cancelling any other engagements in England. They next went to Paris, where they received a summons to appear at the Palace of St. Cloud, where the Emperor and Empress and a party of about forty witnessed a séance. While in Paris, Hamilton, the successor of the celebrated conjurer., Robert Houdin, visited them, and in a letter to a Paris newspaper, he said: "The phenomena surpassed my expectations, and the experiments are full of interest for me. I consider it my duty to add they are inexplicable." After a return visit to London, Ireland was visited at the beginning of 1866. In Dublin they had many influential sitters, including the editor of the *Irish Times* and the Rev. Dr. Tisdal, who publicly proclaimed his belief in the manifestations.

In April of the same year the Davenports went to Hamburg and then to Berlin, but the expected war (which their guides told them would come about) made the trip unremunerative. Theatre managers offered them liberal terms for exhibitions, but, heeding the advice of their ever-present spirit monitor, who said that their manifestations, being supernatural, should be kept above the level of theatrical entertainments, they declined, though much against the wish of their business manager. During their month's stay in Berlin they were visited by members of the Royal family. After three weeks in Hamburg they proceeded to Belgium, where considerable success was attained in Brussels, and all the principal towns. They next went to Russia, arriving in St. Petersburg on December 27, 1866. On January 7, 1867, they gave their first public séance to an audience numbering one thousand. The next séance was at the residence of the French Ambassador to a gathering of about fifty people, including officers of the Imperial Court,

and on January 9 they gave a séance in the Winter Palace to the Emperor and the Imperial family.



The Davenport Brothers in Their Séance Cabinet.

They afterwards visited Poland and Sweden. On April 11, 1868, they reappeared in London at the Hanover Square Rooms, and received an enthusiastic welcome from a crowded audience. Mr. Benjamin Coleman, a prominent Spiritualist, who arranged their first public séances in London, writing at this time of their stay of close on four years in Europe, says⁴:

I desire to convey to those of my friends in America who introduced them to me, the assurance of my conviction that the Brothers' mission to Europe has been of great service to Spiritualism; that their public conduct as mediums—in which relation I alone know them—has been steady and unexceptionable.

He adds that he knows no form of mediumship better adapted for a large audience than theirs. After this visit to London the Davenports returned home to America. The brothers visited Australia in 1876, and on August 24 gave their first public séance in Melbourne. William died in Sydney in July, 1877.

Throughout their career the Davenport Brothers excited the deep envy and malice of the conjuring fraternity. Maskelyne, with amazing effrontery, pretended to have exposed them in England. His claims in this direction have been well answered by Dr. George Sexton, a former editor of *The Spiritual Magazine*, who described in public, in the presence of Mr. Maskelyne, how his tricks were done, and comparing them with the results achieved by the Davenports, said: "The two bear about as much resemblance to each other as the productions of the poet Close to the sublime and glorious dramas of the immortal bard of Avon."⁵ Still the conjurers made more noise in public than the Spiritualists, and with the Press to support them they made the general public believe that the Davenport Brothers had been exposed.

In announcing the death in America of Ira Davenport in 1911, *Light* comments on the outpouring of journalistic ignorance for which it furnished the opportunity. The Daily News is quoted as saying of the brothers: "They made the mistake of appearing as sorcerers

⁴ *Spiritual Magazine*, 1868, p. 321.

⁵ Address at Cavendish Rooms, London, June 15, 1873.

instead of as honest conjurers. If, like their conqueror, Maskelyne, they had thought of saying, 'It's so simple,' the brethren might have achieved not only fortune but respectability." In reply to this, *Light* asks why, if they were mere conjurers and not honest believers in their mediumship, did the Davenport Brothers endure hardships, insults, and injuries, and suffer the indignities that were put upon them, when by renouncing their claims to mediumship they might have been "respectable" and rich?

An inevitable remark on the part of those who are not able to detect trickery is to ask what elevating purpose can be furthered by phenomena such as those observed with the Davenports. The well-known author and sturdy Spiritualist, William Howitt, has given a good answer:

Are these who play tricks and fling about instruments spirits from Heaven? Can God really send such? Yes, God sends them, to teach us this, if nothing more: that He has servants of all grades and tastes ready to do all kinds of work, and He has here sent what you call low and harlequin spirits to a low and very sensual age. Had He sent anything higher it would have gone right over the heads of their audiences. As it is, nine-tenths cannot take in what they see.

It is a sad reflection that the Davenports—probably the greatest mediums of their kind that the world has ever seen—suffered throughout their lives from brutal opposition and even persecution. Many times they were in danger of their lives.

One is forced to think that there could be no clearer evidence of the influence of the dark forces of evil than the prevailing hostility to all spiritual manifestations.

Touching this aspect, Mr. Randall says⁶:

There seems to be a sort of chronic dislike, almost hatred, in the minds of some persons toward any and everything spiritual. It seems as if it were a vapour floating, in the air—a kind of mental spore flowing through the spaces, and breathed in by the great multitude of humankind, which kindles a rankly poisonous fire in their hearts against all those whose mission it is to bring peace on earth and good will to men. The future men and women of the world will marvel

⁶ *Biography*, p. 82.

greatly at those now living, when they shall, as they will, read that the Davenports, and all other mediums, were forced to encounter the most inveterate hostility; that they, and the writer among them, were compelled to endure horrors baffling description, for no other offence than trying to convince the multitude that they were not beasts that perish and leave no sign, but immortal, deathless, grave-surviving souls.

Mediums alone are capable of demonstrating the fact of man's continued existence after death; and yet (strange inconsistency of human nature) the very people who persecute these, their truest and best friends, and fairly hound them to premature death or despair, are the very ones who freely lavish all that wealth can give upon those whose office it is merely to guess at human immortality.

In discussing the claims of various professional magicians to have exposed or imitated the Davenports, Sir Richard Burton said:

I have spent a great part of my life in Oriental lands, and have seen their many magicians. Lately I have been permitted to see and be present at the performances of Messrs. Anderson and Tolmaque. The latter showed, as they profess, clever conjuring, but they do not even attempt what the Messrs. Davenport and Fay succeed in doing: for instance, the beautiful management of the musical instruments. Finally, I have read and listened to every explanation of the Davenport "tricks" hitherto placed before the English public, and, believe me, if anything would make me take that tremendous jump "from matter to spirit," it is the utter and complete unreason of the reasons by which the "manifestations" are explained.

It is to be remarked that the Davenports themselves, as contrasted with their friends and travelling companions, never claimed any preternatural origin for their results. The reason for this may have been that as an entertainment it was more piquant and less provocative when every member of the audience could form his own solution. Writing to the American conjurer Houdini, Ira Davenport said in his old age, "We never in public affirmed our belief in Spiritualism. That we regarded as no business of the public, nor did we offer our entertainment as the result of sleight-of-hand, or, on the other hand, as Spiritualism. We let our friends

and foes settle that as best they could between themselves, but, unfortunately, we were often the victims of their disagreements."

Houdini further claimed that Davenport admitted that his results were normally effected, but Houdini has himself stuffed so many errors of fact into his book, "A Magician Among the Spirits," and has shown such extraordinary bias on the whole question, that his statement carries no weight. The letter which he produces makes no such admission. A further statement quoted as being made by Ira Davenport is demonstrably false. It is that the instruments never left the cabinet. As a matter of fact, The Timer representative was severely struck in the face by a floating guitar, his brow being cut, and on several occasions when a light was struck instruments dropped all over the room. If Houdini has completely misunderstood this latter statement, it is not likely that he is very accurate upon the former (*Vide Appendix*).

It may be urged, and has been urged, by Spiritualists as well as by sceptics that such mountebank psychic exhibitions are undignified and unworthy. There are many of us who think so, and yet there are many others who would echo these words of Mr. P. B. Randall:

The fault lies not with the immortals, but in us; for, as is the demand, so is the supply. If we cannot be reached in one way, we must be, and are, reached in another; and the wisdom of the eternal world gives the blind race just as much as it can bear and no more. If we are intellectual babes, we must put up with mental pap till our digestive capacities warrant and demand stronger food; and, if people can best be convinced of immortality by spiritual pranks and antics, the ends resorted to justify the means. The sight of a spectral arm in an audience of three thousand persons will appeal to more hearts, make a deeper impression, and convert more people to a belief in their hereafter, in ten minutes, than a whole regiment of preachers, no matter how eloquent, could in five years.

11. THE RESEARCHES OF SIR WILLIAM CROOKES (1870-1874)



Sir William Crookes.

The research into the phenomena of Spiritualism by Sir William Crookes—or Professor Crookes, as he then was—during the years from 1870 to 1874 is one of the outstanding incidents in the history of the movement. It is notable on account of the high scientific standing of the inquirer, the stern and yet just spirit in which the inquiry was conducted, the extraordinary results, and the uncompromising declaration of faith

which followed them. It has been a favourite device of the opponents of the movement to attribute some physical weakness or growing senility to each fresh witness to psychic truth, but none can deny that these researches were carried out by a man at the very zenith of his mental development, and that the famous career which followed was a sufficient proof of his intellectual stability. It is to be remarked that the result was to prove the integrity not only of the medium Florence Cook with whom the more sensational results were obtained, but also that of D.D. Home and of Miss Kate Fox, who were also severely tested.

Sir William Crookes, who was born in 1832 and died in 1919, was pre-eminent in the world of science.

Elected a Fellow of the Royal Society in 1863, he received from this body in 1875 a Royal Gold Medal for his various chemical and physical researches, the Davy Medal in 1888, and the Sir Joseph Copley Medal in 1904. He was knighted by Queen Victoria in 1897, and was awarded the Order of Merit in 1910. He occupied the position of President at different times of the Royal Society, the Chemical Society, the Institution of Electrical Engineers, the British Association, and the Society for Psychical Research. His discovery of the new chemical element which he named "Thallium," his inventions of the radiometer, the spintharoscope, and the "Crookes' tube," only represent a slight part of his great research. He founded in 1859 *The Chemical News*, which he edited, and in 1864 he became editor of the *Quarterly Journal Of Science*. In 1880 the French Academy of Sciences awarded him a gold medal and a prize of 3,000 francs in recognition of his important work.

Crookes confesses that he began his investigations into psychical phenomena believing that the whole matter might prove to be a trick. His scientific brethren held the same view, and were delighted at the course he had adopted. Profound satisfaction was expressed because the subject was to be investigated by a man so thoroughly qualified. They had little doubt that what were considered to be the sham pretensions of Spiritualism would now be exposed. One writer said, "If men like Mr. Crookes grapple with the subject we shall soon know how much to believe." Dr. (afterwards Professor) Balfour Stewart, in a communication to *Nature*, commended the boldness and honesty which had led Mr. Crookes to take this step. Crookes himself took the view that it was the

duty of scientists to make such investigation. He writes: "It argues ill for the boasted freedom of opinion among scientific men that they have so long refused to institute a scientific investigation into the existence and nature of facts asserted by so many competent and credible witnesses, and which they are freely invited to examine when and where they please. For my own part, I too much value the pursuit of truth, and the discovery of any new fact in Nature, to avoid inquiry because it appears to clash with prevailing opinions." In this spirit he began his inquiry.

It should be stated, however, that though Professor Crookes was sternly critical as to the physical phenomena, already he had had acquaintance with the mental phenomena, and would appear to have accepted them. Possibly this sympathetic spiritual attitude may have aided him in obtaining his remarkable results, for it cannot be too often repeated—because it is too often forgotten—that psychic research of the best sort is really "psychic," and depends upon spiritual conditions. It is not the bumptious self-opinionated man, sitting with a ludicrous want of proportion as a judge upon spiritual matters, who attains results; but it is he who appreciates that the strict use of reason and observation is not incompatible with humility of mind, and that courteous gentleness of demeanour which makes for harmony and sympathy between the inquirer and his subject.

Crookes's less material inquiries seem to have begun in the summer of 1869. In July of that year he had sittings with the well-known medium, Mrs. Marshall, and in December with another famous medium, J. J. Morse. In July, 1869, D.D. Home who had been giving séances in St. Petersburg, returned to London with a letter of introduction to Crookes from Professor Butlerof.

An interesting fact emerges from a private diary kept by Crookes during his voyage to Spain in December, 1870, with the Eclipse Expedition. Under the date December 31, he writes:¹

I cannot help reverting in thought to this time last year. Nelly (his wife) and I were then sitting together in communion with dear departed friends, and as twelve o'clock struck they wished us many happy New Years. I feel that they are looking on now, and as space is no obstacle to

¹ *Life Of Sir William Crookes*, by E. E. Fournier d'Albe, 1923.

them, they are, I believe, looking over my dear Nelly at the same time. Over us both I know there is one whom we all—spirits as well as mortals—bow down to as Father and Master, and it is my humble prayer to Him—the Great Good as the mandarin calls Him—that He will continue His merciful protection to Nelly and me and our dear little family. May He also allow us to continue to receive spiritual communications from my brother who passed over the boundary when in a ship at sea more than three years ago.

He further adds New Year loving greetings to his wife and children, and concludes:

And when the earthly years have ended may we continue to spend still happier ones in the spirit land, glimpses of which I am occasionally getting.

Miss Florence Cook, with whom Crookes undertook his classical series of experiments, was a young girl of fifteen who was asserted to possess strong psychic powers, taking the rare shape of complete materialization. It would appear to have been a family characteristic, for her sister, Miss Kate Cook, was not less famous. There had been some squabble with an alleged exposure in which a Mr. Volckman had taken sides against Miss Cook, and in her desire for vindication she placed herself entirely under the protection of Mrs. Crookes, declaring that her husband might make any experiments upon her powers under his own conditions, and asking for no reward save that he should clear her character as a medium by giving his exact conclusions to the world. Fortunately, she was dealing with a man of unswerving intellectual honesty. We have had experience in these latter days of mediums giving themselves up in the same unreserved way to scientific investigation and being betrayed by the investigators, who had not the moral courage to admit those results which would have entailed their own public acceptance of the spiritual interpretation.

Professor Crookes published a full account of his methods in *the Quarterly Journal Of Science*, of which he was then editor. In his house at Mornington Road a small study opened into the chemical laboratory, a door with a curtain separating the two rooms. Miss Cook lay entranced upon a couch in the inner room. In the outer in subdued light sat Crookes, with such other observers as he invited. At the end of a period

which varied from twenty minutes to an hour the materialized figure was built up from the ectoplasm of the medium. The existence of this substance and its method of production were unknown at that date, but subsequent research has thrown much light upon it, an account of which has been embodied in the chapter on ectoplasm. The actual effect was that the curtain was opened, and there emerged into the laboratory a female who was usually as different from the medium as two people could be. This apparition, which could move, talk, and act in all ways as an independent entity, is known by the name which she herself claimed as her own, "Katie King."

The natural explanation of the sceptic is that the two women were really the same woman, and that Katie was a clever impersonation of Florence. The objector could strengthen his case by the observation made not only by Crookes but by Miss Marryat and others, that there were times when Katie was very like Florence.

Herein lies one of the mysteries of materialization which call for careful consideration rather than sneers. The author, sitting with Miss Besinnet, the famous American medium, has remarked the same thing, the psychic faces beginning when the power was weak by resembling those of the medium, and later becoming utterly unlike. Some speculators have imagined that the etheric form of the medium, her spiritual body, has been liberated by the trance, and is the basis upon which the other manifesting entities build up their own simulacra. However that may be, the fact has to be admitted; and it is paralleled by Direct Voice phenomena, where the voice often resembles that of the medium at first and then takes an entirely different tone, or divides into two voices speaking at the same time.

However, the student has certainly the right to claim that Florence Cook and Katie King were the same individual until convincing evidence is laid before him that this is impossible. Such evidence Professor Crookes is very careful to give.

The points of difference which he observed between Miss Cook and Katie are thus described:

Katie's height varies; in my house I have seen her six inches taller than Miss Cook. Last night, with bare feet and not tip-toeing, she was four

and a half inches taller than Miss Cook. Katie's neck was bare last night; the skin was perfectly smooth both to touch and sight, whilst on Miss Cook's neck is a large blister, which under similar circumstances is distinctly visible and rough to the touch. Katie's ears are unpierced, whilst Miss Cook habitually wears ear-rings. Katie's complexion is very fair, while that of Miss Cook is very dark. Katie's fingers are much longer than Miss Cook's, and her face is also larger. In manners and ways of expression there are also many decided differences.

In a later contribution, he adds:

Having seen so much of Katie lately, when she has been illuminated by the electric light, I am enabled to add to the points of difference between her and her medium which I mentioned in a former article. I have the most absolute certainty that Miss Cook and Katie are two separate individuals so far as their bodies are concerned. Several little marks on Miss Cook's face are absent on Katie's. Miss Cook's hair is so dark a brown as almost to appear black; a lock of Katie's, which is now before me, and which she allowed me to cut from her luxuriant tresses, having first traced it up to the scalp and satisfied myself that it actually grew there, is a rich golden auburn.

On one evening I timed Katie's pulse. It beat steadily at 75, whilst Miss Cook's pulse a little time after was going at its usual rate of 90. On applying my ear to Katie's chest, I could hear a heart beating rhythmically inside, and pulsating even more steadily than did Miss Cook's heart when she allowed me to try a similar experiment after the séance. Tested in the same way, Katie's lungs were found to be sounder than her medium's, for at the time I tried my experiment Miss Cook was under medical treatment for a severe cough.

Crookes took forty-four photographs of Katie King by the aid of electric light. Writing in *The Spiritualist* (1874, p. 270), he describes the methods he adopted:

During the week before Katie took her departure, she gave séances at my house almost nightly, to enable me to photograph her by artificial light. Five complete sets of photographic apparatus were accordingly fitted up for the purpose, consisting of five cameras, one of the whole-plate size, one half-plate, one quarter-plate, and two binocular

stereoscopic cameras, which were all brought to bear upon Katie at the same time on each occasion on which she stood for her portrait. Five sensitizing and fixing baths were used, and plenty of plates were cleaned ready for use in advance, so that there might be no hitch or delay during the photographing operations, which were performed by myself, aided by one assistant.

My library was used as a dark cabinet. It has folding doors opening into the laboratory; one of these doors was taken off its hinges, and a curtain suspended in its place to enable Katie to pass in and out easily. Those of our friends who were present were seated in the laboratory facing the curtain, and the cameras were placed a little behind them, ready to photograph Katie when she came outside, and to photograph anything also inside the cabinet, whenever the curtain was withdrawn for the purpose. Each evening there were three or four exposures of plates in the five cameras, giving at least fifteen separate pictures at each séance; some of these were spoilt in the developing, and some in regulating the amount of light. Altogether I have forty-four negatives, some inferior, some indifferent, and some excellent.

Some of these photographs are in the author's possession, and surely there is no more wonderful impression upon any plate than that which shows Crookes at the height of his manhood, with this angel—for such in truth she was—leaning upon his arm. The word "angel" may seem an exaggeration, but when an other-world spirit submits herself to the discomforts of temporary and artificial existence in order to convey the lesson of survival to a material and worldly generation, there is no more fitting term.

Some controversy has arisen as to whether Crookes ever saw the medium and Katie at the same moment. Crookes says in the course of his report that he frequently followed Katie into the cabinet, "and have sometimes seen her and her medium together, but most generally I have found nobody but the entranced medium lying on the floor, Katie and her white robes having instantaneously disappeared."

Much more direct testimony, however, is given by Crookes in a letter to the *Banner Of Light* (U.S.A.), which is reproduced in *The Spiritualist*(London) of July 17, 1874, p. 29. He writes:

In reply to your request, I beg to state that I saw Miss Cook and Katie together at the same moment, by the light of a phosphorus lamp, which was quite sufficient to enable me to see distinctly all I described. The human eye will naturally take in a wide angle, and thus the two figures were included in my field of vision at the same time, but the light being dim, and the two faces being several feet apart, I naturally turned the lamp and my eyes alternately from one to the other, when I desired to bring either Miss Cook's or Katie's face to that portion of my field of view where vision is most distinct. Since the occurrence here referred to took place, Katie and Miss Cook have been seen together by myself and eight other persons, in my own house, illuminated by the full blaze of the electric light. On this occasion Miss Cook's face was not visible, as her head had to be closely bound up in a thick shawl, but I specially satisfied myself that she was there. An attempt to throw the light direct on to her uncovered face, when entranced, was attended with serious consequences.

The camera, too, emphasizes the points of difference between the medium and the form. He says:

One of the most interesting of the pictures is one in which I am standing by the side of Katie; she has her bare foot upon a particular part of the floor. Afterwards I dressed Miss Cook like Katie, placed her and myself in exactly the same position, and we were photographed by the same cameras, placed exactly as in the other experiment, and illuminated by the same light. When these two pictures are placed over each other, the two photographs of myself coincide exactly as regards stature, etc., but Katie is half a head taller than Miss Cook, and looks a big woman in comparison with her. In the breadth of her face, in many of the pictures, she differs essentially in size from her medium, and the photographs show several other points of difference.

Crookes pays a high tribute to the medium, Florence Cook:

The almost daily séances with which Miss Cook has lately favoured me have proved a severe tax upon her strength, and I wish to make the most public acknowledgment of the obligations I am under to her for her readiness to assist me in my experiments. Every test that I have proposed she has at once agreed to submit to with the utmost willingness; she is open and straightforward in speech, and I have

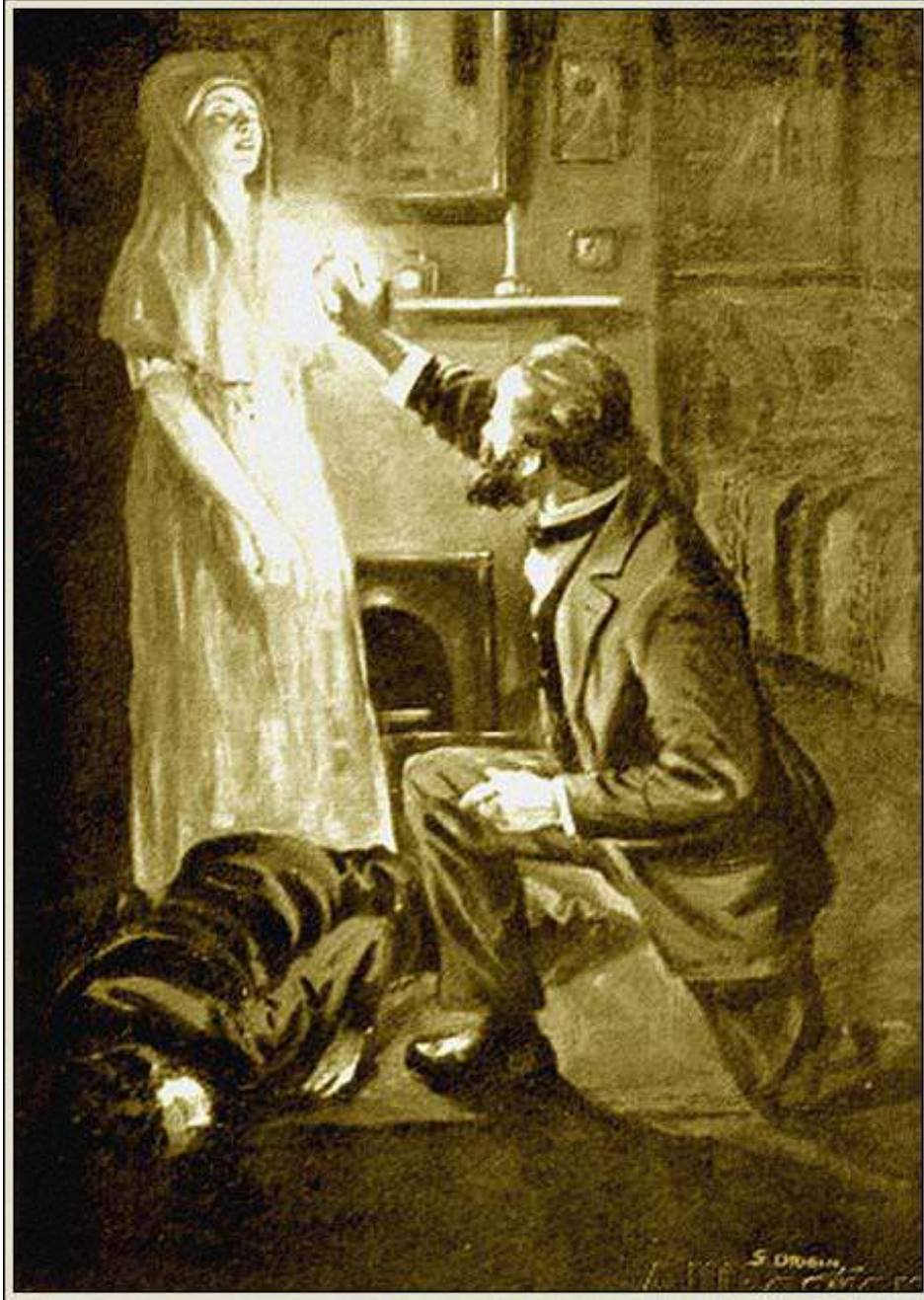
never seen anything approaching the slightest symptom of a wish to deceive. Indeed, I do not believe she could carry on a deception if she were to try, and if she did she would certainly be found out very quickly, for such a line of action is altogether foreign to her nature. And to imagine that an innocent schoolgirl of fifteen should be able to conceive and then successfully carry out for three years so gigantic an imposture as this, and in that time should submit to any test which might be imposed upon her, should bear the strictest scrutiny, should be willing to be searched at any time, either before or after a séance, and should meet with even better success in my own house than at that of her parents, knowing that she visited me with the express object of submitting to strict scientific tests—to imagine, I say, the Katie King of the last three years to be the result of imposture, does more violence to one's reason and common sense than to believe her to be what she herself affirms.²

Granting that a temporary form was built up from the ectoplasm of Florence Cook, and that this form was then occupied and used by an independent being who called herself "Katie King," we are still faced with the question, "Who was Katie King?" To this we can only give the answer which she gave herself, while admitting that we have no proof of it. She declared that she was the daughter of John King, who had long been known among Spiritualists as the presiding spirit at séances held for material phenomena. His personality is discussed later in the chapter upon the Eddy brothers and Mrs. Holmes, to which the reader is referred. Her earth name had been Morgan, and King was rather the general title of a certain class of spirits than an ordinary name. Her life had been spent two hundred years before, in the reign of Charles the Second, in the island of Jamaica. Whether this be true or not, she undoubtedly conformed to the part, and her general conversation was consistent with her account. One of the daughters of Professor Crookes wrote to the author and described her vivid recollection of tales of the Spanish Main told by this kindly spirit to the children of the family. She made herself beloved by all. Mrs. Crookes wrote:

At a séance with Miss Cook in our own house when one of our sons was an infant of three weeks old, Katie King, a materialized spirit,

² *Researches In The Phenomena Of Spiritualism.*

expressed the liveliest interest in him and asked to be allowed to see the baby. The infant was accordingly brought into the séance room and placed in the arms of Katie, who, after holding him in the most natural way for a short time, smilingly gave him back again.



Crookes's test to show that the medium and the spirit were separate entities. After a drawing by S. Drigin.

Professor Crookes has left it on record that her beauty and charm were unique in his experience.

The reader may reasonably think that the subdued light which has been alluded to goes far to vitiate the results by preventing exact observation. Professor Crookes has assured us, however, that as the series of séances proceeded toleration was established, and the figure was able to bear a far greater degree of light. This toleration had its limits, however, which were never passed by Professor Crookes, but which were tested to the full in a daring experiment described by Miss Florence Marryat (Mrs. Ross-Church). It should be stated that Professor Crookes was not present at this experience, nor did Miss Marryat ever claim that he was. She mentions, however, the name of Mr. Carter Hall as being one of the company present. Katie had very good-humouredly consented to testing what the effect would be if a full light were turned upon her image:

She took up her station against the drawing-room wall, with her arms extended as if she were crucified. Then three gas-burners were turned on to their full extent in a room about sixteen feet square. The effect upon Katie King was marvellous. She looked like herself for the space of a second only, then she began gradually to melt away. I can compare the dematerialization of her form to nothing but a wax doll melting before a hot fire. First the features became blurred and indistinct; they seemed to run into each other. The eyes sunk in the sockets, the nose disappeared, the frontal bone fell in. Next the limbs appeared to give way under her, and she sank lower and lower on the carpet, like a crumbling edifice. At last there was nothing but her head left above the ground—then a heap of white drapery only, which disappeared with a whisk, as if a hand had pulled it after her—and we were left staring by the light of three gas-burners at the spot on which Katie King had stood.³

Miss Marryat adds the interesting detail that at some of these séances Miss Cook's hair was nailed to the ground, which did not in the least interfere with the subsequent emergence of Katie from the cabinet.

The results obtained in his own home were honestly and fearlessly reported by Professor Crookes in his Journal, and caused the greatest possible commotion in the scientific world. A few of the larger spirits, men like Russel Wallace, Lord Rayleigh, the young and rising physicist William Barrett, Cromwell Varley, and others, had their former views

³ *There Is No Death*, p. 143.

confirmed, or were encouraged to advance upon a new path of knowledge. There was a fiercely intolerant party, however, headed by Carpenter the physiologist, who derided the matter and were ready to impute anything from lunacy to fraud to their illustrious colleague. Organized science came badly out of the matter. In his published account Crookes gave the letters in which he asked Stokes, the secretary of the Royal Society, to come down and see these things with his own eyes. By his refusal to do so, Stokes placed himself in exactly the same position as those cardinals who would not look at the moons of Jupiter through Galileo's telescope. Material science, when faced with a new problem, showed itself to be just as bigoted as mediaeval theology.

Before quitting the subject of Katie King one should say a few words as to the future of the great medium from whom she had her physical being. Miss Cook became Mrs. Corner, but continued to exhibit her remarkable powers. The author is only aware of one occasion upon which the honesty of her mediumship was called in question, and that was when she was seized by Sir George Sitwell and accused of personating a spirit. The author is of opinion that a materializing medium should always be secured so that she cannot wander around—and this as a protection against herself. It is unlikely that she will move in deep trance, but in the half-trance condition there is nothing to prevent her unconsciously, or semi-consciously, or in obedience to suggestion from the expectations of the circle, wandering out of the cabinet into the room. It is a reflection of our own ignorance that a lifetime of proof should be clouded by a single episode of this nature. It is worthy of remark, however, that upon this occasion the observers agreed that the figure was white, whereas when Mrs. Corner was seized no white was to be seen. An experienced investigator would probably have concluded that this was not a materialization, but a transfiguration, which means that the ectoplasm, being insufficient to build up a complete figure, has been used to drape the medium so that she herself may carry the simulacrum. Commenting upon such cases, the great German investigator, Dr. Schrenck Notzing, says⁴:

This (a photograph) is interesting as throwing a light on the genesis of the so-called transfiguration, I.E. the medium takes upon herself the

⁴ *Phenomena Of Materialization* (English Translation).

part of the spirit, endeavouring to dramatize the character of the person in question by clothing herself in the materialized fabrics. This transition stage is found in nearly all materialization mediums. The literature of the subject records a large number of attempts at exposure of mediums thus impersonating "spirits," e.g. that of the medium Bastian by the Crown Prince Rudolph, that of Crookes's medium, Miss Cook, that of Madame d'Esperance, etc. In all these cases the medium was seized, but the fabrics used for masking immediately disappeared, and were not afterwards found.

It would appear, then, that the true reproach in such cases lies with the negligent sitters rather than with the unconscious medium.

The sensational nature of Professor Crookes's experiments with Miss Cook, and the fact, no doubt, that they seemed more vulnerable to attack, have tended to obscure his very positive results with Home and with Miss Fox, which have established the powers of those mediums upon a solid basis. Crookes soon found the usual difficulties which researchers encounter, but he had sense enough to realize that in an entirely new subject one has to adapt oneself to the conditions, and not abandon the study in disgust because the conditions refuse to adapt themselves to our own preconceived ideas. Thus, in speaking of Home, he says:

The experiments I have tried have been very numerous, but owing to our imperfect knowledge of the conditions which favour or oppose the manifestations of this force, to the apparently capricious manner in which it is exerted, and to the fact that Mr. Home himself is subject to unaccountable ebbs and flows of the force, it has but seldom happened that a result obtained on one occasion could be subsequently confirmed and tested with apparatus specially contrived for the purpose.⁵

The most marked of these results was the alteration in the weight of objects, which was afterwards so completely confirmed by Dr. Crawford working with the Goligher circle, and also in the course of the "Margery" investigation at Boston. Heavy objects could be made light, and light ones heavy, by the action of some unseen force which appeared to be under the influence of an independent intelligence. The checks by which

⁵ *Researches In The Phenomena Of Spiritualism*, p. 10.

all possible fraud was eliminated are very fully set out in the record of the experiments, and must convince any unprejudiced reader. Dr. Huggins, the well-known authority on the spectroscope, and Serjeant Cox, the eminent lawyer, together with several other spectators, witnessed the experiments. As already recorded, however, Crookes found it impossible to get some of the official heads of science to give the matter one hour of their attention.

The playing upon musical instruments, especially an accordion, under circumstances when it was impossible to reach the notes, was another of the phenomena which was very thoroughly examined and then certified by Crookes and his distinguished assistants. Granting that the medium has himself the knowledge which would enable him to play the instrument, the author is not prepared to admit that such a phenomenon is an absolute proof of independent intelligence. When once the existence of an etheric body is granted, with limbs which correspond with our own, there is no obvious reason why a partial detachment should not take place, and why the etheric fingers should not be placed upon the keys while the material ones remain upon the medium's lap. The problem resolves itself, then, into the simpler proposition that the medium's brain can command his etheric fingers, and that those fingers can be supplied with sufficient force to press down the keys. Very many psychic phenomena, the reading with blindfolded eyes, the touching of distant objects, and so forth, may, in the opinion of the author, be referred to the etheric body and may be classed rather under a higher and subtler materialism than under Spiritualism. They are in a class quite distinct from those mental phenomena such as evidential messages from the dead, which form the true centre of the spiritual movement. In speaking of Miss Kate Fox, Professor Crookes says: "I have observed many circumstances which appear to show that the will and intelligence of the medium have much to do with the phenomena." He adds that this is not in any conscious or dishonest way, and continues, "I have observed some circumstances which seem conclusively to point to the agency of an outside intelligence not belonging to any human being in the room."⁶ This is the point which the author has attempted to make as expressed by an authority far higher than his own.

⁶ *Researches In The Phenomena Of Spiritualism*, p. 95.

The phenomena which were chiefly established in the investigation of Miss Kate Fox were the movement of objects at a distance, and the production of percussive sounds—or raps. The latter covered a great range of sound, "delicate ticks, sharp sounds as from an induction coil in full work, detonations in the air, sharp metallic taps, a crackling like that heard when a frictional machine is at work, sounds like scratching, the twittering as of a bird, etc." All of us who have had experience of these sounds have been compelled to ask ourselves how far they are under the control of the medium. The author has come to the conclusion, as already stated, that up to a point they are under the control of the medium, and that beyond that point they are not. He cannot easily forget the distress and embarrassment of a great North-country medium when in the author's presence loud raps, sounding like the snapping of fingers, broke out round his head in the coffee-room of a Doncaster hotel. If he had any doubts that raps were independent of the medium they were finally set at rest upon that occasion. As to the objectivity of these noises, Crookes says of Miss Kate Fox⁷:

It seems only necessary for her to place her hand on any substance for loud thuds to be heard in it, like a triple pulsation, sometimes loud enough to be heard several rooms off. In this manner I have heard them in a living tree—on a sheet of glass—on a stretched iron wire—on a stretched membrane—a tambourine—on the roof of a cab—and on the floor of a theatre. Moreover, actual contact is not always necessary. I have had these sounds proceeding from the floor, walls, etc., when the medium's hands and feet were held—when she was standing on a chair—when she was suspended in a swing from the ceiling—when she was enclosed in a wire cage—and when she had fallen fainting on a sofa. I have heard them on a glass harmonicon—I have felt them on my own shoulder and under my own hands. I have heard them on a sheet of paper, held between the fingers by a piece of thread passed through one corner. With a full knowledge of the numerous theories which have been started, chiefly in America, to explain these sounds, I have tested them in every way that I could devise, until there has been no escape from the conviction that they were true objective occurrences not produced by trickery or mechanical means.

⁷ *Researches In The Phenomena Of Spiritualism*, p. 86.

So finishes the legend of cracking toe joints, dropping apples, and all the other absurd explanations which have been put forward to explain away the facts. It is only fair to say, however, that the painful incidents connected with the latter days of the Fox sisters go some way to justify those who, without knowing the real evidence, have had their attention drawn to that single episode—which is treated elsewhere.

It has sometimes been supposed that Crookes modified or withdrew his opinions upon psychic subjects as expressed in 1874. It may at least be said that the violence of the opposition, and the timidity of those who might have supported him, did alarm him and that he felt his scientific position to be in danger. Without going the length of subterfuge, he did unquestionably shirk the question. He refused to have his articles upon the subject republished, and he would not circulate the wonderful photographs in which the materialized Katie King stood arm-in-arm with himself. He was exceedingly cautious also in defining his position. In a letter quoted by Professor Angelo Brofferio, he says⁸:

All that I am concerned in is that invisible and intelligent beings exist who say that they are the spirits of dead persons. But proof that they really are the individuals they assume to be, which I require in order to believe it, I have never received, though I am disposed to admit that many of my friends assert that they have actually obtained the desired proofs, and I myself have already frequently been many times on the verge of this conviction.

As he grew older, however, this conviction hardened, or perhaps he became more conscious of the moral responsibilities which such exceptional experiences must entail.

In his presidential address before the British Association at Bristol in 1898, Sir William briefly referred to his earlier researches. He said:

Upon one other interest I have not yet touched—to me the weightiest and farthest—reaching of all. No incident in my scientific career is more widely known than the part I took many years ago in certain psychic researches. Thirty years have passed since I published an account of experiments tending to show that outside our scientific knowledge there exists a Force exercised by intelligence differing from the ordinary

⁸ *Für den Spiritismus*, Leipzig, 1894, p. 319.

intelligence common to mortals . I have nothing to retract. I adhere to my already published statements. Indeed, I might add much thereto.

Nearly twenty years later his belief was stronger than ever. In the course of an interview, he said⁹:

I have never had any occasion to change my mind on the subject. I am perfectly satisfied with what I have said in earlier days. It is quite true that a connexion has been set up between this world and the next.

In reply to the question whether Spiritualism had not killed the old materialism of the scientists, he added:

I think it has. It has at least convinced the great majority of people, who know anything about the subject, of the existence of the next world.

The author has had an opportunity lately, through the courtesy of Mr. Thomas Blyton, of seeing the letter of condolence written by Sir William Crookes on the occasion of the death of Mrs. Corner. It is dated April 24, 1904, and in it he says: "Convey Lady Crookes's and my own sincerest sympathy to the family in their irreparable loss. We trust that the certain belief that our loved ones, when they have passed over, are still watching over us —a belief which owes so much of its certainty to the mediumship of Mrs. Corner (or Florence Cook, as she will always be in our memory — will strengthen and console those who are left behind." The daughter in announcing the death said, "She died in deep peace and happiness."

⁹ *The International Psychic Gazette*, December, 1917, pp. 61-2.

12. THE EDDY BROTHERS AND THE HOLMESES

IT is difficult within any reasonable compass to follow the rise of various mediums in the United States, and a study of one or two outstanding cases must typify the whole. The years 1874 and 1875 were years of great psychic activity, bringing conviction to some and scandal to others. On the whole the scandal seems to have predominated, but whether rightly or not is a question which may well be debated. The opponents of psychic truth having upon their side the clergy of the various churches, organized science, and the huge inert bulk of material mankind, had the lay Press at their command, with the result that everything that was in its favour was suppressed or contorted, and everything which could tell against it was given the widest publicity. Hence, a constant checking of past episodes and reassessment of old values are necessary. Even at the present day the air is charged with prejudice. If any man of standing at the present instant were to enter a London newspaper office and say that he had detected a medium in fraud, the matter would be seized upon eagerly and broadcast over the country; while if the same man proclaimed that he had beyond all question satisfied himself that the phenomena were true, it is doubtful if he would get a paragraph. The scale is always heavily weighted. In America, where there is practically no Libel Act, and where the Press is often violent and sensational, this state of things was—and possibly is—even more in evidence.

The first outstanding incident was the mediumship of the Eddy brothers, which has probably never been excelled in the matter of materialization, or, as we may now call them, ectoplasmic forms. The difficulty at that date in accepting such phenomena lay in the fact that they seemed to be regulated by no known law, and to be isolated from all our experiences of Nature. The labours of Geley, Crawford, Madame Bisson, Schrenck Notzing and others have removed this, and have given us, what is at the lowest, a complete scientific hypothesis, sustained by prolonged and careful investigations, so that we can bring some order into the matter. This did not exist in 1874, and we can well sympathize with the doubt of even the most honest and candid minds, when they were asked to believe that two rude farmers, unmannered and uneducated, could produce

results which were denied to the rest of the world and utterly inexplicable to science.

The Eddy brothers, Horatio and William, were primitive folk farming a small holding at the hamlet of Chittenden, near Rutland, in the State of Vermont. An observer has described them as "sensitive, distant and curt with strangers, look more like hard-working rough farmers than prophets or priests of a new dispensation, have dark complexions, black hair and eyes, stiff joints, a clumsy carriage, shrink from advances, and make new-comers ill at ease and unwelcome. They are at feud with some of their neighbours and not liked. They are, in fact, under the ban of a public opinion that is not prepared or desirous to study the phenomena as either scientific marvels or revelations from another world."

The rumours of the strange doings which occurred in the Eddy homestead had got abroad, and raised an excitement similar to that caused by the Koons's music-room in earlier days. Folk came from all parts to investigate. The Eddys seem to have had ample, if rude, accommodation for their guests, and to have boarded them in a great room with the plaster stripping off the walls and the food as simple as the surroundings. For this board, of course, they charged at a low rate, but they do not seem to have made any profit out of their psychic demonstrations.

A good deal of curiosity had been aroused in Boston and New York by the reports of what was happening, and a New York paper, the Daily Graphic, sent up Colonel Olcott as investigator. Olcott was not at that time identified with any psychic movement—indeed, his mind was prejudiced against it, and he approached his task rather in the spirit of an "exposer." He was a man of clear brain and outstanding ability, with a high sense of honour. No one can read the very full and intimate details of his own life which are contained in his "Old Diary Leaves" without feeling a respect for the man—loyal to a fault, unselfish, and with that rare moral courage which will follow truth and accept results even when they oppose one's expectations and desires. He was no mystic dreamer but a very practical man of affairs, and some of his psychic research observations have met with far less attention than they deserve.

Olcott remained for ten weeks in the Vermont atmosphere, which must in itself have been a feat of considerable endurance, with plain fare, hard

living and uncongenial hosts. He came away with something very near to personal dislike for his morose entertainers, and at the same time with absolute confidence in their psychic powers. Like every wise investigator, he refuses to give blank certificates of character, and will not answer for occasions upon which he was not present, nor for the future conduct of those whom he is judging. He confines himself to his actual experience, and in fifteen remarkable articles which appeared in the *New York Daily Graphic* in October and November, 1874, he gave his full results and the steps which he had taken to check them. Reading these, it is difficult to suggest any precaution which he had omitted.

His first care was to examine the Eddy history. It was a good but not a spotless record. It cannot be too often insisted upon that the medium is a mere instrument and that the gift has no relation to character. This applies to physical phenomena, but not to mental, for no high teaching could ever come through a low channel. There was nothing wrong in the record of the brothers, but they had once admittedly given a fake mediumistic show, announcing it as such and exposing tricks. This was probably done to raise the wind and also to conciliate their bigoted neighbours, who were incensed against the real phenomena. Whatever the cause or motive, it naturally led Olcott to be very circumspect in his dealings, since it showed an intimate knowledge of tricks.

The ancestry was most interesting, for not only was there an unbroken record of psychic power extending over several generations, but their grand mother four times removed had been burned as a witch—or at least had been sentenced to that fate in the famous Salem trials of 1692. There are many living now who would be just as ready to take this short way with our mediums as ever Cotton Mather was, but police prosecutions are the modern equivalent. The father of the Eddys was unhappily one of those narrow persecuting fanatics. Olcott declares that the children were marked for life by the blows which he gave them in order to discourage what he chose to look upon as diabolical powers. The mother, who was herself strongly psychic, knew how unjustly this "religious" brute was acting, and the homestead must have become a hell upon earth. There was no refuge for the children outside, for the psychic phenomena used to follow them even into the schoolroom, and excite the revilings of the ignorant young barbarians around them. At home, when young Eddy fell into a trance, the father and a neighbour poured boiling

water over him and placed a red—hot coal on his head, leaving an indelible scar. The lad fortunately slept on. Is it to be wondered at that after such a childhood the children should have grown into morose and secretive men?

As they grew older the wretched father tried to make some money out of the powers which he had so brutally discouraged, and hired the children out as mediums. No one has ever yet adequately described the sufferings which public mediums used to undergo at the hands of idiotic investigators and cruel sceptics. Olcott testifies that the hands and arms of the sisters as well as the brothers were grooved with the marks of ligatures and scarred with burning sealing wax, while two of the girls had pieces of flesh pinched out by handcuffs. They were ridden on rails, beaten, fired at, stoned and chased while their cabinet was repeatedly broken to pieces. The blood oozed from their finger-nails from the compression of arteries. These were the early days in America, but Great Britain has little to boast of when one recalls the Davenport brothers and the ignorant violence of the Liverpool mob.

The Eddys seem to have covered about the whole range of physical mediumship. Olcott gives the list thus—rappings, movement of objects, painting in oils and water-colours under influence, prophecy, speaking strange tongues, healing, discernment of spirits, levitation, writing of messages, psychometry, clairvoyance, and finally the production of materialized forms. Since St. Paul first enumerated the gifts of the spirit no more comprehensive list has ever been given.

The method of the séances was that the medium should sit in a cabinet at one end of the room, and that his audience should occupy rows of benches in front of him. The inquirer will probably ask why there should be a cabinet at all, and extended experience has shown that it can, as a matter of fact, be dispensed with save in this particular crowning phenomenon of materialization. Home never used a cabinet, and it is seldom used by our chief British mediums of to-day. There is, however, a very definite reason for its presence. Without being too didactic upon a subject which is still under examination, it may at least be stated, as a working hypothesis with a great deal to recommend it, that the ectoplasmic vapour which solidifies into the plasmic substance from which the forms are constructed can be more easily condensed in a

limited space. It has been found, however, that the presence of the medium within that space is not needful. At the greatest materialization séance which the author has ever attended, where some twenty forms of various ages and sizes appeared in one evening, the medium sat outside the door of the cabinet from which the shapes emerged. Presumably, according to the hypothesis, his ectoplasmic vapour was conducted into the confined space, irrespective of the position of his physical body. This had not been recognized at the date of this investigation, so the cabinet was employed.

It is obvious, however, that the cabinet offered a means for fraud and impersonation, so it had to be carefully examined. It was on the second floor, with one small window. Olcott had the window netted with a mosquito curtain fastened on the outside. The rest of the cabinet was solid wood and unapproachable save by the room in which the spectators were sitting. There seems to have been no possible opening for fraud. Olcott had it examined by an expert, whose certificate is given in the book.

Under these circumstances Olcott related in his newspaper articles, and afterwards in his remarkable book, "People from the Other World," that he saw in the course of ten weeks no fewer than four hundred apparitions appear out of this cabinet, of all sorts, sizes, sexes and races, clad in the most marvellous garments, babies in arms, Indian warriors, gentlemen in evening dress, a Kurd with a nine-foot lance, squaws who smoked tobacco, ladies in fine costumes. Such was Olcott's evidence, and there was not a statement he made for which he was not prepared to produce the evidence of a roomful of people. His story was received with incredulity then, and will excite little less incredulity now. Olcott, full of his subject and knowing his own precautions, chafed, as all of us chafe, at the criticism of those who had not been present, and who chose to assume that those who were present were dupes and simpletons. He says: "If one tells them of babies being carried in from the cabinet by women, of young girls with lithe forms, yellow hair and short stature, of old women and men standing in full sight and speaking to us, of half-grown children seen, two at a time, simultaneously with another form, of costumes of different makes, of bald heads, grey hair, black shocky heads of hair, curly hair, of ghosts instantly recognized by friends, and ghosts speaking audibly in a foreign language of which the medium is ignorant

—their equanimity is not disturbed... The credulity of some scientific men, too, is boundless—they would rather believe that a baby could lift a mountain without levers, than that a spirit could lift an ounce."

But apart from the extreme sceptic, whom nothing will convince and who would label the Angel Gabriel at the last day as an optical delusion, there are some very natural objections which an honest novice is bound to make, and an honest believer to answer. What about these costumes? Whence come they? Can we accept a nine-foot lance as being a spiritual object? The answer lies, so far as we understand it, in the amazing properties of ectoplasm. It is the most protean substance, capable of being moulded instantly into any shape, and the moulding power is spirit will, either in or out of the body. Anything may in an instant be fashioned from it if the predominating intelligence so decides. At all such séances there appears to be present one controlling spiritual being who marshals the figures and arranges the whole programme. Sometimes he speaks and openly directs. Sometimes he is silent and manifests only by his actions. As already stated, such controls are very often Red Indians who appear in their spiritual life to have some special affinity with physical phenomena.

William Eddy, the chief medium for these phenomena, does not appear to have suffered in health or strength from that which is usually a most exhausting process. Crookes has testified how Home would "lie in an almost fainting condition on the floor, pale and speechless." Home, however, was not a rude open air farmer, but a sensitive artistic invalid. Eddy seems to have eaten little, but smoked incessantly. Music and singing were employed at the séances, for it has long been observed that there is a close connexion between musical vibrations and psychic results. White light also has been found to prohibit results, and this is now explained from the devastating effects which light has been shown to exert upon ectoplasm. Many colours have been tried in order to prevent total darkness, but if you can trust your medium the latter is the most conducive to results, especially to those results of phosphorescent and flashing lights which are among the most beautiful of the phenomena. If a light is used, red is the colour which is best tolerated. In the Eddy séances there was a subdued illumination from a shaded lamp.

It would be wearisome to the reader to enter into details as to the various types which appeared in these remarkable gatherings. Madame Blavatsky, who was then an unknown woman in New York, had come up to see the sights. At that time she had not yet developed the theosophical line of thought, and was an ardent Spiritualist. Colonel Olcott and she met for the first time in the Vermont farm-house, and there began a friendship which was destined in the future to lead to strange developments. In her honour apparently a whole train of Russian images appeared, who carried on conversations in that language with the lady. The chief apparitions, however, were a giant Indian named Santum and an Indian squaw named Honto, who materialized so completely and so often that the audience may well have been excused if they forgot sometimes that they were dealing with spirits at all. So close was the contact that Olcott measured Honto on a painted scale beside the cabinet door. She was five feet three. On one occasion she exposed her woman's breast and asked a lady present to feel the beating of her heart. Honto was a light-hearted person, fond of dancing, of singing, of smoking, and of exhibiting her wealth of dark hair to the audience. Santum, on the other hand, was a taciturn warrior, six feet three in height. The height of the medium was five feet nine.

It is worth noting that the Indian always wore a powder-horn, which had been actually given him by a visitor to the circle. This was hung up in the cabinet and was donned by him when he materialized. Some of the Eddy spirits could speak and others could not, while the amount of fluency varied greatly. This was in accordance with the author's experience at similar séances. It seems that the returning soul has much to learn when it handles this simulacrum of itself, and that here, as elsewhere, practice goes for much. In speaking, these figures move their lips exactly as human beings would do. It has been shown also that their breath in lime water produces the characteristic reaction of carbon dioxide. Olcott says: "The spirits themselves say that they have to learn the art of self-materialization, as one would any other art." At first they could only make tangible hands as in the cases of the Davenports, the Foxes, and others. Many mediums never get beyond this stage.

Among the numerous visitors to the Vermont homestead there were naturally some who took up a hostile attitude. None of these, however, seems to have gone into the matter with any thoroughness. The one who

attracted most attention was a Dr. Beard, of New York, a medical man, who on the strength of a single sitting contended that the figures were all impersonations by William Eddy himself. No evidence, and only his own individual impression is put forward to sustain this view, and he declared that he could produce all the effects with "three dollars' worth of theatrical properties." Such an opinion might well be honestly formed upon a single performance, especially if it should have been a more or less unsuccessful one. But it becomes perfectly untenable when it is compared with the experiences of those who attended a number of sittings. Thus, Dr. Hodgson, of Stoneham, Mass., together with four other witnesses, signed a document: "We certify that Santum was out on the platform when another Indian of almost as great a stature came out, and the two passed and re-passed each other as they walked up and down. At the same time a conversation was being carried on between George Dix, Mayflower, old Mr. Morse, and Mrs. Eaton inside the cabinet. We recognized the familiar voice of each." There are many such testimonies, apart from Olcott, and they put the theory of impersonation quite out of court. It should be added that many of the forms were little children and babies in arms. Olcott measured one child two feet four in height. It should, in fairness, be added that the one thing which clouds the reader occasionally is Olcott's own hesitation and reservations. He was new to the subject, and every now and then a wave of fear and doubt would pass over his mind, and he would feel that he had committed himself too far and that he must hedge in case, in some inexplicable way, he should be shown to be in the wrong. Thus, he says: "The forms I saw at Chittenden, while apparently defying any other explanation than that they are of super-sensual origin, are still as a scientific fact to be regarded as `not proven.'" Elsewhere he talks about not having "test conditions."

This expression "test conditions" has become a sort of shibboleth which loses all meaning. Thus, when you say that you have beyond all question or doubt seen your own dead mother's face before you, the objector replies: "Ah, but was it under test conditions?" The test lies in the phenomenon itself. When one considers that Olcott was permitted for ten weeks to examine the little wooden enclosure which served as cabinet, to occlude the window, to search the medium, to measure and to weigh the ectoplasmic forms, one wonders what else he would demand

in order to make assurance complete. The fact is, that while Olcott was writing his account there came the alleged exposure of Mrs. Holmes, and the partial recantation of Mr. Dale Owen, and that this caused him to take these precautions.

It was William Eddy whose mediumship took the form of materializations. Horatio Eddy gave séances of quite a different character. In his case a sort of cloth screen was fixed up, in front of which he used to sit in good light with one of his audience beside him holding his hand. Behind the screen was placed a guitar and other instruments, which presently began to play, apparently of their own accord, while materialized hands showed themselves over the edge of the screen. The general effect of the performance was much the same as that of the Davenport brothers, but it was more impressive, inasmuch as the medium was in full view, and was under control by a spectator. The hypothesis of modern psychic science, founded upon many experiments, especially those of Dr. Crawford, of Belfast, is that invisible bands of ectoplasm, which are rather conductors of force than forcible in themselves, are evolved from the body of the medium and connect up with the object to be manipulated, where they are used to raise it, or to play it, as the unseen power may desire—that unseen power being, according to the present views of Professor Charles Richet, some extension of the personality of the medium, and according to the more advanced school some independent entity. Of this nothing was known at the time of the Eddys, and the phenomena presented the questionable appearance of a whole series of effects without any cause. As to the reality of the fact, it is impossible to read Olcott's very detailed description without being convinced that there could be no error in that. This movement of objects at a distance from the medium, or *telekinesis*, to use the modern phrase, is now a rare phenomenon in light, but on one occasion at an amateur circle of experienced Spiritualists the author has seen a large platter-shaped circle of wood in the full light of a candle, rising up on edge and flapping code answers to questions when no one was within six feet of it.

In Horatio Eddy's dark séances, where the complete absence of light gave the psychic power full scope, Olcott has testified that there were mad Indian war dances with the thudding of a dozen feet, and the wild playing of every instrument simultaneously, accompanied by yells and

whoops. "As an exhibition of pure brute force," he says, "this Indian dance is probably unsurpassed in the annals of such manifestations." A light turned on would find all the instruments littered about the floor, and Horatio in a deep slumber, without a trace of perspiration, lying unconscious in his chair. Olcott assures us that he and other gentlemen present, whose names he gives, were permitted to sit on the medium, but that within a minute or two all the instruments were playing once again. After such an experiment all further experiences – and there were very many—seem to be beside the point. Short of wholesale and senseless lying on the part of Olcott and the other spectators, there can be no doubt that Horatio Eddy was exercising powers of which science was, and still is, very imperfectly acquainted.

Some of Olcott's experiments were so definite, and are narrated so frankly and so clearly, that they deserve respectful consideration, and antedate the work of many of our modern researchers. For example, he brought from New York a balance which was duly tested as correct with a published certificate to that effect. He then persuaded one of the forms, the squaw Honto, to stand upon it, the actual weights being recorded by a third person, Mr. Pritchard, who was a reputable citizen and disinterested in the matter. Olcott gives his account of the results, and adds the certificate of Pritchard as sworn to before a magistrate. Honto was weighed four times, standing upon the platform so that she could not ease her weight in any way. She was a woman five feet three in height, and might be expected to register about 135 lb. The four results were actually 88, 58, 58, and 65 lb., all on the same evening. This seems to show that her body was a mere simulacrum which could vary in density from minute to minute. It showed also what was clearly brought out afterwards by Crawford, that the whole weight of the simulacrum cannot be derived from the medium. It is inconceivable that Eddy, who weighed 179 lb., was able to give up 88 of them. The whole circle, according to their capacity, which varies greatly, are called upon to contribute, and other elements may in all probability be drawn from the atmosphere. The highest actual loss of weight ever shown by Miss Goligher in the Crawford experiments was 52 lb., but each member of the circle was shown by the dials on the weighing chairs to have contributed some substance to the building of the ectoplasmic formations.

Colonel Olcott also prepared two spring balances and tested the pulling power of the spirit hands, while those of the medium were held by one of the audience. A left hand pulled with a force of forty lb., and the right hand with fifty in a light which was so good that Olcott could clearly see that the right hand was one finger short. He was already familiar with the assertion of the spirit in question that he had been a sailor and had lost a finger in his lifetime. When one reads of such things the complaint of Olcott that his results were not final, and that he had not perfect test conditions, becomes more and more hard to comprehend. He winds up his conclusions, however, with the words: "No matter how many sceptics came battering against these granitic facts, no matter what array of 'exposers' might blow their tin horns and penny trumpets, that Jericho would stand."

One observation which Olcott made was that these ectoplasmic forms were quick to obey any mental order from a strong-minded sitter, coming and going as they were willed to do. Other observers in various séances have noted the same fact, and it may be taken as one of the fixed points in this baffling problem.

There is one other curious point which probably escaped Olcott's notice. The mediums and the spirits who had been fairly amiable to him during his long visit turned suddenly very acid and repellent. This change seems to have occurred just after the arrival of Madame Blavatsky, with whom Olcott had struck up a close comradeship. Madame was, as stated, an ardent Spiritualist at the time, but it is at least possible that the spirits may have had foresight, and that they sensed danger from this Russian lady. Her theosophical teachings which were put forward in a year or two were to take the shape that, although the phenomena were real, the spirits were empty astral shells, and had no true life of their own. Whatever the true explanation, the change in the spirits was remarkable. "So far from the importance of my labour being recognized and all reasonable facilities afforded, I was kept constantly at a distance, as though I were an enemy instead of an unprejudiced observer."

Colonel Olcott narrates many cases where the sitters have recognized spirits, but too much stress should not be laid upon this, as with a dim light and an emotional condition it is easy for an honest observer to be mistaken. The author has had the opportunity of gazing into the faces of

at least a hundred of these images, and he can only recall two cases in which he was absolutely certain in his recognition. In both these cases the faces were self-illuminated, and he had not to depend upon the red lamp. There were two other occasions when, with the red lamp, he was morally certain, but in the vast majority of cases it was possible, if one allowed one's imagination to work, to read anything into the vague moulds which rose before one. It is likely that this occurred in the Eddy circle—indeed, C. C. Massey, a very competent judge, sitting with the Eddys in 1875, complained of the fact. The real miracle consisted not in the recognition but in the presence of the figure at all.

There can be no doubt that the interest aroused by the Press accounts of the Eddy phenomena might have caused a more serious treatment of psychic science, and possibly advanced the cause of truth by a generation. Unhappily, at the very moment when the public attention was strongly drawn to the subject there came the real or imaginary scandal of the Holmeses at Philadelphia, which was vigorously exploited by the materialists, helped by the exaggerated honesty of Robert Dale Owen. The facts were as follows:

Two mediums in Philadelphia, Mr. and Mrs. Nelson Holmes, had given a series of séances at which an alleged spirit had continually appeared, which took the name of Katie King, and professed to be the same as that with which Professor Crookes had experimented in London. On the face of it the assertion seemed most doubtful since the original Katie King had clearly stated that her mission was ended. However, apart from the identity of the spirit, there seemed to be good evidence that the phenomenon was genuine and not fraudulent, for it was most fully endorsed by Mr. Dale Owen, General Lippitt, and a number of other observers, who quoted personal experiences which were entirely beyond the reach of imposture.

There was in Philadelphia at the time a Dr. Child, who plays a very ambiguous part in the obscure events which followed. Child had vouched for the genuine character of these phenomena in the most pronounced way. He had gone so far as to state in a pamphlet published in 1874 that the same John and Katie King, whom he had seen in the séance room, had come to him in his own private offices and had there dictated particulars of their earth life which he duly published. Such a statement

must raise grave doubts in the mind of any psychic student, for a spirit form can only manifest from a medium, and there is no indication that Child was one. In any case one would imagine that, after such an assertion, Child was the last man in the world who could declare that the séances were fraudulent.

Great public interest had been aroused in the séances by an article by General Lippitt in the *Galaxy* of December, 1874, and another by Dale Owen in *The Atlantic Monthly* of January, 1875. Then suddenly came the crash. It was heralded by a notice from Dale Owen, dated January 5, to the effect that evidence had been laid before him which compelled him to withdraw his previous expressions of confidence in the Holmeses. A similar card was issued by Dr. Child. Writing to Olcott, who after his Eddy investigation was recognized as an authority, Dale Owen said: "I believe they have been latterly playing us false, which may be only supplementing the genuine with the spurious, but it does cast a doubt on last summer's manifestations, so that I shall probably not use them in my next book on Spiritualism. It is a loss, but you and Mr. Crookes have amply made it up."

Dale Owen's position is clear enough, since he was a man of sensitive honour, who was horrified at the idea that he could for one instant have certified an imposture to be a truth. His error seems to have lain in acting upon the first breath of suspicion instead of waiting until the facts were clear. Dr. Child's position is, however, more questionable, for if the manifestations were indeed fraudulent, how could he possibly have had interviews with the same spirits alone in his own private room?

It was asserted now that a woman, whose name was not given, had been impersonating Katie King at these séances, that she had allowed her photograph to be taken and sold as Katie King, that she could produce the robes and ornaments worn by Katie King at the séances, and that she was prepared to make a full confession. Nothing could appear to be more damning and more complete. It was at this point that Olcott took up the investigation, and he seems to have been quite prepared to find that the general verdict was correct.

His investigation soon revealed some facts, however, which threw fresh lights upon the matter and proved that psychic research in order to be accurate should examine "exposures" with the same critical care that it

does phenomena. The name of the person who confessed that she had personated Katie King was revealed as Eliza White. In an account of the matter which she published, without giving the name, she declared that she had been born in 1851, which would make her twenty-three years of age. She had married at fifteen and had one child eight years old. Her husband had died in 1872, and she had to keep herself and child. The Holmeses had come to lodge with her in March, 1874. In May they engaged her to personate a spirit. The cabinet had a false panel at the back through which she could slip, clad in a muslin robe. Mr. Dale Owen was invited to the séances and was completely taken in. All this caused violent twinges of her own conscience which did not prevent her from going to greater lengths and learning to fade away or re-form by the help of black cloths, and finally, of being photographed as Katie King.

One day, according to her account, there came to her performance a man named Leslie, a railroad contractor. This gentleman showed his suspicions, and at a subsequent interview taxed her with her deceit, offering her pecuniary aid if she would confess to it. This she accepted, and then showed Leslie the methods of her impersonation. On December 5, a mock séance was held at which she rehearsed her part as played in the real séances, and this so impressed Dale Owen and also Dr. Child, both of whom were present, that they issued the notices in which they recanted their former belief—a recantation which was a staggering blow to those who had accepted Dale Owen's previous assurances, and who now claimed that he should have made some thorough investigation before issuing such a document. It was the more painful as Dale Owen was seventy-three years of age, and had been one of the most eloquent and painstaking of all the disciples of the new dispensation.

Olcott's first task was to sift the record already given, and to get past the anonymity of the authoress. He soon discovered that she was, as already stated, Mrs. Eliza White, and that, though in Philadelphia, she refused to see him. The Holmeses, on the other hand, acted in a very open manner towards him and offered him every facility for examining their phenomena with such reasonable test conditions as he might desire. An examination of the past life of Eliza White showed that her statement, so far as it concerned her own story, was a tissue of lies. She was very much older than stated—not less than thirty-five—and it was doubtful whether she had ever been married to White at all. For years she had been a

vocalist in a travelling show. White was still alive, so there was no question of widowhood. Olcott published the certificate of the Chief of the Police to that effect.

Among other documents put forward by Colonel Olcott was one from a Mr. Allen, Justice of the Peace of New Jersey, given under oath. Eliza White, according to this witness, was "so untruthful that those to whom she spoke never knew when to believe her, and her moral reputation was as bad as bad could be." Judge Allen was able, however, to give some testimony which bore more directly upon the matter under discussion. He deposed that he had visited the Holmeses in Philadelphia, and had assisted Dr. Child to put up the cabinet, that it was solidly constructed, and that there was no possibility of any entrance being effected from behind, as alleged by Mrs. White. Further, that he was at a séance at which Katie King appeared, and that the proceedings had been disturbed by the singing of Mrs. White in another room, so that it was quite impossible that Mrs. White could, as she claimed, have acted an impersonation of the spirit. This being a sworn deposition by a justice of the Peace would seem to be a weighty piece of evidence.

This cabinet seems to have been made in June, for General Lippitt, an excellent witness, described quite another arrangement on the occasion when he experimented. He says that two doors folded backwards, so as to touch each other, and the cabinet was simply the recess between these doors with a board over the top. "The first two or three evenings I made a careful examination, and once with a professional magician, who was perfectly satisfied that there was no chance of any trick." This was in May, so the two descriptions are not contradictory, save to Eliza White's claim that she could pass into the cabinet.

In addition to these reasons for caution in forming an opinion, the Holmeses were able to produce letters written to them from Mrs. White in August, 1874, which were quite incompatible with there being any guilty secret between them. On the other hand, one of these letters did relate that efforts had been made to bribe her into a confession that she had been Katie King. Later in the year Mrs. White seems to have assumed a more threatening tone, as is sworn by the Holmeses in a formal affidavit, when she declared that unless they paid a rent which she claimed, there were a number of gentlemen of wealth, including

members of the Young Men's Christian Association, who were ready to pay her a large sum of money, and she need not trouble the Holmeses any more. A thousand dollars was the exact sum which Eliza White was to get if she would consent to admit that she impersonated Katie King. It must surely be conceded that this statement, taken in conjunction with the woman's record, makes it very essential to demand corroboration for every assertion she might make.

One culminating fact remains. At the very hour that the bogus séance was being held at which Mrs. White was showing how Katie King was impersonated, the Holmeses held a real séance, attended by twenty people, at which the spirit appeared the same as ever. Colonel Olcott collected several affidavits from those who were present on this occasion, and there can be no doubt about the fact. That of Dr. Adolphus Fellger is short, and may be given almost in full. He says under oath that "he has seen the spirit known as Katie King in all perhaps eighty times, is perfectly familiar with her features, and cannot mistake as to the identity of the Katie King who appeared upon the evening of December 5, for while the said spirit scarcely ever appeared of exactly the same height or features two evenings in succession, her voice was always the same, and the expression of her eyes, and the topics of her conversation enabled him to be still more certain of her being the same person." This Fellger was a well-known and highly respected Philadelphia physician, whose simple word, says Olcott, would outweigh "a score of affidavits of your Eliza Whites."

It was also clearly shown that Katie King appeared constantly when Mrs. Holmes was at Blissfield and Mrs. White was in Philadelphia, and that Mrs. Holmes had written to Mrs. White describing their successful appearances, which seems a final proof that the latter was not a confederate.

By this time one must admit that Mrs. White's anonymous confession is shot through and through with so many holes that it is in a sinking condition. But there is one part which, it seems to the author, will still float. That is the question of the photograph. It was asserted by the Holmeses in an interview with General Lippitt—whose word is a solid patch in this general quagmire—that Eliza White was hired by Dr. Child to pose in a photograph as Katie King. Child seems to have played a

dubious part all through this business, making affirmations at different times which were quite contradictory, and having apparently some pecuniary interest in the matter. One is inclined, therefore, to look seriously into this charge, and to believe that the Holmeses may have been party to the fraud. Granting that the Katie King image was real, they may well have doubted whether it could be photographed, since dim light was necessary for its production. On the other hand, there was clearly a source of revenue if photographs at half a dollar each could be sold to the numerous sitters. Colonel Olcott in his book produces a photograph of Mrs. White alongside of the one which was supposed to be Katie King, and claims that there is no resemblance. It is clear, however, that the photographer would be asked to touch up the negative so as to conceal the resemblance, otherwise the fraud would be obvious. The author has the impression, though not the certainty, that the two faces are the same with just such changes as manipulation would produce. Therefore he thinks that the photograph may well be a fraud, but that this by no means corroborates the rest of Mrs. White's narrative, though it would shake our faith in the character of Mr. and Mrs. Holmes as well as of Dr. Child. But the character of physical mediums has really only an indirect bearing upon the question of the reality of their psychic powers, which should be tested upon their own merits whether the individual be saint or sinner.

Colonel Olcott's wise conclusion was that, as the evidence was so conflicting, he would put it all to one side and test the mediums in his own way with out reference to what was past. This he did in a very convincing way, and it is impossible for anyone who reads his investigation ("People From the Other World," p. 460 and onwards) to deny that he took every possible precaution against fraud. The cabinet was netted at the sides so that no one could enter as Mrs. White claimed to have done. Mrs. Holmes was herself put into a bag which tied round the neck and, as her husband was away, she was confined to her own resources. Under these circumstances numerous heads were formed, some of which were semi-materialized, presenting a somewhat terrible appearance. This may have been done as a test, or it may have been that the long contention had impaired the powers of the medium. The faces were made to appear at a level which the medium could in no case have

reached. Dale Owen was present at this demonstration and must have already begun to regret his premature declaration.

Further séances with similar results were then held in Olcott's own rooms, so as to preclude the possibility of some ingenious mechanism under the control of the medium. On one occasion, when the head of John King, the presiding spirit, appeared in the air, Olcott, remembering Eliza White's assertion that these faces were merely ten cent masks, asked and obtained permission to pass his stick all round it, and so satisfied himself that it was not supported. This experiment seems so final that the reader who desires even more evidence may be referred to the book where he will find much. It was perfectly clear that whatever part Eliza White may have played in the photograph, there was not a shadow of a doubt that Mrs. Holmes was a genuine and powerful medium for material phenomena. It should be added that the Katie King head was repeatedly seen by the investigators, though the whole form appears only once to have been materialized. General Lippitt was present at these experiments and associated himself publicly (*Banner Of Light*, February 6, 1875) with Olcott's conclusions.

The author has dwelt at some length upon this case, as it is very typical of the way in which the public has been misled over Spiritualism. The papers are full of an "exposure." It is investigated and is shown to be either quite false or very partially true. This is not reported, and the public is left with the original impression uncorrected. Even now, when one mentions Katie King, one hears some critic say: "Oh, she was shown to be a fraud in Philadelphia," and by a natural confusion of thought this has even been brought as an argument against Crookes's classical experiments. The affair—especially the temporary weakening of Dale Owen—set the cause of Spiritualism back by many years in America.

Mention has been made of John King, the presiding spirit at the Holmes séances. This strange entity would appear to have been the chief controller of all physical phenomena in the early days of the movement, and is still occasionally to be seen and heard. His name is associated with the Koons's music saloon, with the Davenport brothers, with Williams in London, with Mrs. Holmes, and many others. In person when materialized he presents the appearance of a tall, swarthy man with a noble head and a full black beard. His voice is loud and deep, while his

rap has a decisive character of its own. He is master of all languages, having been tested in the most out-of-the-way tongues, such as Georgian, and never having been found wanting. This formidable person controls the bands of lesser primitive spirits, Red Indians and others, who assist at such phenomena. He claims that Katie King is his daughter, and that he was himself when in life Henry Morgan, the buccaneer who was pardoned and knighted by Charles II and ended as Governor of Jamaica. If so, he has been a most cruel ruffian and has much to expiate. The author is bound to state, however, that he has in his possession a contemporary picture of Henry Morgan (it will be found in Howard Pyle's "Buccaneers," p. 178), and that if reliable it has no resemblance to John King. All these questions of earthly identity are very obscure.¹

Before closing the account of Olcott's experiences at this stage of his evolution, some notice should be taken of the so-called Compton transfiguration case, which shows what deep waters we are in when we attempt psychic research. These particular waters have not been plumbed yet, nor in any way charted. Nothing can be clearer than the facts, or more satisfactory than the evidence. The medium Mrs. Compton was shut up in her small cabinet, and thread passed through the bored holes in her ears and fastened to the back of her chair. Presently a slim white figure emerged from the cabinet. Olcott had a weighing platform provided, and on it the spirit figure stood. Twice it was weighed, the records being 77 lb. and 59 lb. Olcott then, as prearranged, went into the cabinet leaving the figure outside. The medium was gone. The chair was there, but there was no sign of the woman. Olcott then turned back and again weighed the apparition, who this time scaled 52 lb. The spirit then returned into the cabinet from which other figures emerged. Finally, Olcott says:

I went inside with a lamp and found the medium just as I left her at the beginning of the séance, with every thread unbroken and every seal undisturbed! She sat there, with her head leaning against the wall, her flesh as pale and as cold as marble, her eyeballs turned up beneath the

¹ As the author has given a point against the identity of John King with Morgan, it is only fair that he should give one which supports it and comes to him almost first-hand from a reliable source. The daughter of a recent Governor of Jamaica was at a séance in London lately, and was confronted with John King. The King spirit said to her, "You have brought back from Jamaica something which was mine." She said, "What was it?" He answered, "My will." It was a fact, quite unknown to the company, that her father had brought back this document.

lids, her forehead covered with a death-like damp, no breath coming from her lungs and no pulse at her wrist. When every person had examined the threads and seals, I cut the flimsy bonds with a pair of scissors, and, lifting the chair by its back and seat, carried the cataleptic woman out into the open air of the chamber.

She lay thus inanimate for eighteen minutes; life gradually coming back to her body, until respiration and pulse and the temperature of her skin became normal... I then put her upon the scale... She weighed one hundred and twenty-one pounds!

What are we to make of such a result as that? There were eleven witnesses besides Olcott himself. The facts seem to be beyond dispute. But what are we to deduce from such facts? The author has seen a photograph, taken in the presence of an amateur medium, where every detail of the room has come out but the sitter has vanished. Is the disappearance of the medium in some way analogous to that? If the ectoplasmic figure weighed only 77 lb. and the medium 121 lb., then it is clear that only 44 lb. of her were left when the phantom was out. If 44 lb. were not enough to continue the processes of life, may not her guardians have used their subtle occult chemistry in order to dematerialize her and so save her from all danger until the return of the phantom would enable her to reassemble? It is a strange supposition, but it seems to meet the facts—which cannot be done by mere blank, unreasoning incredulity.

13. HENRY SLADE AND DR. MONCK



Henry Slade.

IT is impossible to record the many mediums of various shades of power, and occasionally of honesty, who have demonstrated the effects which outside intelligences can produce when the material conditions are such as to enable them to manifest upon this plane. There are a few, however,

who have been so pre-eminent and so involved in public polemics that no history of the movement can disregard them, even if their careers have not been in all ways above suspicion. We shall deal in this chapter with the histories of Slade and Monck, both of whom played a prominent part in their days.

Henry Slade, the celebrated slate-writing medium, had been before the public in America for fifteen years before he arrived in London on July 13, 1876. Colonel H. S. Olcott, a former president of the Theosophical Society, states that he and Madame Blavatsky were responsible for Slade's visit to England. It appears that the Grand Duke Constantine of Russia, desiring to make a scientific investigation of Spiritualism, a committee of professors of the Imperial University of St. Petersburg requested Colonel Olcott and Madame Blavatsky to select out of the best American mediums one whom they could recommend for tests.

They chose Slade, after submitting him to exacting tests for several weeks before a committee of sceptics, who in their report certified that "messages were written inside double slates, sometimes tied and sealed together, while they either lay upon the table in full view of all, or were laid upon the heads of members of the committee, or held flat against the under surface of the table-top, or held in a committeeman's hand without the medium touching it." It was en route to Russia that Slade came to England.

A representative of the London *World*, who had a sitting with Slade soon after his arrival, thus describes him: "A highly-wrought, nervous temperament, a dreamy, mystical face, regular features, eyes luminous with expression, a rather sad smile, and a certain melancholy grace of manner, were the impressions conveyed by the tall, lithe figure introduced to me as Dr. Slade. He is the sort of man you would pick out of a roomful as an enthusiast." The Seybert Commission Report says, "he is probably six feet in height, with a figure of unusual symmetry," and that "his face would attract notice anywhere for its uncommon beauty," and sums him up as "a noteworthy man in every respect."

Directly after his arrival in London Slade began to give sittings at his lodgings in 8 Upper Bedford Place, Russell Square, and his success was immediate and pronounced. Not only was writing obtained of an evidential nature, under test conditions, with the sitter's own slates, but

the levitation of objects and materialized hands were observed in strong sunlight.

The editor of *The Spiritual Magazine*, the soberest and most high-class of the Spiritualist periodicals of the time, wrote: "We have no hesitation in saying that Dr. Slade is the most remarkable medium of modern times."

Mr. J. Enmore Jones, a well-known psychic researcher of that day, who afterwards edited *The Spiritual Magazine*, said that Slade was taking the place vacated by D.D. Home. His account of his first sitting indicates the business-like method of procedure: "In Mr. Home's case, he refused to take fees, and as a rule the sittings were in the evening in the quiet of domestic life; but in Dr. Slade's case it was any time during the day, in one of the rooms he occupies at a boarding-house. The fee of twenty shillings is charged, and he prefers that only one person be present in the large room he uses. No time is lost; as soon as the visitor sits down the incidents commence, are continued, and in, say, fifteen minutes are ended." Stainton Moses, who was afterwards the first president of the London Spiritualist Alliance, conveys the same idea with regard to Slade. He wrote: "In his presence phenomena occur with a regularity and precision, with an absence of regard for 'conditions,' and with a facility for observation which satisfy my desires entirely. It is impossible to conceive circumstances more favourable to minute investigation than those under which I witnessed the phenomena which occur in his presence with such startling rapidity... There was no hesitation, no tentative experiments. All was short, sharp, and decisive. The invisible operators knew exactly what they were going to do, and did it with promptitude and precision."¹

Slade's first séance in England was given on July 15, 1876, to Mr. Charles Blackburn, a prominent Spiritualist, and Mr. W. H. Harrison, editor of *The Spiritualist*. In strong sunlight the medium and the two sitters occupied three sides of an ordinary table about four feet square. A vacant chair was placed at the fourth side. Slade put a tiny piece of pencil, about the size of a grain of wheat, upon a slate, and held the slate by one corner with one hand under the table flat against the leaf. Writing was heard on the slate, and on examination a short message was found to have been

¹ *The Spiritualist*, Vol. IX, p. 2.

written. While this was taking place the four hands of the sitters and Slade's disengaged hands were clasped in the centre of the table. Mr. Blackburn's chair was moved four or five inches while he was sitting upon it, and no one but himself was touching it. The unoccupied chair at the fourth side of the table once jumped in the air, striking its seat against the under edge of the table. Twice a life-like hand passed in front of Mr. Blackburn while both Slade's hands were under observation. The medium held an accordion under the table, and while his other hand was in clear view on the table "Hone, Sweet Home" was played. Mr. Blackburn then held the accordion in the same way, when the instrument was drawn out strongly and one note sounded. While this occurred Slade's hands were on the table. Finally, the three present raised their hands a foot above the table, and it rose until it touched their hands. At another sitting on the same day a chair rose about four feet, when no one was touching it, and when Slade rested one hand on the top of Miss Blackburn's chair, she and the chair were raised about half a yard from the floor.

Mr. Stainton Moses thus describes an early sitting which he had with Slade:

A midday sun, hot enough to roast one, was pouring into the room; the table was uncovered; the medium sat with the whole of his body in full view; there was no human being present save myself and him. What conditions could be better? The raps were instantaneous and loud, as if made by the clenched fist of a powerful man. The slate-writing occurred under any suggested condition. It came on a slate held by Dr. Slade and myself; on one held by myself alone in the corner of the table farthest from the medium; on a slate which I had myself brought with me, and which I held myself. The latter writing occupied some time in production, and the grating noise of the pencil in forming each word was distinctly audible. A chair opposite to me was raised some eighteen inches from the floor; my slate was taken out of my hand, and produced at the opposite side of the table, where neither Dr. Slade nor I could reach it; the accordion played all round and about me, while the doctor held it by the lower part, and finally, on a touch from his hand upon the back of my chair, I was levitated, chair and all, some inches.

Mr. Stainton Moses was himself a powerful medium, and this fact doubtless aided the conditions. He adds:

*I have seen all these phenomena and many others several times before, but I never saw them occur rapidly and consecutively in broad daylight. The whole séance did not extend over more than half an hour, and no cessation of the phenomena occurred from first to last.*²

All went well for six weeks, and London was full of curiosity as to the powers of Slade, when there came an awkward interruption.

Early in September, 1876, Professor Ray Lankester with Dr. Donkin had two sittings with Slade, and on the second occasion, seizing the slate, he found writing on it when none was supposed to have taken place. He was entirely without experience in psychic research, or he would have known that it is impossible to say at what moment writing occurs in such séances. Occasionally a whole sheet of writing seems to be precipitated in an instant, while at other times the author has clearly heard the pencil scratching along from line to line. To Ray Lankester, however, it seemed a clear case of fraud, and he wrote a letter to *The Times*³ denouncing Slade, and also prosecuted him for obtaining money under false pretences. Replies to Lankester's letter and supporting Slade were forthcoming from Dr. Alfred Russel Wallace, Professor Barrett, and others. Dr. Wallace pointed out that Professor Lankester's account of what happened was so completely unlike what occurred during his own visit to the medium, as well as the recorded experience of Serjeant Cox, Dr. Carter Blake, and many others, that he could only look upon it as a striking example of Dr. Carpenter's theory of preconceived ideas. He says: "Professor Lankester went with the firm conviction that all he was going to see would be imposture, and he believes he saw imposture accordingly." Professor Lankester showed his bias when, referring to the paper read before the British Association on September 12 by Professor Barrett, in which he dealt with Spiritualistic phenomena, he said, in his letter to *The Times*: "The discussions of the British Association have been degraded by the introduction of Spiritualism."

² *The Spiritualist*, Vol. IX, p. 2.

³ September 16, 1876.

Professor Barrett wrote that Slade had a ready reply, based on his ignorance of when the writing did actually occur. He describes a very evidential sitting he had in which the slate rested on the table with his elbow resting on it. One of Slade's hands was held by him, and the fingers of the medium's other hand rested lightly on the surface of the slate. In this way writing occurred on the under surface of the slate. Professor Barrett further speaks of an eminent scientific friend who obtained writing on a clean slate when it was held entirely by him, both of the medium's hands being on the table. Such instances must surely seem absolutely conclusive to the unbiased reader, and it will be clear that if the positive is firmly established, occasional allegations of negative have no bearing upon the general conclusion.

Slade's trial came on at Bow Street Police Court on October 1, 1876, before Mr. Flowers, the magistrate. Mr. George Lewis prosecuted and Mr. Munton appeared for the defence. Evidence in favour of the genuineness of Slade's mediumship was given by Dr. Alfred Russel Wallace, Serjeant Cox, Dr. George Wyld, and one other, only four witnesses being allowed. The magistrate described the testimony as "overwhelming" as to the evidence for the phenomena, but in giving judgment he excluded everything but the evidence of Lankester and his friend Dr. Donkin, saying that he must base his decision on "inferences to be drawn from the known course of nature." A statement made by Mr. Maskelyne, the well-known conjurer, that the table used by Slade was a trick-table was disproved by the evidence of the workman who made it. This table can now be seen at the offices of the London Spiritualist Alliance, and one marvels at the audacity of a witness who could imperil another man's liberty by so false a statement, which must have powerfully affected the course of the trial. Indeed, in the face of the evidence of Ray Lankester, Donkin, and Maskelyne, it is hard to see how Mr. Flowers could fail to convict, for he would say with truth and reason, "What is before the Court is not what has happened upon other occasions—however convincing these eminent witnesses may be—but what occurred upon this particular occasion, and here we have two witnesses on one side and only the prisoner on the other." The "trick-table" probably settled the matter.

Slade was sentenced, under the Vagrancy Act, to three months' imprisonment with hard labour. An appeal was lodged and he was

released on bail. When the appeal came to be heard, the conviction was quashed on a technical point. It may be pointed out that though he escaped on a technical point, namely, that the words "by palmistry or otherwise" which appeared in the statute had been omitted, it must not be assumed that had the technical point failed he might not have escaped on the merits of his case. Slade, whose health had been seriously affected by the strain of the trial, left England for the Continent a day or two later. From the Hague, after a rest of a few months, Slade wrote to Professor Lankester offering to return to London and to give him exhaustive private tests on condition that he could come without molestation. He received no answer to his suggestion, which surely is not that of a guilty man.

An illuminated testimonial to Slade from London Spiritualists in 1877 sets out:

In view of the deplorable termination of Henry Slade's visit to this country, we the undersigned desire to place on record our high opinion of his mediumship, and our reprobation of the treatment he has undergone.

We regard Henry Slade as one of the most valuable Test Mediums now living. The phenomena which occur in his presence are evolved with a rapidity and regularity rarely equalled....

He leaves us not only untarnished in reputation by the late proceedings in our Law Courts, but with a mass of testimony in his favour which could probably have been elicited in no other way.

This is signed by Mr. Alexander Calder (President of the British National Association of Spiritualists) and a number of representative Spiritualists. Unhappily, however, it is the Noes, not the Ayes, which have the ear of the Press, and even now, fifty years later, it would be hard to find a paper enlightened enough to do the man justice.

Spiritualists, however, showed great energy in supporting Slade. Before the trial a Defence Fund was raised, and Spiritualists in America drew up a memorial to the American Minister in London. Between the Bow Street conviction and the hearing of the appeal, a memorial was sent to the Home Secretary protesting against the action of the Government in conducting the prosecution on appeal. Copies of this were sent to all the

members of the Legislature, to all the Middlesex magistrates, to various members of the Royal Society, and of other public bodies. Miss Kislingbury, the secretary to the National Association of Spiritualists, forwarded a copy to the Queen.

After giving successful séances at the Hague, Slade went to Berlin in November, 1877, where he created the keenest interest. He was said to know no German, yet messages in German appeared on the slates, and were written in the characters of the fifteenth century. The *Berliner Fremdenblatt* of November 10, 1877, wrote: "Since the arrival of Mr. Slade at the Kronprinz Hotel the greater portion of the educated world of Berlin has been suffering from an epidemic which we may term a Spiritualistic fever." Describing his experiences in Berlin, Slade said that he began by fully converting the landlord of the hotel, using the latter's slates and tables in his own house. The landlord invited the Chief of Police and many prominent citizens of Berlin to witness the manifestations, and they expressed themselves as satisfied. Slade writes: "Samuel Bellachini, Court Conjuror to the Emperor of Germany, had a week's experience with me free of charge. I gave him from two to three séances a day and one of them at his own house. After his full and complete investigation, he went to a public notary and made oath that the phenomena were genuine and not trickery."

Bellachini's declaration on oath, which has been published, bears out this statement. He says that after the minutest investigation he considers any explanation by conjuring to be "absolutely impossible." The conduct of conjurers seems to have been usually determined by a sort of trade union jealousy, as if the results of the medium were some sort of breach of a monopoly, but this enlightened German, together with Houdin, Kellar, and a few more, have shown a more open mind.

A visit to Denmark followed, and in December began the historic séances with Professor Zollner, at Leipzig. A full account of these will be found in Zollner's "Transcendental Physics," which has been translated by Mr. C. C. Massey. Zollner was Professor of Physics and Astronomy in the University of Leipzig, and associated with him in the experiments with Slade were other scientific men, including William Edward Weber, Professor of Physics; Professor Scheibner, a distinguished mathematician; Gustave Theodore Fechner, Professor of Physics and an

eminent natural philosopher, who were all, says Professor Zollner, "perfectly convinced of the reality of the observed facts, altogether excluding imposture or "prestidigitation." The phenomena in question included, among other things, "the production of true knots in an endless string, the rending of Professor Zollner's bed-screen, the disappearance of a small table and its subsequent descent from the ceiling in *full light*, in a private house and under the observed conditions, of which the most noticeable is the apparent passivity of Dr. Slade during all these occurrences."

Certain critics have tried to indicate what they consider insufficient precautions observed in these experiments. Dr. J. Maxwell, the acute French critic, makes an excellent reply to such objections. He points out⁴ that because skilled and conscientious psychic investigators have omitted to indicate explicitly in their reports that every hypothesis of fraud has been studied and dismissed, in the belief that "their implicit affirmation of the reality of the fact appeared sufficient to them," and in order to prevent their reports from being too unwieldy, yet captious critics do not hesitate to condemn them and to suggest possibilities of fraud which are quite inadmissible under the observed conditions.

Zollner gave a dignified reply to the supposition that he was tricked in these cord-tying experiments: "If, nevertheless, the foundation of this fact, deduced by me on the ground of an enlarged conception of space, should be denied, only one other kind of explanation would remain, arising from a moral code of consideration that at present, it is true, is quite customary. This explanation would consist in the presumption that I myself and the honourable men and citizens of Leipzig, in whose presence several of these cords were sealed, were either common impostors, or were not in possession of our sound senses sufficient to perceive if Mr. Slade himself, before the cords were sealed, had tied them in knots. The discussion, however, of such a hypothesis would no longer belong to the dominion of science, but would fall under the category of social decency."⁵

As a sample of the reckless statements of opponents of Spiritualism, it may be mentioned that Mr. Joseph McCabe, who is second only to the

⁴ *Metapsychical Phenomena* (Translation 1905), p. 405.

⁵ Massey's *Zollner*, pp. 20-21.

American Houdini for wild inaccuracies, speaks of Zollner⁶ as "an elderly and purblind professor," whereas he died in 1882, in his forty-eighth year, and his experiments with Slade were carried out in 1877-78, when this distinguished scientist was in the vigour of his intellectual life.

So far have opponents pushed their enmity that it has even been stated that Zollner was deranged, and that his death which occurred some years later was accompanied with cerebral weakness. An inquiry from Dr. Funk set this matter at rest, though it is unfortunately easy to get libels of this sort into circulation and very difficult to get the contradictions. Here is the document:⁷

Your letter addressed to the Rector of the University, October 20, 1903, received. The Rector of this University was installed here after the death of Zollner, and had no personal acquaintance with him; but information received from Zollner's colleagues states that during his entire studies at the University here, until his death, he was of sound mind; moreover, in the best of health. The cause of his death was a hemorrhage of the brain on the morning of April 25th, 1882, while he was at breakfast with his mother, and from which he died shortly after. It is true that Professor Zollner was an ardent believer in Spiritualism, and as such was in close relations with Slade.

(Dr.) KARL BUCHER, Professor of Statistics and National Economy at the University.

The tremendous power which occasionally manifests itself when the conditions are favourable was shown once in the presence of Zollner, Weber, and Scheibner, all three professors of the University. There was a strong wooden screen on one side of the room:

A violent crack was suddenly heard as in the discharging of a large battery of Leyden jars. On turning with some alarm in the direction of the sound, the before-mentioned screen fell apart in two pieces. The strong wooden screws, half an inch thick, were torn from above and below, without any visible contact of Slade with the screen. The parts broken were at least five feet removed from Slade, who had his back to the screen; but even if he had intended to tear it down by a cleverly

⁶ "Spiritualism. A Popular History from 1847," p. 161.

⁷ "The Widow's Mite," p. 276.

devised sideward motion, it would have been necessary to fasten it on the opposite side. As it was, the screen stood quite unattached, and the grain of the wood being parallel to the axis of the cylindrical wooden fastenings, the wrenching asunder could only be accomplished by a force acting longitudinally to the part in question. We were all astonished at this unexpected and violent manifestation of mechanical force, and asked Slade what it all meant; but he only shrugged his shoulders, saying that such phenomena occasionally, though somewhat rarely, occurred in his presence. As he spoke, he placed, while still standing, a piece of slate-pencil on the polished surface of the table, laid over it a slate, purchased and just cleaned by myself, and pressed the five spread fingers of his right hand on the upper surface of the slate, while his left hand rested on the centre of the table. Writing began on the inner surface of the slate, and when Slade turned it up, the following sentence was written in English: "It was not our intention to do harm. Forgive what has happened." We were the more surprised at the production of the writing under these circumstances, for we particularly observed that both Slade's hands remained quite motionless while the writing was going on.⁸

In his desperate attempt to explain this incident, Mr. McCabe says that no doubt the screen was broken before and fastened together afterwards with thread. There is truly no limit to the credulity of the incredulous.

After a very successful series of séances in St. Petersburg, Slade returned to London for a few days in 1878, and then proceeded to Australia. An interesting account of his work there is to be found in Mr. James Curtis's book, "Rustlings in the Golden City." Then he returned to America. In 1885 he appeared before the Seybert Commission in Philadelphia, and in 1887 again visited England under the name of "Dr. Wilson," though it was well known who he was. Presumably his alias was due to a fear that the old proceedings would be renewed.

At most of his séances, Slade exhibited clairvoyant powers, and materialized hands were a familiar occurrence. In Australia, where psychic conditions are good, he had materializations. Mr. Curtis says that the medium objected to sitting for this form of manifestation, because it left him weak for a time, and because he preferred to give

⁸ *Transcendental Physics*, p. 34, 35.

séances in the light. He consented, however, to try with Mr. Curtis, who thus describes what took place at Ballarat, in Victoria:

Our first test of spirit appearance in the form took place at Lester's Hotel. I placed the table about four or five feet from the west wall of the room. Mr. Slade sat at the end of the table furthest from the wall, whilst I took my position on the north side. The gaslight was toned down, not so much but that any object in the room could be clearly seen. Our hands were placed over one another in a single pile. We sat very still about ten minutes, when I observed something like a little misty cloud between myself and the wall. When my attention was first drawn towards this phenomenon, it was about the size and colour of a gentleman's high-crowned, whitish-grey felt hat. This cloudlike appearance rapidly grew and became transformed, when we saw before us a woman—a lady. The being thus fashioned, and all but perfected, rose from the floor on to the top of the table, where I could most distinctly observe the configuration. The arms and hands were elegantly shaped; the forehead, mouth, nose, cheeks, and beautiful brown hair showed harmoniously, each part in concord with the whole. Only the eyes were veiled because they could not be completely materialized. The feet were encased in white satin shoes. The dress glowed in light, and was the most beautiful I ever beheld, the colour being bright, sheeny silvery grey, or greyish shining white. The whole figure was graceful, and the drapery perfect. The materialized spirit glided and walked about, causing the table to shake, vibrate, jerk and tilt considerably. I could hear, too, the rustling of the dress as the celestial visitant transiently wended from one position or place to another. The spirit form, within two feet of our unmoved hands, still piled up together in a heap, then dissolved, and gradually faded from our vision.

The conditions at this beautiful séance—with the medium's hands held throughout, and with enough light for visibility—seem satisfactory, provided we grant the honesty of the witness. As the preface contains the supporting testimony of a responsible Australian Government official, who also speaks of Mr. Curtis's initial extremely sceptical state of mind, we may well do so. At the same séance a quarter of an hour later the figure again appeared:

The apparition then floated in the air and alighted on the table, rapidly glided about, and thrice bent her beautiful figure with graceful bows, each bending deliberate and low, the head coming within six inches of my face. The dress rustled (as silk rustles) with every movement. The face was partially veiled as before. The visibility then became invisible, slowly disappearing like the former materialization.

Other similar séances are described.

In view of the many elaborate and stringent tests through which he passed successfully, the story of Slade's "exposure" in America in 1886 is not convincing, but we refer to it for historical reasons, and to show that such incidents are not excluded from our review of the subject. *The Boston Herald*, February 2, 1886, heads its account, "The celebrated Dr. Slade comes to grief in Weston, West Virginia, writes upon slates which lie upon his knees under the table, and moves tables and chairs with his toes." Observers in an adjoining room, looking through the crevice under the door saw these feats of agility being performed by the medium, though those present in the room with him were unaware of them. There seems, however, to have been in this as in other cases, occurrences which bore the appearance of fraud, and Spiritualists were among those who denounced him. At a subsequent public performance for "Direct Spirit Writing" in the Justice Hall, Weston, Mr. E. S. Barrett, described as a "Spiritualist," came forward and explained how Slade's imposture had been detected. Slade, who was asked to speak, appeared dumbfounded, and could only say, according to the report, that if his accusers had been deceived he had been equally so, for if the deceit had been done by him, it had been without his consciousness.

Mr. J. Simmons, Slade's business manager, made a frank statement which seems to point to the operation of ectoplasmic limbs, as years later was proved to be the case with the famous Italian medium, Eusapia Palladino. He says: "I do not doubt that these gentlemen saw what they assert they did; but I am convinced at the same time that Slade is as innocent of what he is accused of as you (the editor) yourself would have been under similar circumstances. But I know that my explanation would have no weight in a court of justice. I myself saw a hand, which I could have sworn to be that of Slade, if it had been possible for his hand to be in that position. While one of his hands lay upon the table and the

other held the slate under the corner of the table, a third hand appeared with a clothes-brush (which a moment previously had brushed against me from the knee upwards) in the middle of the opposite edge of the table, which was forty-two inches long." Slade and his manager were arrested and released on bail, but no further proceedings seem to have been taken against them. Truesdell, also, in his book, "Spiritualism, Bottom Facts," states that he saw Slade effecting the movement of objects with his foot, and he asks his readers to believe that the medium made to him a full confession of how all his manifestations were produced. If Slade ever really did this, it may probably be accounted for by a burst of ill-timed levity on his part in seeking to fool a certain type of investigator by giving him exactly what he was seeking for. To such instances we may apply the judgment of Professor Zollner on the Lankester incident: "The physical facts observed by us in so astonishing a variety in his presence negated on every reasonable ground the supposition that he in one solitary case had taken refuge in wilful imposture." He adds, what was certainly the case in that particular instance, that Slade was the victim of his accuser's and his judge's limited knowledge.

At the same time there is ample evidence that Slade degenerated in general character towards the latter part of his life. Promiscuous sittings with a mercenary object, the subsequent exhaustions, and the alcoholic stimulus which affords a temporary relief, all acting upon a most sensitive organization, had a deleterious effect. This weakening of character, with a corresponding loss of health, may have led to a diminution of his psychic powers, and increased the temptation to resort to trickery. Making every allowance for the difficulty of distinguishing what is fraud and what is of crude psychic origin, an unpleasant impression is left upon the mind by the evidence given in the Seybert Commission and by the fact that Spiritualists upon the spot should have condemned his action. Human frailty, however, is one thing and psychic power is another. Those who seek evidence for the latter will find ample in those years when the man and his powers were both at their zenith.

Slade died in 1905 at a Michigan sanatorium to which he had been sent by the American Spiritualists, and the announcement was followed by the customary sort of comment in the London Press. *The Star*, which has an evil tradition in psychic matters, printed a sensational article headed

"Spook Swindles," giving a garbled account of the Lankester prosecution at Bow Street. Referring to this, *Light* says⁹:

Of course, this whole thing is a hash of ignorance, unfairness and prejudice. We do not care to discuss it or to controvert it. It would be useless to do so for the sake of the unfair, the ignorant, and the prejudiced, and it is not necessary for those who know. Suffice it to say that The Star only supplies one more instance of the difficulty of getting all the facts before the public; but the prejudiced newspapers have themselves to blame for their ignorance or inaccuracy.

It is the story of the Davenport Brothers and Maskelyne over again.

If Slade's career is difficult to appraise, and if one is forced to admit that while there was an overpowering preponderance of psychic results, there was also a residuum which left the unpleasant impression that the medium might supplement truth with fraud, the same admission must be made in the case of the medium Monck, who played a considerable part for some years in the 'seventies. Of all mediums none is more difficult to appraise, for on the one hand many of his results are beyond all dispute, while in a few there seems to be an absolute certainty of dishonesty. In his case, as in Slade's, there were physical causes which would account for a degeneration of the moral and psychic powers.

Monck was a Nonconformist clergyman, a favourite pupil of the famous Spurgeon. According to his own account, he had been subject from childhood to psychic influences, which increased with his growth. In 1873 he announced his adhesion to Spiritualism and gave an address in the Cavendish Rooms. Shortly afterwards he began to give demonstrations, which appear to have been unpaid and were given in light. In 1875 he made a tour through England and Scotland, his performances exciting much attention and debate, and in 1876 he visited Ireland, where his powers were directed towards healing. Hence he was usually known as "Dr." Monck, a fact which naturally aroused some protest from the medical profession.

⁹ 1886, p. 433.



Francis Ward Monck.

Dr. Alfred Russel Wallace, a most competent and honest observer, has given an account of a materialization séance with Monck which appears to be as critic-proof as such a thing could be. No subsequent suspicion or conviction can ever eliminate such an incontrovertible instance of psychic power. It is to be noted how far the effects were in agreement with the subsequent demonstrations of ectoplasmic outflow in the case of Eva and other modern mediums. Dr. Wallace's companions upon this occasion were Mr. Stainton Moses and Mr. Hensleigh Wedgwood. Dr. Wallace writes:



Alfred Russel Wallace.

It was a bright summer afternoon, and everything happened in the full light of day. After a little conversation, Monck, who was dressed in the usual clerical black, appeared to go into a trance; then stood up a few feet in front of us, and after a little while pointed to his side, saying, "Look."

We saw there a faint white patch on his coat on the left side. This grew brighter, then seemed to flicker and extend both upwards and downwards, till very gradually it formed a cloudy pillar extending from his shoulder to his feet and close to his body.

Dr. Wallace goes on to describe how the cloudy figure finally assumed the form of a thickly draped woman, who, after a brief space, appeared to be absorbed into the body of the medium.

He adds: "The whole process of the formation of a shrouded figure was seen in full daylight."

Mr. Wedgwood assured him that he had lead even more remarkable manifestations of this kind with Monck, when the medium was in a deep trance, and in full view.

It is quite impossible after such evidence to doubt the powers of the medium at that time. Archdeacon Colley, who had seen similar exhibitions, offered a prize of a thousand pounds to Mr. J. N. Maskelyne, the famous conjurer, if he could duplicate the performance. This challenge was accepted by Mr. Maskelyne, but the evidence showed that the imitation bore no relation to the original. He attempted to gain a decision in the courts, but the verdict was against him.

It is interesting to compare the account given by Russel Wallace and the experience later of a well-known American, Judge Dailey. This gentleman wrote¹⁰:

Glancing at Dr. Monck's side we observed what looked like an opalescent mass of compact steam emerging from just below his heart on the left side. It increased in volume, rising up and extending downward, the upper portions taking the form of a child's head, the face being distinguished as that of a little child I had lost some twenty years previously. It only remained in this form for a moment, and then suddenly disappeared, seeming to be instantly absorbed into the Doctor's side. This remarkable phenomenon was repeated four or five times, in each instance the materialization being more distinct than the preceding one. This was witnessed by all in the room, with gas burning sufficiently bright for every object in the room to be plainly visible.

¹⁰ *Banner Of Light*, Dec. 15, 1881.

It was a phenomenon seldom to be seen, and has enabled all who saw it to vouch for, not only the remarkable power possessed by Dr. Monck as a materializing medium, but as to the wonderful manner in which a spirit draws out.

Surely it is vain after such testimony to deny that Monck had, indeed, great psychic powers.

Apart from materializations Dr. Monck was a remarkable slate-writing medium. Dr. Russel Wallace in a letter to *The Spectator*¹¹ says that with Monck at a private house in Richmond he cleaned two slates, and after placing a fragment of pencil between them, tied them together tightly with a strong cord, lengthways and crosswise, in a manner that prevented any movement.

I then laid them flat on the table without losing sight of them for an instant. Dr. Monck placed the fingers of both hands on them, while I and a lady sitting opposite placed our hands on the corners of the slates. From this position our hands were never moved till I untied the slates to ascertain the result.

Monck asked Wallace to name a word to be written on the slate. He chose the word "God" and in answer to a request decided that it should be length ways on the slate. The sound of writing was heard, and when the medium's hands were withdrawn, Dr. Wallace opened the slates and found on the lower one the word he had asked for and written in the manner requested.

Dr. Wallace says:

The essential features of this experiment are that I myself cleaned and tied up the slates; that I kept my hands on them all the time; that they never went out of my sight for a moment; and that I named the word to be written, and the manner of writing it after they were thus secured and held by me.

Mr. Edward T. Bennett, assistant secretary to the Society for Psychical Research, adds to this account: "I was present on this occasion, and certify that Mr. Wallace's account of what happened is correct."

¹¹ October 7, 1877.

Another good test is described by Mr. W. P. Adshead, of Belper, a well-known investigator, who says of a séance held in Derby on September 18, 1876:

There were eight persons present, three ladies and five gentlemen. A lady whom Dr. Monck had never before seen had a slate passed to her by a sitter, which she examined and found clean. The slate pencil which was on the table a few minutes before we sat down could not be found. An investigator suggested that it would be a good test if a lead pencil were used.

Accordingly a lead pencil was put on the slate, and the lady held both under the table. The sound of writing was instantly heard, and in a few seconds a communication had been written filling one side of the slate. The writing was done in lead, and was very small and neat, and alluded to a strictly private matter.

Here were three tests at once. (1) Writing was obtained without the medium (or any other person but the lady), touching the slate from first to last. (2) It was written with lead pencil at the spontaneous suggestion of another stranger. (3) It gave an important test communication regarding a matter that was strictly private. Dr. Monck did not so much as touch the slate from first to last.

Mr. Adshead also speaks of physical phenomena occurring freely with this medium when his hands were closely confined in an apparatus called the "stocks," which did not permit movement of even an inch in any direction.

In the year 1876 the Slade trial was going on in London, as already described, and exposures were in the air. In considering the following rather puzzling and certainly suspicious case, one has to remember that when a man who is a public performer, a conjurer or a mesmerist, can pose as having exposed a medium, he wins a valuable public advertisement and attracts to himself all that very numerous section of the community who desire to see such an exposure. It is only fair to bear this in mind in endeavouring to hold the scales fair where there is a conflict of evidence.

In this case the conjurer and mesmerist was one Lodge, and the occasion was a séance held at Huddersfield on November 3, 1876. Mr. Lodge

suddenly demanded that the medium be searched. Monck, whether dreading assault or to save himself exposure, ran upstairs and locked himself in his room. He then let himself down from his window and made for the police office, where he lodged a complaint as to his treatment. The door of his bedroom had been forced and his effects searched, with the result that a pair of stuffed gloves was found. Monck asserted that these gloves had been made for a lecture in which he had exposed the difference between conjuring and mediumship. Still, as a Spiritualist paper remarked at the time:

The phenomena of his mediumship do not rest on his probity at all. If he were the greatest rogue and the most accomplished conjurer rolled into one, it would not account for the manifestations which have been reported of him.

Monck was sentenced to three months' imprisonment, and is alleged to have made a confession to Mr. Lodge.

After his release from prison Monck held a number of test sittings with Stainton Moses, at which remarkable phenomena occurred.

Light comments:

Those whose names we have mentioned as testifying to the genuineness of Dr. Monck's mediumship are well-known to the older Spiritualists as keen and scrupulously cautious experimenters, and Mr. Hensleigh Wedgwood's name carried much weight, as he was known as a man of science and was brother-in-law of Charles Darwin.

There is an element of doubt about the Huddersfield case, as the accuser was by no means an impartial person, but Sir William Barrett's testimony makes it clear that Monck did sometimes descend to deliberate and cold-blooded trickery. Sir William writes:

I caught the "Dr." in a gross bit of fraud, a piece of white muslin on a wire frame with a black thread attached, being used by the medium to simulate a partially materialized spirit.¹²

Such an exposure, coming from so sure a source, arouses a feeling of disgust which urges one to throw the whole evidence concerning the man

¹² *S.P.R. Proceedings*, Vol. IV., p. 38

into the wastepaper basket. One must, however, be patient and reasonable in such matters. Monck's earlier séances, as has been clearly shown, were in good light, and any such clumsy mechanism was out of the question. We must not argue that because a man once forges, therefore he has never signed an honest cheque in his life. But we must clearly admit that Monck was capable of fraud, that he would take the easier way when things were difficult, and that each of his manifestations should be carefully checked.

14. COLLECTIVE INVESTIGATIONS OF SPIRITUALISM

SEVERAL committees have at different times sat upon the subject of Spiritualism. Of these the two most important are that of the Dialectical Society in 1869-70, and the Seybert Commission in 1884, the first British and the second American. To these may be added that of the French society, Institut General Psychologique in 1905-8. In spite of the intervals between these various investigations, it will be convenient to treat them in a single chapter as certain remarks in common apply to each of them.

There are obvious difficulties in the way of collective investigations — difficulties which are so grave that they are almost insurmountable. When a Crookes or a Lombroso explores the subject he either sits alone with the medium, or he has with him others whose knowledge of psychic conditions and laws may be helpful in the matter. This is not usually so with these committees. They fail to understand that they are themselves part of the experiment, and that it is possible for them to create such intolerable vibrations, and to surround themselves with so negative an atmosphere, that these outside forces, which are governed by very definite laws, are unable to penetrate it. It is not in vain that the three words "with one accord" are interpolated into the account of the apostolic sitting in the upper room. If a small piece of metal may upset a whole magnetic installation, so a strong adverse psychic current may ruin a psychic circle. It is for this reason, and not on account of any superior credulity, that practising Spiritualists continually get such results as are never attained by mere researchers. This also may be the reason why the one committee upon which Spiritualists were fairly well represented was the one which gained the most positive results. This was the committee which was chosen by the Dialectical Society of London, a committee which began its explorations early in 1869 and presented its report in 1871. If common sense and the ordinary laws of evidence had been followed in the reception of this report, the progress of psychic truth would have been accelerated by fifty years.

Thirty-four gentlemen of standing were appointed upon this committee, the terms of reference being "to investigate the phenomena alleged to be spiritual manifestations." The majority of the members were certainly in the mood to unmask an imposture, but they encountered a body of evidence which could not be disregarded, and they ended by asserting that "the subject is worthy of more serious attention and careful investigation than it has hitherto received." This conclusion so amazed the society which they represented that they could not get it to publish the findings, so the committee in a spirited way published them at their own cost, thus giving permanent record to a most interesting investigation.

The members of the committee were drawn from many varied professions and included a doctor of divinity, two physicians, two surgeons, two civil engineers, two fellows of scientific societies, two barristers, and others of repute. Charles Bradlaugh the Rationalist was a member. Professor Huxley and G. H. Lewes, the consort of George Eliot, were invited to co-operate, but both refused, Huxley stating in his reply that "supposing the phenomena to be genuine, they do not interest me"—a dictum which showed that this great and clear-headed man had his limitations.

The six sub-committees sat forty times under test conditions, often without the aid of a professional medium, and with a full sense of responsibility they agreed that the following points appeared to have been established

"1. That sounds of a very varied character, apparently proceeding from articles of furniture, the floor and walls of the room—the vibrations accompanying which sounds are often distinctly perceptible to the touch—occur, without being produced by muscular action or mechanical contrivance.

"2. That movements of heavy bodies take place without mechanical contrivance of any kind or adequate exertion of muscular force by the persons present, and frequently without contact or connexion with any person.

"3. That these sounds and movements often occur at the times and in the manner asked for by persons present, and, by means of a simple code of signals, answer questions and spell out coherent communications.

"4. That the answers and communications thus obtained are, for the most part, of a commonplace character; but facts are sometimes correctly given which are only known to one of the persons present.

"5. That the circumstances under which the phenomena occur are variable, the most prominent fact being that the presence of certain persons seems necessary to their occurrence, and that of others generally adverse; but this difference does not appear to depend upon any belief or disbelief concerning the phenomena.

"6. That, nevertheless, the occurrence of the phenomena is not ensured by the presence or absence of such persons respectively."

The report briefly summarizes as follows the oral and written evidence received, which not only testifies to phenomena of the same nature as those witnessed by the sub-committees, but to others of a more varied and extraordinary character:

"1. Thirteen witnesses state that they have seen heavy bodies—in some instances men—rise slowly in the air and remain there for some time without visible or tangible support.

"2. Fourteen witnesses testify to having seen hands or figures, not appertaining to any human being, but lifelike in appearance and mobility, which they have sometimes touched or even grasped, and which they are therefore convinced were not the result of imposture or illusion.

"3. Five witnesses state that they have been touched by some invisible agency on various parts of the body, and often where requested, when the hands of all present were visible.

"4. Thirteen witnesses declare that they have heard musical pieces well played upon instruments not manipulated by any ascertainable agency.

"5. Five witnesses state that they have seen red-hot coals applied to the hands or heads of several persons without producing pain or scorching,

and three witnesses state that they have had the same experiment made upon themselves with the like immunity.

"6. Eight witnesses state that they have received precise information through rappings, writings, and in other ways, the accuracy of which was unknown at the time to themselves or to any persons present, and which on subsequent inquiry was found to be correct.

"7. One witness declares that he has received a precise and detailed statement which, nevertheless, proved to be entirely erroneous.

"8. Three witnesses state that they have been present when drawings, both in pencil and colours, were produced in so short a time, and under such conditions as to render human agency impossible.

"9. Six witnesses declare that they have received information of future events, and that in some cases the hour and minute of their occurrence have been accurately foretold, days and even weeks before."

In addition to the above, evidence was given of trance-speaking, of healing, of automatic writing, of the introduction of flowers and fruits into closed rooms, of voices in the air, of visions in crystals and glasses, and of the elongation of the human body.

The report closes with the following observations:

In presenting their report, your Committee, taking into consideration the high character and great intelligence of many of the witnesses to the more extraordinary facts, the extent to which their testimony is supported by the reports of the sub-committees, and the absence of any proof of imposture or delusion as regards a large portion of the phenomena; and further, having regard to the exceptional character of the phenomena, the large number of persons in every grade of society and over the whole civilized world who are more or less influenced by a belief in their supernatural origin, and to the fact that no philosophical explanation of them has yet been arrived at, deem it incumbent upon them to state their conviction that the subject is worthy of more serious attention and careful investigation than it has hitherto received.

Among those who gave evidence or read papers before the committee were: Dr. Alfred Russel Wallace, Mrs. Emma Hardinge, Mr. H. D.

Jencken, Mr. Benjamin Coleman, Mr. Cromwell F. Varley, Mr. D.D. Home, and the Master of Lindsay. Correspondence was received from Lord Lytton, Mr. Robert Chambers, Dr. Garth Wilkinson, Mr. William Howitt, M. Camille Flammarion, and others.

The committee was successful in procuring the evidence of believers in the phenomena, but almost wholly failed, as stated in its report, to obtain evidence from those who attributed them to fraud or delusion.

In the records of the evidence of over fifty witnesses, there is voluminous testimony to the existence of the facts from men and women of good standing. One witness¹ considered that the most remarkable phenomenon brought to light by the labours of the committee was the extraordinary number of eminent men who were shown to be firm believers in the Spiritual hypothesis. And another declared that whatever agencies might be employed in these manifestations, they were not to be explained by referring them to imposture on the one side or hallucination on the other.

An interesting sidelight on the growth of the movement is obtained from Mrs. Emma Hardinge's statement that at that time (1869) she knew only two professional mediums in London, though she was acquainted with several non-professional ones. As she herself was a medium she was probably correct in what she said. Mr. Cromwell Varley averred that there were probably not more than a hundred known mediums in the whole kingdom, and he added that very few of those were well developed. We have here conclusive testimony to the great work accomplished in England by D.D. Home, for the bulk of the converts were due to his mediumship. Another medium who played an important part was Mrs. Marshall. Many witnesses spoke of evidential sittings they had attended at her house. Mr. William Howitt, the well-known author, was of opinion that Spiritualism had then received the assent of about twenty millions of people in all countries after personal examination.

What may be called the evidence for the opposition was not at all formidable. Lord Lytton said that in his experience the phenomena were traceable to material influences of whose nature we were ignorant, Dr. Carpenter brought out his pet hobby of "unconscious cerebration." Dr.

¹ Grattan Geary. E. L. Blanchard.

Kidd thought that the majority were evidently subjective phenomena, and three witnesses, while convinced of the genuineness of the occurrences, ascribed them to Satanic agency. These objections were well answered by Mr. Thomas Shorter, author of "Confessions of a Truth Seeker," and secretary of the Working Men's College, in an admirable review of the report in the *Spiritual Magazine*.²

It is worthy of note that on the publication of this important and well-considered report it was ridiculed by a large part of the London Press. An honourable exception was *The Spectator*.

The Times reviewer considered it "nothing more than a farrago of impotent conclusions, garnished by a mass of the most monstrous rubbish it has ever been our misfortune to sit in judgment upon."

The Morning Post said: "The report which has been published is entirely worthless."

The Saturday Review hoped that report would involuntarily lead "to discrediting a little further one of the most unequivocally degrading superstitions that have ever found currency among reasonable beings."

The Standard made a sound criticism that deserves to be remembered. Objecting to the remark of those who do not believe in Spiritualism, yet say that there may be "something in it," the newspaper sagely observes: "If there is anything whatever in it beyond imposture and imbecility, there is the whole of another world in it."

The Daily News regarded the report as "an important contribution to the literature of a subject which, some day or other, by the very number of its followers, will demand more extended investigation."

The Spectator, after describing the book as an extremely curious one, added: "Few, however, could read the mass of evidence collected in this volume, showing the firm faith in the reality of the alleged spiritual phenomena possessed by a number of individuals of honourable and upright character, without also agreeing with Mr. Jeffrey's opinion, that the remarkable phenomena witnessed, some of which had not been traced to imposture or delusion, and the gathered testimony of

² 1872, pp. 3-15.

respectable witnesses, 'justify the recommendation of the subject to further cautious investigation.'"

These are but brief extracts from longer notices in a few of the London newspapers—there were many others—and, bad as they are, they none the less indicate a change of attitude on the part of the Press, which had been in the habit of ignoring the subject altogether.

It must be remembered that the report concerned itself only with the phenomenal aspect of Spiritualism, and this, in the opinion of leading Spiritualists, is decidedly the less important side. Only in the report of one sub-committee is it recorded that the general gist of the messages was that physical death was a trivial matter in retrospect, but that for the spirit it was a rebirth into new experiences of existence, that spirit life was in every respect human; that friendly intercourse was as common and pleasurable as in life; that although spirits took great interest in worldly affairs, they had no wish to return to their former state of existence; that communication with earth friends was pleasurable and desired by spirits, being intended as a proof to the former of the continuance of life in spite of bodily dissolution, and that spirits claimed no certain prophetic power. These were the main heads of the information received.

It will be generally recognized in the future that in their day and generation, the Dialectical Society's Committee did excellent work. The great majority of the members were opposed to the psychic claims, but in the face of evidence, with a few exceptions, such as Dr. Edmunds, they yielded to the testimony of their own senses. There were a few examples of intolerance such as Huxley's unhappy dictum, and Charles Bradlaugh's declaration that he would not even examine certain things because they were in the region of the impossible, but on the whole the team work of the sub-committees was excellent.

There appears in the report of the Dialectical Society's Committee a long article by Dr. Edmunds, an opponent to Spiritualism, and to the findings of his colleagues. It is worth reading as typical of a certain class of mind. The worthy doctor, while imagining himself to be impartial, is really so absolutely prejudiced that the conceivable possibility of the phenomena being supernormal never is allowed to enter into his mind. When he sees one with his own eyes his only question is, "How was the trick done?" If

he cannot answer the question he does not consider this to be in favour of some other explanation, but simply records that he cannot discover the trick. Thus his evidence, which is perfectly honest as to fact, records that a number of fresh flowers and fruits, still wet, fell upon the table—a phenomenon of apports which was shown many times by Mrs. Guppy. The doctor's only comment is that they must have been taken from the sideboard, although one would have imagined that a large basket of fruit upon the sideboard would have attracted attention, and he does not venture to say that he saw such an object. Again he was shut up with the Davenports in their cabinet and admits that he could make nothing of it, but, of course, it must be a conjuring trick. Then when he finds that mediums who perceive that his mental attitude is hopeless refuse to sit with him again, he sets that down also as an evidence of their guilt. There is a certain type of scientific mind which is quite astute within its own subject and, outside it, is the most foolish and illogical thing upon earth.

It was the misfortune of the Seybert Commission, which we will now discuss, that it was entirely composed of such people, with the exception of one Spiritualist, a Mr. Hazard, who was co-opted by them and who had little chance of influencing their general atmosphere of obstruction. The circumstances in which the Commission was appointed were these. A certain Henry Seybert, a citizen of Philadelphia, had left the sum of sixty thousand dollars for the purpose of founding a Chair of Philosophy at the University of Pennsylvania with the condition that the said University should appoint a commission to "make a thorough and impartial investigation of all systems of morals, religion, or philosophy which assume to represent the truth, and particularly of modern Spiritualism." The personnel of the body chosen is immaterial save that all were connected with the University, with Dr. Pepper, the Provost of the University as nominal chairman, Dr. Furness as acting chairman, and Professor Fullerton as secretary. In spite of the fact that the duty of the Commission was to "make a thorough and impartial investigation" of modern Spiritualism, the preliminary report coolly states The Commission is composed of men whose days are already filled with duties which cannot be laid aside, and who are able, therefore, to devote but a small portion of their time to these investigations.

The fact that the members were satisfied to start with this handicap shows how little they understood the nature of the work before them.

Their failure, in the circumstances, was inevitable. The proceedings began in March, 1884, and a "preliminary" report, so called, was issued in 1887. This report was, as it proved, the final one, for though it was reissued in 1920 there was no addition save a colourless preface of three paragraphs by a descendant of the former chairman. The gist of this report is that fraud on the one side and credulity on the other make up the whole of Spiritualism, and that there was really nothing serious on which the committee could report. The whole long document is well worth reading by any student of psychic matters. The impression left upon the mind is that the various members of the Commission were in their own limited way honestly endeavouring to get at the facts, but that their minds, like that of Dr. Edmunds, were so formed that when, in spite of their repellent and impossible attitude, some psychic happening did manage to break through their barriers, they would not for an instant consider the possibility that it was genuine, but simply passed it by as if it did not exist. Thus with Mrs. Fox-Kane they did get well-marked raps, and are content with the thousand-times disproved supposition that they came from inside her own body, and they pass without comment the fact that they received from her long messages, written swiftly in script, which could only be read when held to the looking-glass, as it was from right to left. This swiftly-written script contained an abstruse Latin sentence which would appear to be much above the capacity of the medium. All of this was unexplained and ignored.

Again, in reporting upon Mrs. Lord the Commission got the Direct Voice, and also phosphorescent lights after the medium had been searched. We are informed that the medium kept up an "almost continuous clapping of hands," and yet people at a distance from her seem to have been touched. The spirit in which the inquiry is approached may be judged from the remark of the acting chairman to W. M. Keeler, who was said to be a spirit photographer, that he "would not be satisfied with less than a cherub on my head, one on each shoulder, and a full-blown angel on my breast." A Spiritualist would be surprised indeed if an inquirer in so frivolous a mood should be favoured with results. All through runs the fallacy that the medium is producing something as a conjurer does. Never for a moment do they seem to realize that the favour and assent of invisible operators may be essential – operators who may stoop to the

humble-minded and shrink away from, or even make game of, the self-sufficient scoffer.

While there were some results which may have been genuine, but which are brushed aside by the report, there were some episodes which must be painful to the Spiritualist, but which none the less must be faced. The Commission exposed obvious fraud in the case of the slate medium, Mrs. Patterson, and it is impossible to deny that the case against Slade is a substantial one. The latter days of this medium were admittedly under a cloud, and the powers which had once been so conspicuous may have been replaced by trickery. Dr. Furness goes the length of asserting that such trickery was actually admitted, but the anecdote as given in the report rather suggests chaff upon the part of the medium. That Dr. Slade should jovially beckon the doctor in from his open window, and should at once in reply to a facetious remark admit that his own whole life had been a swindle, is more than one can easily believe.

There are some aspects in which the Commission—or some members of it—seem to have been disingenuous. Thus, they state at the beginning that they will rest their report upon their own labours and disregard the mass of material already available. In spite of this, they introduce a long and adverse report from their secretary upon the Zollner evidence in favour of Slade. This report is quite incorrect in itself, as is shown in the account of Zollner given in the chapter treating of Slade's experiences in Leipzig. It carefully suppresses the fact that the chief conjurer in Germany, after a considerable investigation, gave a certificate that Slade's phenomena were not trickery. On the other hand, when the testimony of a conjurer is against a spiritual explanation, as in the comments of Kellar, it is given in full, with no knowledge, apparently, that in the case of another medium, Eglinton, this same Kellar had declared the results to be beyond his art.

At the opening of the report the Commission says: "We deemed ourselves fortunate at the outset in having as a counsellor the late Mr. Thomas R. Hazard, a personal friend of Mr. Seybert, and widely known throughout the land as an uncompromising Spiritualist." Mr. Hazard evidently knew the importance of ensuring the right conditions and the right type of sitters for such an experimental investigation. Describing an interview he had with Mr. Seybert a few days before the latter's death,

when he agreed to act as his representative, Mr. Hazard says he did so only "with the full and distinct understanding that I should be permitted to prescribe the methods to be pursued in the investigation, designate the mediums to be consulted, and reject the attendance of any person or persons whose presence I deemed might conflict with the harmony and good order of the spirit circles." But this representative of Mr. Seybert seems to have been quietly ignored by the University. After the Commission had been sitting for some time, Mr. Hazard was dissatisfied with some of its members and their methods. We find him writing as follows in the *Philadelphia North American*, [May 18, 1885.] presumably after vainly approaching the University authorities:

Without aiming to detract in the slightest degree from the unblemished moral character that attaches to each and every individual of the Faculty, including the Commission, in public esteem, nor to the high social and literary standing they occupy in society, I must say that through some strange infatuation, obliquity of judgment, or perversity of intellect, the Trustees of the University have placed on the Commission for the investigation of modern Spiritualism, a majority of its members whose education, habit of thought, and prejudices so singularly disqualify them from making a thorough and impartial investigation of the subject which the Trustees of the University are obligated both by contract and in honour to do, that had the object in view been to belittle and bring into discredit, hatred and general contempt the cause that I know the late Henry Seybert held nearest his heart and loved more than all else in the world beside, the Trustees could scarcely have selected more suitable instruments for the object intended from all the denizens of Philadelphia than are the gentlemen who constitute a majority of the Seybert Commission. And this I repeat, not from any causes that affect their moral, social or literary standing in society, but simply because of their prejudices against the cause of Spiritualism.

He further advised the Trustees to remove from the Commission Messrs. Fullerton, Thompson, and Koenig.

Mr. Hazard quoted Professor Fullerton as saying in a lecture before the Harvard University Club on March 3, 1885:

It is possible that the way mediums tell a person's history is by the process of thought-transference, for every person who is thus told of these things goes to a medium thinking of the same points about which the medium talks... When a man has a cold he hears a buzzing noise in his ears, and an insane person constantly hears sounds which never occur. Perhaps, then, disease of mind or ear, or some strong emotion, may be the cause of a large number of spiritual phenomena.

These words were spoken after the professor had served on the Commission for more than twelve months.

Mr. Hazard also quotes Dr. George A. Koenig's views, published in *The Philadelphia Press*, about a year after his appointment on the Commission:

I must frankly admit that I am prepared to deny the truth of Spiritualism as it is now popularly understood. It is my belief that all of the so-called mediums are humbugs without exception. I have never seen Slade perform any of his tricks, but, from the published descriptions, I have set him down as an impostor, the cleverest one of the lot. I do not think the Commission view with much favour the examination of so-called spirit mediums. The wisest men are apt to be deceived. One man in an hour can invent more tricks than a wise man can solve in a year.

Mr. Hazard learned from what he considered to be a reliable source, that Professor Robert E. Thompson was responsible for this view which appeared in Penn's Monthly of February, 1880.

Even if Spiritualism be all that its champions claim for it, it has no importance for anyone who holds a Christian faith. The consideration and discussion of the subject is tampering with notions and condescending to discussions with which no Christian believer has any business.

We have in these expressions of opinion a means of judging how unsuited these members of the Commission were for making what Mr. Seybert asked for — "a thorough and impartial" investigation of the subject.

An American Spiritualist periodical, the *Banner Of Light*, commenting on Mr. Hazard's communication, wrote:

So far as we have information, no notice was taken of Mr. Hazard's appeal —certainly no action was had, for the members above quoted remain on the Commission to this day, and their names are appended to this preliminary report. Professor Fullerton, in fact, was and now is the secretary; one hundred and twenty of the one hundred and fifty pages of the volume before us are written by him, and exhibit that excessive lack of spiritual perception and knowledge of occult, and we might also say natural laws, which led him to inform an audience of Harvard students that "when a man has a cold he hears a buzzing noise in his ears"; that "an insane person constantly hears sounds which never occur," and suggest to them that spiritual phenomena may proceed from such causes.

The *Banner Of Light* continues:

We consider that the Seybert Commission's failure to follow the counsel of Mr. Hazard, as it was plainly their duty to do, is the key to the entire failure of all their subsequent efforts. The paucity of phenomenal results, in any degree approaching what might be looked for, even by a sceptic, which this book records, is certainly remarkable. It is a report of what was not done, rather than that of what was. In the memoranda of proceedings at each session, as given by Professor Fullerton, there is plainly seen a studied effort to give prominence to everything that a superficial mind might deem proof of trickery on the part of the medium, and to conceal all that might be evidence of the truth of his claims... It is mentioned that when certain members of the Commission were present all phenomena ceased. This substantiates the correctness of Mr. Hazard's position; and there is no one who has had an experience with mediums, sufficient to render his opinion of any value, who will not endorse it. The spirits knew what elements they had to deal with; they endeavoured to eliminate those that rendered their experiments nugatory; they failed to do this through the ignorance, wilfulness or prejudice of the Commission, and the experiments failed; so the Commission, very "wise in its own conceit," decided that all was fraud.

Light,³ in its notice of the report, says what needs saying as much now as in 1887:

We notice with some pleasure, though without any marked expectation of what may result from the pursuance of bad methods of investigation, that the Commission proposes to continue its quest "with minds as sincerely and honestly open as heretofore to conviction." Since this is so, we presume to offer a few words of advice founded upon large experience. The investigation of these obscure phenomena is beset with difficulty, and any instructions that can be given are derived from a knowledge which is to a great extent empirical. But we know that prolonged and patient experiment with a properly constituted circle is a sine qua non. We know that all does not depend on the medium, but that a circle must be formed and varied from time to time experimentally, until the proper constituent elements are secured. What these elements may be we cannot tell the Seybert Commission. They must discover that for themselves. Let them make a study in the literature of Spiritualism of the varied characteristics of mediumship before they proceed to personal experiment. And when they have done this, and perhaps when they have realized how easy it is so to conduct an examination of this nature as to arrive at negative results, they will be in a better position to devote intelligent and patient care to a study which can be profitably conducted in no other way.

There is no doubt that the report of the Seybert Commission set back for the time the cause of psychic truth. Yet the real harm fell upon the learned institution which these gentlemen represented. In these days when ectoplasm, the physical basis of psychic phenomena, has been established beyond a shadow of doubt to all who examine the evidence, it is too late to pretend that there is nothing to be examined. There is now hardly a capital which has not its Psychic Research Society—a final comment upon the inference of the Commission that there was no field for research. If the Seybert Commission had had the effect of Pennsylvania University heading this movement, and living up to the great tradition of Professor Hare, how proud would her final position have been! As Newton associated Cambridge with the law of gravitation, so Pennsylvania might have been linked to a far more important advance

³ 1887, p. 391.

of human knowledge. It was left to several European centres of learning to share the honour among them.

The remaining collective investigation is of less importance, since it deals only with a particular medium. This was conducted by the Institut General Psychologique in Paris. It consisted of three series of sittings with the famous Eusapia Palladino in the years 1905, 1906, and 1907, the total number of séances being forty-three. No complete list of the sitters is available, nor was there any proper collective report, the only record being a very imperfect and inconclusive one from the secretary, M. Courtier. The investigators included some very distinguished persons, including Charles Richet, Monsieur and Madame Curie, Messrs. Bergson, Perrin, Professor d'Arsonal of the College de France, who was president of the society, Count de Gramont, Professor Charpentier, and Principal Debierne of the Sorbonne. The actual result could not have been disastrous to the medium, since Professor Richet has recorded his endorsement of the reality of her psychic powers, but the strange superficial tricks of Eusapia are recorded in the subsequent account of her career, and we can well imagine the disconcerting effect which they would have upon those to whom such things were new.

There is included in the report a sort of conversation among the sitters in which they talk the matter over, most of them being in a very nebulous and non-committal frame of mind. It cannot be claimed that any new light was shed upon the medium, or any new argument provided either for the sceptic or for the believer. Dr. Geley, however, who has probably gone as deeply as anyone else into psychic science, claims that "les experiences"—he does not say the report—constitute a valuable contribution to the subject.⁴ He bases this upon the fact that the results chronicled do often strikingly confirm those obtained in his own Institut Métapsychique working with Kluski, Guzik, and other mediums. The differences, he says, are in details and never in essentials. The control of the hands was the same in either case, both the hands being always held. This was easier in the case of the later mediums, especially with Kluski in trance, while Eusapia was usually a very restless individual. There seems to be a halfway condition which was characteristic of Eusapia, and which has been observed by the author in the case of Frau Silbert, Evan Powell,

⁴ *L'Ectoplasmie et la Clairvoyance*, 1924, p. 402.

and other mediums, where the person seems normal, and yet is peculiarly susceptible to suggestion or other mental impressions. A suspicion of fraud may very easily be aroused in this condition, for the general desire on the part of the audience that something should occur reacts with great force upon the unreasoning mind of the medium. An amateur who had some psychic power has assured the author that it needs considerable inhibition to keep such impulses in check and to await the real power from outside. In this report we read: "The two hands, feet, and knees of Eusapia being controlled, the table is raised suddenly, all four feet leaving the ground. Eusapia closes her fists and holds them towards the table, which is then completely raised from the floor five times in succession, five raps being also given. It is again completely raised whilst each of Eusapia's hands is on the head of a sitter. It is raised to a height of one foot from the floor and suspended in the air for seven seconds, while Eusapia kept her hand on the table, and a lighted candle was placed under the table," and so on, with even more conclusive tests with table and other phenomena.

The timidity of the report was satirized by the great French Spiritualist, Gabriel Delanne. He says:

The reporter keeps saying "it seems" and "it appears," like a man who is not sure of what he is relating. Those who held forty-three séances, with good eyes and apparatus for verification, ought to have a settled opinion —or, at least, to be able to say, if they regard a certain phenomenon as fraudulent, that at a given séance they had seen the medium in the act of tricking. But there is nothing of the sort. The reader is left in uncertainty —a vague suspicion hovers over everything, though not supported on any serious grounds.

Commenting on this, *Light* says:⁵

Delanne shows by extracts from the Report itself that some of the experiments succeeded even when the fullest test precautions were taken, such as using lamp-black to discover whether Eusapia really touched the objects moved. Yet the Report deliberately discounts these direct and positive observations by instancing cases occurring at other

⁵ 1909, p. 356.

times and places in which Eusapia was said or believed to have unduly influenced the phenomena.

The Courier Report will prove more and more plainly to be what we have already called it, a "monument of ineptitude," and the reality of Eusapia's phenomena cannot be seriously called in question by the meaningless phrases with which it is liberally garnished.

What may be called a collective investigation of a medium, Mrs. Crandon, the wife of a doctor in Boston, was undertaken in the years 1923 to 1925 by a committee chosen by *The Scientific American* and afterwards by a small committee of Harvard men with Dr. Shapley, the astronomer, at their head. The controversy over these inquiries is still raging, and the matter has been referred to in the chapter which deals with great modern mediums. It may briefly be stated that of *The Scientific American* inquirers the secretary, Mr. Malcolm Bird, and Dr. Hereward Carrington announced their complete conversion.

The others gave no clear decision which involved the humiliating admission that after numerous sittings under their own conditions and in the presence of constant phenomena, they could not tell whether they were being cheated or not. The defect of the committee was that no experienced Spiritualist who was familiar with psychic conditions was upon it. Dr. Prince was very deaf, while Dr. McDougall was in a position where his whole academic career would obviously be endangered by the acceptance of an unpopular explanation. The same remark applies to Dr. Shapley's committee, which was all composed of budding scientists. Without imputing conscious mental dishonesty, there is a subconscious drag to wards the course of safety. Reading the report of these gentlemen with their signed acquiescence at each sitting with the result, and their final verdict of fraud, one cannot discover any normal way in which they have reached their conclusions. On the other hand, the endorsements of the mediumship by folk who had no personal reasons for extreme caution were frequent and enthusiastic. Dr. Mark Richardson of Boston reported that he had sat more than 300 times, and had no doubt at all about the results.

The author has seen numerous photographs of the ectoplasmic flow from "Margery," and has no hesitation, on comparing it with similar photographs taken in Europe, in saying that it is unquestionably

genuine, and that the future will justify the medium as against her unreasonable critics.

APPENDIX

NOTES TO CHAPTER IV

EVIDENCE OF THE HAUNTING OF THE HYDESVILLE HOUSE BEFORE THE FOX FAMILY OCCUPIED IT

Mrs. Ann Pulver certifies:

I was acquainted with Mr. and Mrs. Bell (who occupied the house in 1844). I used to call on them frequently. My warping bars were in their chamber, and I used to go there to do my work. One morning when I went there Mrs. Bell told me that she felt very bad; that she had not slept much, if any, the night before. When I asked her what the matter was, she said she didn't know but what it was the fidgets; but she thought she heard somebody walking about from one room to another, and that she had Mr. Bell get up and fasten down all the windows. She said she felt more safe after that. I asked her what she thought it was. She said it might be rats. I heard her speak about hearing noises after that, which she could not account for.

Miss Lucretia Pulver gave testimony:

I lived in this house all one winter, in the family of Mr. Bell. I worked for them part of the time, and part of the time I boarded and went to school. I lived there about three months. During the latter part of the time that I was there I heard this knocking frequently in the bedroom, under the foot of the bed. I heard it a number of nights, as I slept in the bedroom all the time that I staid there. One night I thought I heard a man walking in the buttry. This buttry is near the bedroom, with a stairway between. Miss Aurelia Losey staid with me on that night; she also heard the noise, and we were both much frightened, and got up and fastened down the windows and fastened the door. It sounded as if a person walked through the buttry, down cellar, and part way across the cellar-bottom, and there the noise would cease. There was no one else in the house at this time, except my little brother, who was asleep in the same room with us. This was about twelve o'clock, I should think. We did not go to bed until after eleven, and had not been asleep when we heard the

noise. Mr. and Mrs. Bell had gone to Loch Berlin, to be gone until the next day.

Thus it is proved that strange sounds were heard in the house in 1844. Another family named Weekman lived there in 1846-7, and they had a similar experience.

STATEMENT OF MRS. HANNAH WEEKMAN

I have heard about the mysterious noises that have been heard in the house now occupied by Mr. Fox. We used to live in the same house; we lived there about a year and a half and moved from there to the house we now occupy. About a year ago, while we were living there, we heard someone, as we supposed, rapping on the outside door. I had just got into bed, but my husband had not. He went and opened it, and said that there was no one there. He came back, and was about getting into bed when we heard the rapping on the door again. He then went to the door and opened it, and said that he could see no one, although he stepped out a little way. He then came back and got into bed. He was quite angry; he thought 'twas some of the neighbouring boys trying to disturb us, and said that "They might knock away, but they would not fool him," or something of that kind. The knocking was heard again, and after a while he got up and went to the door and went out. I told him not to go outdoors, for perhaps somebody wanted to get him out and hurt him. He came back, and said he could see nothing. We heard a good deal of noise during the night; we could hardly tell where it was: it sounded sometimes as if someone was walking in the cellar. But the house was old, and we thought it might be the rattling of loose boards, or something of that kind.

A few nights afterwards, one of our little girls, who slept in the bedroom where the noises are now heard, woke us all up by screaming very loud. My husband and I, and our hired girl, got up immediately to see what was the matter. She sat up in bed, crying and screaming, and it was some time before we could find out what the matter was. She said that something had been moving about, over her head and face—that it was cold, and she did not know what it was. She said that she felt it all over

her, but she was most alarmed at feeling it on her face. She was very much frightened. This was between twelve and one o'clock at night. She got up and got into bed with us, and it was a long time before she could go to sleep. It was several days before we could get her to sleep in that room again. She was eight years old at that time.

Nothing else happened to me during the time that we lived there; but my husband told me that one night he heard someone call him by name, somewhere in the house—he did not know where—but could never find out where or what it was that night. I was not at home that night. I was sitting up with a sick person. We did not think the house was haunted at that time.

Hannah Weekman April 11, 1848.

STATEMENT OF MICHAEL WEEKMAN

I am the husband of Hannah Weekman. We used to live in the house now occupied by Mr. Fox, in which they say strange noises are heard. We lived there about a year and a half. One evening, about bedtime, I heard the rapping. I supposed it was someone knocking at the door who wanted to come in. I did not bid him "Come in," as I usually do, but went to the door. I did not find anyone there, but went back, and just as I was getting into bed I heard the rapping again and opened the door quick, but could see no one there. I stepped out a step or two, but could see no one about there. I then went back and got into bed. I thought someone was making game of me. After a few minutes I heard the knocking again, and after waiting a few minutes and still hearing it, I got up and went to the door. This time I went clear out and looked around the house, but could find no one. I then stepped back and shut the door, and held on to the latch, thinking that if there was anyone there I would catch them at it. In a minute or two I heard the rapping again. My hand was on the door, and the knocking appeared to be on the door. I could feel it jar with the raps. I instantly opened the door and sprang out, but there was no one in sight. I then went round the house again, but could find no one, as before. My wife told me I had better not go out of doors, as it might be

someone that wanted to hurt me. I did not know what to think of it, it seemed so strange and unaccountable.

He here relates the case of the little girl being frightened, as given above.

One night after this, about midnight, I was awake, and heard my name called. It sounded as if it was on the south side of the room.

I sat up in bed and listened, but did not hear it again. I did not get out of bed, but waited to see if it would be repeated. My wife was not at home that night. I told her of it afterwards, and she said she guessed I had been dreaming. My wife used to be frightened quite often by hearing strange noises in and about the house.

I have heard so much from men in whom I place confidence about these noises that are now heard, that, taken in connexion with what I heard, I cannot account for it, unless it is a supernatural appearance. I am willing to make affidavit to the above facts if necessary.

(Signed) Michael Weekman. April 11, 1848.

**EXTRACT FROM HORACE, GREELEY'S ARTICLE
IN THE NEW YORK TRIBUNE GIVING HIS OPINION
OF THE FOX SISTERS AND THEIR MEDIUMSHIP¹**

THE MYSTERIOUS RAPPINGS

Mrs. Fox and her three daughters left our city yesterday on their return to Rochester, after a stay here of some weeks, during which they have subjected the mysterious influence, by which they seem to be accompanied, to every reasonable test, and to the keen and critical scrutiny of hundreds who have chosen to visit them, or whom they have been invited to visit. The rooms which they occupied at the hotel have been repeatedly searched and scrutinized; they have been taken without an hour's notice into houses they had never before entered; they have been all unconsciously placed on a glass surface concealed under the carpet in order to interrupt electrical vibrations; they have been disrobed

¹ Capron, *Modern Spiritualism*, pp. 179-181.

by a committee of ladies appointed without notice, and insisting that neither of them should leave the room until the investigation has been made, etc., etc., yet we believe no one, to this moment, pretends that he has detected either of them in producing or causing the "rappings," nor do we think any of their contemners has invented a plausible theory to account for the production of these sounds, nor the singular intelligence which (certainly at times) has seemed to be manifest through them.

Some ten or twelve days since they gave up their rooms at the hotel and devoted the remainder of their sojourn here to visiting several families, to which they had been invited by persons interested in the subject, and subjecting the singular influence to a closer, calmer examination than could be given to it at a hotel, and before casual companies of strangers, drawn together by vague curiosity more than rational interest, or predetermined and invincible hostility. Our own dwelling was among those they thus visited; not only submitting to, but courting, the fullest and keenest inquiry with regard to the alleged "manifestations" from the spirit-world, by which they were attended.

We devoted what time we could spare from our duties out of three days to this subject, and it would be the basest cowardice not to say that we are convinced beyond a doubt of their perfect integrity and good faith in the premises. Whatever may be the origin or cause of the "rappings," the ladies in whose presence they occur do not make them. We tested this thoroughly and to our entire satisfaction. Their conduct and bearing is as unlike that of deceivers as possible, and we think no one acquainted with them could believe them at all capable of engaging in so daring, impious, and shameful a juggle as this would be if they caused the sounds. And it is not possible that such a juggle should have been so long perpetrated in public. A juggler performs one feat quickly and hurries on to another; he does not devote weeks after weeks to the same thing over and over, deliberately, in full view of hundreds who sit beside or confronting him in broad daylight, not to enjoy but to detect his trick. A deceiver naturally avoids conversation on the subject of his knavery, but these ladies converse freely and fully with regard to the origin of these "rappings" in their dwellings years ago, the various sensations they caused, the neighbourhood excitement created, the progress of the developments—what they have seen, heard and experienced from first to last. If all were false, they could not fail to have involved themselves ere this in a

labyrinth of blasting contradictions, as each separately gives accounts of the most astonishing developments at this or that time. Persons foolish enough so to commit themselves without reserve or caution could not have deferred a thorough self-exposure for a single week.

Of course, a variety of opinions of so strange a matter would naturally be formed by the various persons who have visited them, and we presume that those who have merely run into their room for an hour or so, and listened, among a huddle of strangers, to a medley of questions—not all admitting of very profitable answers—put to certain invisible intelligences, and answered by "rappings," or singular noises on the floor, table, etc., as the alphabet was called over, or otherwise, would naturally go away, perhaps puzzled, probably disgusted, rarely convinced. It is hardly possible that a matter, ostensibly so grave, could be presented under circumstances less favourable to conviction. But of those who have enjoyed proper opportunities for a full investigation, we believe that fully three-fourths are convinced, as we are, that these singular sounds and seeming manifestations are not produced by Mrs. Fox and her daughters, nor by any human being connected with them.

How they are caused, and whence they proceed, are questions which open a much wider field of inquiry, with whose way-marks we do not profess to be familiar. He must be well acquainted with the arcana of the universe, who shall presume dogmatically to decide that these manifestations are natural or supernatural. The ladies say that they are informed that this is but the beginning of a new era, or economy, in which spirits clothed in the flesh are to be more closely palpably connected with those who have put on immortality; that manifestations have already appeared in many other families and destined to be diffused and rendered clearer, until all who will may communicate freely with their friends who have "shuffled off this mortal coil." Of all this we know nothing, and shall guess nothing. But if we were simply to print (which we shall not) the questions asked and answers we received, during a two-hours' uninterrupted conference with the "rappers," we should at once be accused of having done so expressly to sustain the theory which regards these manifestations as the utterances of departed spirits. H.G.

NOTE TO CHAPTER VI

PEN-PICTURE OF LAKE HARRIS BY LAURENCE OLIPHANT

There was a remarkable alternation of vivacity and deliberation about the movements of Mr. Masollam. His voice seemed pitched in two different keys, the effect of which was, when he changed them, to make one seem a distant echo of the other—a species of ventriloquistic phenomenon which was calculated to impart a sudden and not altogether pleasant shock to the nerves of the listeners. When he talked with what I may term his "near" voice, he was generally rapid and vivacious; when he exchanged it for his "far off" one, he was solemn and impressive. His hair, which had once been raven black, was now streaked with grey, but it was still thick and fell in a massive wave over his ears, and nearly to his shoulders, giving him something of a leonine aspect. His brow was overhanging and bushy, and his eyes were like revolving lights in two dark caverns, so fitfully did they seem to emit flashes and then lose all expression. Like his voice, they too had a near and a far-off expression, which could be adjusted to the required focus like a telescope, growing smaller and smaller as though in an effort to project the sight beyond the limits of natural vision. At such times they would be so entirely devoid of all appreciation of outward objects as to produce almost the impression of blindness, when suddenly the focus would change, the pupils expand, and rays flash from them like lightning from a thundercloud, giving an unexpected and extraordinary brilliancy to a face which seemed promptly to respond to the summons. The general cast of countenance, the upper part of which, were it not for the depth of the eye-sockets, would have been strikingly handsome, was decidedly Semitic; and in repose the general effect was almost statuesque in its calm fixedness. The mouth was partially concealed by a heavy moustache and long iron-grey beard; but the transition from repose to animation revealed an extraordinary flexibility in those muscles which had a moment before appeared so rigid, and the whole character of the countenance was altered as suddenly as the expression of the eye. It would perhaps be prying too much into the secrets of Nature, or, at all events, into the secrets of Mr. Masollam's nature, to inquire whether this

lightening and darkening of the countenance was voluntary or not. In a lesser degree it is a common phenomenon with us all: the effect of one class of emotions is, vulgarly speaking, to make a man look black, and of another to make him look bright. The peculiarity of Mr. Masollam was that he could look so much blacker and brighter than most people, and made the change of expression with such extraordinary rapidity and intensity that it seemed a sort of facial legerdemain, and suggested the suspicion that it might be an acquired faculty. There was, moreover, another change which he apparently had the power of working on his countenance, which affects other people involuntarily, and which generally, especially in the case of the fair sex, does so very much against their will. Mr. Masollam had the faculty of looking very much older one hour than he did the next. "There were moments when a careful study of his wrinkles and of his dull, faded-looking eyes would lead you to put him down at eighty if he was a day; and there were others when his flashing glance, expanding nostril, broad, smooth brow and mobile mouth would make a rejuvenating combination that would for a moment convince you that you had been at least five-and-twenty years out in your first estimate. These rapid contrasts were calculated to arrest the attention of the most casual observer, and to produce a sensation which was not altogether pleasant when first one made his acquaintance. It was not exactly mistrust—for both manners were perfectly frank and natural—so much as perplexity. He seemed to be two opposite characters rolled into one, and to be presenting undesigningly a curious moral and physiological problem for solution, which had a disagreeable sort of attractiveness about it, for you almost immediately felt it to be insoluble, and yet it would not let you rest. He might be the best or the worst of men."

NOTES TO CHAPTER VII

ADDITIONAL TESTIMONY OF PROFESSOR AND MRS. DE MORGAN

Professor De Morgan says:

I gave an account of all this to a friend who was then alive, a man of ologies and ometers both, who was not at all disposed to think it anything but a clever imposture. "But," said he, "what you tell me is very singular: I shall go myself to Mrs. Hayden; I shall go alone and not give my name. I don't think I shall hear anything from anybody, but if I do I shall find out the trick. Depend upon it,

I shall find it out." He went accordingly, and came to me to report progress. He told me that he had gone a step beyond me, for he had insisted on taking his alphabet behind a large folding screen and asking his questions by the alphabet and a pencil, as well as receiving the answers. No persons except himself and Mrs. Hayden were in the room. The "spirit" who came to him was one whose unfortunate death was fully detailed in the usual way. My friend told me that he was "awestruck," and had nearly forgotten all his precautions.

The things which I have narrated were the beginning of a long series of experiences, many as remarkable as what I have given; many of a minor character, separately worth little, but jointly of weight when considered in connexion with the more decisive proofs of reality. Many of a confirmatory tendency as mere facts, but of a character not sustentive of the gravity and dignity of the spiritual world. The celebrated apparition of Giles Scroggins is a serious personage compared to some which have fallen in my way, and a logical one, too. If these things be spirits, they show that pretenders, coxcombs and liars are to be found on the other side of the grave as well as on this; and what for no? as Meg Dods said.

The whole question may receive such persevering attention as shall worm out the real truth; or it may die away, obtaining only casual notice, until a new outburst of phenomena recalls its history of this clay. But this subsidence does not seem to begin. It is now twelve or thirteen years since the matter began to be everywhere talked about, during which time there have been many announcements of the total extinction of the "spirit-mania." But in several cases, as in Tom Moore's fable, the extinguishers have caught fire. Were it the absurdity it is often said to be, it would do much good by calling attention to the "manifestations" of another absurdity, the philosophy of possibilities and impossibilities, the philosophy of the fourth court. Extremes meet, but the "meeting" is often for the purpose of mutual exposure, like that of silly gentlemen in the

day of pop-and-paragraph duels. This on the supposition that Spiritualism is all either imposture or delusion; it cannot be more certainly one or the other than is the philosophy opposed to it. I have no acquaintance either with P or Q. But I feel sure that the decided conviction of all who can see both sides of the shield must be, that it is more likely that P has seen a ghost than that Q knows he cannot have seen one. I know that Q says he knows it.

In this connexion the following from the Publishers' Circular on the appearance of Mrs. De Morgan's book shows a contemporary estimate of Professor De Morgan's critical faculty:

Mere *litterateurs* and writers of fiction may be pardoned for a little tendency to the visionary and unreal, but the fact that the well-known author of the standard works on Formal Logic, the Differential Calculus, and the Theory of Probabilities, should figure with his lady in the characters of believers in spirit-rapping and table-turning, will probably take most people by surprise. There is perhaps no contributor to our reviews who is more at home in demolishing a fallacy, or in good-humouredly disposing of an ignorant pretender in science than Mr. De Morgan. His clear, logical, witty and whimsical style is readily traced by literary readers in many a striking article in our critical journals. He is probably the last man whom the sceptical in such mysteries would expect to find on the side of Mr. Home and Mrs. Newton Crosland. Yet we must record the fact that Mr. De Morgan declares himself " perfectly convinced that he has both seen and heard, in a manner which should make unbelief impossible, things called spiritual which cannot be taken by a rational being to be capable of explanation by imposture, coincidence, or mistake."

Let us add to the foregoing Mrs. De Morgan's testimony:

It is now ten years since I began attentively to observe the phenomena of "Spiritualism." My first experience occurred in the presence of Mrs. Hayden from New York. I never heard a word which could shake my strong conviction of Mrs. Hayden's honesty; indeed, the result of our first interview, when my name was quite unknown to her, was sufficient to prove that I was not on that occasion the victim of her imposture, or my own credulity.

After describing the visit to Mrs. Hayden, to whom none of the names of those present was mentioned, she says:

We sat for at least a quarter of an hour and were beginning to apprehend a failure, when a very small throbbing or patting sound was heard, apparently in the centre of the table. Great was our pleasure when Mrs. Hayden, who had before seemed rather anxious, said, "They are coming." Who were coming? Neither she nor we could tell. As the sounds gathered strength, which they seemed to do with our necessary conviction of their genuineness, whatever might be their origin, Mrs. Hayden said, "There is a spirit who wishes to speak with someone here, but as I do not know the names of the gentlemen and ladies, I must point to each in turn, and, when I come to the right one, beg that the spirit will rap." This was agreed to by our invisible companion, who rapped in assent. Mrs. Hayden then pointed to each of the party in turn. To my surprise, and even annoyance (for I did not wish this, and many of my friends did), no sounds were heard until she indicated myself, the last in the circle. I was seated at her right hand; she had gone round from the left. I was then directed to point to the letters of a large type alphabet, and I may add that, having no wish to obtain the name of any dear friend or relation, I certainly did not rest, as it has been surmised is often done, on any letter. However, to my astonishment, the not common name of a dear relation who had left this world seventeen years before, and whose surname was that of my father's, not my husband's, family was spelt. Then this sentence, "I am happy, and with F. and G." (names at length). I then received a promise of future communication with all three spirits; the two last had left the world twenty and twelve years before. Other persons present then received communications by rapping; of these some were as singularly truthful and satisfactory as that to myself, while others were false and even mischievous.

Mrs. De Morgan observes that after the séances with Mrs. Hayden she and her friends experimented in private, "and it was found that a number of persons, both in and out of my own family, possessed the faculty of mediumship in a greater or less degree."

NOTE TO CHAPTER X

WERE THE DAVENPORTS JUGGLERS OR SPIRITUALISTS?

As Mr. Houdini has seemed to question whether the Davenports themselves ever asserted that they were Spiritualists, it may clear the matter up finally to quote the following from a letter written by them in 1868 to the *Banner Of Light*, the leading Spiritualist journal in the United States. Dealing with the report that they were not Spiritualists, they wrote:

It is singular that any individual, sceptic or Spiritualist, could believe such statements after fourteen years of the most bitter persecution and violent opposition, culminating in the riots of Liverpool, Huddersfield, and Leeds, where our lives were placed in imminent peril by the fury of brutal mobs, our property destroyed, and where we suffered a loss of seventy-five thousand dollars, and all because we would not renounce Spiritualism, and declare ourselves jugglers, when threatened by the mob, and urged to do so. In conclusion, we have only to say that we denounce all such statements as base falsehoods.

**THE HISTORY OF
SPIRITUALISM**

VOL. II

**BY
ARTHUR CONAN DOYLE**

1926

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CHAPTER 1. THE CAREER OF EUSAPIA PALLADINO

THE mediumship of Eusapia Palladino marks an important stage in the history of psychical research, because she was the first medium for physical phenomena to be examined by a large number of eminent men of science. The chief manifestations that occurred with her were the movement of objects without contact, the levitation of a table and other objects, the levitation of the medium, the appearance of materialized hands and faces, lights, and the playing of musical instruments without human contact. All these phenomena took place, as we have seen, at a much earlier date with the medium D.D. Home, but when Sir William Crookes invited his scientific brethren to come and examine them they declined. Now for the first time these strange facts were the subject of prolonged investigation by men of European reputation. Needless to say, these experimenters were at first sceptical in the highest degree, and so-called "tests" (those often silly precautions which may defeat the very object aimed at) were the order of the day. No medium in the whole world has been more rigidly tested than this one, and since she was able to convince the vast majority of her sitters, it is clear that her mediumship was of no ordinary type. It is little use pointing out that no psychic researcher should be admitted to the séance room without at least some elementary knowledge of the complexities of mediumship and the right conditions for its unfoldment, or without, for instance, an understanding of the basic truth that it is not the medium alone, but the sitters equally, who are factors in the success of the experiment. Not one scientific man in a thousand recognizes this, and the fact that Eusapia triumphed in spite of such a tremendous handicap is an eloquent tribute to her powers.

The mediumistic career of this humble, illiterate Neapolitan woman, of surpassing interest as well as of extreme importance in its results, supplies yet another instance of the lowly being used as the instrument to shatter the sophistries of the learned. Eusapia was born on January 21, 1854, and died in 1918. Her mediumship began to manifest itself when she was about fourteen years of age.



Eusapia Palladino.

Her mother died at her birth, and her father when she was twelve years old. At the house of friends with whom she went to stay she was persuaded to sit at a table with others. At the end of ten minutes the table was levitated, the chairs began to dance, the curtains in the room to swell, and glasses and bottles to move about. Each sitter was tested in turn to discover who was responsible for the movements, and in the end it was decided that Eusapia was the medium. She took no interest in the proceedings, and only

consented to have further sittings to please her hosts and prevent herself from being sent to a convent. It was not until her twenty-second or twenty-third year that her Spiritualistic education began, and then, according to M. Flammarion, it was directed by an ardent Spiritualist, Signor Damiani.

In connexion with this period Eusapia relates a singular incident. At Naples an English lady who had become the wife of Signor Damiani was told at a table séance by a spirit, giving the name of John King, to seek out a woman named Eusapia, the street and the number of the house being specified. He said she was a powerful medium through whom he intended to manifest. Madame Damiani went to the address indicated and found Eusapia Palladino, of whom she had not previously heard. The two women held a séance and John King controlled the medium, whose guide or control he continued ever after to be.

Her first introduction to the European scientific world came through Professor Chiaia, of Naples, who in 1888 published in a journal issued in Rome a letter to Professor Lombroso, detailing his experiences and inviting this celebrated alienist to investigate the medium for himself. It was not until 1891 that Lombroso accepted this invitation, and in February of that year he had two sittings with Eusapia in Naples. He was converted, and wrote: "I am filled with confusion and regret that I combated with so much persistence the possibility of the facts called Spiritualistic." His conversion led many important scientific men in Europe to investigate, and from now onward Madame Palladino was kept busy for many years with test sittings.

Lombroso's Naples sittings in 1891 were followed by the Milan Commission in 1892, which included Professor Schiaparelli, Director of the Observatory of Milan; Professor Gerosa, Chair of Physics; Ermacora, Doctor of Natural Philosophy; M. Aksakof, Councillor of State to the Emperor of Russia; Charles du Prel, Doctor of Philosophy in Munich; and Professor Charles Richet, of the University of Paris. Seventeen sittings were held. Then came investigations in Naples in 1893; in Rome, 1893-4; in Warsaw, and France, in 1894 – the latter under the direction of Professor Richet, Sir Oliver Lodge, Mr. F.W.H. Myers, and Dr. Ochorowicz; in 1895 at Naples; and in the same year in England, at Cambridge, in the house of Mr. F.W.H. Myers, in the presence of Professor and Mrs. Sidgwick, Sir Oliver Lodge and Dr. Richard

Hodgson. They were continued in 1895 in France at the house of Colonel de Rochas; in 1896 at Tremezzo, at Auteuil, and at Choisy Yvrac; in 1897 at Naples, Rome, Paris, Montfort, and Bordeaux; in Paris in November, 1898, in the presence of a scientific committee composed of MM. Flammarion, Charles Richet, A. de Rochas, Victorien Sardou, Jules Claretie, Adolphe Bisson, G. Delanne, G. de Fontenay, and others; also in 1901 at the Minerva Club in Geneva, in the presence of Professors Porro, Morselli, Bozzano, Venzano, Lombroso, Vassalo, and others. There were many other experimental sittings with scientific men, both in Europe and in America.

Professor Chiaia, in his letter to Professor Lombroso already referred to, gave this picturesque description of the phenomena occurring with Eusapia. He invited him to observe a special case which he considers worthy of the serious attention of the mind of a Lombroso, and continues:

The case I allude to is that of an invalid woman who belongs to the humblest class of society. She is nearly thirty years old and very ignorant; her look is neither fascinating nor endowed with the power which modern criminologists call irresistible; but when she wishes, be it by day or by night, she can divert a curious group for an hour or so with the most surprising phenomena. Either bound to a seat or firmly held by the hands of the curious, she attracts to her the articles of furniture which surround her, lifts them up, holds them suspended in the air like Mahomet's coffin, and makes them come down again with undulatory movements, as if they were obeying her will. She increases their weight or lessens it according to her pleasure. She raps or taps upon the walls, the ceiling, the floor, with fine rhythm and cadence. In response to the requests of the spectators, something like flashes of electricity shoot forth from her body, and envelop her or enwrap the spectators of these marvellous scenes. She draws upon cards that you hold out, everything that you want—figures, signatures, numbers, sentences—by just stretching out her hand toward the indicated place.

If you place in the corner of the room a vessel containing a layer of soft clay, you find after some moments the imprint in it of a small or a large hand, the image of a face (front view or profile) from which a plaster cast can be taken. In this way portraits of a face taken at different angles have been preserved, and those who desire so to do can thus make serious and important studies.

This woman rises in the air, no matter what bands tie her down. She seems to be upon the empty air, as on a couch, contrary to all the laws of gravity; she plays on musical instruments—organs, bells, tambourines – as if they had been touched by her hands or moved by the breath of invisible gnomes. This woman at times can increase her stature by more than four inches.

Professor Lombroso, as we have seen, was interested enough by this graphic account to investigate, with the result that he was converted. The Milan Committee (1892), the next to experiment, say in their report:

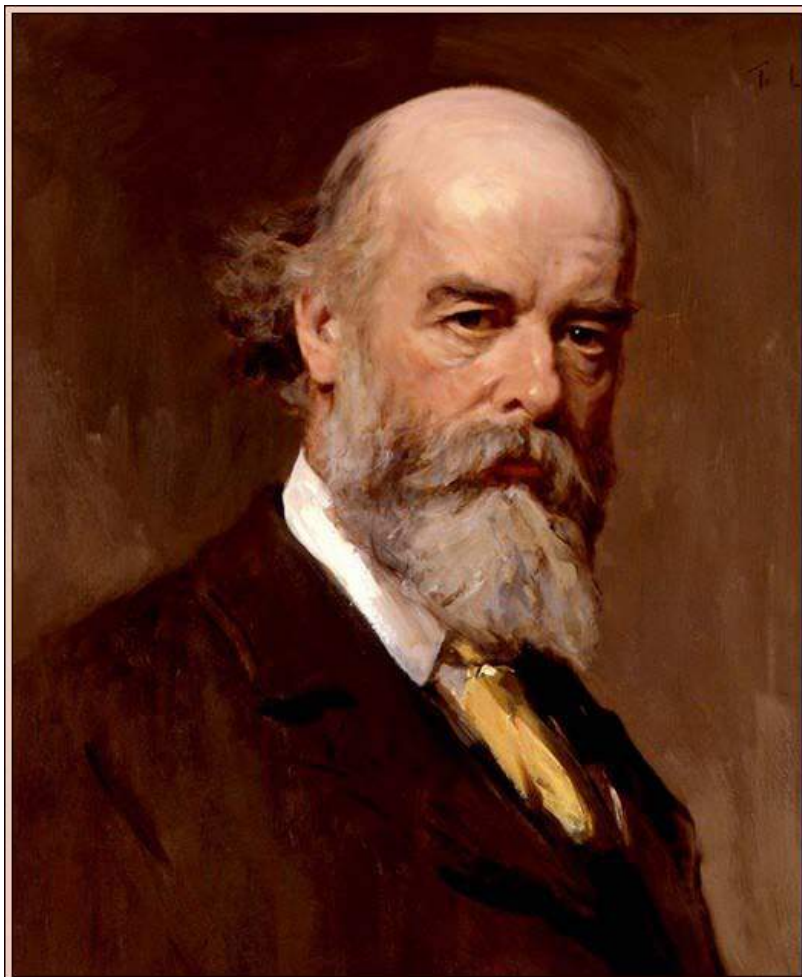
It is impossible to count the number of times that a hand appeared and was touched by one of us. Suffice it to say that doubt was no longer possible. It was indeed a living human hand which we saw and touched, while at the same time the bust and arms of the medium remained visible, and her hands were held by those on either side of her.

Many phenomena occurred in the light supplied by two candles and an oil-lamp, and the same occurrences were witnessed in full light when the medium was in trance. Dr. Ochorowicz persuaded Eusapia to visit Warsaw in 1894., and the experiments there were in the presence of men and women eminent in scientific and philosophical circles. The record of these sittings says that partial and complete levitations of the table and many other physical phenomena were obtained. These levitations occurred while both the medium's feet were visible in the light, and when her feet were tied and held by a sitter kneeling under the table.

After the sittings at Professor Richet's house on the Ile Roubaud in 1894, Sir Oliver Lodge in the course of his report to the English Society for Psychical Research said:

However the facts are to be explained, the possibility of the facts I am constrained to admit. There is no further room in my mind for doubt. Any person without invincible prejudice who had had the same experience would have come to the same broad conclusion, viz.: that things hitherto held impossible do actually occur. The result of my experience is to convince me that certain phenomena usually considered abnormal do belong to the order of nature, and, as a corollary from this, that these phenomena ought to be

*investigated and recorded by persons and societies interested in natural knowledge.*¹



Sir Oliver Lodge.

At the meeting at which Sir Oliver Lodge's report was read, Sir William Crookes drew attention to the resemblance of the phenomena occurring with Eusapia to those that happened in the presence of D.D. Home. Sir Oliver Lodge's report was adversely criticized by Dr. Richard Hodgson, then absent in the United States, and as a consequence Eusapia Palladino and Dr. Hodgson were invited to England, and a series of sittings were held at Cambridge at the house of Mr. F.W.H. Myers in August and September,

¹ *Journal Of The S.P.R.*, Vol. VI, Nov. 1894., pp. 334, 360.

1895. These "Cambridge Experiments," as they were called, were for the most part unsuccessful, and it was claimed that the medium was repeatedly detected in fraud. A great deal has been written on both sides in the acute controversy that followed. It is enough to say that competent observers refused to accept this verdict on Eusapia, and that they roundly condemned the methods adopted by the Cambridge group of experimenters.

It is interesting to recall that an American reporter, on the occasion of Eusapia's visit to his country in 1910, bluntly asked the medium if she had ever been caught tricking. Here is Eusapia's frank reply: "Many times I have been told so. You see, it is like this. Some people are at the table who expect tricks—in fact, they want them. I am in a trance. Nothing happens. They get impatient. They think of the tricks—nothing but tricks. They put their mind on the tricks, and—I—and I automatically respond. But it is not often. They merely will me to do them. That is all." This sounds like Eusapia's ingenious adoption of a defence she has heard others make on her behalf. At the same time it has no doubt an element of truth in it, the psychological side of mediumship being little understood.

Two important observations may be made in this connexion. First, as Dr. Hereward Carrington pointed out, various experiments conducted with the object of duplicating the phenomena by fraudulent means resulted in complete failure in almost every case. Second, that the Cambridge sitters were apparently entirely ignorant of the existence and operation of what may be called the "ectoplasmic limb," a phenomenon observed in the case of Slade and other mediums. Carrington says: "All the objections Mrs. Sidgwick raises might be met if we could suppose that Eusapia materializes for the time being a third arm, which produces these phenomena, and which recedes into her body at the conclusion of a phenomenon." Now, strange as it may appear, this is just the conclusion to which abundant evidence points. As early as 1894. Sir Oliver Lodge saw what he describes as an "appearance as of extra limbs," continuous with Eusapia's body or very close to it. With that assurance which ignorance so often assumes, the editorial comment in the *Journal Of The Society for Psychical Research*, wherein Sir Oliver's account was printed, says: "It is hardly necessary to remark that the continuity of the

'spirit' limbs with the body of the medium is *prima facie* a circumstance strongly suggestive of fraud."

But later scientific investigators amply confirm Sir Oliver Lodge's surmise. Professor Bottazzi states:

Another time, later on, the same hand was placed on my right forearm, without squeezing it. On this occasion I not only carried my left hand to the spot, but I looked, so I could see and feel at the same time: I saw a human hand, of natural colour, and I felt with mine the fingers and the back of a lukewarm, nervous, rough hand. The hand dissolved, and (I saw it with my eyes) retreated as if into Madame Palladino's body, describing a curve. I confess that I felt some doubt as to whether Eusapia's left hand had freed itself from my right hand, to reach my forearm, but at the same instant I was able to prove to myself that the doubt was groundless, because our two hands were still in contact in the ordinary way. If all the observed phenomena of the seven séances were to disappear from my memory, this one I could never forget.

Professor Galeotti, in July, 1907, plainly saw what he called the doubling of the left arm of the medium. He exclaimed: "Look, I see two left arms, identical in appearance! One is on the little table, and it is that which M. Bottazzi touches, and the other seems to come out of her shoulder—to approach her, and touch her, and then return and melt into her body again. This is not an hallucination." At a séance in July, 1905, at the house of M. Berisso, when Eusapia's hands were thoroughly controlled and visible to all, Dr. Venzano and others present "distinctly saw a hand and an arm covered by a dark sleeve issue from the front and upper part of the right shoulder of the medium." Much similar testimony might be given.

Towards a study of the complexities of mediumship, especially with Eusapia, the following case is deserving of serious attention. In a sitting with Professor Morselli, Eusapia had been detected liberating her hand from the professor's grasp and stretching it out to reach a trumpet which was on the table. She was prevented, however, from doing this. The report then says:

At this moment, while the control was certainly more rigorous than ever, the trumpet was raised from the table and disappeared into the cabinet, passing

between the medium and Dr. Morselli. Evidently the medium had attempted to do with her hand what she subsequently did mediumistically. Such a futile and foolish attempt at fraud is inexplicable. There is no doubt about the matter; this time the medium did not touch, and could not touch, the trumpet; and even if she could have touched it she could not have conveyed it into the cabinet, which was behind her back.

It may be mentioned that a corner of the room was curtained off to form what is called a "cabinet" (i.e. an enclosure to gather "power") and that Eusapia, unlike most other mediums, sat outside it, about a foot distant from the curtains behind her.

The Society for Psychical Research in 1895 had decided that Eusapia's phenomena were all fraudulent, and would have no more to do with her. But on the Continent of Europe group after group of scientific inquirers, adopting the most rigorous precautions, endorsed Eusapia's powers. Then in 1908 the Society for Psychical Research decided to investigate this medium once more. It nominated three of its most capable sceptics. One, Mr. W. W. Baggally, a member of the Council, had been investigating psychic phenomena for more than thirty-five years, and during that time—with the exception, perhaps, of a few incidents at a séance with Eusapia a few years before—had never witnessed a single genuine physical phenomenon. "Throughout his investigations he had invariably detected fraud, and nothing but fraud." Also, he was an expert conjurer. Mr. Everard Feilding, the honorary secretary of the society, had been investigating for some ten years, but "during all that time he had never seen one physical phenomenon which appeared to him to be conclusively proved," unless, again, perhaps in the case of a séance with Eusapia. Dr. Hereward Carrington, the third of the nominees, though he had attended countless séances, could say, until he sat with Eusapia, "I had never seen one single manifestation of the physical order which I could consider genuine."

At first blush this record of the three investigators seems like a crushing blow to the assumptions of the Spiritualists. But in the investigation of Eusapia Palladino this trio of sceptics met their Waterloo. The full story of their long and patient research of this medium at Naples will be found in Dr.

Hereward Carrington's book, "Eusapia Palladino and Her Phenomena" (1909).

As evidence of the careful investigation of scientific investigators on the Continent, we may mention that Professor Morselli noted no fewer than thirty nine distinct types of phenomena occurring with Eusapia Palladino.

The following incidents may be mentioned because they can well be classed under the heading "Foolproof." Of a séance in Rome in 1894, in the presence of Professor Richet, Dr. Schrenck Notzing, Professor Lombroso, and others, the report says:

Hoping to obtain the movement of an object without contact, we placed a little piece of paper folded in the form of the letter "A" under a glass, and upon a disc of light pasteboard. Not being successful in this, we did not wish to fatigue the medium, and we left the apparatus upon the large table; then we took our places around the little table, after having carefully shut all the doors, the keys of which I begged my guests to put in their pockets, in order that we might not be accused of not having taken all necessary precautions.

The light was extinguished. Soon we heard the glass resound on our table, and having procured a light, we found it in the midst of us, in the same position, upside down, and covering the little piece of paper; only the cardboard disc was wanting. We sought for it in vain. The séance ended. I conducted my guests once more into the antechamber. M. Richet was the first to open the door—well bolted on the inside. What was not his surprise when he perceived near to the threshold of the door, on the other side of it, upon the staircase, the disc that we had sought for so long! He picked it up, and it was identified by all as the card placed under the glass.

A strong objective proof worth recording is the fact that M. de Fontenay photographed various hands appearing over Eusapia's head, and in one photograph the medium's hands can be seen to be securely held by the investigators. Reproductions of these photographs are given in the "Annals of Psychical Science" (April, 1908, p. 181 et seq.).

At the sixth and last séance of the series at Genoa with Professor Morselli in 1906-7, an effective test was devised. The medium was tied to the couch

with a thick, broad band, of the kind used in asylums to fasten down maniacs, and capable of being tied very tightly without cutting the flesh. Morselli, with experience as an alienist, performed the operation, and also secured the wrists and ankles. After a red electric lamp of ten-candle power had been lighted, the table, which was free from all contact, moved from time to time, small lights were seen and a hand. At one stage the curtains in front of the cabinet opened, giving a view of the medium lying securely bound. "The phenomena," says an account, "were inexplicable considering that the position rendered movement on her part impossible."

Here, in conclusion, are two accounts, out of many, of convincing materializations. The first is related by Dr. Joseph Venzano in the "Annals of Psychological Science" (Vol. VI, p. 164., September, 1907). Light was provided by a candle, enabling the figure of the medium to be seen:

In spite of the dimness of the light I could distinctly see Madame Palladino and my fellow sitters. Suddenly I perceived that behind me was a form, fairly tall, which was leaning its head on my left shoulder and sobbing violently, so that those present could hear the sobs: it kissed me repeatedly. I clearly perceived the outlines of this face, which touched my own, and I felt the very fine and abundant hair in contact with my left cheek, so that I could be quite sure that it was a woman. The table then began to move, and by typtology gave the name of a close family connexion who was known to no one present except myself. She had died some time before, and on account of incompatibility of temperament there had been serious disagreements with her. I was so far from expecting this typtological response that I at first thought this was a case of coincidence of name, but while I was mentally forming this reflection I felt a mouth, with warm breath, touch my left ear and whisper, in a low voice in Genoese dialect, a succession of sentences, the murmur of which was audible to the sitters. These sentences were broken by bursts of weeping, and their gist was repeatedly to implore pardon for injuries done to me, with a fullness of detail connected with family affairs which could only be known to the person in question. The phenomenon seemed so real that I felt compelled to reply to the excuses offered me with expressions of affection, and to ask pardon in my turn if any resentment of the wrongs referred to had been excessive. But I had scarcely uttered the first syllables when two hands, with

exquisite delicacy, applied themselves to my lips and prevented my continuing. The form then said to me, "Thank you," embraced me, kissed me, and disappeared.

With other mediums there have been finer materializations than this one, and in better light, but in this case there was internal, mental evidence of identity.

The last example we shall give occurred in Paris, in 1898, at a sitting at which M. Flammarion was present, when M. Le Bocain addressed a materialized spirit in Arabic, saying: "If it is really thou, Rosalie, who art in the midst of us, pull the hair on the back of my head three times in succession." About ten minutes later, and when M. Le Bocain had almost completely forgotten his request, he felt his hair pulled three separate times, just as he had desired. He says: "I certify this fact, which, besides, formed for me a most convincing proof of the presence of a familiar spirit close about us." He adds that it is hardly necessary to say that Eusapia knows no Arabic.

Opponents and a section of psychic researchers contend that the evidence for phenomena occurring at séances is of little value because the usual observers have no knowledge of the resources of conjurers. In New York in 1910 Dr. Hereward Carrington took with him to a séance given by Eusapia, Mr. Howard Thurston, whom he describes as the most noted magician in America. Mr. Thurston who, with his assistant, controlled the hands and feet of the medium in a good light, wrote:

I witnessed in person the table levitations of Madame Eusapia Palladino and am thoroughly convinced that the phenomena I saw were not due to fraud and were not performed by the aid of her feet, knees, or hands.

He offered to give a thousand dollars to a charitable institution if it could be proved that this medium could not levitate the table without resort to trickery or fraud.

It will be asked what has been the outcome of all the years of investigation conducted with this medium. A number of scientists holding with Sir David Brewster that "Spirit" is the last thing they will give in to have invented ingenious hypotheses to account for the phenomena, of the genuine nature

of which they are fully convinced. Colonel de Rochas tried to explain them by what he called "exteriorization of motivity." M. de Fontenay spoke of a dynamic theory of matter; others believe in "ectenic force" and "collective consciousness," and the action of the subconscious mind, but those cases, well authenticated, where the operation of an independent intelligence is clearly shown, make these attempted explanations untenable. Various experimenters were forced to adopt the Spiritualist hypothesis as the only one that explained all the facts in a reasonable way. Dr. Venzano says:

In the greater number of the materialized forms perceived by us either by sight, contact, or hearing, we were able to recognize points of resemblance to deceased persons, generally our relatives, unknown to the medium and known only to those present who were concerned with the phenomena.

Dr. Hereward Carrington speaks with no uncertain voice. Regarding Mrs. Sidgwick's opinion that it is useless to speculate whether the phenomena are Spiritualistic in character, or whether they represent "some unknown biological law," until the facts themselves have been established, he says: "I must say that before I obtained my sittings I, too, took Mrs. Sidgwick's view." And he continues: "My own sittings convinced me finally and conclusively that genuine phenomena do occur, and, that being the case, the question of their interpretation naturally looms before me. I think that not only is the Spiritualistic hypothesis justified as a working theory, but it is, in fact, the only one capable of rationally explaining the facts."²

The mediumship of Eusapia Palladino, as we said at the outset, was similar to that of others, but she had the advantage of enlisting the attention of men of influence whose published accounts of her phenomena have had a weight not given to the utterances of less well-known people. Lombroso in particular has recorded his convictions in his well-known book, "After Death – What?" (1909). Eusapia was the means of demonstrating the reality of certain facts not accepted by orthodox science. It is easier for the world to deny these facts than to explain them, and that is the course usually adopted.

² *Eusapia Palladino and Her Phenomena*, by Hereward Carrington Ph.D., pp. 250-1.

Those who try to explain away all Eusapia's mediumship by alluding to her superficial habit of playing conscious or unconscious tricks upon the sitters are simply deceiving themselves. That such tricks are played is beyond all question. Lombroso, who entirely endorses the validity of her mediumship, describes the tricks thus:

Many are the crafty tricks she plays, both in the state of trance (unconsciously) and out of it—for example, freeing one of her two hands, held by the controllers, for the sake of moving objects near her; making touches; slowly lifting the legs of the table by means of one of her knees and one of her feet; and feigning to adjust her hair and then slyly pulling out one hair and putting it over the little balance tray of a letter-weigher in order to lower it. She was seen by Faifofer, before her séances, furtively gathering flowers in a garden, that she might feign them to be "apports" by availing herself of the shrouding dark of the room. And yet her deepest grief is when she is accused of trickery during the séances —accused unjustly, too, sometimes, it must be confessed, because we are now sure that phantasmal limbs are superimposed (or added to) her own and act as their substitute, while all the time they were believed to be her own limbs detected in the act of cozening for their owner's behoof.

In her visit to America, which was late in life when her powers were at a low ebb, she was detected in these obvious tricks and offended her sitters to such an extent that they discarded her, but Howard Thurston, the famous conjurer, narrates that he determined to disregard these things and continued the sitting, with the result that he obtained an undoubted materialization. Another well-known sitter deposed that at the very moment when he was reproaching her for moving some object with her hand, another object, quite out of her reach, moved across the table. Her case is certainly a peculiar one, for it may be most truthfully said of her that no medium has ever more certainly been proved to have psychic powers, and no medium was ever more certainly a cheat upon occasions. Here, as always, it is the positive result which counts.

Eusapia had a peculiar depression of her parietal bone, due, it is said, to some accident in her childhood. Such physical defects are very often associated with strong mediumship. It is as if the bodily weakness caused what may be described as a dislocation of the soul, so that it is more

detached and capable of independent action. Thus Mrs. Piper's mediumship followed upon two internal operations, Home's went with the tubercular diathesis, and many other cases might be quoted. Her nature was hysterical, impetuous and wayward, but she possessed some beautiful traits.

Lombroso says of her that she had "a singular kindness of heart which leads her to lavish her gains upon the poor, and upon infants in order to relieve their misfortunes, and which impels her to feel boundless pity for the old and the weak, and to be awake at night thinking of them. The same goodness of heart drives her to protect animals that are being maltreated by sharply rebuking their cruel oppressors." This passage may be commended to the attention of those who think that psychic power savours of the devil.

CHAPTER 2. GREAT MEDIUMS FROM 1870 TO 1900: CHARLES H. FOSTER, MADAME D'ESPÉRANCE, WILLIAM EGLINTON, STANTON MOSES

THERE were many notable and some notorious mediums in the period from 1870 to 1900. Of these D.D. Home, Slade, and Monck have already been mentioned. Four others, whose names will live in the history of the movement, are the American, C. H. Foster, Madame d'Espérance, Eglinton, and the Rev. W. Stainton Moses. A short account of each of these will now be given.

Charles H. Foster is fortunate in having a biographer who was such an admirer that he called him "the greatest spiritual medium since Swedenborg." There is a tendency on the part of writers to exaggerate the claims of the particular sensitive with whom they have been brought in contact. None the less, Mr. George C. Bartlett in his "The Salem Seer" shows that he had close personal acquaintance with Foster, and that he really was a very remarkable medium. His fame was not confined to America, for he travelled widely and visited both Australia and Great Britain. In the latter country he made friends with Bulwer Lytton, visited Knebworth, and became the original of Margrave in "A Strange Story."

Foster seems to have been a clairvoyant of great power, and had the peculiar gift of being able to bring out the name or initials of the spirit which he described upon his own skin, usually upon his forearm. This phenomenon was so often repeated and so closely examined that there can be no possible doubt as to the fact. What may have been the cause of the fact is another matter. There were many points about Foster's mediumship which suggested an extended personality, rather than an outside intelligence. It is, for example, frankly incredible that the spirits of the great departed, such as Virgil, Camoens and Cervantes, should have been in attendance upon this unlearned New Englander, and yet we have Bartlett's authority for the fact, illustrated with many quotations, that he held conversations with such

entities, who were ready to quote the context in any stanza which might be selected out of their copious works.



Charles H. Foster. From a Photograph.

Such evidence of familiarity with literature far beyond the capacity of the medium bears some analogy to those book tests frequently carried out of late years, where a line from any volume in a library is readily quoted. They need not suggest the actual presence of the author of such a volume, but might rather depend upon some undefined power of the loosened etheric self of the medium, or possibly some other entity of the nature of a control who could swiftly gather information in some supernal fashion. Spiritualists have so overpowering a case that they need not claim all psychic

phenomena as having necessarily their face value, and the author confesses that he has frequently observed how much that has somewhere, some time, been placed on record in print or writing is conveyed back to us, though by no normal means could such print or writing be consulted at any time by the medium.

Foster's peculiar gift, by which initials were scrawled upon his flesh, had some comic results. Bartlett narrates how a Mr. Adams consulted Foster. "As he was leaving, Mr. Foster told him that in all his experience he had never known one individual to bring so many spirits the room being literally packed with them, coming and going. About two o'clock the next morning Mr. Foster called to me saying: 'George, will you please light the gas? I cannot sleep; the room is still filled with the Adams family, and they seem to me to be writing their names all over me.' And to my astonishment a list of names of the Adams family was displayed upon his body. I counted eleven distinct names; one was written across his forehead, others on his arms, and several on his back." Such anecdotes certainly give a handle to the scoffer, and yet we have much evidence that the sense of humour is intensified rather than dulled upon the Other Side.

The gift of blood-red letters upon Foster's skin would seem to compare closely with the well-known phenomenon of the stigmata appearing upon the hands and feet of devout worshippers. In the one case concentration of the individual's thoughts upon the one subject has had an objective result. In the other, it may be that the concentration from some invisible entity has had a similar effect. We must bear in mind that we are all spirits, whether we be in the body or out, and have the same powers in varying degree.

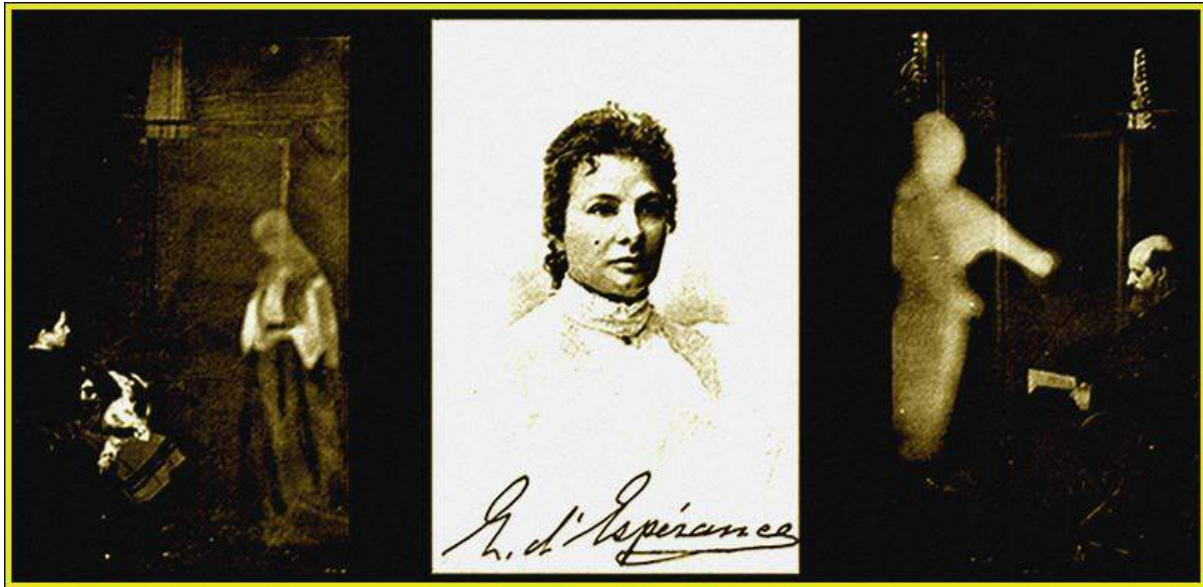
Foster's views as to his own profession seem to have been very contradictory, for he frequently declared, like Margaret Fox-Kane and the Davenports, that he would not undertake to say that his phenomena were due to spiritual beings, while, on the other hand, all his sittings were conducted on the clear assumption that they were so. Thus he would minutely describe the appearance of the spirit and give messages by name from it to the surviving relatives. Like D.D. Home, he was exceedingly critical of other mediums, and would not believe in the photographic powers of Mumler, though those powers were as well attested as his own. He seems

to have had in an exaggerated degree the volatile spirit of the typical medium, easily influenced for good or ill. His friend, who was clearly a close observer, says of him:

He was extravagantly dual. He was not only Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde, but he represented half a dozen different Jekylls and Hydes. He was strangely gifted, and on the other hand he was woefully deficient. He was an unbalanced genius, and at times, I should say, insane. He had a heart so large indeed that it took in the world; tears for the afflicted; money for the poor; the chords of his heart were touched by every sigh. At other times his heart shrunk up until it disappeared. He would become pouty, and with the petulance of a child would abuse his best friends. He wore out many of his friends, as an unbreakable horse does its owner. No harness fitted Foster. He was not vicious, but absolutely uncontrollable. He would go his own way, which way was often the wrong way. Like a child he seemed to have no forethought. He seemed to live for to-day, caring nothing for to-morrow. If it were possible, he did exactly as he wished to do, regardless of consequences. He would take no one's advice, simply because he could not. He seemed impervious to the opinions of others, and apparently yielded to every desire; but after all he did not abuse himself much, as he continued in perfect health until the final breaking up. When asked, "How is your health?" his favourite expression was, "Excellent. I am simply bursting with physical health." The same dual nature showed itself in his work. Some days he would sit at the table all day, and far into the night, under tremendous mental strain. He would do this day after day, and night after night. Then days and weeks would come when he would do absolutely nothing—turn hundreds of dollars away and disappoint the people, without any apparent reason, save he was in the mood for loafing.

Madame d'Espérance, whose real name was Mrs. Hope, was born in 1849 and her career extended over thirty years, her activities covering the Continent as well as Great Britain. She was first brought to the notice of the general public by T. P. Barkas, a well-known citizen of Newcastle. The medium at that time was a young girl of average middle-class education. When in semi-trance, however, she displayed to a marked degree that gift of wisdom and knowledge which St. Paul places at the head of his spiritual category. Barkas narrates how he prepared long lists of questions which

covered every branch of science and that the answers were rapidly written out by the medium, usually in English, but sometimes in German and even in Latin.



Elizabeth d'Espérance.

Mr. Barkas, in summing up these séances, says³:

It will be admitted by all that no one can by normal effort answer in detail critical and obscure questions in many difficult departments of science with which she is entirely unacquainted; it will further be admitted that no one can normally see and draw with minute accuracy in complete darkness; that no one can by any normal power of vision read the contents of closed letters in the dark; that no one who is entirely unacquainted with the German language can write with rapidity and accuracy long communications in German; and yet all these phenomena took place through this medium, and are as well accredited as are many of the ordinary occurrences of daily life.

³ Psychological Review, Vol. I, p. 224.

It must be admitted, however, that until we know the limits of the extended powers produced by a liberation or partial liberation of the etheric body, we cannot safely put down such manifestations to spirit intervention. They showed a remarkable personal psychic individuality and possibly nothing more.

But Madame d'Espérance's fame as a medium depends upon many gifts which were more undoubtedly Spiritualistic. We have a very full account of these from her own pen, for she wrote a book, called "Shadow Land," which may rank with A. J. Davis's "Magic Staff" and Turvey's "The Beginnings of Seership," as among the most remarkable psychic autobiographies in our literature. One cannot read it without being impressed by the good feeling and honesty of the writer.

In it she narrates, as other great sensitives have done, how in her early childhood she would play with spirit children who were as real to her as the living. This power of clairvoyance remained with her through life, but the rarer gift of materialization was added to it. The book already quoted contained photographs of Yolande, a beautiful Arab girl, who was to this medium what Katie King was to Florence Cook. Not unfrequently she was materialized when Madame d'Espérance was seated outside the cabinet in full view of the sitters. The medium thus could see her own strange emanation, so intimate and yet so distinct. The following is her own description:

Her thin draperies allowed the rich olive tint of her neck, shoulders, arms and ankles to be plainly visible. The long black waving hair hung over her shoulders to below her waist and was confined by a small turban-shaped head-dress. Her features were small, straight and piquant; the eyes were dark, large and lively; her every movement was as full of grace as those of a young child, or, as it struck me then when I saw her standing half shyly, half boldly, between the curtains, like a young roe-deer.

In describing her sensations during a séance, Madame d'Espérance speaks of feeling as if spiders' webs were woven about her face and hands. If a little light penetrated between the curtains of the cabinet she saw a white, misty mass floating about like steam from a locomotive, and out of this was

evolved a human form. A feeling of emptiness began as soon as what she calls the spider's web material was present, with loss of control of her limbs.

The Hon. Alexander Aksakof, of St. Petersburg, a well-known psychical researcher and editor of *Psychische Studien*, has described in his book, "A Case of Partial Dematerialization," an extraordinary séance at which this medium's body was partly dissolved. Commenting on this, he observes: "The frequently noted fact of the resemblance of the materialized form to that of the medium here finds its natural explanation. As that form is only a duplication of the medium, it is natural that it should have all her features."

This may, as Aksakof says, be natural, but it is equally natural that it should provoke the ridicule of the sceptic. A larger experience, however, would convince him that the Russian scientist is right. The author has sat at materializing séances where he has seen the duplicates of the medium's face so clearly before him that he has been ready to denounce the proceedings as fraudulent, but with patience and a greater accumulation of power he has seen later the development of other faces which could by no possible stretch of imagination be turned into the medium's. In some cases it has seemed to him that the invisible powers (who often produce their effects with little regard for the misconstructions which may arise from them) have used the actual physical face of the unconscious medium and have adorned it with ectoplasmic appendages in order to transform it. In other cases one could believe that the etheric double of the medium has been the basis of the new creation. So it was sometimes with Katie King, who occasionally closely resembled Florence Cook in feature even when she differed utterly in stature and in colouring. On other occasions the materialized figure is absolutely different. The author has observed all three phases of spirit construction in the case of the American medium, Miss Ada Besinnet, whose ectoplasmic figure sometimes took the shape of a muscular and well-developed Indian. The story of Madame d'Espérance corresponds closely with these varieties of power.

Mr. William Oxley, the compiler and publisher of that remarkable work in five volumes entitled "Angelic Revelations," has given an account of twenty-seven roses being produced at a séance by Yolande, the materialized figure, and of the materialization of a rare plant in flower. Mr. Oxley writes:

I had the plant (ixora crocata) photographed next morning, and afterwards brought it home and placed it in my conservatory under the gardener's care. It lived for three months, when it shrivelled up. I kept the leaves, giving most of them away except the flower and the three top leaves which the gardener cut off when he took charge of the plant.

At a séance on June 28, 1890, in the presence of M. Aksakof and Professor Butlerof, of St. Petersburg, a golden lily, seven feet high, is said to have been materialized. It was kept for a week and during that time six photographs of it were taken, after which it dissolved and disappeared. A photograph of it appears in "Shadow Land" (facing p. 328)

A feminine form, somewhat taller than the medium, and known by the name of Y-Ay-Ali, excited the utmost admiration. Mr. Oxley says: "I have seen many materialized spirit forms, but for perfection of symmetry in figure and beauty of countenance I have seen none like unto that." The figure gave him the plant which had been materialized, and then drew back her veil. She implanted a kiss on his hand and held out her own, which he kissed.

"As she was in the light rays, I had a good view of her face and hands. The countenance was beautiful to gaze upon, and the hands were soft, warm, and perfectly natural, and, but for what followed, I could have thought I held the hand of a permanent embodied lady, so perfectly natural, yet so exquisitely beautiful and pure."

He goes on to relate how she retired to within two feet of the medium in the cabinet, and in sight of all "gradually dematerialized by melting away from the feet upwards, until the head only appeared above the floor, and then this grew less and less until a white spot only remained, which, continuing for a moment or two, disappeared."

At the same séance an infant form materialized and placed three fingers of its tiny hand in Mr. Oxley's. Mr. Oxley afterwards took its hand in his and kissed it. This occurred in August, 1880.

Mr. Oxley records a very interesting experience of high evidential value. While Yolande, the Arab girl, was speaking to a lady sitter, "the top part of her white drapery fell of and revealed her form. I noticed that the form was

imperfect, as the bust was undeveloped and the waist uncontracted, which was a test that the form was not a lay figure." He might have added, nor that of the medium.

Writing on "How a Medium Feels During Materializations," Madame d'Espérance throws some light on the curious sympathy constantly seen to exist between the medium and the spirit form. Describing a séance at which she sat outside the cabinet, she says⁴:

And now, another small and delicate form appears, with its little arms stretched out. Someone at the far end of the circle rises, approaches it, and they embrace. I hear inarticulate cries, "Anna, oh, Anna, my child, my dear child!" Then another person rises and throws her arms around the spirit; whereupon I hear sobs and exclamations, mingled with benedictions. I feel my body moved from side to side; everything grows dark before my eyes. I feel someone's arms around my shoulders; someone's heart beats against my bosom. I feel that something happens. No one is near me; no one pays the slightest attention to me. Every eye is fixed upon that little figure, white and slender, in the arms of the two women in mourning.

It must be my heart that I hear beating so distinctly, yet, surely, someone's arms are around me; never have I felt an embrace more plainly. I begin to wonder. Who am I? Am I the apparition in white, or am I that which remains seated in the chair? Are those my arms around the neck of the elder woman? Or are those mine which lie before me on my lap? Am I the phantom, and if so, what shall I call the being in the chair?

Surely, my lips are kissed; my cheeks are moist with the tears so plentifully shed by the two women. But how can that be? This feeling of doubt as to one's own identity is fearful. I wish to extend one of the hands lying in my lap. I cannot do so. I wish to touch someone so as to make perfectly certain whether I am I, or only a dream; whether Anna is I, and if I am, in some sort, lost in her identity.

⁴ Medium And Daybreak, 1893, p. 46.

While the medium is in this state of distracted doubt another little spirit child who had materialized comes and slips her hands into those of Madame d'Espérance.

How happy I am to feel the touch, even of a little child. My doubts, as to who and where I am, are gone. And while I am experiencing all this, the white form of Anna disappears in the cabinet and the two women return to their places, tearful, shaken with emotion, but intensely happy.

It is not surprising to learn that when a sitter at one of Madame d'Espérance's séances seized the materialized figure, he declared it to be the medium herself. In this connexion Aksakof's views⁵ on the general question are of interest:

One may seize the materialized form, and hold it, and assure himself that he holds nothing except the medium herself, in flesh and bone; and it is not yet a proof of fraud on the medium's part. In fact, according to our hypothesis, what could happen if we detain the medium's double by force, when it is materialized to such a degree that nothing but an invisible simulacre of the medium remains in the seat behind the curtain? It is obvious that the simulacre—that small portion, fluid and ethereal—will be immediately absorbed into the already compactly materialized form, which lacks nothing (of being the medium) but that invisible remainder.

M. Aksakof, in the Introduction he has written for Madame d'Espérance's book, "Shadow Land," pays a high tribute to her as a woman and as a medium. He says she was as interested as himself in trying to find the truth. She submitted willingly to all the tests he imposed.

One interesting incident in the career of Madame d'Espérance was that she succeeded in reconciling Professor Friese, of Breslau, to Professor Zollner, of Leipzig. The alienation of these two friends had occurred on account of Zollner's profession of Spiritualism, but the English medium was able to give such proofs to Friese that he no longer contested his friend's conclusions.

It should be remarked that in the course of Mr. Oxley's experiments with Madame d'Espérance moulds were taken of the hands and feet of the

⁵ A Case Of Partial Dematerialization, p. 181.

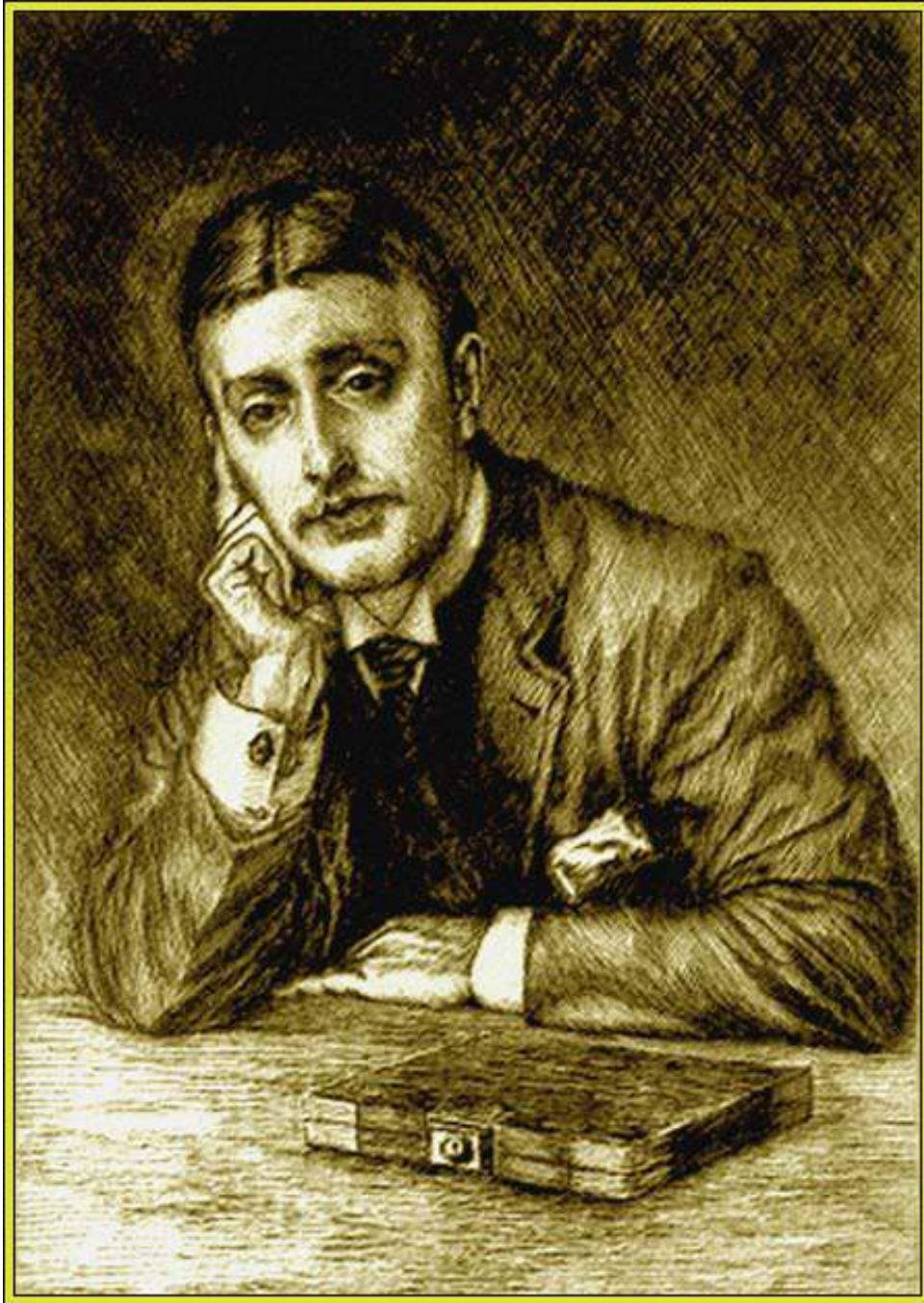
materialized figures, with wrist and ankle apertures which were too narrow to allow the withdrawal of the limb in any way, save by dematerialization. In view of the great interest excited by the paraffin moulds taken in 1922 in Paris from the medium Kluski, it is curious to reflect that the same experiment had been successfully carried out, unnoticed save by the psychic Press, by this Manchester student so far back as 1876.

The latter part of Madame d'Espérance's life, which was spent largely in Scandinavia, was marred by ill health, which was originally induced by the shock that she sustained at the so-called "exposure" when Yolande was seized by some injudicious researcher at Helsingfors in 1893. No one has expressed more clearly than she how much sensitives suffer from the ignorance of the world around them. In the last chapter of her remarkable book she deals with the subject. She concludes: "They who come after me may perchance suffer as I have done through ignorance of God's laws. Yet the world is wiser than it was, and it may be that they who take up the work in the next generation will not have to fight, as I did, the narrow bigotry and harsh judgments of the 'unco' guid'."

* * * * *

EACH of the mediums treated in this chapter has had one or more books devoted to his or her career. In the case of William Eglinton there is a remarkable volume, "'Twixt Two Worlds," by J. S. Farmer, which covers most of his activities.

Eglinton was born at Islington on July 10, 1857, and, after a brief period at school, entered the printing and publishing business of a relative. As a boy he was extremely imaginative, as well as dreamy and sensitive, but, unlike so many other great mediums, he showed in his boyhood no sign of possessing any psychic powers. In 1874, when he was seventeen years of age, Eglinton entered the family circle by means of which his father was investigating the alleged phenomena of Spiritualists. Up to that time the circle had obtained no results, but when the boy joined it the table rose steadily from the floor until the sitters had to stand to keep their hands on it. Questions were answered to the satisfaction of those present.



William Eglinton.

At the next sitting on the following evening, the boy passed into a trance, and evidential communications from his dead mother were received. In a few months his mediumship had developed, and stronger manifestations were forthcoming. His fame as a medium spread, and he received numerous requests for séances, but he resisted all efforts to induce him to become a professional medium. Finally, he had to adopt this course in 1875.

Eglinton thus describes his feelings before entering the séance room for the first time, and the change that came over him:

My manner, previous to doing so, was that of a boy full of fun; but as soon as I found myself in the presence of the "inquirers," a strange and mysterious feeling came over me, which I could not shake off. I sat down at the table, determined that if anything happened I would put a stop to it. Something did happen, but I was powerless to prevent it. The table began to show signs of life and vigour; it suddenly rose off the ground and steadily raised itself in the air, until we had to stand to reach it. This was in full gaslight. It afterwards answered, intelligently, questions which were put to it, and gave a number of test communications to persons present.

The next evening saw us eagerly sitting for further manifestations, and with a larger circle, for the news had got widely spread that we had "seen ghosts and talked to them," together with similar reports.

After we had read the customary prayer, I seemed to be no longer of this earth. A most ecstatic feeling came over me, and I presently passed into a trance. All my friends were novices in the matter, and tried various means to restore me, but without result. At the end of half an hour I returned to consciousness, feeling a strong desire to relapse into the former condition. We had communications which proved conclusively, to my mind, that the spirit of my mother had really returned to us. I then began to realize how mistaken — how utterly empty and unspiritual—had been my past life, and I felt a pleasure indescribable in knowing, beyond a doubt, that those who had passed from earth could return again, and prove the immortality of the soul. In the quietness of our family circle we enjoyed to the full extent our communion with the departed, and many are the happy hours I have spent in this way.

In two respects his work resembles that of D.D. Home. His séances were usually held in the light, and he always agreed willingly to any proposed tests. A further strong point of similarity was the fact that his results were observed and recorded by many eminent men and by good critical witnesses.

Eglinton, like Home, travelled a great deal, and his mediumship was witnessed in many places. In 1878 he sailed for South Africa. The following

year he visited Sweden, Denmark, and Germany. In February, 1880, he went to Cambridge University and held sittings under the auspices of the Psychological Society. In March he journeyed to Holland, thence proceeding to Leipzig, where he gave sittings to Professor Zollner and others connected with the University. Dresden and Prague followed, and in Vienna in April over thirty séances were held which were attended by many members of the aristocracy. In Vienna he was the guest of Baron Hellenbach, the well-known author, who in his book, "Prejudices of Mankind," has described the phenomena that occurred there. After returning to England, he sailed for America on February 12, 1881, remaining there about three months. In November of the same year he went to India, and after holding numerous séances in Calcutta, returned in April, 1882. In 1883 he again visited Paris, and in 1885 was in Vienna and Paris. He subsequently visited Venice, which he described as "a veritable hotbed of Spiritualism."

In Paris, in 1885, Eglinton met M. Tissot, the famous artist, who sat with him and subsequently visited him in England. A remarkable materializing séance at which two figures were plainly seen, and one, a lady, was recognized as a relation, has been immortalized by Tissot in a mezzotint entitled "Apparition Medianimique." This beautiful, artistic production, a copy of which hangs at the offices of the London Spiritualist Alliance, shows the two figures illuminated by spirit lights which they are carrying in their hands. Tissot also executed a portrait etching of the medium, and this is to be found as the frontispiece to Mr. Farmer's book, "'Twixt Two Worlds."

A typical example of his early physical mediumship is described⁶ by Miss Kislingbury and Dr. Carter Blake (Lecturer in Anatomy at Westminster Hospital):

Mr. Eglinton's coat-sleeves were sewn together behind his back near the wrist with strong white cotton; the tying committee then bound him in his chair, passing the tape round his neck, and placed him close behind the curtain (of the cabinet) facing the company, with his knees and feet in sight. A small round table with various objects upon it was placed before the medium outside the cabinet and in view of the sitters; the little stringed instrument

⁶ *The Spiritualist*, May 12, 1876, p. 221.

known as the Oxford Chimes was laid inverted across his knees, and a book and a hand-bell were placed upon it. In a few moments the strings were played upon, though no visible hand was touching them, the book, the front of which was turned towards the sitters, opened and shut (this was repeated a great number of times, so that all present saw the experiment unmistakably), and the handbell was rung from within, that is, without being raised from the board. The musical box placed near the curtain, but fully in sight, was stopped and set going, while the lid remained shut. Fingers, and at times a whole hand, were now and then protruded through the curtain. An instant after one of these had appeared, Captain Rolleston was requested to thrust his arm through the curtain and ascertain whether the tying and sewing were as at first. He satisfied himself that they were, and the same testimony was given by another gentleman later on.

This was one of a series of experimental séances held under the auspices of the British National Association of Spiritualists, at their rooms, 38 Great Russell Street, London. Referring to these, *The Spiritualist* says⁷:

The test manifestations with Mr. Eglinton are of great value, not because other mediums may not obtain equally conclusive results, but because in his case they had been observed and recorded by good critical witnesses whose testimony will carry weight with the public.

At the beginning Eglinton's materializations were obtained in the moonlight, while all present sat round a table, and there was no cabinet. The medium, too, was usually conscious. He was induced to sit in the dark for manifestations by a friend who had been to a séance with a professional medium. Having thus started he was apparently obliged to continue, but stated that the results obtained were of a less spiritual character. A feature of his materializing séances was the fact that he sat among those present and that his hands were held. Under these conditions full-form materializations were seen in light which was sufficient for the recognition of those appearing.

In January, 1877, Eglinton gave a series of nonprofessional séances at the house, off Park Lane, of Mrs. Makdougall Gregory (widow of Professor

⁷ May 12, 1876.

Gregory, of Edinburgh). They were attended by Sir Patrick and Lady Colquhoun, Lord Borthwick, Lady Jenkinson, Rev. Maurice Davies, D.D., Lady Archibald Campbell, Sir William Fairfax, Lord and Lady Mount-Temple, General Brewster, Sir Garnet and Lady Wolseley, Lord and Lady Avonmore, Professor Blackie, and many others. Mr. W. Harrison (editor of *The Spiritualist*) describes one of these séances⁸:

Last Monday evening ten or twelve friends sat round a large circular table, with their hands joined, under which conditions Mr. W. Eglinton, the medium, was held on both sides. There were no other persons in the room than those seated at the table. An expiring fire gave a dim light, permitting only the outlines of objects to be visible. The medium sat at that part of the table which was nearest to the fire, consequently his back was to the light. A form, of the full proportions of a man, rose slowly from the floor to about the level of the edge of the table; it was about a foot behind the right elbow of the medium. The other nearest sitter was Mrs. Wiseman, of Orme Square, Bayswater. This form was covered with white drapery, but no features were visible. As it was close to the fire, it could be seen distinctly by those near it. It was observed by all who were so placed that the edge of the table or intervening sitters did not cut off the view of the form; thus it was observed by four or five persons altogether, and was not the result of subjective impressions. After rising to the level of the edge of the table, it sank downwards, and was no more seen, having apparently exhausted all the power. Mr. Eglinton was in a strange house and in evening dress. Altogether it was a test manifestation which could not have been produced by artificial means.

One sitting described by Mr. Dawson Rogers showed remarkable features. It was held on February 17, 1885, in the presence of fourteen sitters, under test conditions. Though an inner room was used as a cabinet, Mr. Eglinton did not stay there, but paced about among the sitters, who were arranged in horseshoe formation. A form materialized and passed round the room shaking hands with each one. Then the form approached Mr. Eglinton, who was partially supported from falling by Mr. Rogers, and, taking the medium by the shoulders, dragged him into the cabinet. Mr. Rogers says: "The form was that of a man taller by several inches and older than the medium. He

⁸ *The Spiritualist*, Feb. 23, 1877, p. 96.

was apparelled in a white flowing robe, and was full of life and animation, and at one time was fully ten feet away from the medium."

Particular interest attaches to that phase of his mediumship known as Psychography, or slate-writing. With regard to this there is an overwhelming mass of testimony. In view of the wonderful results he obtained it is worthy of note that he sat for over three years without receiving a scratch of writing. It was from the year 1884 that he concentrated his powers on this form of manifestation, which was considered to be most suited to beginners, especially as all the séances were held in the light. Eglinton, in refusing to give a séance for materialization to a party of inquirers who had had no experience of this phase, wrote giving the following reason for his action: "I hold that a medium is placed in a very responsible position, and that he has a right to satisfy, as far as he possibly can, those who come to him. Now, my experience, which is a varied one, leads me to the conclusion that no sceptic, however well-intentioned or honest, can be convinced by the conditions prevailing at a materialization séance, and the result is further scepticism on his part, and condemnation of the medium. It is different when there is a harmonious circle of Spiritualists who are advanced enough to witness such phenomena, and with whom I shall always be delighted to sit; but a neophyte must be prepared by other methods. If your friend cares to come to a slate-writing séance I shall be happy to arrange an hour, otherwise I must decline to sit, for the reasons stated above, and which must commend themselves to you as to all thinking Spiritualists."

In the case of Eglinton, it may be explained that common school slates were used (the sitter being at liberty to bring his own slates), and after being washed, a crumb of slate pencil was placed on the upper surface and the slate placed under the leaf of the table, pressed against it and held by the hand of the medium, whose thumb was visible on the upper surface of the table. Presently the sound of writing was heard, and on the signal of three taps being given, the slate was examined and found to contain a written message. In the same way two slates of the same size were used, bound tightly together with cord, and also what are known as box slates, to which a lock and key are attached. On many occasions writing was obtained on a

single slate resting on the upper surface of the table, with the pencil between it and the table.

Mr. Gladstone had a sitting with Eglinton on October 29, 1884, and expressed himself as very interested in what took place. When an account of this sitting appeared in *Light* it was copied by nearly all the leading papers throughout the country, and the movement gained considerably by this publicity. At the conclusion of the séance Mr. Gladstone is reported as saying: "I have always thought that scientific men run too much in a groove. They do noble work in their own special lines of research, but they are too often indisposed to give any attention to matters which seem to conflict with their established modes of thought. Indeed, they not infrequently attempt to deny that into which they have never inquired, not sufficiently realizing the fact that there may possibly be forces in nature of which they know nothing." Shortly afterwards Mr. Gladstone, while never professing himself to be a Spiritualist, showed his sustained interest in the subject by joining the Society for Psychical Research.

Eglinton did not escape the usual attacks. In June, 1886, Mrs. Sidgwick, wife of Professor Sidgwick, of Cambridge, one of the founders of the Society for Psychical Research, published an article in the *Journal Of The S.P.R.* entitled "Mr. Eglinton,"⁹ in which, after giving other people's descriptions from over forty séances for slate-writing with this medium, she says: "For myself, I have now no hesitation in attributing the performances to clever conjuring." She had no personal experience with Eglinton, but based her belief on the impossibility of maintaining continuous observation during the manifestations. In the columns of *Light* Eglinton invited testimony from sitters who were convinced of the genuineness of his mediumship, and in a later special supplement of the same journal a very large number responded, many of them being members and associates of the S.P.R. Dr. George Herschell, an experienced amateur conjurer of fourteen years' standing, furnished one of the many convincing replies to Mrs. Sidgwick.

The Society for Psychical Research also published minute accounts of the results obtained by Mr. S. J. Davey, who professed to obtain by trickery

⁹ June, 1886, pp. 282-324. 1886, p. 309.

similar and even more wonderful results in slate-writing than those occurring with Eglinton.¹⁰ Mr. C.C. Massey, barrister, a very competent and experienced observer, and a member of the S.P.R., embodied the views of many others when he wrote to Eglinton in reference to Mrs. Sidgwick's article:

I quite concur in what you say that she "adduces not one particle of evidence" in support of this most injurious judgment which is opposed to a great body of excellent testimony, only encountered by presumptions contrary, as it seems to me, to common sense and to all experience.

On the whole, Mrs. Sidgwick's rash attack on the medium had a good effect, because it called forth a volume of more or less expert testimony in favour of the genuineness of the manifestations occurring with him.

Eglinton, like so many other mediums for physical manifestations, had his "exposures." One of these was in Munich, where he had been engaged to give a series of twelve séances. Ten of these had proved very successful, but at the eleventh a mechanical frog was discovered in the room, and though the medium's hands were held, he was charged with fraud because the musical instruments, having been secretly blackened, black was afterwards found on him. Three months later a sitter confessed that he had brought the mechanical toy into the room. No explanation of the blackening was forthcoming, but the fact of the medium's hands being held should have been sufficient refutation.

A fuller knowledge since that time has shown us that physical phenomena depend upon ectoplasm, and that this ectoplasm is reabsorbed into the body of the medium carrying any colouring matter with it. Thus, in the case of Miss Goligher after an experiment with carmine, Dr. Crawford found stains of carmine in various parts of her skin. Thus, both in the case of the mechanical frog and of the lamp-black, it was, as so often happens, the "exposers" who were in the wrong and not the unfortunate medium.

¹⁰ *Proceedings Of The S.P.R.*, Vol. IV, pp. 416-487.

A more serious charge against him was made by Archdeacon Colley, who declared¹¹ that at the house of Mr. Owen Harries, where Eglinton was giving a séance, he discovered in the medium's portmanteau some muslin and a beard, with which portions of drapery and hair cut from alleged materialized figures corresponded. Mrs. Sidgwick, in her article in the S.P.R. journal, reproduced Archdeacon Colley's charges, and Eglinton, in his general reply to her, contents himself with a flat denial, remarking that he was absent in South Africa when the charges were published and did not see them until years after.

Discussing this incident, *Light* in a leading article says that the charges in question were fully investigated by the Council of the British National Association of Spiritualists and dismissed on the ground that the Council could by no means get direct evidence from the accusers. It goes on:

Mrs. Sidgwick has suppressed very material facts in her quotation as printed in the Journal. In the first place the alleged circumstances occurred two years previous to the letter in which the accuser made his charge, during which time he made no public move in the matter, and only did so at all in consequence of personal pique against the Council of the late B.N.A.S. In the second place, the suppressed portions of the letter quoted by Mrs. Sidgwick bear upon their face the mark of utter worthlessness. We affirm that no one accustomed to examine and weigh evidence in a scientific manner would have accorded to the correspondence the slightest serious attention without the clearest corroborative testimony.

None the less, it must be admitted that when so whole-hearted a Spiritualist as Archdeacon Colley makes so definite a charge, it becomes a grave matter which cannot be lightly dismissed. There is always the possibility that a great medium, finding his powers deserting him—as such powers do—should resort to fraud in order to fill up the gap until they return. Home has narrated how his power was suddenly taken from him for a year and then returned in full plenitude. When a medium lives on his work such a hiatus must be a serious matter and tempt him to fraud. However that may have been in this particular instance, it is certain, as has surely been shown in

¹¹ *Medium And Daybreak*, 1878, pp. 698, 730. *The Spiritualist*, 1879, Vol. XIV, pp. 83, 135. 1886, p. 324.

these pages, that there is a mass of evidence as to the reality of the powers of Eglinton which cannot possibly be shaken. Among other witnesses to his powers is Kellar, the famous conjurer, who admitted, as many other conjurers have done, that psychic phenomena far transcend the powers of the juggler.

There is no writer who has left his mark upon the religious side of Spiritualism so strongly as the Reverend W. Stainton Moses.



The Rev. Stainton Moses.

His inspired writings confirmed what had already been accepted, and defined much which was nebulous. He is generally accepted by Spiritualists

as being the best modern exponent of their views. They do not, however, regard him as final or infallible, and in posthumous utterances which bear good evidence of being veridical, he has himself declared that his enlarged experience has modified his views upon certain points. This is the inevitable result of the new life to each of us. These religious views will be treated in the separate chapter which deals with the religion of Spiritualists.

Besides being a religious teacher of an inspired type, Stainton Moses was a strong medium, so that he was one of the few men who could follow the apostolic precept and demonstrate not only by words but also by power. In this short account it is the physical side which we must emphasize.

Stainton Moses was born in Lincolnshire on November 5, 1839, and was educated at Bedford Grammar School and Exeter College, Oxford. He turned his thoughts towards the ministry, and after some years' service as a curate in the Isle of Man and elsewhere he became a master at University College School. It is remarkable that in the course of his wanderjahre he visited the monastery of Mount Athos, and spent six months there—a rare experience for an English Protestant. He was assured later that this marked the birth of his psychic career.

Whilst Stainton Moses was a curate he had an opportunity of showing his bravery and sense of duty. A severe epidemic of smallpox broke out in the parish which was without a resident doctor. His biographer says: "Day and night he was in attendance at the bedside of some poor victim who was stricken by the fell disease, and sometimes after he had soothed the sufferer's dying moments by his ministrations he was compelled to combine the offices of priest and gravedigger and conduct the interment with his own hands." It is no wonder that when he left he received a strongly worded testimonial from the inhabitants, which may be summed up in the one sentence, "The longer we have known you and the more we have seen of your work, the greater has our regard for you increased."

It was in 1872 that his attention was drawn to Spiritualism through séances with Williams and Miss Lottie Fowler. Before long he found that he himself possessed the gift of mediumship to a very unusual extent. At the same time he was prompted to make a thorough study of the subject, bringing his

strong intellect to bear upon every phase of it. His writings, under the signature of "M.A. Oxon.," are among the classics of Spiritualism. They include "Spirit Teachings," "Higher Aspects of Spiritualism," and other works. Finally, he became editor of Light, and sustained its high traditions for many years. His mediumship steadily progressed until it included almost every physical phenomenon with which we are acquainted.

These results were not obtained until he had passed through a period of preparation. He says:

For a long time I failed in getting the evidence I wanted, and if I had done as most investigators do, I should have abandoned the quest in despair. My state of mind was too positive, and I was forced to take some personal pains before I obtained what I desired. Bit by bit, here a little and there a little, the evidence came, as my mind opened to receive it. Some six months were spent in persistent daily efforts to bring home to me proof of the perpetuated existence of human spirits and their power to communicate.

In Stainton Moses's presence heavy tables rose in the air, and books and letters were brought from one room into another in the light. There is independent testimony to these manifestations from trustworthy witnesses.

The late Serjeant Cox, in his book "What am I?" records the following incident which occurred with Stainton Moses:

On Tuesday, June 2nd, 1813, a personal friend, a gentleman of high social position, a graduate of Oxford, came to my residence in Russell Square, to dress for a dinner party to which we were invited. He had previously exhibited considerable power as a Psychic. Having half an hour to spare we went into the dining-room. It was just six o'clock and, of course, broad daylight. I was opening letters, he was reading The Times. My dining-table is of mahogany, very heavy, old-fashioned, six feet wide, nine feet long. It stands on a Turkey carpet, which much increases the difficulty of moving it. A subsequent trial showed that the united efforts of two strong men standing were required to move it one inch. There was no cloth upon it, and the light fell full under it. No person was in the room but my friend and myself. Suddenly, as we were sitting thus, frequent and loud rappings came upon the table. My friend was then

sitting holding the newspaper with both hands, one arm resting on the table, the other on the back of a chair, and turned sidewise from the table so that his legs and feet were not under the table but at the side of it. Presently the solid table quivered as if with an ague fit. Then it swayed to and fro so violently as almost to dislocate the big pillar-like legs, of which there are eight. Then it moved forward about three inches. I looked under it to be sure that it was not touched; but still it moved, and still the blows were loud upon it.

This sudden access of the force at such a time and in such a place, with none present but myself and my friend, and with no thought then of invoking it, caused the utmost astonishment in both of us. My friend said that nothing like it had ever before occurred to him. I then suggested that it would be an invaluable opportunity, with so great a power in action, to make trial of motion without contact, the presence of two persons only, the daylight, the place, the size and weight of the table, making the experiment a crucial one. Accordingly we stood upright, he on one side of the table, I on the other side of it. We stood two feet from it, and held our hands eight inches above it. In one minute it rocked violently. Then it moved over the carpet a distance of seven inches. Then it rose three inches from the floor on the side on which my friend was standing. Then it rose equally on my side. Finally, my friend held his hands four inches over the end of the table, and asked that it would rise and touch his hand three times. It did so; and then, in accordance with the like request, it rose to my hand, held at the other end to the same height above it, and in the same manner.

At Douglas, Isle of Man, during a Sunday in August, 1872, a remarkable exhibition of spirit power was given. The facts related by Stanton Moses are corroborated by Dr. and Mrs. Speer, at whose house the phenomena occurred, and they lasted from breakfast-time until ten o'clock at night. Raps followed the medium wherever he went in the house and even at church he and Dr. and Mrs. Speer heard them while sitting in their pew. On returning from church Stanton Moses found in his bedroom that objects had been moved from the toilet table and laid on the bed in the form of a cross. He went to summon Dr. Speer to witness what had taken place, and on returning to the bedroom discovered that his collar, which he had removed a minute or so before, had in his absence been placed round the head of the

improvised cross. He and Dr. Speer locked the door of the bedroom and adjourned to lunch, but during the course of the meal loud raps occurred and the heavy dining-table was moved three or four times. On a further inspection of the bedroom they found that two other articles from the dressing-case had been added to the cross. The room was again locked, and at three subsequent visits fresh objects had been added to the cross. We are told that on the first occasion there was no one in the house who was likely to play a trick, and that afterwards adequate precautions were taken to prevent such a thing from happening.

Mrs. Speer's version of this series of events is as follows:

During the time we were at church, raps were heard by each member of the circle in different parts of the pew in which we were all sitting. On our return Mr. S. M. found on his bed three things removed from his dressing table, and placed in the form of a cross on his bed. He called Dr. S. into his room to see what had taken place during our absence. Dr. S. heard loud raps on the foot board of the bed. He then locked the door, put the key in his pocket, and left the room vacant for a time. We went to dinner, and during our meal the large dining-table, covered with glass, china, etc., repeatedly moved, tilted and rapped; it seemed to be full of life and motion.

Raps accompanied the tune of a hymn our little girl was singing, and intelligent raps followed our conversation. We paid several visits to the locked-up room, and each time found an addition had been made to the cross. Dr. S. kept the key, unlocked the door, and left the room last. At last all was finished. The cross was placed down the centre of the bed; all the dressing things had been used that our friend had in his travelling dressing-case. Each time we went into the room raps occurred. At our last visit it was proposed to leave a piece of paper and pencil on the bed, and when we returned again we found the initials of three friends of Mr. S. M.'s, all dead, and unknown to anyone in the house but himself. The cross was perfectly symmetrical, and had been made in a locked room that no one could enter, and was indeed a startling manifestation of spirit power.

A drawing showing the various toilet articles in their arranged form is given in Arthur Lillie's "Modern Mystics and Modern Magic" (p. 72). Further examples are given in the Appendix.

At his sittings with Dr. and Mrs. Speer many communications were received, giving proofs of the identity of the spirits in the form of names, dates, and places, unknown to the sitters, but afterwards verified.

A band of spirits is said to have been associated with his mediumship. Through them a body of teaching was communicated by means of automatic writing, beginning on March 30, 1873, and continuing to the year 1880. A selection of them is embodied in "Spirit Teachings." In his Introduction to this book Stanton Moses writes:

The subject-matter was always of a pure and elevated character, much of it being of personal application, intended for my own guidance and direction. I may say that throughout the whole of these written communications, extending in unbroken continuity to the year 1880, there is no flippant message, no attempt at jest, no vulgarity or incongruity, no false or misleading statement, so far as I know or could discover; nothing incompatible with the avowed object, again and again repeated, of instruction, enlightenment and guidance by Spirits fitted for the task. Judged as I should wish to be judged myself, they were what they pretended to be. Their words were words of sincerity, and of sober, serious purpose.

A detailed account of the various persons communicating, many of them having renowned names, will be found in Mr. A. W. Tetley's book, "The 'Controls' of Stainton Moses" (1923).

Stainton Moses aided in the formation of the Society for Psychical Research in 1882, but resigned from that body in 1886 in disgust at its treatment of the medium William Eglinton. He was the first president of the London Spiritualist Alliance, formed in 1884, a position he retained until his death.

In addition to his books "Spirit Identity" (1879), "Higher Aspects of Spiritualism" (1880), "Psychography" (2nd ed. 1882), and "Spirit Teachings" (1883), he contributed frequently to the Spiritualist Press as well as to *The Saturday Review*, *Punch*, and other high-class journals.

A masterly summary of his mediumship was contributed to the *Proceedings Of The Society for Psychical Research* by Mr. F.W.H. Myers.¹² In an obituary notice of him Mr. Myers writes: "I personally regard his life as one of the most noteworthy lives of our generation, and from few men have I heard at first hand facts comparable in importance for me with those which I heard from him."

The various mediums treated in this chapter may be said to cover the different types of mediumship prevalent during this period, but there were many who were almost as well known as those which have been quoted, Thus Mrs. Marshall brought knowledge to many; Mrs. Guppy showed powers which in some directions have never been surpassed; Mrs. Everitt, an amateur, continued throughout a long life to be a centre of psychic force; and Mrs. Mellon, both in England and in Australia, excelled in materializations and in physical phenomena.

¹² *Proceedings Of The S.P.R.*, Vol. IX, pp. 245-353. and Vol. XI, pp. 24-113.

CHAPTER 3. THE SOCIETY FOR PSYCHICAL RESEARCH

ANY full account of the activities of the Psychical Research Society, with its strangely mingled record of usefulness and obstruction, would be out of place in this volume. There are some points, however, which need to be brought out, and some cases which should be discussed. In certain directions the work of the society has been excellent, but from the beginning it made the capital error of assuming a certain supercilious air towards Spiritualism, which had the effect of alienating a number of men who could have been helpful in its councils, and, above all, of offending those mediums without whose willing co-operation the work of the society could not fail to be barren. At the present moment the society possesses an excellent séance room, but the difficulty is to persuade any medium to enter it. This is as it should be, for both the medium and the cause he represents are in danger when misrepresentation and injurious charges are made as lightly as in the past. Psychical research should show some respect for the feelings and opinions of Spiritualists, for it is very certain that without the latter the former would not have existed.



Amid the irritations of what they regard as offensive criticism Spiritualists must not forget that the society has at various times done some excellent work. It has, for example, been the mother of many other societies which are more active than itself. It has also nurtured a number of men both in London and in its American branch who have followed the evidence and have become whole-hearted advocates of the spirit view. Indeed, it is not too much to say that nearly all the bigger men, the men who showed signs of strong mentality apart from this particular subject, adopted the psychic explanation. Sir William Crookes, Sir Oliver Lodge, Russel Wallace, Lord Rayleigh, Sir William Barrett, Professor William James, Professor Hyslop, Dr. Richard Hodgson, and Mr. F.W.H. Myers were all in different degrees on the side of the angels.

There had been a previous society of the same nature, the Psychological Society of Great Britain, which was founded in 1875 by Mr. Serjeant Cox. On the death of this gentleman in 1879 this society dissolved. On January 6, 1882, a meeting was held at the initiative of Sir William Barrett to consider the formation of a new society, and on February 20 it came into being. Professor Henry Sidgwick of Cambridge was elected President, and among the Vice-Presidents was the Rev. W. Stainton Moses. The Council included such representative Spiritualists as Mr. Edmund Dawson Rogers, Mr. Hensleigh Wedgwood, Dr. George Wyld, Mr. Alexander Calder, and Mr. Morell Theobald. We shall see in the course of our review of its history how the Society for Psychical Research gradually alienated the sympathies of these members and caused many of them to resign, and how the cleavage thus early begun has gone on widening with the passage of the years.

A manifesto of the society sets out:

It has been widely felt that the present is an opportune time for making an organized and systematic attempt to investigate that large group of debatable phenomena designated by such terms as mesmeric, psychical and Spiritualistic.

Professor Sidgwick, in his first presidential address to the society on July 17, 1882, speaking of the need for psychical research, said:

We are all agreed that the present state of things is a scandal to the enlightened age in which we live, that the dispute as to the reality of these marvellous phenomena of which it is quite impossible to exaggerate the scientific importance, if only a tenth part of what has been alleged by generally credible witnesses could be shown to be true—I say it is a scandal that the dispute as to the reality of these phenomena should still be going on, that so many competent witnesses should have declared their belief in them, that so many others should be profoundly interested in having the question determined, and yet that the educated world, as a body, should still be simply in an attitude of incredulity.

The attitude of the society, as thus defined by its first president, was a fair and reasonable one. Answering a criticism to the effect that their intention was to reject as untrustworthy the results of all previous inquiries into psychical phenomena, he said:

I do not presume to suppose that I could produce evidence better in quality than much that has been laid before the world by writers of indubitable scientific repute—men like Mr. Crookes, Mr. Wallace, and the late Professor De Morgan. But it is clear from what I have defined as the aim of the society, however good some of its evidence may be in quality, we require a great deal more of it.

The educated world, he pointed out, was not yet convinced, and thus more evidence must be piled up. He did not add that there was abundant evidence already but that the world had not yet troubled to examine it.

Returning to this aspect at the close of his address he said:

Scientific incredulity has been so long in growing, and has so many and so strong roots, that we shall only kill it, if we are able to kill it at all as regards any of those questions, by burying it alive under a heap of facts. We must keep "pegging away," as Lincoln said; we must accumulate fact upon fact, and add experiment upon experiment, and, I should say, not wrangle too much with incredulous outsiders about the conclusiveness of any one, but trust to the mass of evidence for conviction. The highest degree of demonstrative force that we can obtain out of any single record of investigation is, of course, limited by the trustworthiness of the investigator. We have done all that we

can when the critic has nothing left to allege except that the investigator is in the trick. But when he has nothing else left he will allege that. We must drive the objector into the position of being forced either to admit the phenomena as inexplicable, at least by him, or to accuse the investigators either of lying or cheating or of a blindness or forgetfulness incompatible with any intellectual condition except absolute idiocy.

The early work of the society was devoted to an experimental investigation of thought-transference, a subject which Sir William (then Professor) Barrett had brought before the British Association in 1876. After long and patient research it was considered that thought-transference, or telepathy, as it was named by Mr. F.W.H. Myers, was an established fact. In the domain of mental phenomena much valuable work has been done by the society, and this has been placed on record in a systematic and careful manner in the society's "Proceedings." Its researches, too, into what are known as "Cross Correspondences" constitute an important phase of its activities. The investigation of the mediumship of Mrs. Piper was also a notable work, to which we shall refer later.

Where the society has been less fortunate has been in its consideration of what are known as the physical phenomena of Spiritualism. Mr. E. T. Bennett, for twenty years the assistant secretary to the society, thus refers to this aspect:

It is a remarkable thing, we are inclined to say one of the most remarkable things in the history of the society, that this branch of inquiry should have been—it is hardly an exaggeration to say – absolutely barren of result. It may also be said that the result has been barren in proportion to the simplicity of the alleged phenomena. As to the moving of tables and other objects without contact, the production of audible raps, and of visible lights, opinion, even within the society itself, to say nothing of the outside intelligent world, is in the same state of chaos as it was twenty years ago. The question of the movement of tables without contact is exactly in the state in which it was left by the Dialectical Society in the year 1869. Even then, the fact of the movement of a heavy dining-room table, untouched by anyone present, and not in the presence of a professional medium, was attested by a number of well-known men. If it was "a scandal that the dispute as to the reality of these phenomena

should still be going on," when Professor Sidgwick gave his first presidential address, how much more of a scandal is it that now, after the lapse of nearly another quarter of a century, "the educated world as a body should still be simply in an attitude of incredulity." In the whole series of volumes issued by the society, there is no light whatever thrown on these simple alleged phenomena of seeing and hearing. With regard to the higher physical phenomena which imply intelligence for their production, such as Direct Writing and Spirit Photography, some investigation has been made, but to a large extent, though not entirely, with negative results.¹³

These sweeping charges against the society are made by a friendly critic. Let us see how Spiritualists of that time viewed its activities. To start from near the beginning, we find early in 1883, a year after the formation of the society, a correspondent writing to Light asking, "What is the distinction between the Society for Psychical Research and the Central Association of Spiritualists?" and also inquiring whether there was any antagonism between the two bodies. The reply is given in a leading article from which we make this extract. With our retrospect of forty years from that date it has an historic interest:

Spiritualists cannot doubt what the end will be—they cannot doubt that, as time goes on, the Society for Psychical Research will afford as clear and unquestionable proofs of clairvoyance, of spirit-writing, of spiritual appearances, and of the various forms of physical phenomena as they have so successfully afforded of thought-reading. But mean while there is a sharp line of distinction between the Society for Psychical Research and the Central Association of Spiritualists. The Spiritualists have a settled faith—nay, more, a certain knowledge—in regard to facts about which the Society for Psychical Research would not yet profess to have any knowledge whatever. The Society for Psychical Research are busy with phenomena only, seeking evidence of their existence. To them the idea of spirit communion, of sweet converse with dear departed friends—so precious to Spiritualists—has no present interest. We speak of them, of course, as a Society—not of individual members. As a Society they are studying the mere bones and muscles, and have not yet penetrated to the heart and soul.

¹³ *Twenty Years of Psychical Research*, by Edward T. Bennett (1904), pp. 21-2.

Light, 1833, p. 54.

The editor, continuing, takes a dip into the future, though how distant a future it was destined to prove he could not see:

As a Society, they cannot yet call themselves Spiritualists. As a Society, they will, as their proofs accumulate, in all probability become – first, "Spiritualists without the spirits"—and ultimately very like other Spiritualists, with the added satisfaction that in reaching that position they have made good every step in their path as they went along, and have, by their cautious conduct, induced many noble and clever men and women to tread the same way with them.

In conclusion, the correspondent is assured that there is no antagonism between the two bodies, and that Spiritualists are confident that the Society for Psychological Research is doing a most useful work.

The extract is instructive, showing as it does the kindly feelings entertained by the leading Spiritualist organ towards the new society. The prophecy accompanying it, however, has been far from realized. In an exaggerated striving after what was considered to be an impartial, scientific attitude, a certain little group within the society has continued for many years to maintain a position, if not of hostility to, yet of persistent denial of, the reality of physical manifestations observed with particular mediums. It has mattered not what weight of testimony was forthcoming from trustworthy men whose qualifications and experience made them worthy of credence. As soon as the Society for Psychological Research came to consider such testimony, or, more rarely, to conduct an investigation for themselves, either open charges of fraud were levelled against the mediums or possibilities of how the results might have been obtained by other than supernormal means were suggested. Thus, we have Mrs. Sidgwick, who is one of the worst offenders in this respect, saying of a sitting with Mrs. Jencken (Kate Fox), held in light reported to be sufficient to read print by, when direct writing was obtained on a sheet of paper supplied by the sitters and placed under the table: "We thought that Mrs. Jencken might have written the word with her foot." Of Henry Slade: "The impression on my mind after about ten séances with Dr. Slade is that the phenomena are

produced by tricks." Of William Eglinton's slatewriting: "For myself I have now no hesitation in attributing the performances to clever conjuring." One lady medium, the daughter of a well-known professor, described to the author how impossible, and indeed how unconsciously insulting, was the attitude of Mrs. Sidgwick on such an occasion.

Many further quotations to the same effect, and about other famous mediums, could be given, as already stated. A paper entitled "Mr. Eglinton," contributed by Mrs. Sidgwick to the society's *Journal* in 1886, caused a storm of angry criticism, and a special supplement of *Light* was devoted to letters of protest. In an editorial comment coming from Mr. Stainton Moses, this newspaper, which in the past had shown such uniform sympathy with the new body, writes:

The Society for Psychical Research have in more than one direction placed themselves in a false position, and when their attention has been drawn to the fact, have allowed judgment to go by default. Indeed, the secret history of "Psychical Research" in England will, when written, prove a very instructive and suggestive narrative. Moreover, we regret to say that (and we say it with a full sense of the gravity of our words), as far as free and full discussion of these matters is concerned, their policy has been an obstructionist one. In these circumstances, therefore, it rests with the Society for Psychical Research itself to decide whether the friction which now unfortunately exists shall be intensified, or whether a modus vivendi between themselves and the Spiritualistic body shall be established. No official disavowal of Mrs. Sidgwick's views as being representative of the Society has, however, yet been made. That is assuredly the first step.

The situation here indicated in the fourth year of the existence of this society has continued with little alteration until the present day. We can see it well described by Sir Oliver Lodge,¹⁴ who says of the society, while of course not agreeing with the dictum: "It has been called a society for the suppression of facts, for the wholesale imputation of imposture, for the discouragement of the sensitive, and for the repudiation of every revelation

¹⁴ *The Survival Of Man* (1909), p. 6.

of the kind which was said to be pressing itself upon humanity from the regions of light and knowledge."

If this criticism be deemed too severe, it at least indicates the tone of a considerable body of influential opinion regarding the Society for Psychical Research.

One of the earliest public activities of the S.P.R. was the journey to India of their representative, Dr. Richard Hodgson, in order to investigate the alleged miracles which had occurred at Adyar, the headquarters of Madame Blavatsky, who had taken so prominent a part in resuscitating the ancient wisdom of the East and forming it, under the name of Theosophy, into a philosophic system which would be intelligible to and acceptable by the West. This is not the place to discuss the mixed character of that remarkable woman, and it may simply be stated that Dr. Hodgson formed a most adverse opinion of her and her alleged miracles. For a time it seemed that this conclusion was final, but later some reasons were put forward for its reconsideration, the best epitome of which is to be found in Mrs. Besant's defence.¹⁵ Mrs. Besant's chief point is that the witnesses were thoroughly malicious and corrupt, and that much of the evidence was clearly manufactured. The net result is that while this and similar episodes will always cast a shadow over Madame Blavatsky's record, it cannot be said that the particular case was finally established. In this as in other instances the society's standard of evidence, when it wishes to prove fraud, is very much more elastic than when it examines some alleged psychic phenomenon.

It is more pleasing to turn to the thorough examination of the mediumship of Mrs. Leonora Piper, the celebrated sensitive of Boston, U.S.A., for this ranks amongst the finest of the results achieved by the Society for Psychical Research. It was continued over a period of fifteen years, and the records are voluminous. Among the investigators were such well-known and competent men as Professor William James, of Harvard University, Dr. Richard Hodgson, and Professor Hyslop, of Columbia University. These three

¹⁵ *H.P. Blavatsky and the Masters of Wisdom* (Theosophical Publishing House.)

were convinced of the genuineness of the phenomena occurring in her presence, and all favoured the Spiritualistic interpretation of them.

The Spiritualists were naturally jubilant at this justification of their claims. Mr. E. Dawson Rogers, President of the London Spiritualist Alliance, at a gathering of that body on October 24, 1901, said:

A little event has occurred during the past few days which it is thought calls for a few words from myself. As many of you know, our friends of the Psychical Research Society—or some of them—have come over to our camp. I do not mean to say they have joined the London Spiritualist Alliance—but I mean that some who laughed and scoffed at us a few years ago now proclaim themselves as adherents to our creed; that is, adherents to the hypothesis or theory that man continues to live after death, and that under certain conditions it is possible for him to communicate with those he has left behind.

Well, now, I have a somewhat painful memory of the early history of the Society for Psychical Research. I was, fortunately or unfortunately, a member of its first Council, as was also our dear departed friend W. Stainton Moses. We sat together and we were sadly distressed by the way in which the Council of the Society for Psychical Research received any suggestion about the possibility of demonstrating the continued existence of man after so-called death. The result was that, being unable to endure it any longer, Mr. Stainton Moses and I resigned our position on the Council. However, time has had its revenges. At that time our friends professed to be anxious to discover the truth, but they hoped, and strongly hoped, that the truth would be that Spiritualism was a fraud.

Happily that time, and that attitude, have passed, and we can now regard the Society for Psychical Research as an excellent friend. It has gone assiduously and sedulously to work, and has proved our case—if it needed proving—up to the hilt. First of all we had our good friend Mr. F.W.H. Myers, whose memory we all cherish, and we do not forget that Mr. Myers stated plainly that he had come to the conclusion that the Spiritualistic hypothesis alone accounted for the phenomena he had himself witnessed. Then there is Dr. Hodgson. You will remember, those of you who have been long acquainted with the subject, how earnestly he pursued all who professed Spiritualism. He was a very Saul

persecuting the Christians. Yet he himself, by virtue of his investigations of the phenomena occurring in the presence of Mrs. Leonora Piper, came over to our side, and honestly and fearlessly declared himself a convert to the Spiritualistic hypothesis. And now within the last few days we have had a notable volume by Professor Hyslop, of the Columbia University, New York, and published by the Society for Psychical Research—a book of 650 pages, which shows that he too, a vice-president of the Society for Psychical Research, is convinced that the Spiritualistic hypothesis is the only possible hypothesis to explain the phenomena he has witnessed. They are all coming in, and I am beginning almost to have a hope of our good friend Mr. Podmore.

Light, 1901, p. 523.

From our vantage ground of twenty odd years later, we see that this forecast was altogether too optimistic. But the work with Mrs. Piper stands beyond challenge.

Professor James became acquainted with Mrs. Piper in 1885, through hearing of the visit of a relative of his who obtained highly interesting results. Though he was rather sceptical, he determined to investigate for himself. He obtained a number of evidential messages. For instance, his mother-in-law had lost her bank-book, but Dr. Phinuit, Mrs. Piper's control, when asked to help in finding it, told her where it was, and the statement proved to be correct. On another occasion this control said to Professor James: "Your child has a boy named Robert F. as a playfellow in our world." The F.s were cousins of Mrs. James and lived in a distant town. Professor James told his wife that Dr. Phinuit had made a mistake in the sex of the dead child of the F.'s, because he had said it was a boy. But Professor James was wrong; the child was a boy, and the information supplied was correct. Here there could be no question of reading the sitter's conscious mind. Many more examples of veridical communications could be given. Professor James describes Mrs. Piper as an absolutely simple and genuine person, and says of his investigation, "The result is to make me feel as absolutely certain as I am of any personal fact in the world, that she knows things in her trances which she cannot possibly have heard in her waking state."

After Dr. Richard Hodgson's death in 1905, Professor Hyslop obtained through Mrs. Piper a series of evidential communications which convinced him that he was indeed in touch with his friend and fellow-worker. Hodgson, for instance, reminded him of a private medium about whose powers the two men had differed. He said he had visited her, adding, "I found things better than I thought." He spoke of a coloured-water test which he and Hyslop had employed to test a medium five hundred miles distant from Boston, and about which Mrs. Piper could know nothing. There was also the mention of a discussion he had had with Hyslop about cutting down the manuscript of one of Hyslop's books. The sceptic may object that these facts were within the knowledge of Professor Hyslop, from whom Mrs. Piper obtained, them telepathically. But accompanying the communications there were many evidences of personal peculiarities of Dr. Hodgson which Professor Hyslop recognized.

To enable the reader to judge the cogency of some of the evidence given through Mrs. Piper under the Phinuit control, the following case is extracted:¹⁶

At the 45th English sitting on Dec. 24, 1889, when Messrs. Oliver and Alfred Lodge and Mr. and Mrs. Thompson were the sitters, Phinuit suddenly said:

"Do you know Richard, Rich, Mr. Rich?"

MRS. THOMPSON: "Not well. I knew a Dr. Rich."

PHINUIT: "That's him. He's passed out. He sends kindest regards to his father."

At the 83rd sitting, when Mr. and Mrs. Thompson were again present, Phinuit said all at once: "Here's Dr. Rich!" upon which Dr. Rich proceeds to speak:

DR. RICH: "It is very kind of this gentleman" (i.e. Dr. Phinuit) "to let me speak to you. Mr. Thompson, I want you to give a message to father."

MR. THOMPSON: "I will give it."

DR. RICH: "Thank you a thousand times; it is very good of you. You see, I passed out rather suddenly. Father was very much troubled about it, and he is

¹⁶ *Proceedings Of The S.P.R., Vol. VI, p. 509. Quoted in M. Sage's Mrs. Piper And The S.P.R.*

troubled yet. He hasn't got over it. Tell him I am alive—that I send my love to him. Where are my glasses?" (The medium passes her hands over her eyes.) "I used to wear glasses." (True.)

I think he has them, and some of my books. There was a little black case I had—I think he has that, too.

I don't want that lost. Sometimes he is bothered about a dizzy feeling in his head—nervous about it—but it is of no consequence."

MR. THOMPSON: "What does your father do?" The medium took up a card and appeared to write on it, and pretended to put a stamp in the corner.

DR. RICH: "He attends to this sort of thing. Mr. Thompson, if you will give this message, I will help you in many ways. I can, and I will."

Professor Lodge remarks about this incident: "Mr. Rich, senior, is head of Liverpool Post Office. His son, Dr. Rich, was almost a stranger to Mr. Thompson, and quite a stranger to me. The father was much distressed about his son's death, we find. Mr. Thompson has since been to see him and given him the message. He (Mr. Rich, senior) considers the episode very extraordinary and inexplicable, except by fraud of some kind. The phrase, 'Thank you a thousand times,' he asserts to be characteristic, and he admits a recent slight dizziness." Mr. Rich did not know what his son meant by "a black case." The only person who could give any information about it was at the time in Germany. But it was reported that Dr. Rich talked constantly about a black case when he was on his death-bed.

M. Sage comments, "No doubt Mr. and Mrs. Thompson knew Dr. Rich, having met him once. But they were quite ignorant of all the details here given. Whence did the medium take them? Not from the influence left on some object, because there was no such object at the sitting."

Mrs. Piper had several controls at various stages of her long career. The original one was a Dr. Phinuit, who claimed to have been a French doctor, but whose account of his own earth life was contradictory and unsatisfactory. Apart from himself, however, his ministrations were most remarkable, and he convinced very many people that he was actually an intermediary between the living and the dead. Some of the objections to

him, however, had force, for though it is quite possible that a prolonged experience of otherworld conditions may take the edge off our earthly recollections, it is hardly conceivable that it could do so to the extent which was implied by the statements of this control. On the other hand, the alternative theory that he was a secondary personality of Mrs. Piper, a single strand, as it were, separated from the complete fabric of her individuality, opens up even greater difficulties, since so much was given which was beyond any possible knowledge on the part of the medium.

In studying these phenomena Dr. Hodgson, who had been among the most severe critics of all transcendental explanations, was gradually forced to accept the spiritual hypothesis as the only one which covered the facts. He found that telepathy from sitter to medium would not do so. He was much impressed by the fact that where the communicating intelligence had been deranged in mind before death, the after messages were obscure and wild. This would be inexplicable if the messages were mere reflections from the memory of the sitter. On the other hand, there were cases, such as that of Hannah Wild, where a message sealed up in lifetime could not be given after death. While admitting the validity of such objections, one can but repeat that we should cling to the positive results and hope that fuller knowledge may give us the key which will explain those which seem negative. How can we realize what the laws are, and what the special difficulties, in such an experiment?

In March, 1892, the Phinuit control was largely superseded by the George Pelham control, and the whole tone of the communications was raised by the change. George Pelham was a young literary man who was killed at the age of thirty-two by a fall from his horse. He had taken an interest in psychic study, and had actually promised Dr. Hodgson that if he should pass away he would endeavour to furnish evidence. It was a promise which he very amply fulfilled, and the present author would wish to express his gratitude, for it was the study of the George Pelham records¹⁷ which made his mind receptive and sympathetic until final proofs came to him at the time of the Great War.

¹⁷ Dr. Hodgson's Report. *Proceedings Of The S.P.R.*, Vol. XIII, pp. 284-582. M. Sage, *Mrs. Piper And The S.P.R.*, p. 98.

Pelham preferred to write through Mrs. Piper's hand, and it was no unusual thing for Phinuit to be talking and Pelham to be writing at the same moment. Pelham established his identity by meeting thirty old friends who were unknown to the medium, recognizing them all, and addressing each in the tone which he had used in life. Never once did he mistake a stranger for a friend. It is difficult to imagine how continuity of individuality and power of communication—the two essentials of Spiritualism—could be more clearly established than by such a record. It is instructive that the act of communication was very pleasant to Pelham. "I am happy here, and more so since I find I can communicate with you. I pity those people who cannot speak." Sometimes he showed ignorance of the past. M. Sage, commenting upon this, wisely says: "If there is another world, spirits do not go there to ruminate on what has happened in our incomplete life: they go there to be carried away in the vortex of a higher and greater activity. If, therefore, they sometimes forget, it is not astonishing. Nevertheless, they seem to forget less than we do."

It is clear that if Pelham has established his identity, then all that he can tell us of his actual experience of the next world is of the utmost importance. This is where the phenomenal side of Spiritualism gives way to the religious side, for what assurance from the most venerable of teachers, or of writings, can give us the same absolute conviction as a first-hand account from one whom we have known and who is actually leading the life which he describes? This subject is treated more fully elsewhere, and so it must suffice here to say that Pelham's account is, in the main, the same as that which we have so often received, and that it depicts a life of gradual evolution which is a continuation of earth life and presents much the same features, though under a generally more agreeable form. It is not a life of mere pleasure or selfish idleness, but one where all our personal faculties are given a very wide field of action.

In 1898 James Hervey Hyslop, Professor of Logic and Ethics at Columbia University, took the place of Dr. Hodgson as chief experimenter. Starting in the same position of scepticism, he in turn was forced by the same experiences to the same conclusions. It is impossible to read his records, which are given in his various books and also in Vol. XVI of the *Proceedings*

Of *The S.P.R.*, without feeling that he could not possibly withstand the evidence. His father and many of his relatives returned and held conversations which were far beyond every alternative explanation of secondary personality or of telepathy. He does not beat about the bush in his conversation, but he says: "I have been talking with my father, my brother, my uncles," and everyone who reads his account will be forced to agree with him. How this society can have such evidence in its own "Proceedings," and yet, so far as the majority of its Council is concerned, remain unconverted to the spiritual view, is indeed a mystery. It can only be explained by the fact that there is a certain self-centred and limited—though possibly acute type of mind which receives no impression at all from that which happens to another, and yet is so constituted that it is the very last sort of mind likely to get evidence for itself on account of its effect upon the material on which such evidence depends. In this lies the reason for that which would otherwise be inexplicable.

No memory was too small or too definite for the father Hyslop to bring back to his son. Many of the facts had been forgotten and some never known by the latter. Two bottles upon his writing-desk, his brown penknife, his quill pen, the name of his pony, his black cap—people may describe such things as trivial, but they are essential in establishing personality. He had been a strict member of some small sect. Only in this did he seem to have changed. "Orthodoxy does not matter over here. I should have changed my mind in many things if I had known."

It is interesting to note that when on his sixteenth interview Professor Hyslop adopted the methods of the Spiritualists, chatting freely and without tests, he obtained more actual corroboration than in all the fifteen sittings in which he had adopted every precaution. The incident confirms the opinion that the less restraint there is at such interviews the more successful are the results, and that the meticulous researcher often ruins his own sitting. Hyslop has left it on record that out of 205 incidents mentioned in these conversations he has been able to verify no fewer than 152.

Perhaps the most interesting and dramatic conversation ever held through Mrs. Piper is that between her two researchers after the death of Richard Hodgson in 1905. Here we have two men of first-class brain—Hodgson and

Hyslop—the one "dead," the other with his full faculties, keeping up a conversation at their accustomed level through the mouth and hand of this semi-educated and entranced woman. It is a wonderful, almost an inconceivable situation, that he who had so long been examining the spirit who used the woman should now actually be the spirit who used the woman, and be examined in turn by his old colleague. The whole episode is worthy of careful study.¹⁸

So, too, is the succeeding message, alleged to be from Stainton Moses. The following passage in it should give thought to many of our more material psychic researchers. The reader can decide for himself whether it is likely to have had its origin in the mind of Mrs. Piper:

This thought we all wish to impress upon you and upon the friends on earth, that there is a difference between the entrance into the Spirit World of those who seek for spiritual unfolding and those who simply seek for scientific knowledge. Dr. Hodgson says that I shall tell you that it was a great error that he kept himself so largely attuned to material life and material things. You will understand he means that he did not move in the realm of the higher or spiritual. He did not view these psychic matters from the standpoint that I did. He sought to base everything mainly on material facts, and did not seek to interpret anything wholly as spiritual. One that comes over as he came over is transplanted from one sphere of life into another like a babe just born. He has been besieged since he is here with messages started from your side. All manner of questions are being carried to him by messengers. This is all in vain: he cannot answer. He repeats that I shall tell you he realizes now that he saw only one side of this great question, and that the lesser important.

Some description of this remarkable medium may interest the reader. Mr. A. J. Philpott says of her:

I found her a comely, well-built and healthy-looking woman of middle age, above the medium height, with brownish hair and a rather good-natured and matronly cast of countenance. She looked like a well-to-do woman without any particularly marked characteristics, either intellectual or otherwise. I had rather expected to find a different type of woman, somebody that would

¹⁸ *The Psychic Riddle*, Funk, p. 58 and onwards.

show more evidence of nerves; this woman looked as calm and phlegmatic as a German Hausfrau. She evidently never had bothered herself with metaphysical or any other kind of questions of a vague or abstract character. Somehow, she reminded me of a nurse I had seen in a hospital at one time—a calm, self-possessed woman.

Like many other great mediums, such as Margaret Fox-Kane, she was very agnostic as to the source of her own powers, which is the more natural in her case since she was always in deep trance, and had only second-hand accounts from which to judge what occurred. She was inclined herself to some crude and superficial telepathic explanation. As in the case of Eusapia Palladino, her mediumship came on after an injury to the head. Her powers seem to have left her as suddenly as they came. The author met her in New York in 1922, at which time she seemed to have completely lost all her personal gifts, though she still retained her interest in the subject.

The society has devoted an enormous amount of patient work to the consideration of what are known as "cross correspondences." Many hundreds of pages in the society's "Proceedings" are given to this subject, which has aroused acute controversy.

It has been suggested that the scheme was originated on the Other Side by F.W.H. Myers as a method of communication that would eliminate that bugbear of so many psychic researchers—telepathy from the living. It is at least a certainty that while he was on earth Myers had considered the project in a simpler form, namely, to get the same word or message through two mediums.

But the cross correspondence of the S.P.R. is in the main of a much more complicated character. In this, one script is not a mere reproduction of statements made in another; the scripts seem rather designed to represent different aspects of the same idea, and often the information in one is explanatory and complementary of that in another.

Miss Alice Johnson, the Research Officer of the S.P.R., was the first to notice this link between the scripts. She cites this simple instance:

In one case, Mrs. Forbes's script, purporting to come from her son Talbot, stated that he must now leave her, since he was looking for a sensitive who wrote automatically, in order that he might obtain corroboration of her own writing.

Mrs. Verrall, on the same day, wrote of a fir tree planted in a garden, and the script was signed with a sword and suspended bugle. The latter was part of the badge of the regiment to which Talbot Forbes had belonged, and Mrs. Forbes had in her garden some fir trees, grown from seed sent to her by her son. These facts were unknown to Mrs. Verrall.

Miss Johnson, who made a close study of the scripts coming through Mrs. Thompson, Mrs. Forbes, Mrs. Verrall, Mrs. Willett) Mrs. Piper, and others, thus describes the conclusion to which she came:

The characteristic of these cases—or, at least, some of them—is that we do not get in the writing of one automatist anything like a mechanical verbatim reproduction of phrases in the other. We do not even get the same idea expressed in different ways—as might well result from direct telepathy between them. What we get is a fragmentary utterance in one script, which seems to have no particular point or meaning, and another fragmentary utterance in the other, of an equally pointless character; but when we put the two together, we see that they supplement one another, and that there is apparently one coherent idea underlying both, but only partially expressed in each.

She says¹⁹—what is by no means the fact, because hundreds of cases to the contrary can be cited—that:

The weakness of all well-authenticated cases of apparent telepathy from the dead is, of course, that they can generally be explained by telepathy from the living.

And she adds:

In these cross correspondences, however, we find apparently telepathy relating to the present—that is, the corresponding statements are

¹⁹ *Proceedings Of The S.P.R., Vol. XXI, p. 375.*

approximately contemporaneous, and to events in the present which, to all intents and purposes, are unknown to any living person, since the meaning and point of her script is often uncomprehended by each automatist until the solution is found through putting the two scripts together. At the same time we have proof of what has occurred in the scripts themselves. Thus it appears that this method is directed towards satisfying our evidential requirements.

The student who will undertake the immense labour of carefully examining these documents—they run into hundreds of printed pages—may perhaps be satisfied by the evidence presented.

But, as a matter of fact, we find that many able and experienced psychic researchers consider it unsatisfactory. Here are a few opinions on the subject.

Richet says:

These are certainly well-marked cases of cryptesthesia, but whether there is cryptesthesia, or lucidity, or telepathy, these do not in any way imply survival of a conscious personality.²⁰

It has to be remembered, however, that Richet is not an impartial controversialist, since an admission of Spirit would contradict all the teachings of his lifetime.

Dr. Joseph Maxwell is of the same school of thought as Richet. He says:

It is impossible to admit the intervention of a spirit. We want proof of facts, and the system of cross correspondences is founded on negative facts and is an unstable foundation. Only positive facts have an intrinsic value, which cross correspondences cannot show, not at present, at any rate.

It may be remarked that Maxwell, like Richet, has now come a long way towards the Spiritualistic position.

We find the matter discussed with fitting gravity in the London Spectator:

Even if such things (i.e. cross correspondences of a complex type) were common, might it not be argued that they would only prove that some

²⁰ *Thirty Years Of Psychological Research.*

conscious being was producing them; that they would scarcely prove that the conscious being was "in the spirit"; that they would certainly not prove that he was the particular dead person that he claimed to be? A cross correspondence is a possible proof of organization, not of identity.

It is true that many able men like Sir Oliver Lodge and Mr. Gerald Balfour accept the evidence from cross correspondences. But if these satisfy only a comparative few, then their object has not been achieved.

Here are a few examples of the simpler kind taken from the . *Proceedings Of The S.P.R.* As anything from fifty to a hundred printed pages are devoted to a single one of the more complicated cases, it is difficult adequately to summarize them in a brief space, and it is impossible to exaggerate how wearisome they are to the reader in their entirety.

On March 11, 1907, at one o'clock, Mrs. Piper said in the waking stage:

"Violets."

On the same day at 11 a.m. Mrs. Verrall wrote automatically:

"With violet buds their heads were crowned."

"Violaceae odores." (Violet-coloured scents.)

"Violet and olive leaf, purple and hoary."

"The city of the violet"

On April 8, 1907, the alleged spirit of Myers, through Mrs. Piper, said to Mrs. Sidgwick:

"Do you remember Euripides? Do you remember Spirit and Angel? I gave both... Nearly all the words I have written to-day are with reference to messages I am trying to give through Mrs. V."

Mrs. Verrall had, on March 7, in the course of an automatic script, the words "Hercules Furens" and "Euripides." And on March 25 Mrs. Verrall had written:

The Hercules play comes in there and the clue is in the Euripides play, if you could only see it...

This certainly seems beyond coincidence.

Again, on April 16, 1907, Mrs. Holland in India produced a script in which came the words "Mors" and "The shadow of death."

On the following day Mrs. Piper uttered the word "Tanatos" (obviously a mispronunciation of *thanatos*—being the Greek word for "death," as *mors* is the Latin).

On April 29 Mrs. Verrall wrote a script wholly occupied with the idea of Death, with quotations from Landor, Shakespeare, Virgil, and Horace, all involving the idea of Death.

On April 30 Mrs. Piper, in the waking stage, repeated the word *thanatos* three times in close succession.

Here again the theory of coincidence would seem to be far-fetched.

Another cross correspondence concerned with the phrase *Ave Roma immortalis* is a very lengthy one. Mr. Gerald Balfour discussing it²¹ says that the completed idea was a well-known picture in the Vatican.

Mrs. Verrall's script gave details of the picture unmeaning to herself, but made clear by the phrase five Roma immortalis, which came a few days later in Mrs. Holland's script.

An interesting feature was the apparent understanding by the control of what was being done.

On March 2, when the cross correspondence began, Mrs. Verrall wrote that she would have word sent "through another lady" that would elucidate matters. On March 7, when the cross correspondence ended, Mrs. Holland's contribution was followed by the words: "How could I make it any clearer without giving her the clue?"

Mr. Gerald Balfour considers, with reason, that these two comments show that this cross correspondence was being deliberately brought about.

²¹ *Proceedings Of The S.P.R.*, Vol. XXV., p. 54.

Sir Oliver Lodge, in commenting on the way the meaning is ingeniously wrapped up in these cross correspondences, says of one of them:

The ingenuity and subtlety and literary allusiveness made the record difficult to read, even when disentangled and presented by the skill of Mr. Piddington.

This criticism, from one who has been convinced of their veridical character, is sufficient indication that cross correspondences are not likely to make anything more than a limited appeal. To the ordinary Spiritualist they seem an exceedingly roundabout method of demonstrating that which can be proved by easier and more convincing methods. If a man were to endeavour to prove the existence of America by picking up driftwood upon the European shores, as Columbus once did, instead of getting into touch with the land or its inhabitants, it would present a rough analogy to such circuitous methods of investigation.

Apart from the cross correspondence scripts, several others have been closely analysed by the S.P.R., the most remarkable and convincing being that which has been named "the Ear of Dionysius." It must be admitted that after the lowly and occasionally sordid atmosphere of physical phenomena these intellectual excursions do lift one into a purer and more rarefied atmosphere. The cross correspondences were too prolonged and complicated to ensure acceptance, and had a painful resemblance to some pedantic parlour game. It is otherwise with the Ear of Dionysius. It necessarily takes on an academic tone, since it is a classical subject, handled presumably by two professors, but it is a very direct and clear attempt to prove survival by showing that none save these particular men could have produced the script, and that certainly it was beyond the knowledge or faculties of the writer.

This writer, who chooses to assume the name of Mrs. Willett, produced in 1910 the phrase "Dionysius's Ear. The Lobe." It chanced that Mrs. Verrall, the wife of a famous classical scholar, was present, and she referred the phrase to her husband. He explained that the name was given to a huge abandoned quarry at Syracuse, which was roughly shaped like a donkey's ear. In this place the unhappy Athenian captives had been confined after that famous defeat which has been immortalized by Thucydides, and it had received its

name because its peculiar acoustic properties were said to have enabled Dionysius the Tyrant to overhear the talk of his victims.

Dr. Verrall died shortly afterwards, and in 1914 the script of Mrs. Willett began to contain many references to the Ear of Dionysius. These appeared to emanate from the deceased doctor. For example, one sentence ran: "Do you remember that you did not know, and I complained of your classical ignorance? It concerned a place where slaves were kept and audition belongs —also acoustics. Think of the whispering gallery."

Some of the allusions, such as the foregoing, pointed to Dr. Verrall, while others seemed to be associated with another deceased scholar who had passed on in 1910. This was Professor S. H. Butcher, of Edinburgh. Thus the script said: "Father Cam walking arm-in-arm with the Canongate," i.e. Cambridge with Edinburgh. The whole strange mosaic was described by one control as "a literary association of ideas pointing to the influence of two discarnate minds." This idea was certainly carried out, and no one can read the result carefully without the conviction that it has its origin in something entirely remote from the writer. So recondite were the classical allusions that even the best scholars were occasionally baffled, and one of them declared that no minds with which he was acquainted, save only those of Verrall and Butcher, could have produced the result. After careful examination of the records, Mr. Gerald Balfour declared that he was prepared to accept the reputed as "the real authors of this curious literary puzzle." The unseen communicators seem to have got weary of such roundabout methods and Butcher is represented as saying: "Oh, this old bothersome rubbish is so tiresome!" None the less, the result achieved is one of the most clear-cut and successful of any of the purely intellectual explorations of the S.P.R.

The work of the S.P.R. during recent years has not enhanced its reputation, and it is with reluctance that the author, who is one of the oldest members, is compelled to say so. The central machinery of the society has come into the hands of a circle of men whose one care seems to be not to prove truth but to disprove what seems preternatural. Two great men, Lodge and Barrett, stemmed the tide, but they were outvoted by the obstructionists. Spiritualists, and particularly mediums, look upon the investigators and their

methods with aversion. It seems never to have dawned upon these people that the medium is, or should be, inert, and that there may be an intelligent force behind the medium which can only be conciliated and encouraged by gentle sympathy and thoughtful, tactful behaviour.

Eva, the materializing medium, came from France, but the results were meagre, and excessive exaggerated precautions defeated the end in view. The report in which the committee announce their conclusions is a contradictory document, for whereas the casual reader would gather from it that no results—or none worth recording—were obtained, the text is actually illustrated with photographs of ectoplasmic extrusions exactly resembling in miniature those which had been obtained in Paris.

Madame Bisson, who accompanied her protégé to London, at great inconvenience to them both, was naturally indignant at such a result, and Dr. Geley published an incisive paper in the, "Proceedings" of the Institut Métapsychique in which he exposed the fallacies of the investigation and the worthlessness of the report. Professors of the Sorbonne may be excused for handling Eva with no regard for psychic law, but the representatives of a scientific psychic body should have shown greater understanding.

The attack upon Mr. Hope, the psychic photographer, was examined by a strong independent committee and was shown to be quite unsound, and even to bear some signs of a conspiracy against the medium. In this ill-considered affair the society was directly implicated, since one of its officers took part in the proceedings, and the result was chronicled in the official *Journal*. The whole history of this case, and the refusal of the society to face the facts when they were pointed out to them, leave a shadow upon the record of all concerned.

Yet when all is said and done, the world has been the better for the existence of the S.P.R. It has been a clearing-house for psychic ideas, and a half-way house for those who were attracted to the subject and yet dreaded closer contact with so radical a philosophy as Spiritualism. There has been a constant movement among the members from the right of negation to the left of acceptance. The mere fact that a succession of the presidents have

been professed Spiritualists is, in itself, a sign that the anti-spiritual element was not too intolerant or intolerable. On the whole, like all human institutions, it is open to both praise and censure. If it has had its dark passages, it has also been illuminated by occasional periods of brightness. It has constantly had to fight against the imputation of being a purely Spiritualistic society, which would have deprived it of that position of judicial impartiality which it claimed, but did not always exercise. The situation was often a difficult one, and the mere fact that the society has held its own for so many years is a proof that there has been some wisdom in its attitude; and we can but hope that the period of sterility and barren negative criticism may be drawing to an end. Meanwhile the Psychic College, an institution founded by the self-sacrificing work of Mr. and Mrs. Hewat McKenzie, has amply shown that a stern regard for truth and for the necessary evidential requirements are not incompatible with a human treatment of mediums, and a generally sympathetic attitude towards the Spiritualistic point of view.

CHAPTER 4. ECTOPLASM

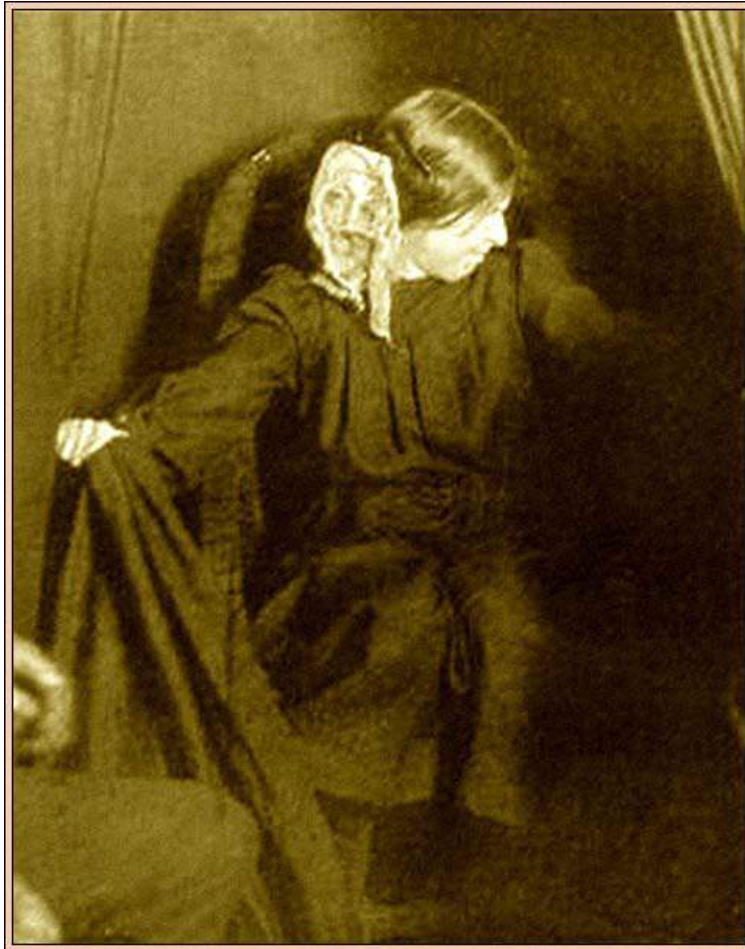
FROM very early days Spiritualists have contended that there was some physical material basis for the phenomena. A hundred times in early Spiritual literature you will find descriptions of the semi-luminous thick vapour which oozes from the side or the mouth of a medium and is dimly visible in the gloom. They had even gone further and had observed how the vapour in turn solidifies to a plastic substance from which the various structures of the séance room are built up. More exact scientific observation could only confirm what these pioneers had stated.

To take a few examples: Judge Peterson states that in 1877 he saw with the medium W. Lawrence "a fleecy cloud" that seemed to issue from the side of the medium and gradually formed into a solid body.²² He also speaks of a figure forming out of "a ball of light." James Curtis saw with Slade in Australia in 1878 a "cloud-like, whitish grey vapour" forming and accumulating, preparatory to the appearance of a fully materialized figure. Alfred Russel Wallace describes seeing with Dr. Monck, first a "white patch," which then gradually formed into a "cloudy pillar." This same expression, "cloudy pillar," is used by Mr. Alfred Smedley of an appearance with the medium Williams, when John King manifested, and he also speaks of it as "a slightly illuminated cloud." Sir William Crookes saw with the medium D.D. Home a "luminous cloud" which condensed into a perfectly formed hand. Mr. E. A. Brackett saw with the medium Helen Berry in the United States in 1885 "a small, white, cloud-like substance" which expanded until it was four or five feet high, "when suddenly from it the full, round, sylphlike form of Bertha stepped forward."²³ Mr. Edmund Dawson Rogers, in his narrative of a sitting with Eglinton in 1885, speaks of seeing emerging from the medium's side "a dingy, white-looking substance" that swayed and pulsated. Mr. Vincent Turvey, the well-known sensitive of Bournemouth, tells of "red, sticky matter" drawn from the medium. Particular interest attaches to a description given by that wonderful medium for materialization, Madame

²² *Essays From The Unseen.*

²³ *Materialized Apparitions*, p. 106. *Beginnings Of Seership*, p. 55. "Shadow Land," p. 229.

d'Espérance, who says: "It seemed that I could feel fine threads being drawn out of the pores of my skin."



Medium (Madame Juliette Bisson?) Emanating an Ectoplasm.

This has an important bearing on the researches of Dr. Crawford, and his remarks on "psychic rods" and "spore-like matter." We find, too, in *The Spiritualist* that while the materialized spirit Katie King was manifesting herself through Miss Florence Cook, "She was connected with the medium by cloudy, faintly luminous threads."²⁴

²⁴ *The Spiritualist*, 1873, p. 83.

As a pendant to these abbreviated references, let us give in detail three experiences of the formation of ectoplasm. One of the sitters in Madame d'Espérance's circle supplies the following description:

*First a filmy, cloudy patch of something white is observed on the floor in front of the cabinet. It then gradually expands, visibly extending itself as if it were an animated patch of muslin, lying fold upon fold, on the floor, until extending about two and a half by three feet, and having a depth of a few inches—perhaps six or more Presently it begins to rise slowly in or near the centre, as if a human head were underneath it, while the cloudy film on the floor begins to look more like muslin falling into folds about the portion so mysteriously rising. By the time it has attained two or more feet it looks as if a child were under it, and moving its arms about in all directions, as if manipulating something underneath. It continues rising, sometimes sinking somewhat to rise again higher than before, until it attains a height of about five feet, when its form can be seen as if arranging the folds of drapery about its figure. Presently the arms rise considerably above the head and open outwards through a mass of cloud-like spirit drapery, and Yolande stands before us unveiled, graceful and beautiful, nearly five feet in height, having a turban-like head-dress, from beneath which her long black hair hangs over her shoulders and down her back. The superfluous white, veil-like drapery is wrapped round her for convenience, or thrown down on the carpet, out of the way till required again. All this occupies from ten to fifteen minutes to accomplish.*²⁵

The second account is by Mr. Edmund Dawson Rogers. He says that at the séance, exclusive of Mr. Eglinton, the medium, there were fourteen persons present, all well known, and that there was sufficient light to enable the writer of the report "clearly to observe everybody and everything in the room," and when the "form" stood before him he was "distinctly able to note every feature." Mr. Eglinton in a state of trance paced about the room between the sitters for five minutes, and then—

He began gently to draw from his side and pay out at right angles a dingy, white-looking substance, which fell down at his left side. The mass of white material on the floor increased in breadth, commenced to pulsate and move

²⁵ *Shadow Land*, by E. d'Espérance (1897), pp. 254-5. *Life And Experience*, p. 58.

up and down, also swaying from side to side, the motor power being underneath. The height of this substance increased to about three feet, and shortly afterwards the "form" quickly and quietly grew to its full stature. By a quick movement of his hand Mr. Eglinton drew away the white material which covered the head of the "form" and it fell back over the shoulders and became part of the clothing of the visitor. The connecting link (the white appearance issuing from the side of the medium) was severed or became invisible, and the "form" advanced to Mr. Everitt, shook hands with him, and passed round the circle, treating nearly everyone in the same manner.

This occurred in London in 1885.

The last description is of a séance in Algiers in 1905 with Eva C., then known as Marthe Beraud. Madame X. writes:²⁶

Marthe was alone in the cabinet on this occasion. After waiting for about twenty-five minutes Marthe herself opened the curtain to its full extent and then sat down in her chair. Almost immediately—with Marthe in full view of the sitters, her hands, head, and body distinctly visible—we saw a white, diaphanous-looking thing gradually build itself up close to Marthe. It looked first of all like a large cloudy patch near Marthe's right elbow, and appeared to be attached to her body; it was very mobile, and grew rapidly both upward and downward, finally assuming the somewhat amorphous appearance of a cloudy pillar extending from about two feet above the head of Marthe to her feet. I could distinguish neither hands nor head; what I saw looked like white fleecy clouds of varying brilliancy, which were gradually condensing, concentrating themselves around some—to me invisible—body.

Here we have an account which tallies in a wonderful way with those we have quoted from séances many years previously.

²⁶ *Annals Of Psychological Science*, Vol. II, p. 305.



Mediums Emanating Ectoplasm.

When we examine the descriptions of the appearance of ectoplasm in Spiritualistic circles forty and fifty years ago, and compare them with those in our own day, we see how much richer were the earlier results. Then "unscientific" methods were in vogue, according to the view of many modern psychical researchers. At least, however, the earlier researchers observed one golden rule. They surrounded the medium with an atmosphere of love and sympathy. Discussing the first materializations that occurred in England, *The Spiritualist* in a leading article²⁷ says:

The influence of the spiritual state of the observers finds optical expression at face séances. Worldly and suspicious people get the feebler manifestations; the spirits then have often a pale ghastly look, as usual when the power is weak. [This is a singularly exact description of many of the faces at séances with Eva C.] Spiritual people, in whose presence the medium feels thoroughly happy, see by far the finest manifestations. Although spiritual phenomena are governed by fixed laws, those laws so work in practice that Spiritualism

²⁷ 1873. pp. 82-3.

undoubtedly partakes much of the character of a special revelation to special people.

Mr. E. A. Brackett, author of that remarkable book, "Materialized Apparitions," expresses the same truth in another way. His view will, of course, excite derision in so-called scientific circles, but it embodies a deep truth. It is the spirit of his words rather than their literal interpretation that he means to convey:

The key that unlocks the glories of another life is pure affection, simple and confiding as that which prompts the child to throw its arms around its mother's neck. To those who pride themselves upon their intellectual attainments, this may seem to be a surrender of the exercise of what they call the higher faculties. So far from this being the case, I can truly say that until I adopted this course, sincerely and without reservation, I learned nothing about these things. Instead of clouding my reason and judgment, it opened my mind to a clearer and more intelligent perception of what was passing before me. That spirit of gentleness, of loving kindness, which more than anything else crowns with eternal beauty the teachings of the Christ, should find its full expression in our association with these beings.

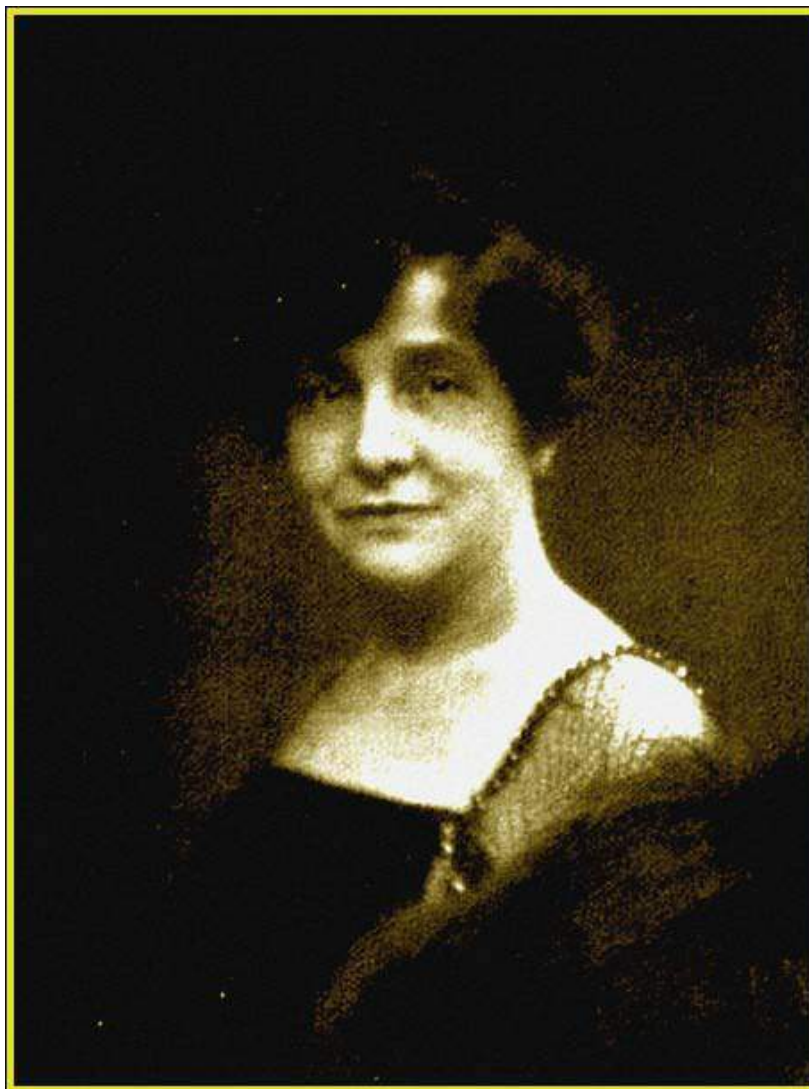
If anyone should think from this passage that the author was a poor, credulous fool upon whom any fraudulent medium could easily impose, a perusal of his excellent book will quickly prove the contrary.

Moreover, his method worked. He had been struggling with doubt and perplexity, when, on the advice tendered by a materialized spirit, he decided to lay aside all reserve and "greet these forms as dear departed friends who had come from afar and had struggled hard to reach me." The change was instantaneous.

From that moment the forms, which had seemed to lack vitality, became animated with marvellous strength. They sprang forward to greet me; tender arms were clasped around me; forms that had been almost dumb during my investigations now talked freely; faces that had worn more the character of a mask than of real life now glowed with beauty. What claimed to be my niece overwhelmed me with demonstrations of regard. Throwing

her arms around me, and laying her head upon my shoulder, she looked up and said "Now we can all come so near you."

It is a thousand pities that Eva C. could not have had a chance to display her powers in the loving atmosphere of an old-fashioned Spiritualist séance. It is quite certain that a very different order of materializations would have been the result. As a proof of this Madame Bisson, in a private family circle with her, secured wonderful results never obtained with the thumb-screw methods of scientific investigators.



Madame Juliette Bisson

The first materializing medium who can be said to have been investigated with scientific care was this girl Eva, or Eva C., as she is usually described, her second name being Carrière. In 1903 she was examined in a series of sittings at the Villa Carmen in Algiers by Professor Charles Richet, and it was his observation of the curious white material which seemed to be extruded from her person which led to his coining the word "ectoplasm." Eva was then in her nineteenth year and at the height of her powers, which were gradually sapped by long years of constrained investigation. Some attempt was made to cast doubt upon Richet's results and to pretend that the materialized figures were in truth some domestic in disguise, but the final answer is that the experiments were carried on behind locked doors, and that similar results have been obtained many times since. It is only poetic justice that Professor Richet should have been subjected to this unfair and annoying criticism, for in his great book, "Thirty Years of Psychological Research," he is most unfair to mediums, believing every tale to their discredit, and acting continually upon the principle that to be accused is the same thing as to be condemned.

In his first reports, published in the "Annals of Psychological Science," Richet describes at great length the appearance with the medium Eva C. of the materialized form of a man who called himself "Bien Boa." The professor says that this form possessed all the attributes of life. "It walks, speaks, moves, and breathes like a human being. Its body is resistant, and has a certain muscular strength. It is neither a lay figure nor a doll, nor an image reflected by a mirror; it is as a living being; it is as a living man; and there are reasons for resolutely setting aside every other supposition than one or the other of these two hypotheses: either that of a phantom having the attributes of life; or that of a living person playing the part of a phantom."²⁸ He discusses in detail his reasons for dismissing the possibility of it being a case of impersonation.

Describing the disappearance of the form, he writes:

Bien Boa tries, as it seems to me, to come among us, but he has a limping, hesitating gait. I could not say whether he walks or glides. At one moment he

²⁸ *Annals Of Psychological Science*, Vol. II, p. 273.

reels as though about to fall, limping with one leg, which seems unable to support him (I give my own impression). Then he goes towards the opening of the curtains. Then without, as far as I believe, opening the curtains, he suddenly sinks down, disappears into the ground, and at the same time a sound of "Clac! clac!" is heard like the noise of a body thrown on to the ground.

While this was taking place the medium in the cabinet was plainly seen by another sitter, Gabriel Delanne, editor of the *Revue du Spiritisme*.

Richet continues:

A very little time afterwards (two, three or four minutes) at the very feet of the General, in the opening of the curtains, we again see the same white ball (his head?) on the ground; it mounts rapidly, quite straight, rises to the height of a man, then suddenly sinks down to the ground, with the same noise, "Clac! clac!" of a body falling on to the ground. The General felt the shock of the limbs, which in falling struck his leg with some violence.

The sudden appearance and disappearance of the figure so much resembled action through a trap-door that next day Richet made a minute examination of the stone-flagged floor, and also of the roof of the coach-house underneath, without finding a trace of any trap-door. To allay absurd rumours of its existence, he afterwards obtained a certificate from the architect.

The interest of these records of the early manifestations is increased from the fact that at this time the medium obtained complete materializations, while at a later date in Paris these were extremely rare at her séances.

A curious experiment with Bien Boa was in trying to get him to breathe into a flask of baryta water to see if the breath would show carbon dioxide. With difficulty the form did as he was asked, and the liquid showed the expected reaction. During this experiment the forms of the medium and a native girl who sat with her in the cabinet were clearly seen.

Richet records an amusing incident during this experiment. When the baryta water was turned white, the sitters shouted, "Bravo!" at which the form of Bien Boa appeared three times at the opening of the curtain, and bowed, like an actor in a theatre taking a call.

Richet and Delanne took many photographs of Bien Boa, and these Sir Oliver Lodge described as the best of the kind he had seen. A striking feature about them is that an arm of the medium presents a flat appearance, pointing to the process of partial dematerialization so well observed with another medium, Madame d'Espérance. Richet acutely observes:²⁹ "I am not afraid of saying that the emptiness of this sleeve, far from demonstrating the presence of fraud, establishes on the contrary that there was no fraud; also that it seems to speak in favour of a sort of material disaggregation of the medium which she herself was incapable of suspecting."

In his last book, already referred to, Richet publishes for the first time an account of a splendid materialization he saw at the Villa Carmen.

Almost as soon as the curtains were drawn, they were reopened, and between them appeared the face of a young and beautiful woman with a kind of gilt ribbon or diadem covering her fair hair and the crown of her head. She was laughing heartily and seemed greatly amused; I can still vividly recall her laugh and her pearly teeth. She appeared two or three times showing her head and then hiding it, like a child playing bo-peep.

He was told to bring scissors the next day, when he would be permitted to cut a lock of the hair of this Egyptian queen, as she was termed. He did so.

The Egyptian queen returned, but only showed the crown of her head with very fair and very abundant hair; she was anxious to know if I had brought the scissors.

I then took a handful of her long hair, but I could scarcely distinguish the face that she kept concealed behind the curtain. As I was about to cut a lock high up, a firm hand behind the curtain lowered mine so that I cut only about six inches from the end. As I was rather slow about doing this, she said in a low voice, "Quick! Quick!" and disappeared. I have kept this lock; it is very fine, silky and undyed. Microscopical examination shows it to be real hair; and I am

²⁹ *Annals Of Psychological Science*, Vol. II, p. 238.

*informed that a wig of the same would cost a thousand francs. Marthe's hair is very dark and she wears her hair rather short.*³⁰

Reference may be made, in passing, to what Professor Richet calls "ignoble newspaper tales" of an alleged confession of deceit by the medium, and also to the assertion of an Arab coachman in the employ of General Noel, who pretended that he had played the part of the ghost at the Villa Carmen. As regards the latter, the man was never on any occasion admitted into the séance room, while as to the former the medium has herself publicly denied the charge. Richet observes that even if the charge were true, psychic researchers were aware of what value to attach to such revelations, which only showed the instability of mediums.

Richet sums up:

The materializations given by Marthe Beraud are of the highest importance. They have presented numerous facts illustrating the general processes of materializations, and have supplied metapsychic science with entirely new and unforeseen data.

This is his final reasoned judgment.

The first prolonged systematic investigation of ectoplasm was undertaken by a French lady, Madame Bisson, the widow of Adolphe Bisson, a well-known public man. It is probable that Madame Bisson will take a place beside her compatriot Madame Curie in the annals of science. Madame Bisson acquired considerable personal influence over Eva, who had after the Algiers experiments been subjected to the usual intolerant persecution. She took her into her care and provided for her in all ways. She then began a series of experiments which lasted for five years, and which gave such solid results that not one, but several, sciences may in the future take their origin from them. In these experiments she associated herself with Dr. Schrenck Notzing, a German savant from Munich, whose name will also be imperishably connected with the original investigation of ectoplasm. Their studies were carried on between 1908 and 1913, and are recorded in her

³⁰ *Thirty Years of Psychical Research*, p. 508.

book "Les Phenomenes dits de Materialisation" and in Schrenck Notzing's "Phenomena of Materialisation," which has been translated into English.

Their method was to make Eva C. change all her garments under supervision, and to dress her in a gown which had no buttons and was fastened at the back. Only her hands and feet were free. She was then taken into the experimental room, to which she had access at no other time. At one end of this room was a small space shut in by curtains at the back and sides and top, but open in front. This was called the cabinet and the object of it was to concentrate the ectoplasmic vapour.

In describing their joint results the German savant says: "We have very often been able to establish that by an unknown biological process there comes from the body of the medium a material, at first semi-fluid, which possesses some of the properties of a living substance, notably that of the power of change, of movement, and of the assumption of definite forms." He adds: "One might doubt the truth of these facts if they had not been verified hundreds of times in the course of laborious tests under varied and very strict conditions." Could there be, so far as this substance is concerned, a more complete vindication of those early Spiritualists who for two generations had borne with patience the ridicule of the world? Schrenck Notzing ends his dignified preface by exhorting his fellow-worker to take heart. "Do not allow yourself to be discouraged in your efforts to open a new domain for science either by foolish attacks, by cowardly calumnies, by the misrepresentation of facts, by the violence of the malevolent, or by any sort of intimidation. Advance always along the path that you have opened, thinking of the words of Faraday, 'Nothing is too amazing to be true.'"

The results are among the most notable of any series of investigations of which we have record. It was testified by numerous competent witnesses, and confirmed by photographs, that there oozed from the medium's mouth, ears, nose, eyes, and skin this extraordinary gelatinous material. The pictures are strange and repulsive, but many of Nature's processes seem so in our eyes. You can see this streaky, viscous stuff hanging like icicles from the chin, dripping down on to the body, and forming a white apron over the front, or projecting in shapeless lumps from the orifices of the face. When touched, or when undue light came upon it, it writhed back into the body as

swiftly and stealthily as the tentacles of a hidden octopus. If it was seized and pinched the medium cried aloud. It would protrude through clothes and vanish again, leaving hardly any trace upon them. With the assent of the medium, a small piece was amputated. It dissolved in the box in which it was placed as snow would have done, leaving moisture and some large cells which might have come from a fungus. The microscope also disclosed epithelial cells from the mucous membrane in which the stuff seemed to originate.

The production of this strange ectoplasm is enough in itself to make such experiments revolutionary and epoch-making, but what follows is far stranger, and will answer the question in every reader's mind, "What has all this to do with spirits?" Utterly incredible as it may appear, this substance after forming begins, in the case of some mediums—Eva being one—to curdle into definite shapes, and those shapes are human limbs and human faces, seen at first in two dimensions upon the flat, and then moulding themselves at the edges until they become detached and complete. Very many of the photographs exhibit these strange phantoms, which are often much smaller than life. Some of these faces probably represent thought-forms from the brain of Eva taking visible form, and a clear resemblance has been traced between some of them and pictures which she may have seen and stored in the memory. One, for example, looks like an extremely rakish President Wilson with a moustache, while another resembles a ferocious rendering of M. Poincare. One of them shows the word "Miroir" printed over the head of the medium, which some critics have claimed as showing that she had smuggled in the journal of that name in order to exhibit it, though what the object of such a proceeding could be has not been explained. Her own explanation was that the controlling forces had in some way, possibly by "apport," brought in the legend in order to convey the idea that these faces and figures are not their real selves, but their selves as seen in a mirror.

Even now the reader may see no obvious connexion with Spiritualism, but the next stage takes us all the way. When Eva is at her best, and it occurs only at long intervals and at some cost to her own health, there forms a complete figure; this figure is moulded to resemble some deceased person,

the cord which binds it to the medium is loosened, a personality which either is or pretends to be that of the dead takes possession of it, and the breath of life is breathed into the image so that it moves and talks and expresses the emotions of the spirit within. The last word of the Bisson record is: "Since these séances, and on numerous occasions, the entire phantom has shown itself, it has come out of the cabinet, has begun to speak, and has reached Mme. Bisson, whom it has embraced on the cheek. The sound of the kiss was audible." Was there ever a stranger finale of a scientific investigation? It may serve to illustrate how impossible it is for even the cleverest of materialists to find any explanation of such facts which is consistent with his theories. The only one which Mr. Joseph McCabe, in his recent public debate, could put forward was that it was a case of the regurgitation of food! He seemed to be unaware that a close-meshed veil was worn over the medium's face in some of the experiments, without in the least hampering the flow of the ectoplasm.

These results, though checked in all possible ways, are none the less so amazing that the inquirer had a right to suspend judgment until they were confirmed. But this has now been fully done. Dr. Schrenck Notzing returned to Munich, and there he was fortunate enough to find another medium, a Polish lady, who possessed the faculty of materialization. With her he conducted a series of experiments which he has recorded in the book, already mentioned. Working with Stanislaw, the Polish medium, and adopting the same strict methods as with Eva, he produced exactly the same results. His book overlaps that of Mme. Bisson, since he gives an account of the Paris experiments, but the most important part is the corroboration furnished by his check experiments in the summer of 1912 in Munich. The various photographs of the ectoplasm, so far as they go, are hardly to be distinguished from those already taken, so that any theory of elaborate fraud upon the part of Eva postulates the same fraud on the part of Stanislaw. Many German observers checked the sittings.

In his thorough Teutonic fashion Schrenck Notzing goes deeper into the matter than Mme. Bisson. He obtained hair from one of the materialized forms and compared it microscopically with hair from Eva (this incident occurred in the French series), showing by several tests that it could not be

from the same person. He gave also the chemical result of an examination of a small portion of ectoplasm, which burned to an ash, leaving a smell as of horn. Chloride of sodium (common salt) and phosphate of calcium were amongst the constituents. Finally, he actually obtained a cinematograph record of the ectoplasm pouring from the mouth of the medium. Part of this is reproduced in his book.

It should be explained that though the medium was in a trance during these experiments she was by no means inanimate. A separate personality seemed to possess her, which might be explained as one of her own secondary individualities, or as an actual obsession from outside. This personality was in the habit of alluding with some severity to the medium, telling Mme. Bisson that she needed discipline and had to be kept up to her work. Occasionally this person showed signs of clairvoyance, explaining correctly, for example, what was amiss with an electric fitting when it failed to work. A running accompaniment of groans and protests from Eva's body seems to have been a mere animal outcry apart from intelligence.

These results were corroborated once again by Dr. Gustave Geley, whose name will live for ever in the annals of psychical research. Dr. Geley was a general practitioner at Annecy, where he fulfilled the high promises which had been given by his academic career at Lyons. He was attracted by the dawning science, and was wisely appointed by M. Jean Meyer as head of the Institut Métapsychique. His work and methods will be an example for all time to his followers, and he soon showed that he was not only an ingenious experimenter and a precise observer, but a deep thinking philosopher. His great book, "From the Unconscious to the Conscious," will probably stand the test of time. He was assailed by the usual human mosquitoes who annoy the first pioneers who push through any fresh jungle of thought, but he met them with bravery and good humour. His death was sudden and tragic. He had been to Warsaw, and had obtained some fresh ectoplasmic moulds from the medium Kluski. Unhappily, the aeroplane in which he travelled crashed, and Geley was killed—an irreparable loss to psychic science.



Dr. Gustave Geley.

The committee of the Institut Métapsychique, which was recognized by the French Government as being "of public utility," included Professor Charles Richet, Professor Santoliquido, Minister of Public Health, Italy; Count de Gramont, of the Institute of France; Dr. Calmette, Medical Inspector-General; M. Camille Flammarion, M. Jules Roche, ex-Minister of State; Dr. Treissier, Hospital of Lyons; with Dr. Gustave Geley himself as Director. Among those added to the committee at a later date were Sir Oliver Lodge, Professor Bozzano, and Professor Leclainche, member of the Institute of France and Inspector-General of Sanitary Services (Agriculture). The Institute is equipped with a good laboratory for psychical research, and has also a library, reading-room, lecture and reception rooms. Particulars of the

work carried out are supplied in its magazine, entitled *La Revue Métapsychique*.

An important side of the work of the Institute has been to invite public men of eminence in science and literature to witness for themselves the psychical investigations that are being carried on. Over a hundred such men have been given first-hand evidence, and in 1923 thirty, including eighteen medical men of distinction, signed and permitted the publication of a statement of their full belief in the genuineness of the manifestations they saw under conditions of rigid control.

Dr. Geley at one time held a series of sittings with Eva, summoning a hundred men of science to witness one or other of them. So strict were his tests that he winds up his account with the words: "I will not merely say that there is no fraud. I will say that there has not been the possibility of fraud." Again he walked the old path and found the same results, save that the phantasms in his experiments took the form of female faces, sometimes beautiful and, as he assured the author, unknown to him. They may be thought-forms from Eva, for in none of his recorded results did he get the absolute living spirit. There was enough, however, to cause Dr. Geley to say: "What we have seen kills materialism. There is no longer any room for it in the world." By this he means, of course, the old-fashioned materialism of Victorian days, by which thought was a result of matter. All the new evidence points to matter being the result of thought. It is only when you ask "Whose thought?" that you get upon debatable ground.

Subsequent to his experiments with Eva, Dr. Geley got even more wonderful results with Franek Kluski, a Polish gentleman, with whom the ectoplasmic figures were so solid that he was able to take a mould of their hands in paraffin. These paraffin gloves, which are exhibited in London,³¹ are so small at the wrist-opening that the hand could not possibly have been withdrawn without breaking the brittle mould. It could only have been done by dematerialization—no other way is possible. These experiments were conducted by Geley, Richet, and Count de Gramont, three most competent

³¹ Similar gloves are to be seen at the Psychic College, 59 Holland Park, W., or at the Psychic Museum, Abbey House, Victoria Street, Westminster.

men. A fuller discussion of these and other moulds taken from ectoplasmic figures will be found in Chapter XX.



***The Experiment at the Institut Métaphysique, Paris
When Richet, Geley and De Gramont obtained the wax moulds of hands
which have confirmed the earlier experiments of Oxley and others.
This is, of course, an idealized non-evidential impression of the scene.***

They are very important, as being the most permanent and undeniable proofs of such structures that have ever been advanced. No rational criticism of them has ever yet been made.

Another Polish medium, named Jean Guzik, has been tested at the Paris Institute by Dr. Geley. The manifestations consisted of lights and ectoplasmic hands and faces. Under conditions of the severest control, thirty-four distinguished persons in Paris, most of whom were entirely sceptical, affirmed, after long and minute investigation, their belief in the

genuineness of the phenomena observed with this medium. Among them were members of the French Academy, of the Academy of Sciences, of the Academy of Medicine, doctors of medicine and of law, and police experts.

Ectoplasm is a most protean substance, and can manifest itself in many ways and with varying properties. This was demonstrated by Dr. W. J. Crawford, Extra-Mural Lecturer in Mechanical Engineering at Queen's University, Belfast. He conducted an important series of experiments from 1914 to 1920 with the medium Miss Kathleen Goligher. He has furnished an account of them in three books, "The Reality of Psychic Phenomena" (1917), "Experiments in Psychical Science" (1919), and "The Psychic Structures at the Goligher Circle" (1921). Dr. Crawford died in 1920, but he left an imperishable memorial in those three books of original experimental research which have probably done as much to place psychic science on an assured footing as any other works on the subject.

To understand fully the conclusions he arrived at his books must be read, but here we may say briefly that he demonstrated that levitations of the table, raps on the floor of the room, and movements of objects in the séance room were due to the action of "psychic rods," or, as he came to call them in his last book, "psychic structures," emanating from the medium's body. When the table is levitated these "rods" are operated in two ways. If the table is a light one, the rod or structure does not touch the floor, but is "a cantilever firmly fixed to the medium's body at one end, and gripping the under surface or legs of the table with the free or working end." In the case of a heavy table the reaction, instead of being thrown on the medium, is applied to the floor of the room, forming a kind of strut between the under surface of the levitated table and the floor. The medium was placed in a weighing scale, and when the table was levitated an increase in her weight was observed.

Dr. Crawford supplies this interesting hypothesis of the process at work in the formation of ectoplasm at a circle. It is to be understood that by "operators" he means the spirit operators controlling the phenomena:

Operators are acting on the brains of the sitters and thence on their nervous systems. Small particles, it may even be molecules, are driven off the nervous

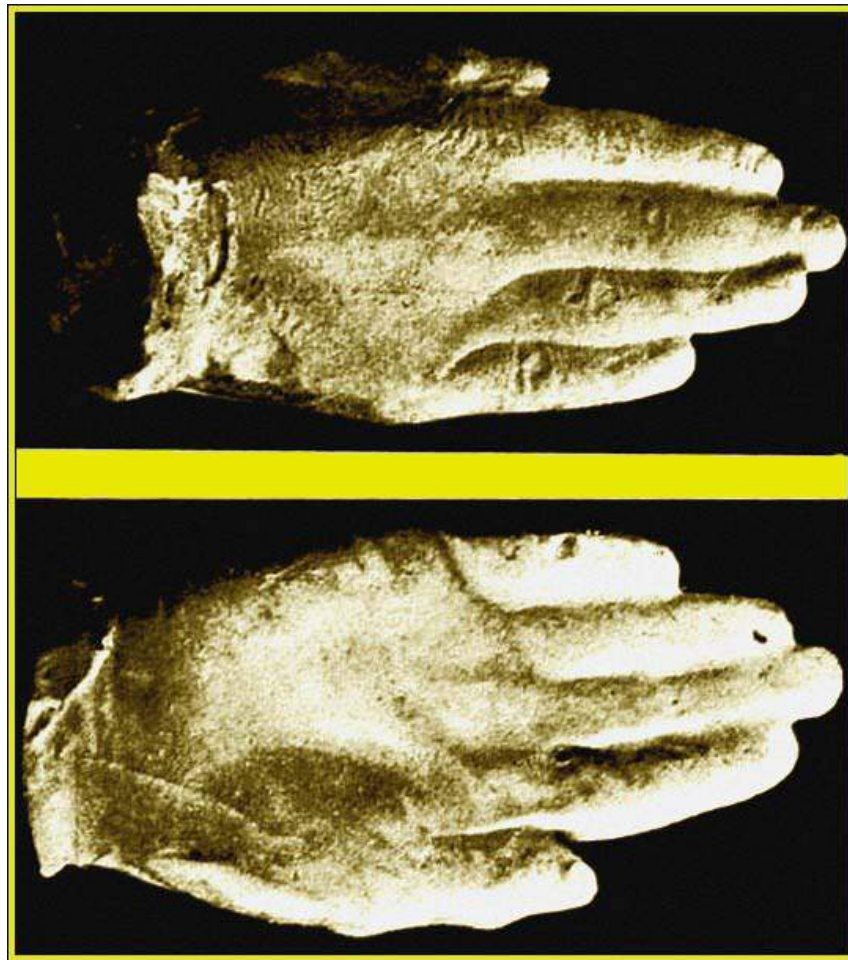
system, out through the bodies of sitters at wrists, hands, fingers, or elsewhere. These small particles, now free, have a considerable amount of latent energy inherent in them, an energy which can react on any human nervous system with which they come into contact. This stream of energized particles flows round the circle, probably partly on the periphery of their bodies. The stream, by gradual augmentation from the sitters, reaches the medium at high degree of "tension," energizes her, receives increment from her, traverses the circle again, and so on. Finally, when the "tension" is sufficiently great, the circulating process ceases, and the energized particles collect on or are attached to the nervous system of the medium, who has henceforth a reservoir from which to draw. The operators having now a good supply of the right kind of energy at their disposal, viz. nerve energy, can act upon the body of the medium, who is so constituted that gross matter from her body can, by means of the nervous tension applied to it, be actually temporarily detached from its usual position and projected into the séance room.³²

This is probably the first attempt at a clear explanation of what occurs at a séance for physical phenomena, and it is possible that it describes with fair accuracy what really takes place. In the following extract Dr. Crawford makes an important comparison between the earlier and later psychic manifestations, and also enunciates a bold comprehensive theory for all psychic phenomena:

I have compared the whitish, cloud-like appearance of the matter in the structure with photographs of materialization phenomena in all stages obtained with many different mediums all over the world, and the conclusion I have come to is that this material very closely resembles, if it is not identical with, the material used in all such materialization phenomena. In fact, it is not too much to say that this whitish, translucent, nebulous matter is the basis of all psychic phenomena of the physical order. Without it in some degree no physical phenomena are possible. It is what gives consistence to the structures of all kinds erected by the operators in the séance chamber; it is, when properly manipulated and applied, that which enables the structures to come into contact with the ordinary forms of matter with which we are acquainted,

³² The Reality Of Psychic Phenomena, p. 243.

whether such structures are ones similar to those with which I am particularly dealing, or whether they are materializations of bodily forms like hands or faces. Further, to me it appears likely that this matter will be found eventually to be the basis of the structures apparently erected for the manifestation of that peculiar form of phenomena known as the Direct Voice, while the phenomena known as Spirit Photography appear also to have it as a basis.³³



Plaster Cast of Ectoplasmic Hand.

Obtained by Dr. Geley and impossible of reproduction in any other fashion (Note the breadth of wrist as compared with hand).

³³ The Psychic Structures At The Goligher Circle, p. 19.

Whilst Crawford was working at his ectoplasmic rods at Belfast, Dr. Geley was checking the results obtained from Eva C. by a fresh series of experiments. He thus summarizes his observations on the phenomena which he observed:

A substance emanates from the body of the medium, it externalizes itself, and is amorphous or polymorphous in the first instance. This substance takes various forms, but in general it shows more or less composite organs. We may distinguish: (1) the substance as a substratum of materialization; (2) its organized development. Its appearance is generally announced by the presence of fluid, white and luminous flakes of a size ranging from that of a pea to that of a five-franc piece, and distributed here and there over the medium's black dress, principally on the left side. The substance itself emanates from the whole body of the medium, but especially from the natural orifices and the extremities, from the top of the head, from the breasts, and the tips of the fingers. The most usual origin, which is most easily observed, is that from the mouth. The substance occurs in various forms, sometimes as ductile dough, sometimes as a true protoplasmic mass, sometimes in the form of numerous thin threads, sometimes as cords of various thicknesses, or in the form of narrow rigid rays, or as a broad band, as a membrane, as a fabric, or as a woven material, with indefinite and irregular outlines. The most curious appearance is presented by a widely expanded membrane, provided with fringes and rucks, and resembling in appearance a net.

The amount of externalized matter varies within wide limits. In some cases it completely envelops the medium as in a mantle. It may have three different colours—white, black, or grey. The white colour is the most frequent, perhaps, because it is the most easily observed. Sometimes the three colours appear simultaneously. The visibility of the substance varies a great deal, and it may slowly increase or decrease in succession. To the touch it gives various impressions. Sometimes it is moist and cold, sometimes viscous and sticky, more rarely dry and hard. The substance is mobile. Sometimes it moves slowly up or down across the medium, on her shoulders, on her breast, or on her knees, with a creeping motion resembling a reptile. Sometimes the movements are sudden and quick. The substance appears and disappears like lightning and is extraordinarily sensitive. The substance is sensitive to light.

We have been able to give only a part of Dr. Geley's masterly analysis and description. This final passage deals with an important aspect:

During the whole time of the materialization phenomenon the product formed is in obvious physiological and psychical connexion with the medium. The physiological connexion is sometimes perceptible in the form of a thin cord joining the structure with the medium, which might be compared with the umbilical cord joining the embryo to its parent. Even if this cord is not visible, the physiological rapport is always close. Every impression received through the ectoplasm reacts upon the medium and vice versa. The sensation reflex of the structure coalesces with that of the medium; in a word, everything proves that the ectoplasm is the partly externalized medium herself.

If the details of this account are compared with those given earlier in this chapter, it will be seen at once how numerous are the points of resemblance. Ectoplasm in its fundamentals has ever been the same. After these confirmations it is not scepticism but pure ignorance which denies the existence of this strange material.

Eva C. came to London, as already stated, and held thirty-eight séances under the auspices 'of the Society for Psychical Research, but the report³⁴ is a very conflicting and unsatisfactory document. Dr. Schrenck Notzing was able to get yet another medium from whom he was able to demonstrate ectoplasm, the results roughly corresponding with those obtained in Paris. This was a lad of fourteen, Willie S. In the case of Willie S., Dr. Schrenck Notzing showed this new substance to a hundred picked observers, not one of whom was able to deny the evidence of his own senses. Among those who signed an affirmative statement were professors or ex-professors of Jena, Giessen, Heidelberg, Munich, Tubingen, Upsala, Freiburg, Basle, and other universities, together with a number of famous physicians, neurologists, and savants of every sort.

We can say, then, that there is no doubt of its existence. It cannot, however, be produced to order. It is a delicate operation which may fail. Thus several experimenters, notably a small committee of the Sorbonne, did fail. We have learned that it needs the right men and the right conditions, which

³⁴ *Proceedings Of The S.P.R.*, Vol. XXXII, pp. 209-343.

conditions are mental and spiritual, rather than chemical. A harmonious atmosphere will help, while a carping, antagonistic one will hinder or totally prevent its appearance. In this it shows its spiritual affinities and that it differs from a purely physical product.

What is it? It takes shape. Who determines the shape? Is it the mind of the entranced medium? Is it the mind of the observers? Is it some independent mind? Among the experimenters we have a material school who urge that we are finding some extraordinary latent property of the normal body, and we have another school, to which the author belongs, who believe that we have come upon a link which may be part of a chain leading to some new order of life. It should be added that there is nothing concerning it which has not been known to the old alchemists of the Middle Ages. This very interesting fact was brought to light by Mr. Foster Damon, of Harvard University, who gave a series of extracts from the works of Vaughan, a philosopher who lived about 1650, where under the name of the "First matter" or of "Mercury" a substance is described, drawn from the body, which has all the characteristics of ectoplasm. Those were the days when, between the Catholic Church on one side and the witch-finders of the Puritans on the other, the ways of the psychic researcher were hard. That is why the chemists of that day disguised their knowledge under fantastic names, and why that knowledge in consequence died out. When one realizes that by the Sun they meant the operator, by the Moon the subject, by the Fire the mesmeric force, and by Mercury the resulting ectoplasm, one has the key to some of their secrets.

The author has frequently seen ectoplasm in its vaporous, but only once in its solid, forma.³⁵ That was at a sitting with Eva C. under the charge of Madame Bisson. Upon that occasion this strange variable substance appeared as a streak of material six inches long, not unlike a section of the umbilical cord, embedded in the cloth of the dress in the region of the lower stomach. It was visible in good light, and the author was permitted to squeeze it between his fingers, when it gave the impression of a living substance, thrilling and shrinking under his touch. There was no possibility of deception upon this occasion.

³⁵ Save in the many instances when he has seen actual materialized faces or figures.

It is impossible to contemplate the facts known about ectoplasm without seeing their bearing upon psychic photography. The pictures photographed round Eva, with their hazy woolly fringe, are often exactly like the photographs obtained by Mr. Hope and others. The most rational opinion seems to be that ectoplasm once formed can be moulded by the mind, and that this mind may, in the simpler cases, simply be the mind of the unconscious medium. We forget sometimes that we are ourselves spirits, and that a spirit in the body has presumably similar powers to a spirit out of the body. In the more complex cases, and especially in psychic photography, it is abundantly clear that it is not the spirit of the medium which is at work, and that some more powerful and purposeful force has intervened.

Personally, the author is of opinion that several different forms of plasm with different activities will be discovered, the whole forming a separate science of the future which may well be called Plasmology. He believes also that all psychic phenomena external to the medium, including clairvoyance, may be traced to this source. Thus a clairvoyant medium may well be one who emits this or some analogous substance which builds up round him or her a special atmosphere that enables the spirit to manifest to those who have the power of perception. As the aerolite passing into the atmosphere of the earth is for a moment visible between two eternities of invisibility, so it may be that the spirit passing into the psychic atmosphere of the ectoplasmic medium can for a short time indicate its presence. Such speculations are beyond our present proofs, but Tyndall has shown how such exploratory hypotheses may become the spear-heads of truth. The reason why some people see a ghost and some do not may be that some furnish sufficient ectoplasm for a manifestation, and some do not, while the cold chill, the trembling, the subsequent faint, may be due not merely to terror but partly to the sudden drain upon the psychic supplies.

Apart from such speculations, the solid knowledge of ectoplasm, which we have now acquired, gives us at last a firm material basis for psychic research. When spirit descends into matter it needs such a material basis, or it is unable to impress our material senses. As late as 1891 Stainton Moses, foremost psychic of his day, was forced to say, "I know no more about the

method or methods by which materialized forms are produced than I did when I first saw them." Were he living now he could hardly say the same.

This new precise knowledge has been useful in giving us some rational explanation of those rapping sounds which were among the first phenomena to attract attention. It would be premature to say that they can only be produced in one way, but it may at least be stated that the usual method of their production is by the extension of a rod of ectoplasm, which may or may not be visible, and by its percussion on some solid object. It is probable that these rods may be the conveyers of strength rather than strong in themselves, as a small copper wire may carry the electric discharge which will disintegrate a battleship. In one of Crawford's admirable experiments, finding that the rods were coming from the chest of his medium, he soaked her blouse with liquid carmine, and then asked for raps upon the opposite wall. The wall was found to be studded with spots of red, the ectoplasmic protrusion having carried with it in each case some of the stain through which it passed. In the same way table-tilting, when genuine, would appear to be due to an accumulation of ectoplasm upon the surface, collected from the various sitters and afterwards used by the presiding intelligence. Crawford surmised that the extrusions must often possess suckers or claws at the end, so as to grip or to raise, and the author subsequently collected several photographs of these formations which show clearly a serrated edge at the end that would fulfil such a purpose.

Crawford paid great attention also to the correspondence between the weight of the ectoplasm emitted and the loss of weight in the medium. His experiments seemed to show that everyone is a medium, that everyone loses weight at a materializing séance, and that the chief medium only differs from the others in that she is so constituted that she can put out a larger ectoplasmic flow. If we ask why one human being should differ from another in this respect, we reach that barren controversy why one should have a fine ear for music and another be lost to all melody. We must take these personal attributes as we find them. In Crawford's experiments it was usual for the medium to lose as much as 10 or 15 lb. in a single sitting—the weight being restored to her immediately the ectoplasm was retracted. On one occasion the enormous loss of 52 lb. was recorded. One would have

thought that the scales were false upon this occasion were it not that even greater losses have been registered in the case of other mediums, as has already been recorded in the account of the experiments of Olcott with the Eddys.

There are some other properties of ectoplasmic protrusions which should be noted. Not only is light destructive to them unless they are gradually acclimatized or specially prepared beforehand by the controls, but the effect of a sudden flash is to drive the structure back into the medium with the force of a snapped elastic band. This is by no means a false claim in order to protect the medium from surprise, but it is a very real fact which has been verified by many observers. Any tampering with ectoplasm, unless its fraudulent production is a certainty, is to be deprecated, and the forcible dragging at the trumpet, or at any other object which is supported by the ectoplasmic rod, is nearly as dangerous as the exhibition of a light. The author has in mind one case where an ignorant sitter removed the trumpet, which was floating in front of him, from the circle. It was done silently, but none the less the medium complained of pain and sickness to those around her and was prostrated for some days. Another medium exhibited a bruise from the breast to the shoulder which was caused by the recoil of the hand when some would-be exposé flashed an electric torch. When the ectoplasm flies back to a mucoid surface the result may be severe hemorrhage, several instances of which have come within the author's personal notice. In one case, that of Susanna Harris, in Melbourne, the medium was confined to bed for a week after such an experience.

It is vain in a single chapter of a work which covers a large subject to give any detailed view of a section of that subject which might well have a volume to itself. Our knowledge of this strange, elusive, protean, all-pervading substance is likely to increase from year to year, and it may be prophesied that if the last generation has been occupied with protoplasm, the next will be engrossed with its psychic equivalent, which will, it is to be hoped, retain Charles Richet's name of ectoplasm, though various other words such as "plasm," "teleplasm," and "ideoplasm" are unfortunately already in circulation. Since this chapter was prepared fresh demonstrations of ectoplasm have occurred in various parts of the world, the most

noticeable being with "Margery," or Mrs. Crandon, of Boston, whose powers have been fully treated in Mr. Malcolm Bird's volume of that name.

CHAPTER 5. SPIRIT PHOTOGRAPHY

THE first authentic account of the production of what is called a spirit photograph dates from 1861. This result was obtained by William H. Mumler in Boston, U.S.A. In England in 1851 Richard Boursnell is said to have had a similar experience, but no early photograph of this nature has been preserved.³⁶ The first example in England capable of being verified occurred with the photographer Hudson, in 1872.



***Robert Bonner seated before a "spirit."
Photograph by William H. Mumler. Albumen silver print***

³⁶ A number of Mumler's "spirit" photographs have, in fact, been preserved and are now in the possession of the J. Paul Getty Museum, Los Angeles. Several reproductions of these are included in this edition of *The History of Spiritualism*. —RG.

Like the rise of modern Spiritualism, this new development was predicted from the Other Side. In 1856 Mr. Thomas Slater, an optician, residing at 136 Euston Road, London, was holding a séance with Lord Brougham and Mr. Robert Owen, when it was rapped out that the time would come when Mr. Slater would take spirit photographs. Mr. Owen remarked that if he were in the spirit world when that time came he would appear on the plate. In 1872, when Mr. Slater was experimenting in spirit photography, he is said to have obtained on a plate the face of Mr. Robert Owen and also that of Lord Brougham.³⁷ Alfred Russel Wallace was shown these results by Mr. Slater, and said:

The first of his successes contained two heads by the side of a portrait of his sister. One of these heads is unmistakably the late Lord Brougham's; the other, much less distinct, is recognized by Mr. Slater as that of Robert Owen, whom he knew intimately up to the time of his death.

After describing other spirit photographs obtained by Mr. Slater, Dr. Wallace goes on:

Now whether these figures are correctly identified or not, is not the essential point. The fact that any figures, so clear and unmistakably human in appearance as these, should appear on plates taken in his own private studio by an experienced optician and amateur photographer, who makes all his apparatus himself, and with no one present but the members of his own family, is the real marvel. In one case a second figure appeared on a plate with himself, taken by Mr. Slater when he was absolutely alone, by the simple process of occupying the sitter's chair after uncapping the camera.

Mr. Slater himself showed me all these pictures, and explained the conditions under which they were produced. That they are not impostures is certain, and as the first independent confirmations of what had been previously obtained only through professional photographers, their value is inestimable.

³⁷ *The Spiritualist*, Nov. 1, 1873. *Miracles And Modern Spiritualism*, 1901, p. 198.



Woman with "spirits" in the background.

Photograph by William H. Mumler. Albumen silver print.

From Mumler in 1861 to William Hope in our own day there have appeared some twenty to thirty recognized mediums for psychic photography, and between them they have produced thousands of those supernatural results which have come to be known as "extras." The best known of these sensitives, in addition to Hope and Mrs. Deane, are Hudson, Parkes, Wyllie, Buguet, Bournsell and Duguid.

Mumler, who was employed as an engraver by a leading firm of jewellers in Boston, was not a Spiritualist, nor a professional photographer. In an idle hour, while trying to take a photograph of himself in a friend's studio, he

obtained on the plate the outline of another figure. The method he adopted was to focus an empty chair, and after uncovering the lens, spring into position by the chair and stand until the requisite exposure was made. Upon the back of the photograph Mr. Mumler had written:

This photograph was taken of myself, by myself, on Sunday, when there was not a living soul in the room beside me—so to speak. The form on my right I recognize as my cousin, who passed away about twelve years since.

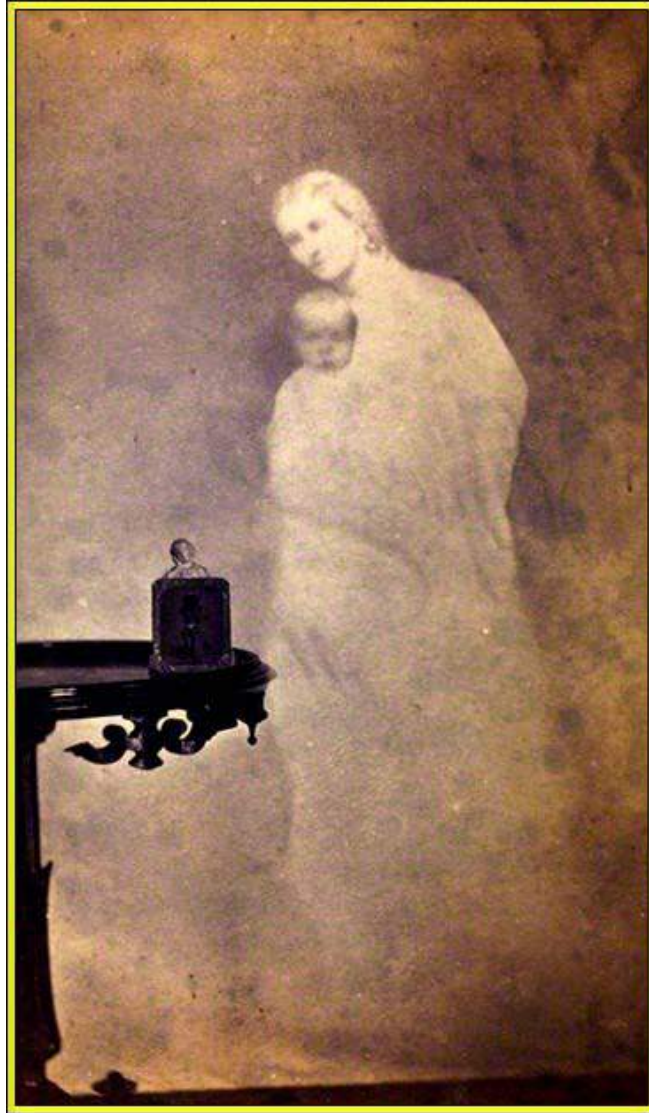
W. H. MUMLER.

The form is that of a young girl who appears to be sitting in the chair. The chair is distinctly seen through the body and arms, also the table upon which one arm rests. Below the waist, says a contemporary account, the form (which is apparently clothed in a dress with low neck and short sleeves) fades away into a dim mist, which simply clouds over the lower part of the picture. It is interesting to note features in this first spirit photograph which have been repeated many times in those obtained by later operators.

News of what had happened to Mumler quickly became known, and he was besieged with applications for sittings. He at first refused, but at last had to yield, and when further "extras" were obtained and his fame spread, he was compelled finally to give up his business and to devote himself to this new work. As his experiences have been, in the main, those of every psychic photographer who has succeeded him, we may glance briefly at them.

Private sitters of good repute obtained thoroughly evidential and recognizable pictures of friends and relatives, and were perfectly satisfied that the results were genuine. Then came professional photographers who were certain that there must be some trick, and that if they were given the opportunity of testing under their own conditions they would discover how it was done. They came one after another, in some cases with their own plates, camera, and chemicals, but after directing and supervising all the operations, were unable to discover any trickery. Mumler also went to their photographic studios and allowed them to do all the handling and developing of the plates, with the same result. Andrew Jackson Davis, who was at that time the editor and publisher of *The Herald Of Progress* in New York, sent a professional photographer, Mr. William Guay, to make a

thorough investigation. He reported that after he had been allowed to control the whole of the photographic process, there appeared on the plate a spirit picture. He experimented with this medium on several other occasions, and was convinced of his genuineness.



*Spirit wife & baby of Mr. Chapin, oil merchant.
Photograph by William H. Mumler. Albumen silver print.*

Another photographer, Mr. Horace Weston, was sent to investigate by Mr. Black, the famous portrait photographer of Boston. When he returned, after having duly obtained a spirit picture, he said he could detect nothing in the operations that differed from those employed in taking an ordinary

photograph. Then Black went himself and personally performed all the manipulation of plates and development. As he watched one of the plates developing and saw appearing on it another form besides his own, and finally found it to be that of a man leaning his arm on his shoulder, he exclaimed in his excitement, "My God, is it possible?"

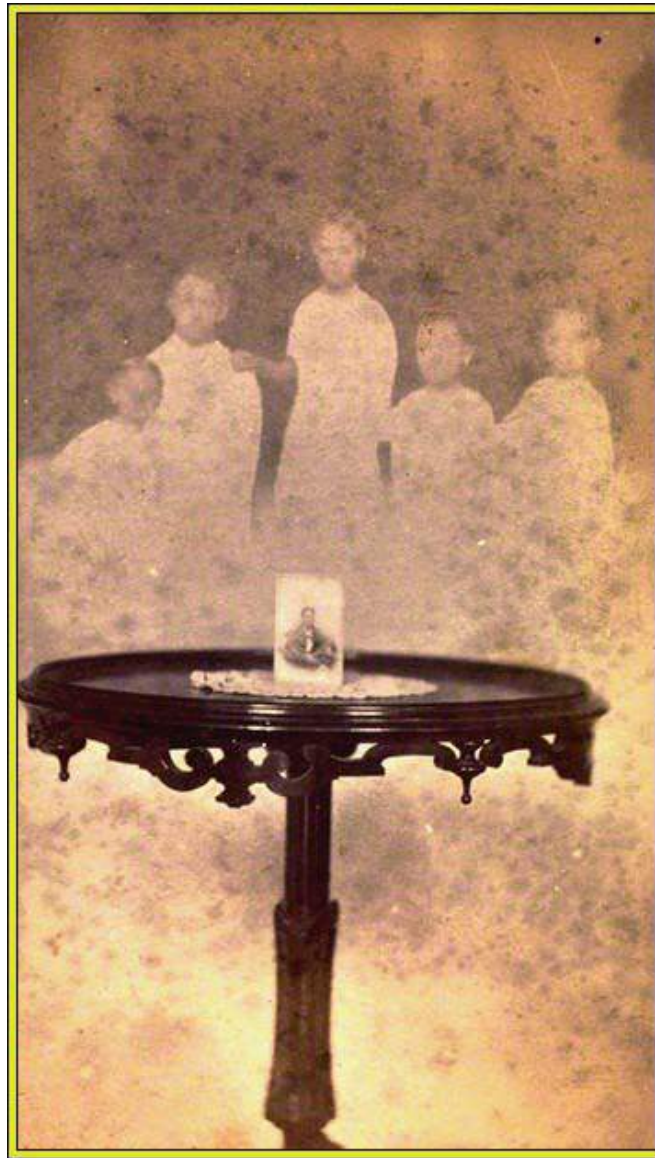
Mumler had more applications for sittings than he could find time for, and appointments were made for weeks ahead. These came from all classes – ministers, doctors, lawyers, judges, mayors, professors, and business men being mentioned as among those particularly interested. A full account of the various evidential results obtained by Mumler will be found in contemporary records.³⁸

In 1863 Mumler, like so many other photographic mediums since his day, found on his plates "extras" of living persons. His strongest supporters were unable to accept this new and startling phenomenon, and while holding to their former belief in his powers, were convinced that he had resorted to trickery. Dr. Gardner, in a letter to the *Banner Of Light* (Boston, February 20, 1863), referring to this fresh development, writes:

While I am fully of the belief that genuine spirit likenesses have been produced through his mediumship, evidence of deception in two cases, at least, has been furnished me, which is perfectly conclusive. Mr. Mumler, or some person connected with Mrs. Stuart's rooms, has been guilty of deception in palming off as genuine spirit likenesses pictures of a person who is now living in this city.

What made the case even more conclusive to the accusers was the fact that the same "extra" of the living person appeared on two different plates. This "exposure" set the tide of public opinion against him, and in 1868 Mumler departed for New York. Here his business prospered for a time until he was arrested by order of the mayor of New York, at the instance of a newspaper reporter who had received an unrecognized "extra." After a lengthy trial he was discharged without a stain on his character. The evidence of professional photographers who were not Spiritualists was strongly in Mumler's favour.

³⁸ *The Spiritual Magazine*, 1862, p. 562; 1863, pp. 34-41.



*Five "spirits" hovering behind a table.
Photograph by William H. Mumler. Albumen silver print.*

Mr. Jeremiah Gurney testified:

I have been a photographer for twenty-eight years; I have witnessed Mumler's process, and although I went prepared to scrutinize everything, I could find nothing which savoured of fraud or trickery; the only thing out of the usual routine being the fact that the operator kept his hand on the camera.

Mumler, who died in poverty in 1884, has left an interesting and convincing narrative of his career in his book, "Personal Experiences of William H. Mumler in Spirit Photography,"³⁹ a copy of which is to be seen at the British Museum.

Hudson, who obtained the first spirit photograph in England of which we have objective evidence, is said to have been about sixty years of age at that time (March, 1872). The sitter was Miss Georgiana Houghton, who has fully described the incident. There is abundant testimony to Hudson's work. Mr. Thomas Slater) already quoted, took his own camera and plates, and after minute observation reported that "collusion or trickery was altogether out of the question." Mr. William Howitt, a stranger to the medium, went unannounced and received a recognized "extra" of his two deceased boys. He pronounced the photographs to be "perfect and unmistakable."

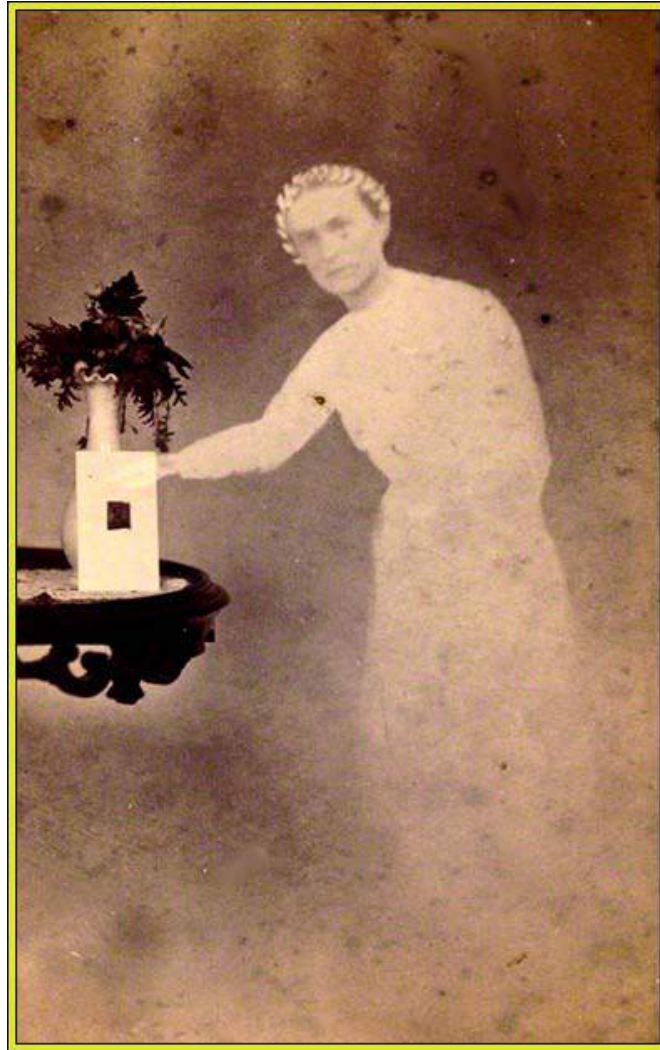
Dr. Alfred Russel Wallace secured a good picture of his mother. Describing his visit he says⁴⁰:

I sat three times, always choosing my own position. Each time a second figure appeared in the negative with me. The first was a male figure with a short sword, the second a full-length figure, standing apparently a few feet on one side and rather behind me, looking down at me and holding a bunch of flowers. At the third sitting, after placing myself, and after the prepared plate was in the camera, I asked that the figure would come close to me. The third plate exhibited a female figure standing close in front of me, so that the drapery covers the lower part of my body. I saw all the plates developed, and in each case the additional figure started out the moment the developing fluid was poured on, while my portrait did not become visible till, perhaps, twenty seconds later. I recognized none of these figures in the negatives; but the moment I got the proofs, the first glance showed me that the third plate contained an unmistakable portrait of my mother—like her both in features and expression; not such a likeness as a portrait taken during life, but a somewhat pensive, idealized likeness yet still, to me, an unmistakable likeness.

³⁹ Boston, 1875. *Chronicles Of The Photographs Of Spiritual Beings, etc.*, 1882, p. 2.

⁴⁰ *Miracles And Modern Spiritualism* (Revised Edition 1901), pp. 196-7.

The second portrait, though indistinct, was also recognized by Dr. Wallace as a picture of his mother. The first "extra" of a man was unrecognized.



***Female "spirit" standing next to a table.
Photograph by William H. Mumler. Albumen silver print.***

Mr. J. Traill Taylor, who was then editor of the *British Journal Of Photography*, testified⁴¹ that he secured supernatural results with this medium, using his own plates, "and that at no time during the preparation, exposure, or development of the pictures was Mr. Hudson within ten feet of the camera or dark room." Surely this must be accepted as final.

⁴¹ *British Journal Of Photography*, August, 1873.

Mr. F. M. Parkes, living at Grove Road, Bow, in the East End of London, was a natural psychic who had veridical visions from his childhood. He knew nothing of Spiritualism until it was brought to his notice in 1871, and early in the following year he experimented in photography with his friend Mr. Reeves, the proprietor of a dining-room near King's Cross. He was then in his thirty-ninth year. At first only irregular markings and patches of light appeared on the plates, but after three months a recognized spirit extra was obtained, the sitters being Dr. Sexton and Dr. Clarke, of Edinburgh. Dr. Sexton invited Mr. Bowman, of Glasgow, an experienced photographer, to make a thorough examination of the camera, the dark room and all the appliances in use. This he did, and declared imposition on the part of Parkes to be impossible. For some years this medium took no remuneration for his services. Mr. Stainton Moses, who has devoted a chapter to Mr. Parkes, writes:

On turning over Mr. Parkes's album, the most striking point is the enormous variety of the designs; the next, perhaps, the utterly unlike character of most of them, and their total dissimilarity to the conventional ghost. Out of 110 that lie before me now, commencing from April 1872, and with some intermissions extending down to present date, there are not two that are alike—scarcely two that bear any similarity to each other. Each design is peculiar to itself, and bears upon the face of it marks of individuality.

Human Nature, 1875, p. 152.

He states that a considerable number of the photographs were recognized by the sitters.

M. Ed. Buguet, the French spirit photographer, visited London in June, 1874, and at his studio at 33 Baker Street had many well-known sitters. Mr. Harrison, editor of *The Spiritualist*, speaks of a test employed by this photographer, namely, cutting off a corner of the glass plate and fitting it to the negative after development. Mr. Stainton Moses describes Buguet as a tall, thin man, with earnest face and clearly-cut features, with an abundance of bushy black hair. During the exposure of a plate he was said to be in partial trance. The psychic results he obtained were of far higher artistic quality and distinctness than those obtained by other mediums. Also a big

percentage of the spirit forms were recognized. A curious feature with Buguet was that he obtained a number of portraits of the "double" of sitters, as well as of those living, but not present, with him in the studio. Thus Stainton Moses, while lying in a state of trance in London, had his picture appear on a plate in Paris when Mr. Gledstones was the sitter.⁴²

In April, 1875, Buguet was arrested and charged by the French Government with producing fraudulent spirit photographs. To save himself he confessed that all his results had been obtained by trickery. He was sentenced to a fine of five hundred francs and imprisonment for one year. At the trial a number of well-known public men maintained their belief in the genuineness of the "extras" they had obtained, in spite of the production of dummy "ghosts" said to have been used by Buguet. The truth of spirit photography does not rest with this medium, but those who are interested enough to read the full account of his arrest and trial⁴³ should be able to form their own conclusions. Writing after the trial, Mr. Stainton Moses says: "I not only believe—I know, as surely as I know anything, that some of Budget's pictures were genuine."

Coates says, however, that Buguet was a worthless fellow. Certainly the position of a man who can only prove that he is not a rogue by admitting that he made a false confession out of fear is a weak one. The case for psychic photography would be stronger without him. As to his confession, it was extracted from him by a criminal action which the Roman Catholic Archbishop of Toulouse took against the *Revue Spirite*, when Leymarie, the editor, was tried and condemned. Buguet was told that his one chance was to confess. Thus pressed, he did what so many victims of the Inquisition had done before him, and made a forced confession, which did not save him, however, from twelve months' imprisonment.

Richard Boursnell (1832-1909) occupied a prominent position in the middle period of the history of spirit photography. He was in partnership with a professional photographer in Fleet Street, and is said to have had psychic markings, with occasional hands and faces, on his plates as early as 1851. His partner accused him of not cleaning the plates properly (those were the

⁴² *Human Nature*, Vol. IX, p. 97.

⁴³ *The Spiritualist*, Vols. VI, VII (1875), and *Human Nature*, Vol. IX, p. 334.

days of the wet collodion process), and after an angry dispute Boursnell said he would have nothing more to do with that side of the business. It was nearly forty years later before he again got markings, and then extra forms, with his photographs, much to his annoyance, because it meant injury to his business and the destruction of many plates. With great difficulty Mr. W. T. Stead persuaded him to allow him to have sittings. Under his own conditions, Mr. Stead obtained repeatedly what the old photographer called "shadow pictures." At first they were not recognized, but later on several that were thoroughly identified were obtained. Mr. Stead gives particulars of precautions observed in marking plates, etc., but says that he attaches little importance to these, considering that the appearance on the plate of a recognized likeness of an unknown relative of an unknown sitter a test far superior to precautions which any expert conjurer or trick photographer might evade. He says:

Again and again I sent friends to Mr. Boursnell giving him no information as to who they were, or telling him anything as to the identity of the person's deceased friend or relative whose portrait they wished to secure, and time and again when the negative was developed, the portrait would appear in the background, or sometimes in front of the sitter. This occurred so frequently that I am quite convinced of the impossibility of any fraud. One time it was a French editor, who, finding the portrait of his deceased wife appear on the negative when developed, was so transported with delight that he insisted on kissing the photographer, Mr. B., much to the old man's embarrassment. On another occasion it was a Lancashire engineer, himself a photographer, who took marked plates and all possible precautions. He obtained portraits of two of his relatives and another of an eminent personage with whom he had been in close relations. Or again, it was a near neighbour who, going as a total stranger to the studio, obtained the portrait of her deceased daughter.

In 1903 the Spiritualists of London presented this medium with a purse of gold and a testimonial signed by over a hundred representative Spiritualists. On this occasion the walls of the rooms of the Psychological Society in George Street, Portman Square, were hung with three hundred chosen spirit photographs taken by Boursnell.

With regard to Mr. Stead's point about the "recognized likeness," critics declare that the sitter often imagines the likeness, and that at times two sitters have claimed the same "extra" as a relative. In answer to this it may be said that Dr. Alfred Russel Wallace, for instance, ought to be the best judge whether the picture was a likeness of his dead mother. Dr. Cushman (of whom we shall speak later) submitted the "extra" of his daughter Agnes to a number of his friends and relations, and all were convinced of the likeness. But irrespective of any certainty about the likeness, there is overwhelming evidence that these supernormal portraits really do occur, and in thousands of cases they have been recognized.

Mr. Edward Wyllie (1848-1911) had genuine mediumistic gifts which were tested by a number of qualified investigators. He was born in Calcutta, his father, Colonel Robert Wyllie, having been military secretary to the Government of India. Wyllie, who served as a captain in the Maori war in New Zealand, afterwards took up photography there. He went to California in 1886. After a time spots of light began to show on his negatives, and as they increased threatened to destroy his business. He had never heard of spirit photography until a lady sitter suggested this as a possible explanation. Experimenting with her, faces appeared on the plate in the spots of light. Thenceforth these faces came so often with other sitters that he was compelled to give up his usual business and devote himself to spirit photography. But here he encountered fresh trouble. He was accused of obtaining his results by fraud, and this so wounded him that he tried to earn his living in some other way, but he did not succeed, and had to come back to work as a photo-medium, as he was called. On November 27, 1900, the committee of the Pasadena Society for Psychical Research conducted an investigation with him at Los Angeles. The following questions which were asked, and answered by Wyllie, are of historical interest:

Q. Do you advertise or promise to get spirit faces, or something out of the ordinary for your sitters?

A. Not at all. I neither guarantee nor promise anything. I have no control over it. I merely charge for my time and material, as you see stated on the card there against the wall. I charge one dollar for a sitting; and if the first one is not satisfactory, I give a second trial without extra charge.

Q. Do you sometimes fail to get anything extra?

A. Oh, yes, often. Last Saturday, working all afternoon, I gave five sittings and didn't get a thing.

Q. About what proportion of such failures do you have?

A. I should say, with an ordinary day's business, they would average three or four failures a day—some days more and some less.

Q. About what proportion of the extra faces that do appear do you estimate are recognized by the sitter or friends?

A. For several months last year I kept a record on this point, and I found that in about two-thirds of the sittings some one or more of the extra faces appearing were recognized. Sometimes there would be only one extra face, and sometimes five or six, or even eight at once, and I couldn't keep a tally of them, but only of the total number of sittings, as shown by my book account.

Q. When a sitting is made, do you know as a psychic whether there will be any "extras" on the plate or not?

A. Sometimes I see lights about the sitter, and then I feel pretty sure there will be something for him or her; but just what it will be I don't know, any more than you do. I don't know what it is until I see it on the negative after it is developed so I can hold it up to the light.

Q. If the sitter strongly desires some particular discarnate friend to appear on the plate, is he more likely to get that result?

A. No. A wrought-up or tense state of mind or feeling, whether of desire or anxiety or antagonism, makes it more difficult for the spirit forces to use the sitter's magnetism towards producing their manifestations, so it is less likely that anything extra will then come on the plate. An easy, restful, passive condition is most favourable for good results.

Q. Do those who are Spiritualists get better results than disbelievers?

A. No. Some of the best test results I have ever had came when the strongest sceptics were in the chair.

With this committee no "extras" were obtained. An earlier committee of seven in 1899 submitted the medium to strict tests, and four plates out of eight "showed results for which the committee are unable to account." After a minute account of the precautions taken, the report concludes:

As a committee we have no theory, and testify only to "that which we do know." Individually we differ as to probable causes, but unanimously agree concerning the palpable facts. We will give twenty-five dollars to any Los Angeles photographer who by trick or skill will produce similar results under similar conditions.

(Signed)—Julian McCrae, P. C. Campbell, J. W. Mackie, W. N. Slocum, John Henley.

David Duguid (1832-1907), the well-known medium for automatic writing and painting, had the benefit of careful investigation of his spirit photographs by Mr. J. Traill Taylor, editor of the *British Journal Of Photography*, who in the course of a paper read by him before the London and Provincial Photographic Association on March 9, 1893, gave an account of recent test sittings with this medium. He says:

My conditions were exceedingly simple. They were, that I for the nonce would assume them all to be tricksters, and to guard against fraud, should use my own camera and unopened packages of dry plates purchased from dealers of repute, and that I should be excused from allowing a plate to go out of my own hand till after development, unless I felt otherwise disposed; but that, as I was to treat them as under suspicion, so they must treat me, and that every act I performed must be in the presence of two witnesses, nay, that I would set a watch upon my own camera in the guise of a duplicate one of the same focus—in other words, I would use a binocular stereoscopic camera and dictate all the conditions of operation.

After giving details of the procedure adopted, he records the appearance on the plates of extra figures, and continues:

Some were in focus, others not so; some were lighted from the right, while the sitter was so from the left some monopolized the major portion of the plate, quite obliterating the material sitters; others were as if an atrociously badly

vignetted portrait, or one cut oval out of a photograph by a can-opener, or equally badly clipped out, were held up behind the sitter. But here is the point not one of these figures which came out so strongly in the negative was visible in any form or shape to me during the time of exposure in the camera, and I vouch in the strongest manner for the fact that no one whatever had an opportunity of tampering with any plate anterior to its being placed in the dark slide or immediately preceding development. Pictorially they are vile, but how came they there?

Other well-known sitters have described remarkable evidential results obtained with Duguid.⁴⁴

Mr. Stainton Moses, in the concluding chapter of his valuable series on Spirit Photography, discusses the theory that the extra forms photographed are moulded from ectoplasm (he speaks of it as the "fluidic substance") by the invisible operators, and makes important comparisons between the results obtained by different photographic mediums.

Mr. John Beattie's "valuable and conclusive experiments," as Dr. Alfred Russel Wallace calls them, can only be referred to briefly. Mr. Beattie, of Clifton, Bristol, who was a retired photographer of twenty years' standing, felt very doubtful about the genuineness of many of the alleged spirit photographs which had been shown to him, and determined to investigate for himself. Without any professional medium, but in the presence of an intimate friend who was a trance sensitive, he and his friend Dr. G.S. Thomson, of Edinburgh, conducted a series of experiments in 1872 and obtained on the plates first patches of light and, later on, entire extra figures. They found that the extra forms and markings showed up on the plate during development much in advance of the sitter a peculiarity often observed by other operators. Mr. Beattie's thorough honesty is vouched for by the editor of the *British Journal Of Photography*. Mr. Stainton Moses⁴⁵ and others supply details of the above experiments.

The London *Daily Mail* in 1908 appointed a Commission to make "an inquiry into the genuineness or otherwise of what are called spirit photographs,"

⁴⁴ James Coates, *Photographing The Invisible* (1921), and Andrew Glendinning, *The Veil Lifted* (1894).

⁴⁵ *Human Nature*, Vols. VIII. and IX., 1874-5. *Human Nature*, Vol. VIII., 1874, p. 390 et seq.

but it came to naught. It was composed of three non-Spiritualists, Messrs. R. Child Bayley, F. J. Mortimer, and E. Sanger-Shepherd, and three supporters of spirit photography, Messrs. A. P. Sinnett, E. R. Serocold Skeels, and Robert King. In the course of the report of the latter three they state that they:

...can only agree to report that the Commission has failed to secure proof that spirit photography is possible, not because evidence to that effect is otherwise than very abundant, but by reason of the unfortunate and unpractical attitude adopted by those members of the commission who had no previous experience of the subject.

Particulars of the Commission will be found in *Light*.⁴⁶ In recent years the history of spirit photography has largely centred round what is known as the Crewe Circle, which is now composed of Mr. William Hope and Mrs. Buxton, both living at Crewe. The Circle was formed about 1905, but did not attract attention until it was discovered by Archdeacon Colley in 1908. Mr. Hope, describing his first experiences, says that while working in a factory near Manchester, he took a photograph one Saturday afternoon of a fellow-workman whom he posed in front of a brick wall. When the plate was developed there was to be seen, in addition to the photograph of his friend, the form of a woman standing by his side, with the brick wall showing through her. The man asked Hope how he had put the other figure there, saying that he recognized it as that of his sister who had been dead some years. Mr. Hope says:

I knew nothing at all about Spiritualism then. We took the photograph to the works on Monday, and a Spiritualist there said it was what was called a Spirit photograph. He suggested that we should try again on the following Saturday at the same place with the same camera, which we did, and not only the same lady came on the plate again, but a little child with her. I thought this very strange, and it made me more interested, and I went on with my experiments. For a long time Hope destroyed all the negatives on which he obtained spirit pictures, until Archdeacon Colley became acquainted with him and told him he must preserve them.

⁴⁶ *Light*, 1908, p. 526, and 1909, pp. 290, 307, 329.

Archdeacon Colley had his first sitting with the Crewe Circle on March 16, 1908. He brought his own camera (a Lancaster quarter-plate which Mr. Hope still uses), his own diamond-marked plates and dark slides, and developed plates with his own chemicals. All that Mr. Hope did was to press the bulb for the exposure. On one of the plates were two spirit pictures.

Since that early day, Mr. Hope and Mrs. Buxton have taken thousands of spirit photographs under every imaginable test, and they are proud to be able to say that they have never charged a penny as professional fees, only charging for the actual photographic materials used and for their time.

Mr. M. J. Vearncombe, a professional photographer in Bridgwater, Somerset, had the same disturbing experience as Wyllie, Bournell, and others in finding unaccountable patches of light appear on his plates, and, like them, he came to take spirit photographs.

In 1920 Mr. Fred Barlow, of Birmingham, a well-known investigator, obtained with this medium extras of faces and written messages, under test conditions, on plates that were not exposed in the camera.⁴⁷ Since that date Mr. Vearncombe has secured many evidential results.

Mrs. Deane's mediumship is of recent date (her first spirit photograph was in June, 1920). She has obtained many recognized "extras" under test conditions, and her work is sometimes equal to the best of her predecessors in this branch. Recently she has achieved two very fine results. Dr. Allerton Cushman, a well-known American scientist and Director of the National Laboratories at Washington, paid an unexpected visit to the British College of Psychic Science at Holland Park in July, 1921, and obtained through Mrs. Deane a beautiful and well-recognized "extra" of his deceased daughter. Full details of this sitting will be found recorded, with photographs, in the *Journal of the American Society for Psychical Research*. The other result was on November 11, 1922, on the occasion of the Great Silence, on Armistice Day, in Whitehall, when in a photograph of the immense concourse of people gathered in the vicinity of the Cenotaph many spirit faces are discernible, and a number of them were recognized. This was repeated on three successive years.

⁴⁷ See *Light*, 1920, p. 190. March 1922, pp. 132-47.

Modern researches have proved that these psychic results are not obtained, in some instances at least, through the lens of the camera. On many occasions, under test conditions, these supernormal pictures have been secured from an unopened box of plates, held between the hands of the sitter or sitters. Also, when the experiment has been tried of using two cameras, if any "extra" appears, it is found in one camera, not in both. A theory held is that the image is precipitated on the photographic plate, or that a psychic screen is applied to the plate.

The author may perhaps say a few words upon his own personal experience, which has been chiefly with the Crewe Circle and with Mrs. Deane. In the case of the latter there have always been results, but in no case were the "extras" recognized. The author is well aware of Mrs. Deane's psychic power, which has been conspicuously shown during the long series of experiments held by Mr. Warrick under every possible test condition, and fully reported in *Psychic Science*.⁴⁸ His own experiences have, however, never been evidential, and if he relied only upon them he could not speak with any certainty. He used Mrs. Deane's own plates, and he has a strong feeling that the faces may be precipitated upon them during the days of preparation when she carries the packet upon her person. She is under the impression that she can facilitate her results in this way, but she is probably quite mistaken, for the Cushman case was extempore. It is also on record that a trick was once played upon her at the Psychic College, her own packet being taken away and another substituted. In spite of this "extras" were obtained. She would be well advised, therefore, if she abandoned methods which make her results, however genuine, so vulnerable to attack.

It is otherwise with Mr. Hope. On the various occasions when the author has sat with him he has always brought his own plates, has marked them in the dark room, and has handled and developed them himself.

Since writing the above, the author has tested the medium with his own plates, marked and developed by himself. He obtained six psychic results in eight experiments. In nearly every case an "extra" has been obtained, that "extra"—though there has never yet been a clear recognition – has certainly

⁴⁸ July, 1925.

been abnormal in its production. Mr. Hope has endured the usual attacks from ignorance or malice to which every medium is exposed, but he has emerged from them with his honour unblemished.

Some mention should be made of the remarkable results of Mr. Staveley Bulford, a talented psychic student, who has produced most excellent genuine psychic photographs. No one can look over his scrapbook and note the gradual development of his gift from mere blotches of light to very perfect faces without being convinced of the reality of the process.

The subject is still obscure, and all the author's personal experience goes to support the view that in a certain number of cases nothing external is ever built up, but the effect is produced by a sort of ray carrying a picture upon it which can penetrate solids, such as the wall of the dark slide, and imprint its effect upon the plate. The experiment, already cited, where two cameras have been trained simultaneously, with the medium midway between them, appears to be conclusive, since it showed a result on one plate and not on the other. The author has obtained results on plates which never left the dark slide, quite as vivid as any which have been exposed to light. It is probable that if Hope never took the cap off the lens his results would often be the same.

Whatever the eventual explanation, the only hypothesis which at present covers the facts is that of a wise invisible Intelligence, presiding over the operation and working in his own fashion, which shows different results with different circles. So standardized are the methods of each that the author would undertake to tell at a glance which photographer had taken any print submitted to him. Supposing such an Intelligence to have the powers claimed, we can then at once see why every normal photographic law is violated, why shadows and lights no longer agree, and why, in short, a whole series of traps are laid for the ordinary conventional critic. We can understand also, since the picture is simply built up by the Intelligence and shot on to the plate, why we find results which are reproductions of old pictures and photographs, and why it is as possible that the face of a living man may appear on the plate as that of a disembodied spirit. In one instance, quoted by Dr. Henslow, the reproduction of a rare Greek script from the British Museum appeared in one of the plates from Hope, with a

slight change in the Greek which showed that it was not a copy.⁴⁹ Here apparently the Intelligence had noted the inscription, had shot it on to the plate, but had made some small slip of memory in the conveyance. This explanation has the disconcerting corollary that the mere fact that we get the psychic photograph of a dead friend is no proof at all that the friend is really present. It is only when that fact is independently asserted in some séance, before or after, that we get something in the nature of proof.

In his experiments with Hope the author has seemed to catch a glimpse of the process by which the objective photographs are built up—so much so that he has been able to arrange a series of slides which exhibit the various stages. The first of these slides—taken with Mr. William Jeffrey, of Glasgow, as a sitter—shows a sort of cocoon of thinly veined, filmy material which we must call ectoplasm, since the various plasms have not yet been subdivided. It is as tenuous as a great soap bubble and has nothing within: This would appear to be the containing envelope within which the process is carried on, force being collected there as in an earthly medium's cabinet. In the next slide one sees that a face has formed inside the cocoon, and that the cocoon is opening down the centre. Various stages of this opening are seen. Finally, the face looks out with the cocoon festooned back, and forming an arch over the face, and a hanging veil on either side of it. This veil is highly characteristic of Hope's pictures, and when it is wanting one may argue that there was no objective presence and that the effect is really a psychograph. The veil or mantilla effect in various forms may be traced back through the whole series of previous photographs, and is especially noticeable in one taken by an amateur on the West Coast of Africa, where the dark spirit has thick folds over the head and down to the ground. When similar results are obtained at Crewe and at Lagos, it is only common sense to agree that a common law is at work.

In pointing out the evidence for the psychic cocoon, the author hopes that he has made some small contribution to the better understanding of the mechanism of psychic photography. It is a very true branch of psychic science, as every earnest investigator will discover. We cannot deny, however, that it has been occasionally made the tool of rogues, nor can we

⁴⁹ *Proofs Of The Truths Of Spiritualism*, p. 218. Henslow.

confidently assert that, because some results of any medium are genuine, we are therefore justified in accepting without question whatever else may come.

CHAPTER 6. VOICE MEDIUMSHIP AND MOULDS

IT is impossible to devote separate chapters to each form of psychic power, as the result would far transcend the limits of this work, but the phenomena of voice production and also of moulds are so clear and evidential that some fuller account of them may not be superfluous.

Many thousands of people can echo the words of job, "And I heard a voice," meaning a voice coming from someone not living on earth. And they can say this with the assurance of conviction, after a series of exhaustive tests. "The Bible narrative abounds with instances of this phenomenon,⁵⁰ and the psychic records of modern times show that here, as in other supernormal manifestations, what happened at the dawn of the world is happening still.

Historic instances of voice messages are those of Socrates and Joan of Arc, though it is not clear that in either case the voice was audible to others. It is in the light of the fuller knowledge which has come to us that we may conclude with some probability that the voices they heard were of the same supernormal character as those with which we are acquainted to-day.

Mr. F.W.H. Myers would have us believe that the Daemon of Socrates was "a profounder stratum of the sage himself," which was communicating with "the superficial or conscious stratum." And in the same way he would explain the voices which came to Joan. But in saying this he is not explaining anything. What are we to think of the reports that ancient statues spoke? The learned, anonymous author, said to have been Dr. Leonard Marsh, of Vermont University, of that curious book "Apocatastasis; or Progress Backwards," quotes Nonnus as saying:

Concerning this statue (of Apollo), where it stood, and how it spoke, I have said nothing. It is to be understood, however, that there was a statue at Delphi which emitted an inarticulate voice. For you must know that spirits speak with inarticulate voices because they have no organs by which they can speak articulately.

⁵⁰ See Usborne Moore's *The Voices* (1913), p. 433. *Journal Of The S.P.R.*, Vol. III., 1887, p. 131.

Dr. Marsh comments on this:

The author seems not to have been well informed in regard to the speaking power of the spirits, since all ancient history declares that their voice was often heard in the air, speaking articulately, and repeating the same words in different places; and this was called, and universally known, by the name of "Vox Divina."

He goes on to say that with the statue mentioned the spirit was evidently experimenting with the perverse material of which it was made (probably stone) to see if he could make it articulate, but could not succeed because the statue had "no larynx or other organs of voice, as modern mediums have." Dr. Marsh in his book set out to show that the Spiritualistic phenomena at that time (1854) were crude and immature in comparison with ancient spirit intercourse. The ancients, he says, spoke of it as a science, and asserted that the knowledge obtained by it was certain and reliable, "in spite of all fraudulent daemons." Granting that the priest was a voice medium, the speaking oracle is easily explained.

It is worth noting that the Voice, which was one of the first forms of mediumship associated with modern Spiritualism, is still prominent, whereas many other aspects of earlier mediumship have become rare. As there are a number of competent investigators who consider that voice phenomena are among the most convincing of psychic manifestations, let us glance at the records.

Jonathan Koons, the Ohio farmer, appears to have been the first of the modern mediums with whom it appeared. In the log-hut already mentioned, called his "Spirit Room," he had in 1852, and for some years after, a number of surprising phenomena, included among which were spirit voices speaking through a tin megaphone or "trumpet." Mr. Charles Partridge, a well-known public man, who was an early investigator, thus describes hearing the spirit known as John King speak at a séance at the Koons's in 1855:

At the close of the séance the spirit of King, as is his custom, took up the trumpet and gave a short lecture through it—speaking audibly and distinctly, presenting the benefits to be derived both in time and eternity from intercourse with spirits, and exhorting us to be discreet and bold in speech,

diligent in our investigations, faithful to the responsibilities which those privileges impose, charitable towards those who are in ignorance or error, tempering our zeal with wisdom, etc.

Professor Mapes, the well-known American chemist, said that in the presence of the Davenports he conversed for half an hour with John King, whose voice was loud and distinct. Mr. Robert Cooper, one of the biographers of the Davenport Brothers, often heard King's voice in daylight, and in the moonlight when walking in the street with the Davenports.

At the present day we have come to have some idea of the process through which the voices are produced at a séance. This knowledge, by the way, has been corroborated by communications received from the spirits themselves.

It appears that ectoplasm coming chiefly from the medium, but also in a lesser degree from the sitters, is used by the spirit operators to fashion something resembling a human larynx. This they use in the production of the voice.

In the explanation given to Koons by the spirits they spoke of using a combination of the elements of the spiritual body, and what corresponds to our modern ectoplasm, "a physical aura which emanates from the medium." Compare this with the spirit explanation given through Mrs. Bassett, a well-known English voice medium in the 'seventies: "They say they take the emanations from the medium and other members of the circle, wherewith they make speaking apparatus which they use to talk with."⁵¹

Mrs. Mary Marshall (died 1875), who was the first English public medium, was the channel for voices coming from John King and others. In London in 1869 Mr. W. H. Harrison, editor of *The Spiritualist*, conducted exhaustive tests with her. As the early Spiritualists were supposed to be people who were easily imposed upon, it is interesting to note his careful scrutiny. He says,⁵² speaking of Mrs. Mary Marshall:

Tables and chairs moved about in daylight, and sometimes rose from the ground, whilst at the dark séances voices were heard, and luminous

⁵¹ *The Spiritual Magazine* (London), 1872, p. 45.

⁵² *The Spiritualist* (London), Vol. 1, p. 38.

manifestations seen; all these things purported to come from spirits. I therefore resolved to be a constant visitor at the séances and to stick at the work till I either discovered the assertions to be true, or detected the imposture with sufficient accuracy and certainty to expose it in the presence of witnesses, and to be able to publish the facts with complete sectional drawings of the apparatus used.

The voice calling itself "John King" is backed by an intelligence apparently entirely different in kind from that of Mr. or Mrs. Marshall. However, I privately assumed that Mr. Marshall did the voice, and by attending a few séances found that it was a common thing for Mr. Marshall and John King to speak at the same time, so I was obliged to throw over that theory.

Next I assumed that Mrs. Marshall did it, till one evening I sat next her; she was on my right-hand side, I had hold of her hand and arm, and John King came and talked into my left ear, Mrs. Marshall being perfectly motionless all the time, so over went the other theory. Next, I assumed that a confederate among the visitors to the circle did John King's voice, so had a séance with Mr. and Mrs. Marshall alone; John was there, and talked for an hour.

Lastly, I assumed that a concealed confederate did the voice, so attended two séances where Mrs. Marshall was present among strangers to her, in a strange house, and again John King was as lively as ever.

Finally, on Thursday evening December 30th, 1869, John King came and talked to eleven persons at Mrs. C. Berry's circle, in the absence of Mr. and Mrs. Marshall, the medium being Mrs. Perrin.

While Mr. Harrison satisfied himself in this way that no human being present produced the voices, he does not mention—what was the case—that the voices often gave internal proofs of identity such as neither the medium nor a confederate could have supplied. Signor Damiani, a well-known investigator, in his evidence before the London Dialectical Society, declared⁵³ that voices that had spoken to him in the presence of unpaid mediums had subsequently conversed with him at private séances with Mrs. Marshall, and had "there exhibited the same peculiarities as to tone,

⁵³ Report Of The London Dialectical Society (1871), p. 201.

expression, pitch, volume, and pronunciation, as upon the former occasions." These voices also talked with him on matters of so private a nature that no one else could have known of them. At times, too, they foretold events which duly came to pass.

It is natural that those who come in contact for the first time with voice phenomena should suspect ventriloquism as a possible explanation. D.D. Home, with whom these voices occurred often, was careful to meet this objection. General Boldero, describing the séance when Home visited him at Cupar, Fife, in 1870, writes:

Then voices were heard speaking together in the room, two different persons judging from the intonation. We could not make out the words spoken, as Home persisted in speaking to us all the time. We remonstrated with him for speaking, and he replied, "I spoke purposely that you might be convinced the voices were not due to any ventriloquism on my part, as this is impossible when anyone is speaking in his natural voice." Home's voice was quite unlike that of the voices heard in the air.

Journal Of The S.P.R., Vol. IV, p. 127.

The author can corroborate this from his personal experience, having repeatedly heard voices speaking at the same time. Examples are given in the chapter on Some Great Modern Mediums.

Admiral Usborne Moore testifies to hearing three and four spirit voices simultaneously with Mrs. Wriedt, of Detroit. In his book "The Voices" (1913) he quotes the testimony of a well-known writer, Miss Edith K. Harper, formerly private secretary to Mr. W. T. Stead. She writes⁵⁴:

After considering a record of about two hundred sittings with Mrs. Etta Wriedt during her three visits to England, of which the notes of the general circles alone would fill a huge volume, were they written in extenso, I will try to relate, in brief, a few of the most striking experiences my mother and I were privileged to have through Mrs. Wriedt's mediumship. Looking over my notes of her first visit in 1911 the following details stand out as among the principal features of the séances:—

⁵⁴ The Voices, pp. 324-5,

(1) Mrs Wriedt was never entranced, but conversed freely with the sitters, and we have heard her talking to, even arguing with, some spirit person with whose opinions she did not agree. I remember once Mr. Stead shaking with laughter on hearing Mrs. Wriedt suddenly reprimand the late editor of the *Progressive Thinker* for his attitude towards mediums, and the evident confusion of Mr. Francis, who, after an attempted explanation, dropped the trumpet, and apparently retired discomfited.

(2) Two, three, and even four spirit voices talking simultaneously to different sitters.

(3) Messages given in foreign languages—French, German, Italian, Spanish, Norwegian, Dutch, Arabic and others—with which the medium was quite unacquainted. A Norwegian lady, well known in the world of literature and politics, was addressed in Norwegian by a man's voice, claiming to be her brother, and giving the name P—— She conversed with him, and seemed overcome with joy at the correct proofs he gave her of his identity. Another time a voice spoke in voluble Spanish, addressing itself definitely to a lady in the circle whom none of the sitters knew to be acquainted with that language; the lady thereupon entered into a fluent conversation in Spanish with the Spirit, to the evident satisfaction of the latter.

Mrs. Mary Hollis (afterwards Mrs. Hollis-Billing) was a remarkable American medium who visited England in 1874, and again in 1880, when a presentation and address were given her in London by representative Spiritualists. A fine account of her varied mediumship is given by Dr. N. B. Wolfe in his book, "Startling Facts in Modern Spiritualism." Mrs. Hollis was a lady of refinement, and thousands obtained evidence and consolation through her powers. Her two spirit guides, "James Nolan" and an Indian named "Ski," talked freely in the Direct Voice. At one of her séances, held at Mrs. Makdougall Gregory's house in Grosvenor Square on January 21, 1880, a clergyman of the Church of England⁵⁵ "had the thread of a conversation taken up by a spirit where it had been broken off seven years before, and he professed himself perfectly satisfied with the genuineness of the voice,

⁵⁵ *Spiritual Notes*, Vol. I., p. 262, iv.

which was very peculiar and distinctly audible to those sitting on either side of the clergyman who was addressed."

Mr. Edward C. Randall gives an account of another good American voice medium, Mrs. Emily S. French, in his book "The Dead Have Never Died." She died in her home in Rochester, New York, on June 24, 1912. Mr. Randall investigated her powers for twenty years, and was convinced that her mediumship was of a very high character.

Mrs. Mercia M. Swain, who died in 1900, was a voice medium through whose instrumentality a Rescue Circle in California was able to reach and do good to unprogressed souls in the beyond. An account of these extraordinary sittings, which were under the control of Mr. Leander Fisher, of Buffalo, New York, and lasted for twenty-five years, from 1875 to 1900, will be found in Admiral Usborne Moore's book, "Glimpses of the Next State."

Mrs. Everitt, a very fine non-professional medium, obtained voices in England in 1867 and for many years after. Most of the great physical mediums, especially the materializing mediums, produced voice phenomena. They occurred, for instance, with Eglinton, Spriggs, Husk, Duguid, Herne, Mrs. Guppy, and Florence Cook.

Mrs. Elizabeth Blake, of Ohio, who died in 1920, was one of the most wonderful voice mediums of whom we have any record, and perhaps the most evidential, because in her presence the voices were regularly produced in broad daylight. She was a poor, illiterate woman living in the tiny village of Bradrick on the shore of the Ohio River, on the opposite bank of which was the town of Huntingdon, in West Virginia. She had been a medium since childhood. She was strongly religious and belonged to the Methodist Church, from which, however, like some others, she was expelled on account of her mediumship.

Little has been written about her, the only detailed account being a valuable monograph by Professor Hyslop.⁵⁶ She is said to have been repeatedly tested by "scientists, physicians and others," and to have submitted willingly

⁵⁶ *Proceedings Of The American S.P.R.*, Vol. VII (1913), pp. 570-788.

to all their tests. As, however, these men were unable to detect any fraud, they did not trouble to give their results to the world. Hyslop had his attention drawn to her by hearing that a well-known American conjurer, of many years' experience, had become convinced of her genuineness, and in 1906 he travelled to Ohio to investigate her mediumship.

Hyslop's voluminous report describes evidential communications that occurred.

He makes this not unusual confession of ignorance of ectoplasmic processes in the production of voice phenomena. He says:

The loudness of the sounds in some cases excludes the supposition that the voices are conveyed from the vocal cords to the trumpet. I have heard the sounds twenty feet away, and could have heard them forty or fifty feet away, and Mrs. Blake's lips did not move.

It still remains to get any clear hypothesis to explain this aspect of the phenomena. Even to say "spirits" would not satisfy the ordinary scientific man. He wants to know the mechanical processes involved, as we explain ordinary speech.

It may be true that spirits are the first cause in the case, but there are steps in the process which intervene between their initiative and the ultimate result. It is that which creates the perplexity more than the supposition that spirits are in some way back of it all the scientific man cannot see how spirits can institute a mechanical event without the use of a mechanical instrument.

Nor can anyone else, for that matter, but the explanation has been given again and again from the Other Side. Professor Hyslop's want of knowledge of the link existing between the sounds and their source would be less surprising were it not for the fact that the spirits themselves have repeatedly supplied the answer to the questions he raises. Through many mediums they have given almost identical explanations.

Dr. L. V. Guthrie, superintendent of the West Virginia Asylum at Huntingdon, Mrs. Blake's medical adviser, was convinced of her powers. He wrote:⁵⁷

I have had sittings with her in my own office, also on the front porch in the open air, and on one occasion in a carriage as we were driving along the road. She has repeatedly offered to let me have a sitting and use a lamp chimney instead of a tin horn, and I have frequently seen her produce the voices with her hand resting on one end of the horn.

Dr. Guthrie gives the following two cases with Mrs. Blake where the information supplied was not known to the sitters, and could not have been known to the medium.

One of my employees, a young lady, whose brother had joined the army and gone to the Philippines; was anxious to receive some word from him, and had written letters to him repeatedly and addressed them in care of his Company in the Philippines, but could receive no answer. She called on Mrs. Blake and was told by the "spirit" of her mother, who had passed away some several years, that if she would address a letter to this brother at C—she would get an answer. She did so and received a reply from him in two or three days, as he had returned from the Philippines, unknown to any of his family.

The next case is even more striking.

An acquaintance of mine, of prominent family in this end of the State, whose grandfather had been found at the foot of a high bridge with his skull smashed and life extinct, called on Mrs. Blake a few years ago and was not thinking of her grandfather at the time. She was very much surprised to have the "spirit" of her grandfather tell her that he had not fallen off the bridge while intoxicated, as had been presumed at the time, but that he had been murdered by two men who met him in a buggy and had proceeded to sandbag him, relieve him of his valuables, and throw him over the bridge. The "spirit" then proceeded to describe minutely the appearance of the two men who had murdered him, and gave such other information that led to the arrest and conviction of one or both of these individuals.

⁵⁷ *op. cit.*, p. 581.

Numerous sitters with Mrs. Blake noted that while the medium was speaking, spirit voices were heard at the same time, and further, that the same spirits preserved the same personality and the same intonation of voice through a course of years. Hyslop gives details of a case with this medium where the voice communication gave the correct solution for opening a combination lock to a safe, when it was unknown to the sitter.

Among modern voice mediums in England are Mrs. Roberts Johnson, Mrs. Blanche Cooper, John C. Sloan, William Phoenix, the Misses Dunsmore, Evan Powell the Welsh medium, and Mr. Potter.

Mr. H. Dennis Bradley has given a full account of the voice mediumship of George Valiantine, the well-known American medium. Mr. Bradley was able himself to secure voices in his own Home Circle, without any professional medium. It is impossible to exaggerate the services which Mr. Bradley's devoted and self-sacrificing work has rendered to psychic science. If our whole knowledge depended upon the evidence given in these two books, it would be ample for any reasonable man.⁵⁸

Some few pages may also be devoted to a summary of the very cogent objective evidence which is offered by the casts that have been taken from the bodies of ectoplasmic figures—in other words, of materialized forms. The first who explored this line of research seems to have been William Denton, the author of "Nature's Secrets," a book on psychometry, published in 1863. In Boston (U. S. A.) in 1875, working with the medium Mary M. Hardy, he employed methods which closely resemble those used by Richet and Geley in their more recent experiments in Paris. Denton actually gave a public demonstration in Paine Hall, when the cast of a spirit face was said to have been produced in melted paraffin. Other mediums with whom these casts were obtained were Mrs. Firman, Dr. Monck, Miss Fairlamb (afterwards Mrs. Mellon), and William Eglinton. The fact that these results were corroborated by the later Paris sittings is a strong argument for their validity. Mr. William Oxley, of Manchester, describes how on February 5, 1876, a beautiful mould of a lady's hand was obtained, and how a subsequent mould of the hand of Mrs. Firman the medium was found to be

⁵⁸ *Towards The Stars and The Wisdom Of The Gods.*

quite different. On this occasion Mrs. Firman was confined in a lace net bag which went over her head and was fastened round the waist, enclosing her hands and arms. This would seem to be final as regards any fraud on the part of the medium, while it is also recorded that the wax mould was warm, which shows that it could not have been brought into the séance room. It is hard to see what further precautions could have been taken to guarantee the result. On a second occasion a mould of the foot as well as of the hand was obtained, the openings of the wrist and ankle being in each case so narrow that the limb could not have been withdrawn. There seems to have been no explanation open save that the hand or foot had dematerialized.

Dr. Monck's results seem also to stand the test of criticism. Oxley experimented with him in Manchester in 1876, and had the same success as with Mrs. Firman. On this occasion different moulds from two separate figures were obtained. Oxley says of these experiences, "The importance and value of these spirit moulds cannot be overestimated, for while the relation of spiritual phenomena to others of doubtful and sceptical turn is valuable only on the ground of credibility, the casts of these hands and feet are permanent and patent facts, and now demand from men of science, artists, and scoffers a solution of the mystery of their production." This demand is still made. A famous conjurer, Houdini, and a great anatomist, Sir Arthur Keith, have both tried their hands, and the results, laboriously produced, have only served to accentuate the unique character of that which they tried to copy.

In the case of Eglinton it has been recorded by Dr. Nichols) the biographer of the Davenports, that evidential casts of hands were obtained, and that one lady present recognized a peculiarity—a slight deformity — characteristic of the hand of her little daughter who had been drowned in South Africa at the age of five years.

Perhaps the most final and convincing of all the moulds was that which was obtained by Epes Sergeant from the medium Mrs. Hardy, already mentioned in connexion with Denton's experiments. The conclusions are worth quoting in full. The writer says:—

"Our conclusions are:

"1. That the mould of a full-sized perfect hand was produced in a closed box by some unknown power exercising intelligence and manual activity.

"2. That the conditions of the experiment were independent of all reliance on the character and good faith of the medium, though the genuineness of her mediumship has been fully vindicated by the result.

"3. That these conditions were so simple and so stringent as completely to exclude all opportunities for fraud and all contrivances for illusion, so that our realization of the conclusiveness of the test is perfect.

"4. That the fact, long known to investigators, that evanescent, materialized hands, guided by intelligence and projected from an invisible organism, can be made visible and tangible, receives confirmation from this duplicated test.

"5. That the experiment of the mould, coupled with that of the so-called spirit photograph, gives objective proof of the operation of an intelligent force outside of any visible organism, and offers a fair basis for scientific investigation.

"6. That the inquiry 'How was that mould produced within that box?' leads to considerations that must have a most important bearing on the philosophy of the future, as well as on problems of psychology and physiology, and opens new views of the latent powers and high destiny of man."

Seven reputable witnesses sign the report.

If the reader is not satisfied by such various examples of the validity of these tests by casts and moulds, he should read the conclusions which were reached by that great investigator Geley, at the end of his classical experiments with Kluski, already shortly alluded to.

Dr. Geley carried out with Kluski a number of remarkable experiments in the formation of wax moulds of materialized hands. He has recorded⁵⁹ the results of a series of eleven successful sittings for this purpose. In a dim light the medium's right hand was held by Professor Richet and his left hand by Count Potocki. A trough containing wax, kept at melting-point by warm water, was placed two feet in front of Kluski, and for the purpose of a test

⁵⁹ *Revue Métapsychique*, June, 1921.

the wax was impregnated (unknown to the medium) with the chemical cholesterin, this to prevent the possibility of substitution. Dr. Geley writes:

The feeble light did not admit of the phenomena being actually seen; we were aware of the moment of dipping, by the sound of splashing in the liquid. The operation involved two or three immersions. The hand that was acting was plunged in the trough, was withdrawn, and, covered with warm paraffin, touched the hands of the controllers of the experiments, and then was plunged again into the wax. After the operation the glove of paraffin, still warm but solidified, was placed against the hand of one of the controllers.



Hand moulds obtain during the Warsaw sessions.

In this way nine moulds were taken: seven of hands, one of a foot, and one of a chin and lips. The wax of which they were composed on being tested gave the characteristic reaction of cholesterin. Dr. Geley shows twenty-three photographs of the moulds and of plaster casts made from them. It may be mentioned that the moulds exhibit the folds of the skin, the nails and the veins, and these markings in nowise resemble those of the medium. Efforts to make similar moulds from the hands of human beings were only partially successful, and the difference from those obtained at the sittings was

obvious. Sculptors and moulders of repute have declared that they know of no method of producing wax moulds such as those obtained at the séances with Kluski.

Geley sums up the result thus:⁶⁰

"We will now enumerate the proofs which we have given of the authenticity of the moulds of materialized limbs in our experiments in Paris and Warsaw.

"We have shown that quite apart from the control of the medium, whose two hands were held by us, all fraud was impossible.

"1. The theory of fraud by a rubber glove is inadmissible, for such an attempt gives crude and absurd results which can be seen at a glance to be imitations.

"2. It is not possible to produce such gloves of wax by using a rigid mould already prepared. A trial of this shows at once how impossible it is.

"3. The use of a prepared mould in some fusible and soluble substance, covered with a film of paraffin during the séance and then dissolved out in a pail of water, will not fit in with the actual procedure. We had no pail of water.

"4. The theory that a living hand was used (that of the medium or of an assistant) is inadmissible. This could not have been done, for several reasons, one being that gloves thus obtained are thick and solid, while ours are fine and delicate, also that the position of the fingers in our moulds makes it impossible that they could be withdrawn without breaking the glove. Also that the gloves have been compared with the hands of the medium and of the assistants, and that they are not alike. This is shown also by anthropological measurements.

"Finally, there is the hypothesis that the gloves were brought by the medium. This is disproved by the fact that we secretly introduced chemicals into the melted wax, and that these were found in the gloves.

"The report of the expert modellers on the point is categorical and final."

Nothing is evidence to those who are so filled with prejudice that they have no room for reason, but it is inconceivable that any normally endowed man

⁶⁰ L'Ectoplasmie, etc., p. 278.

could read all the above, and doubt the possibility of taking moulds from ectoplasmic figures.

CHAPTER 7. FRENCH, GERMAN, AND ITALIAN SPIRITUALISM



Logo of the Institut Métapsychique International.

SPIRITUALISM in France and the Latin races centres round Allan Kardec, who prefers for it the term Spiritism, and its predominant feature is a belief in reincarnation.

M. Hippolyte Leon Denizard Rivail, who adopted the pseudonym "Allan Kardec," was born in Lyons in 1804, where his father was a barrister. In 1850, when the American spirit manifestations were exciting attention in Europe, Allan Kardec investigated the subject through the mediumship of two daughters of a friend.

In the communications which were obtained he was informed that "Spirits of a much higher order than those who habitually communicated through the two young mediums, came expressly for him, and would continue to do so, in order to enable him to fulfil an important religious mission."

He tested this by drawing up a series of questions relating to the problems of human life, and submitting them to the supposed operating intelligences, and by means of raps and writing through the planchette he received the replies upon which he has founded his system of Spiritism.

After two years of these communications he found that his ideas and convictions had become completely changed. He said:

"The instructions thus transmitted constitute an entirely new theory of human life, duty and destiny, that appears to me to be perfectly rational and coherent, admirably lucid and consoling, and intensely interesting." The idea came to him to publish what he had got, and on submitting this idea to the communicating intelligences, he was told that the teaching had been expressly intended to be given to the world, and that he had a mission confided to him by Providence. They also instructed him to call the work *Le livre des esprits* (The Spirits' Book).

The book thus produced in 1856 had a great success. Over twenty editions have been published, and the "Revised Edition," issued in 1857, has become the recognized text-book of spiritual philosophy in France. In 1861 he published "The Mediums' Book"; in 1864, "The Gospel as Explained by Spirits"; in 1865, "Heaven and Hell"; and in 1867, "Genesis." In addition to the above, which are his main works, he published two short treatises entitled, "What is Spiritism?" and "Spiritism Reduced to its Simplest Expression."

Miss Anna Blackwell, who has translated Allan Kardec's works into English, thus describes him:

In person, Allan Kardec was somewhat under middle height. Strongly built, with a large, round, massive head, well-marked features, and clear, grey eyes, he looked more like a German than a Frenchman. Energetic and persevering, but of a temperament that was calm, cautious, and unimaginative almost to coldness, incredulous by nature and by education, a close, logical reasoner, and eminently practical in thought and deed; he was equally free from mysticism and from enthusiasm. Grave, slow of speech, unassuming in manner, yet not without a certain quiet dignity resulting from the earnestness and single-mindedness which were the distinguishing traits of his character; neither courting nor avoiding discussion, but never volunteering any remark upon the

subject to which he had devoted his life, he received with affability the innumerable visitors from every part of the world who came to converse with him in regard to the views of which he was the recognized exponent, answering questions and objections, explaining difficulties, and giving information to all serious inquirers, with whom he talked with freedom and animation, his face occasionally lighting up with a genial and pleasant smile, though such was his habitual sobriety of demeanour that he was never known to laugh. Among the thousands by whom he was thus visited were many of high rank in the social, literary, artistic, and scientific worlds. The Emperor Napoleon III, the fact of whose interest in spiritist phenomena was no mystery, sent for him several times, and held long conversations with him at the Tuileries upon the doctrines of "*The Spirits' Book*."

He founded the Society of Psychologie Studies, which met weekly at his house for the purpose of getting communications through writing mediums. He also established *La revue spirite*, a monthly journal still in existence, which he edited until his death in 1869. Shortly before this he drew up a plan of an organization to carry on his work. It was called "The Joint Stock Company for the Continuation of the Works of Allan Kardec," with power to buy and sell, receive donations and bequests, and to continue the publication of *La revue spirite*. After his death his plans were faithfully carried out.

Kardec considered that the words "spiritual," "spiritualist," and "spiritualism" already had a definite meaning. Therefore he substituted "spiritism" and "spiritist."

This Spiritist philosophy is distinguished by its belief that our spiritual progression is effected through a series of incarnations.

Spirits having to pass through many incarnations, it follows that we have all had many existences, and that we shall have others, more or less perfect, either upon this earth or in other worlds.

The incarnation of spirits always takes place in the human race; it would be an error to suppose that the soul or spirit could be incarnated in the body of an animal.

A spirit's successive corporeal existences are always progressive, and never retrograde; but the rapidity of our progress depends on the efforts we make to arrive at perfection.

The qualities of the soul are those of the spirit incarnated in us; thus, a good man is the incarnation of a good spirit, and a bad man is that of an unpurified spirit.

The soul possessed its own individuality before its incarnation; it preserves that individuality after its separation from the body.

On its re-entrance into the spirit world, the soul again finds there all those whom it has known upon the earth, and all its former existences eventually come back to its memory, with the remembrance of all the good and of all the evil which it has done in them.

The incarnated spirit is under the influence of matter; the man who surmounts this influence, through the elevation and purification of his soul, raises himself nearer to the superior spirits, among whom he will one day be classed. He who allows himself to be ruled by bad passions, and places all his delight in the satisfaction of his gross animal appetites, brings himself nearer to the impure spirits, by giving preponderance to his animal nature.

Incarnated spirits inhabit the different globes of the universe.⁶¹

Kardec conducted his investigations through the communicating intelligences by means of question and answer, and in this way obtained the material for his books. Much information was forthcoming on the subject of reincarnation. To the question "What is the aim of the incarnation of spirits?" the answer was:

It is a necessity imposed on them by God, as the means of attaining perfection. For some of them it is an expiation; for others, a mission. In order to attain perfection, it is necessary for them to undergo all the vicissitudes of corporeal existence. It is the experience acquired by expiation that constitutes its usefulness. Incarnation has also another aim, viz. that of fitting the spirit to perform his share in the work of creation; for which purpose he is made to

⁶¹ Introduction to *The Spirits' Book*.

assume a corporeal apparatus in harmony with the material state of each world into which he is sent, and by means of which he is enabled to accomplish the special work, in connexion with that world, which has been appointed to him by the divine ordering. He is thus made to contribute his quota towards the general weal, while achieving his own advancement.



Allan Kardec.

Spiritualists in England have come to no decision with regard to reincarnation. Some believe in it, many do not, and the general attitude may be taken to be that, as the doctrine cannot be proved, it had better be omitted from the active politics of Spiritualism. Miss Anna Blackwell, in

explanation of this attitude, suggests that the continental mind being more receptive of theories, has accepted Allan Kardec, while the English mind "usually declines to consider any theory until it has assured itself of the facts assumed by such theory."

Mr. Thomas Brevior (Shorter), one of the editors of *The Spiritual Magazine*, sums up the prevailing view of English Spiritualists of his day. He writes:⁶²

When Reincarnation assumes a more scientific aspect, when it can offer a body of demonstrable facts admitting of verification like those of Modern Spiritualism, it will merit ample and careful discussion. Meanwhile, let the architects of speculation amuse themselves if they will by building castles in the air; life is too short, and there is too much to do in this busy world to leave either leisure or inclination to occupy ourselves in demolishing these airy structures, or in showing on what slight foundations they are reared. It is far better to work out those points in which we are agreed than to wrangle over those upon which we appear so hopelessly to differ.

William Howitt, one of the stalwarts of early Spiritualism in England, is still more emphatic in his condemnation of reincarnation. After quoting Emma Hardinge Britten's remark that thousands in the Other World protest, through distinguished mediums, that they have no knowledge or proofs of reincarnation, he says⁶³:

The thing strikes at the root of all faith in the revelations of Spiritualism. If we are brought to doubt the spirits communicating under the most serious guise, under the most serious affirmations, where is Spiritualism itself? If Reincarnation be true, pitiable and repellent as it is, there must have been millions of spirits who, on entering the other world, have sought in vain their kindred, children and friends. Has even a whisper of such a woe ever reached us from the thousands and tens of thousands of communicating spirits? Never. We may, therefore, on this ground alone, pronounce the dogma of Reincarnation false as the hell from which it sprung.

⁶² *The Spiritual Magazine*, 1876, p. 35.

⁶³ *The Spiritual Magazine*, 1876, p. 57.

Mr. Howitt, however, in his vehemence, forgets that there may be a time limit before the next incarnation takes place, and that also there may be a voluntary element in the act.

The Hon. Alexander Aksakof, in an interesting article supplies the names of the mediums at Allan Kardec's circle, with an account of them. He also points out that a belief in the idea of reincarnation was strongly held in France at that time, as can be seen from M. Pezzani's work, "The Plurality of Existences," and others. Aksakof writes⁶⁴:

That the propagation of this doctrine by Kardec was a matter of strong predilection is clear; from the beginning Reincarnation has not been presented as an object of study, but as a dogma. To sustain it he has always had recourse to writing mediums, who, it is well known, pass so easily under the psychological influence of preconceived ideas; and Spiritism has engendered such in profusion; whereas through physical mediums the communications are not only more objective, but always contrary to the doctrine of Reincarnation. Kardec adopted the plan of always disparaging this kind of mediumship, alleging as a pretext its moral inferiority. Thus the experimental method is altogether unknown in Spiritism; for twenty years it has not made the slightest intrinsic progress, and it has remained in total ignorance of Anglo-American Spiritualism! The few French physical mediums who developed their powers in spite of Kardec, were never mentioned by him in the "Revue"; they remained almost unknown to Spiritists, and only because their spirits did not support the doctrine of Reincarnation.

Aksakof adds that his remarks do not affect the question of reincarnation in the abstract, but only have to do with its propagation under the name of Spiritism.

D.D. Home, in commenting on Aksakof's article, has a thrust at a phase of the belief in reincarnation. He says:⁶⁵

I meet many who are reincarnationists, and I have had the pleasure of meeting at least twelve who were Marie Antoinette, six or seven Mary Queen of Scots, a

⁶⁴ *The Spiritualist*, Vol. VII., 1875, pp. 74-5.

⁶⁵ *The Spiritualist*, Vol. VII., p. 165.

whole host of Louis and other kings, about twenty Alexander the Greats, but it remains for me yet to meet a plain John Smith, and I beg of you, if you meet one, to cage him as a curiosity.

Miss Anna Blackwell summarizes the contents of Kardec's chief books as follows:

"The Spirits' Book" demonstrates the existence and attributes of the Causal Power, and of the nature of the relation between that Power and the universe, putting us in the track of the Divine operation.

"The Mediums' Book" describes the various methods of communication between this world and the next.

"Heaven and Hell" vindicates the justice of the Divine government, by explaining the nature of Evil as the result of ignorance, and showing the process by which men shall become enlightened and purified.

"The Gospel as Explained by Spirits" is a comment on the moral precepts of Christ, with an examination of His life and a comparison of its incidents with present manifestations of spirit power.

"Genesis" shows the accordance of the Spiritist philosophy with the discoveries of modern science, and with the general tenor of the Mosaic record, as explained by spirits.

"These works," she says, "are regarded by the majority of Continental Spiritualists as constituting the basis of the religious philosophy of the future—a philosophy in harmony with the advance of scientific discovery in the various other realms of human knowledge; promulgated by the host of enlightened Spirits acting under the direction of Christ Himself."

On the whole, it seems to the author that the balance of evidence shows that reincarnation is a fact, but not necessarily a universal one. As to the ignorance of our spirit friends upon the point, it concerns their own future, and if we are not clear as to our future, it is possible that they have the same limitations. When the question is asked, "Where were we before we were born?" we have a definite answer in the system of slow development by incarnation, with long intervals of spirit rest between, while otherwise we

have no answer, though we must admit that it is inconceivable that we have been born in time for eternity. Existence afterwards seems to postulate existence before. As to the natural question, "Why, then, do we not remember such existences?" we may point out that such remembrance would enormously complicate our present life, and that such existences may well form a cycle which is all clear to us when we have come to the end of it, when perhaps we may see a whole rosary of lives threaded upon the one personality. The convergence of so many lines of theosophic and Eastern thought upon this one conclusion, and the explanation which it affords in the supplementary doctrine of Karma of the apparent injustice of any single life, are arguments in its favour, and so perhaps are those vague recognitions and memories which are occasionally too definite to be easily explained as atavistic impressions. Certain hypnotic experiments, the most famous of which were by the French investigator, Colonel de Rochas, seemed to afford some definite evidence, the subject when in trance being pushed back for several alleged incarnations, but the farther ones were hard to trace, while the nearer came under the suspicion that they were influenced by the normal knowledge of the medium. It may, at least, be conceded that where some special task has to be completed, or where some fault has to be remedied, the possibility of reincarnation may be one which would be eagerly welcomed by the spirit concerned.

Before turning from the story of French Spiritualism one cannot but remark upon the splendid group of writers who have adorned it. Apart from Allan Kardec, and the scientific work on research lines of Geley, Maxwell, Flammarion, and Richet, there have been pure Spiritists such as Gabriel Delanne, Henri Regnault, and Leon Denis who have made their mark. The last especially would have been deemed a great master of French prose, whatever might have been his theme.

This work, which confines itself to the main stream of psychic history, has hardly space in which it can follow its many meanderings in lesser rivulets over every land upon the globe. Such manifestations were invariably repetitions or close variants of those which have been already described, and it may briefly be stated that the cult is catholic in the fullest sense, for there is no land which is without it. From the Argentine to Iceland the same

results have sprung in the same manner from the same causes. Such a history would require a volume in itself. Some special pages should, however, be devoted to Germany.

Though slow to follow the organized movement, for it was not until 1865 that *Psyche*, a Spiritualistic paper, was established in that country, it had above all other lands a tradition of mystic speculation and magical experiment, which might be regarded as a preparation for the definite revelation. Paracelsus, Cornelius Agrippa, van Helmont, and Jacob Boehme are all among the pioneers of the spirit, feeling their way out of matter, however vague the goal they may have reached. Something more definite was attained by Mesmer, who did most of his work in Vienna in the latter part of the eighteenth century. However mistaken in some of his inferences, he was the prime mover in bringing the dissociation of soul and body before the actual senses of mankind, and a native of Strasbourg, M. de Puysegur carried his work one step farther and opened up the wonders of clairvoyance. Jung Stilling and Dr. Justinus Kerner are names which must always be associated with the development of human knowledge along this mist-girt path. The actual announcement of spirit communication was received with mingled interest and scepticism, and it was long before any authoritative voices were raised in its defence. Finally, the matter was brought prominently forward when Slade made his historical visit in 1877. After viewing and testing his performances, he obtained at Leipzig the endorsement of six professors as to their genuine objective character. These were Zollner, Fechner and Scheibner of Leipzig, Weber of Gottingen, Fichte of Stuttgart, and Ulrici of Halle. As these testimonials were reinforced by an affidavit from Bellachini, the chief conjurer of Germany, that there was no possibility of trickery, a considerable effect was produced upon the public mind, which was increased by the subsequent adhesion of two eminent Russians, Aksakof the statesman, and Professor Butlerof of St. Petersburg University. The cult does not appear, however, to have found a congenial soil in that bureaucratic and military land. Save for the name of Carl du Prel, one can recall none other which is associated with the higher phases of the movement.

Baron Carl du Prel, of Munich, began his career as a student of mysticism, and in his first work⁶⁶ he deals not with Spiritualism but rather with the latent powers of man, the phenomena of dream, of trance, and of the hypnotic sleep. In another treatise, however, "A Problem for Conjurers," he gives a closely reasoned account of the steps which led him to a full belief in the truth of Spiritualism. In this book, while admitting that scientific men and philosophers may not be the best people to detect trickery, he reminds the reader that Bosco, Houdin, Bellachini, and other skilled conjurers have declared those mediums whom they have investigated to be free from imposture. Du Prel was not content, as so many are, to take second-hand evidence, but he had a number of sittings with Eglinton, and later with Eusapia Palladino. He gave particular attention to the phenomenon of psychography (slate writing) and he says of it:

One thing is clear, that is, that Psychography must be ascribed to a transcendental origin. We shall find (1) that the hypothesis of prepared slates is inadmissible. (2) The place on which the writing is found is quite inaccessible to the hands of the medium. In some cases the double slate is securely locked, leaving only room inside for the tiny morsel of slate pencil. (3) That the writing is actually done at the time. (4) That the medium is not writing. (5) The writing must be actually done with the morsel of slate, or lead pencil. (6) The writing is done by an intelligent being, since the answers are exactly pertinent to the questions. (7) This being can read, write, and understand the language of human beings, frequently such as is unknown to the medium. (8) It strongly resembles a human being, as well in the degree of its intelligence as in the mistakes sometimes made. These beings are, therefore, although invisible, of human nature or species. It is no use whatever to fight against this proposition. (9) If these beings speak, they do so in human language. If they are asked who they are, they answer that they are beings who have left this world. (10) Where these appearances become partly visible, perhaps only their hands, the hands seen are of human form. (11) When these things become entirely visible, they show the human form and countenance. Spiritualism must be investigated by science. I should look upon myself as a coward if I did not openly express my convictions.

⁶⁶ *Philosophy Of Mysticism*, 2 Vols. (1889). Trans. by C.C. Massey.

Du Prel emphasizes the fact that his convictions do not rest on results obtained with professional mediums. He states that he knows three private mediums "in whose presence direct writing not only takes place inside double slates, but is done in inaccessible places."

"In these circumstances," he says dryly, "the question 'Medium or Conjuror?' seems to me to stir up a great deal more dust than it deserves," a remark some psychical researchers might take to heart.

It is interesting to note that du Prel proclaims the assertion that the messages are only silly and trivial to be entirely unjustified by his experience, while at the same time he asserts that he has found no traces of superhuman intelligence, but of course, before pronouncing upon such a point, one has to determine how a superhuman intelligence could be distinguished and how far it would be intelligible to our brains. Speaking of materialization, du Prel says:

When these things become entirely visible in the dark room, in which case the medium himself sits among the chain formed by the circle, they show the human form and countenance. It is very easily said that in this case it is the medium himself who is masquerading. But when the medium speaks from his seat; when his neighbours on either side declare that they have hold of his hands, and at the same time I see a figure standing close to me; when this figure illumines his face with the air exhausted glass tube filled with quicksilver, lying on the table—the light produced by shaking which not impeding the phenomena—so that I can see it distinctly, then the collective evidence of the facts I have narrated proves to me the necessity of the existence of a transcendental being, even if thereby all the conclusions I have come to during twenty years of work and study should be thrown overboard. Since, however, on the contrary, my views (as set forth in my "Philosophy of Mysticism ") have taken quite another course and are only further justified by these experiences, I find as little subjective grounds for combating these facts as objective ones.

He adds:

I now have the empirical experience of the existence of such transcendental beings, which I am convinced of by the evidence of my senses of sight, hearing,

and feeling, as well as by their own intelligent communications. Under these circumstances, being led by two methods of inquiry to the self-same goal, I must indeed be abandoned of the gods if I did not recognize the fact of the immortality—or rather let us say, since the proofs do not extend farther—the continued existence of man after death.

Carl du Prel died in 1899. His contribution to the subject is probably the greatest yet made by any German. On the other hand, a formidable opponent was found there in Eduard von Hartmann, author of "The Philosophy of the Unconscious," who wrote a brochure in 1885 called "Spiritism." Commenting upon this performance, C.C. Massey wrote⁶⁷:

Now for the first time, a man of commanding intellectual position has dealt fairly by us as an opponent. He has taken the trouble to get up the facts, if not quite thoroughly, at least to an extent that indisputably qualifies him for critical examination. And while formally declining an unreserved acceptance of the evidence, he has come to the conclusion that the existence in the human organism of more forces and capacities than exact science has investigated is sufficiently accredited by historical and contemporary testimony. He even urges research by State-appointed and paid commissions. He repudiates, with all the authority of a philosopher and man of science, the supposition that the facts are a priori incredible or "contrary to the laws of nature." He exposes the irrelevance of "exposures," and blows to the winds the stupid parallel between mediums and conjurers. And if his application of the psychology of somnambulism to the phenomena results, in his view, in "ruling out" spirits altogether, on the other hand it contains information to the public which is highly important for the protection of mediums.

Massey says further that from the standpoint of von Hartmann's philosophy the agency of spirits is inadmissible, and personal immortality is a delusion. "The issue of psychological philosophy is now between his school and that of du Prel and Hellenbach."

Alexander Aksakof replied to von Hartmann in his monthly journal *Psychische Studien*.

⁶⁷ Light, 1885, p. 404. It should be noted that Charles Carlton Massey, the barrister, and Gerald Massey, the poet, are separate people with nothing in common save that both were Spiritualists.

Aksakof points out that Hartmann had no practical experience whatever, that he bestowed insufficient attention to phenomena which did not fit into his mode of explanation, and that there were many phenomena which were quite unknown to him. Hartmann, for instance, did not believe in the objectivity of materialization phenomena. Aksakof ably sets out with full details a number of cases which decidedly negative Hartmann's conclusions.

Aksakof refers to Baron Lazar Hellenbach, a Spiritualist, as the first philosophical investigator of the phenomena in Germany, and says: "Zollner's admission of the reality of the mediumistic phenomena produced in Germany an immense sensation." In many ways it would appear that von Hartmann wrote with an imperfect knowledge of the subject.

Germany has produced few great mediums, unless Frau Anna Rothe can be classed as such. It is possible that this woman resorted to fraud when her psychic powers failed her, but that she had such powers in a high degree is clearly shown by the evidence at the trial after her alleged "exposure" in 1902.

The medium, after being kept in prison for twelve months and three weeks before being brought to trial, was sentenced to eighteen months imprisonment and a fine of five hundred marks. At the trial many people of standing gave evidence in her favour, among whom were Herr Stocker, former Court Chaplain, and Judge Sulzers, president of the High Court of Appeal, Zurich. The judge stated on oath that Frau Rothe put him in communication with the spirits of his wife and father, who said things to him which the medium could not possibly have invented, because they dealt with matters unknown to any mortal. He also declared that flowers of the rarest kind were produced out of the air in a room flooded with light. His evidence caused a sensation.

It is clear that the result of the trial was a foregone conclusion. It was a repetition of the position of the magistrate, Mr. Flowers, in the Slade case. The German legal luminary in his preliminary address said:

The Court cannot allow itself to criticize the Spiritistic theory, for it must be acknowledged that science, with the generality of men of culture, declares supernatural manifestations to be impossible.

In the face of that no evidence could have any weight.

Of recent years two names stand out in connexion with the subject. The one is Dr. Schrenck Notzing, of Munich, whose fine laboratory work has been already treated in the chapter on Ectoplasm. The other is the famous Dr. Hans Driesch, Professor of Philosophy at the University of Leipzig. He has recently declared that "the actuality of psychical phenomena is doubted to-day only by the incorrigible dogmatist." He made this statement in the course of a lecture at the London University in 1924, afterwards published in *The Quest*.⁶⁸ He went on to say:

These phenomena have had, however, a hard struggle to gain recognition; and the chief reason why they have had to fight so strenuously, is because they utterly refused to dovetail with orthodox psychology and natural science, such as these both were, up to the end of last century, at any rate.

Professor Driesch points out that natural science and psychology have undergone a radical change since the beginning of the present century, and proceeds to show how psychical phenomena link up with "normal" natural sciences. He remarks that if the latter refused to recognize their kinship with the former, it would make no difference to the truth of psychical phenomena. He shows, with various biological illustrations, how the mechanistic theory is overthrown. He expounds his vitalistic theory "to establish a closer contact between the phenomena of normal biology and the physical phenomena in the domain of psychical research."

Italy has, in some ways, been superior to all other European states in its treatment of Spiritualism—and this in spite of the constant opposition of the Roman Catholic Church, which has most illogically stigmatized as diabolism in others that which it has claimed as a special mark of sanctity in itself. The *Acta Sanctorum* are one long chronicle of psychic phenomena with levitations, apports, prophecy, and all the other signs of mediumistic power. This Church has, however, always persecuted Spiritualism. Powerful as it is, it will find in time that it has encountered something stronger than itself.

⁶⁸ July, 1924.

Of modern Italians the great Mazzini was a Spiritualist in days when Spiritualism had hardly formulated itself, and his associate Garibaldi was president of a psychic society. In a letter to a friend in 1849, Mazzini sketched his religio-philosophical system which curiously foreshadowed the more recent Spiritualistic view. He substituted a temporary purgatory for an eternal hell, postulated a bond of union between this world and the next, defined a hierarchy of spiritual beings, and foresaw a continual progression towards supreme perfection.

Italy has been very rich in mediums, but she has been even more fortunate in having men of science who were wise enough to follow facts wherever they might lead. Among these numerous investigators, all of whom were convinced of the reality of psychic phenomena, though it cannot be claimed that all accepted the Spiritualistic view, there are to be found such names as Ermacora, Schiaparelli, Lombroso, Bozzano, Morselli, Chiaia, Pictet, Foa, Porro, Brofferio, Bottazzi, and many others. They have had the advantage of a wonderful subject in Eusapia Palladino, as has already been described, but there have been a succession of other powerful mediums, including such names as Politi, Carancini, Zuccarini, Lucia Sordi, and especially Linda Gazzera. Here as elsewhere, however, the first impulse came from the English-speaking countries. It was the visit of D.D. Home to Florence in 1855, and the subsequent visit of Mrs. Guppy in 1868 which opened the furrow. Signor Damiani was the first great investigator, and it was he who in 1872 discovered the powers of Palladino.

Damiani's mantle fell upon Dr. G. B. Ermacora, who was founder and co-editor with Dr. Finzi of the *Rivista di studi psichici*. He died at Rovigo in his fortieth year at the hand of a homicide—a very great loss to the cause. His adhesion to it, and his enthusiasm, drew in others of equal standing. Thus Porro, in his glowing obituary, wrote:

Lombroso found himself at Milan with three young physicists, entirely devoid of all prejudice, Ermacora, Finzi and Gerosa, with two profound thinkers who had already exhausted the philosophical side of the question, the German du Prel and the Russian Aksakof, with another philosopher of acute mind and vast learning, Brofferio; and lastly, with a great astronomer, Schiaparelli, and with an able physiologist, Richet.

He adds:

It would be difficult to collect a better assortment of learned men giving the necessary guarantees of seriousness, of varied competence, of technical ability in experimenting, of sagacity and prudence in coming to conclusions.

He continues:

While Brofferio, by his weighty book "Per to Spiritismo" (Milan, 1892), demolished one by one the arguments of the opposite side, collecting, coordinating, and classifying with incomparable dialectical skill the proofs in favour of his thesis, Ermacora applied to its demonstration all the resources of a robust mind trained to the use of the experimental method; and he took so much pleasure in this new and fertile study, that he entirely abandoned those researches in electricity which had already caused him to be looked upon as a successor to Faraday and Maxwell.

Dr. Ercole Chiaia, who died in 1905, was also an ardent worker and propagandist to whom many distinguished men of European reputation owed their first knowledge of psychical phenomena, among others, Lombroso, Professor Bianchi of the University of Naples, Schiaparelli, Flournoy, Professor Porro of the University of Genoa, and Colonel de Rochas. Lombroso wrote of him:

You are right to honour highly the memory of Ercole Chiaia. In a country where there is such a horror of what is new, it required great courage and a noble soul to become the apostle of theories which have met with ridicule, and to do so with that tenacity, that energy, which always characterized Chiaia. It is to him that many owe—myself among others—the privilege of seeing a new world open out to psychical investigation – and this by the only way which exists to convince men of culture, that is to say, by direct observation.

Sardou, Richet, and Morselli also paid tributes to the work of Chiaia.⁶⁹

Chiaia did an important work in leading Lombroso, the eminent alienist, to investigate the subject. After his first experiments with Eusapia Palladino, in March, 1891, Lombroso wrote:

⁶⁹ *Annals Of Psychical Science*, Vol, II. (1905), pp. 261-262.

I am quite ashamed and grieved at having opposed with so much tenacity the possibility of the so-called Spiritistic facts.

At first he only gave his assent to the facts, while still opposed to the theory associated with them. But even this partial admission caused a sensation in Italy and throughout the world. Aksakof wrote to Dr. Chiaia: "Glory to M. Lombroso for his noble words! Glory to you for your devotion!"

Lombroso affords a good example of the conversion of an utter materialist, after a long and careful examination of the facts. In 1900 he wrote to Professor Falcomer:

I am like a little pebble on the beach. As yet I am uncovered, but I feel that each tide draws me a little closer to the sea.

He ended, as we know, by becoming a complete believer, a convinced Spiritualist, and published his celebrated book, "After Death – What?"

Ernesto Bozzano, who was born in Genoa in 1862, has devoted thirty years to psychical research, embodying his conclusions in thirty long monographs. He will be remembered for his incisive criticism⁷⁰ of Mr. Podmore's slighting references to Mr. Stainton Moses. It is entitled, "A Defence of William Stainton Moses." Bozzano, in company with Professors Morselli and Porro, had a long series of experiments with Eusapia Palladino. After consideration of the subjective and objective phenomena, he was led "logically and of necessity" to give full adherence to the Spiritistic hypothesis.

Enrico Morselli, Professor of Psychiatry at Genoa, was for many years, as he himself says, a bitter sceptic with regard to the objective reality of psychic phenomena. From 1901 onwards he had thirty sittings with Eusapia Palladino, and became completely convinced of the facts, if not of the spirit theory. He published his observations in a book which Professor Richet describes as "a model of erudition" ("Psicologia e Spiritismo," 2 Vols., Turin, 1908). Lombroso, in a very generous review⁷¹ of this book, refers to the author's scepticism regarding certain phenomena he observed.

⁷⁰ *Annals Of Psychical Science*, Vol. I. (1905), pp. 75-129.

⁷¹ *Annals Of Psychical Science*, Vol. VII. (1908), p. 376.

Yes. Morselli commits the same fault as Flournoy with Miss Smith, of torturing his own strong ingenuity to find not true and not credible the things which he himself declares that he saw, and which really occurred. For instance, during the first few days after the apparition of his own mother, he admitted to me that he had seen her and had quite a conversation in gestures with her, in which she pointed almost with bitterness to his spectacles and his partially bald head, and made him remember how long ago she had left him a fine, bold young man.

Helene Smith, the medium in Flournoy's book, From India To The Planet Mars.

When Morselli asked his mother for a proof of identity, she touched his forehead with her hand, seeking for a wart there, but because she first touched the right side and then the left, on which the wart really was, Morselli would not accept this as evidence of his mother's presence. Lombroso, with more experience, points out to him the awkwardness of spirits using the instrumentality of a medium for the first time. The truth was that Morselli had, strangely enough, the utmost repugnance to the appearance of his mother through a medium against his will. Lombroso cannot understand this feeling. He says:

I confess that I not only do not share it, but, on the contrary, when I saw my mother again, I felt one of the most pleasing inward excitements of my life, a pleasure that was almost a spasm, which aroused a sense, not of resentment, but of gratitude to the medium who threw my mother again into my arms after so many years, and this great event caused me to forget, not once, but many times, the humble position of Eusapia, who had done for me, even were it purely automatically, that which no giant in power and thought could ever have done.

Morselli is in much the same position as Professor Richet with regard to psychical research, but, like the latter distinguished scientist, he has been the means of powerfully influencing public opinion to a more enlightened view of the subject.

Morselli speaks strongly about the neglect of science. Writing in 1907, he says:

The question of Spiritism has been discussed for over fifty years; and although no one can at present foresee when it will be settled, all are now agreed in assigning to it great importance among the problems left as a legacy by the nineteenth century to the twentieth. Meanwhile, no one can fail to recognize that Spiritism is a strong current or tendency in contemporary thought. If for many years academic science has depreciated the whole category of facts which Spiritism has, for good or ill, rightly or wrongly, absorbed and assimilated, to form the elements of its doctrinal system, so much the worse for science! And worse still for the scientists who have remained deaf and blind before all the affirmations, not of credulous sectarians, but of serious and worthy observers such as Crookes, Lodge and Richet. I am not ashamed to say that I myself, as far as my modest power went, have contributed to this obstinate scepticism, up to the day on which I was enabled to break the chains in which my absolutist preconceptions had bound my judgment.⁷²

It is to be noted that the majority of the Italian professors, while giving adherence to psychical facts, decline to follow the conclusions of those they call the Spiritists. De Vesme makes this clear when he says:

It is most important to point out that the revival of interest in these questions, which has been displayed by the public in Italy, would not have been produced so easily if the scientific men who have just proclaimed the objective authenticity of these mediumistic phenomena had not been careful to add that the recognition of the facts does not by any means imply the acceptance of the Spiritistic hypothesis.

There was, however, a strong minority who saw the full meaning of the revelation.

⁷² *Annals Of Psychological Science*, Vol. V. (1907), p. 322.

CHAPTER 8. SOME GREAT MODERN MEDIUMS

THERE is always a certain monotony in writing about physical signs of external intelligence, because they take stereotyped forms limited in their nature. They are amply sufficient for their purpose, which is to demonstrate the presence of invisible powers unknown to material science, but both their methods of production and the results lead to endless reiteration. This manifestation in itself, occurring as it does in every country on the globe, should convince anyone who thinks seriously upon the subject that he is in the presence of fixed laws, and that it is not a sporadic succession of miracles, but a real science which is being developed. It is in their ignorant and arrogant contempt of this fact that opponents have sinned. "*Ils ne comprennent pas qu'il y a des lois,*" wrote Madame Bisson, after some fatuous attempt on the part of the doctors of the Sorbonne to produce ectoplasm under conditions which negated their own experiment. As will be seen by what has gone before, a great physical medium can produce the Direct Voice apart from his own vocal organs, telekenesis, or movement of objects at a distance, raps, or percussions of ectoplasm, levitations, apports, or the bringing of objects from a distance, materializations, either of faces, limbs, or of complete figures, trance talkings and writings, writings within closed slates, and luminous phenomena, which take many forms. All of these manifestations the author has many times seen, and as they have been exhibited to him by the leading mediums of his day, he ventures to vary the form of this history by speaking of the more recent sensitives from his own personal knowledge and observation.

It is understood that some cultivate one gift and some another, while those who can exhibit all round forms of power are not usually so proficient in any one as the man or woman who specializes upon it. You have so much psychic power upon which to draw, and you may turn it all into one deep channel or disperse it over several superficial ones. Now and then some wonder-man appears like D.D. Home, who carries with him the whole range of mediumship—but it is rare.

The greatest trance medium with whom the author is acquainted is Mrs. Osborne Leonard. The outstanding merit of her gift is that it is, as a rule, continuous. It is not broken up by long pauses or irrelevant intervals, but it flows on exactly as if the person alleged to be speaking were actually present. The usual procedure is that Mrs. Leonard, a pleasant, gentle, middle-aged, ladylike woman, sinks into slumber, upon which her voice changes entirely, and what comes through purports to be from her little control, Fedra. The control talks in rather broken English in a high voice, with many little intimacies and pleasantries which give the impression of a sweet, amiable and intelligent child. She acts as spokesman for the waiting spirit, but the spirit occasionally breaks in also, which leads to sudden changes from the first person singular to the third, such as: "I am here, Father. He says he wants to speak. I am so well and so happy. He says he finds it so wonderful to be able to talk to you" and so on.



Mrs. Osborne Leonard.

At her best, it is a wonderful experience. Upon one occasion the author had received a long series of messages purporting to deal with the future fate of the world, through his wife's hand and voice in his own Home Circle. When he visited Mrs. Leonard, he said no word of this, nor had he at that time spoken of the matter in any public way. Yet he had hardly sat down and arranged the writing-pad upon which he proposed to take notes of what came through, when his son announced his presence, and spoke with hardly a break for an hour. During this long monologue he showed an intimate knowledge of all that had come through in the Home Circle, and also of small details of family life, utterly foreign to the medium. In the whole interview he made no mistake as to fact, and yet many facts were mentioned. A short section of the less personal part of it may be quoted here as a sample:

There is so much false progress of material mechanical kind. That is not progress. If you build a car to go one thousand miles this year, then you build one to go two thousand miles next year. No one is the better for that. We want real progress—to understand the power of mind and spirit and to realize the fact that there is a spirit world.

So much help could be given from our side if only people on the earth would fit themselves to take it, but we cannot force our help on those who are not prepared for it. That is your work, to prepare people for us. Some of them are so hopelessly ignorant, but sow the seed, even if you do not see it coming up.

The clergy are so limited in their ideas and so bound by a system which should be an obsolete one. It is like serving up last week's dinner instead of having a new one. We want fresh spiritual food, not a hash of the old food. We know how wonderful Christ is. We realize His love and His power. He can help both us and you. But He will do so by kindling fresh fires, not by raking always in the old ashes.

That is what we want—the fire of enthusiasm on the two altars of imagination and knowledge. Some people would do away with the imagination, but it is often the gateway to knowledge. The Churches have had the right teaching, but they have not put it to practical use. One must be able to demonstrate

one's spiritual knowledge in a practical form. The plane on which you live is a practical one in which you are expected to put your knowledge and belief into action. On our plane knowledge and faith are action – one thinks a thing and at once puts it into practice, but on earth there are so many who say a thing is right, but never do it. The Church teaches, but does not demonstrate its own teaching. The blackboard is useful at times, you know. That is what you need. You should teach, and then demonstrate upon the blackboard. Thus physical phenomena are really most important. There will be some in this upheaval. It is difficult for us to manifest physically now because the greater bulk of collective thought is against and not for us. But when the upheaval comes, people will be shaken out of their pig-headed, ignorant, antagonistic attitude to us, which will immediately open the way to a fuller demonstration than we have hitherto been able to give.

It is like a wall now that we have to batter against, and we lose ninety per cent of our power in the battering and trying to find a weak spot in this wall of ignorance through which we can creep to you. But many of you are chiselling and hammering from your side to let us through. You have not built the wall, and you are helping us to penetrate it. In a little while you will have so weakened it that it will crumble, and instead of creeping through with difficulty we shall all emerge together in a glorious band. That will be the climax—the meeting of spirit and matter.

If the truth of Spiritualism depended upon Mrs. Leonard's powers alone, the case would be an overwhelming one, since she has seen many hundreds of clients and seldom failed to give complete satisfaction. There are, however, many clairvoyants whose powers are little inferior to those of Mrs. Leonard, and who would perhaps equal her if they showed the same restraint in their use. No fee will ever tempt Mrs. Leonard to take more than two clients in the day, and it is to this, no doubt, that the sustained excellence of her results are due.

Among London clairvoyants whom the author has used, Mr. Vout Peters is entitled to a high place. On one occasion a very remarkable piece of

evidence came through him, as is narrated elsewhere.⁷³ Another excellent medium upon her day is Mrs. Annie Brittain.



Mr. Vout Peters.

The author was in the habit of sending mourners to this medium during the wartime, and filed the letters in which they narrated their experience. The result is a very remarkable one. Out of the first hundred cases eighty were quite successful in establishing touch with the object of their inquiry. In some cases the result was overpoweringly evidential, and the amount of comfort given to the inquirers can hardly be exaggerated. The revulsion of feeling when the mourner suddenly finds that death is not silent, but that a still small voice, speaking in very happy accents, can still come back is an

⁷³ The New Revelation, p. 53.

overpowering one. One lady wrote that she had fully determined to take her own life, so bleak and empty was existence, but that she left Mrs. Brittain's parlour with renewed hope in her heart. When one hears that such a medium has been dragged up to a police-court, sworn down by ignorant policemen, and condemned by a still more ignorant magistrate, one feels that one is indeed living in the dark ages of the world's history.

Like Mrs. Leonard, Mrs. Brittain has a kindly little child familiar named Belle. In his extensive researches the author has made the acquaintance of many of these little creatures in different parts of the world, finding the same character, the same voice and the same pleasant ways in all. This similarity would in itself show any reasoning being that some general law was at work. Fedra, Belle, Iris, Harmony, and many more, prattle in their high falsetto voices, and the world is the better for their presence and ministrations.

Miss McCreadie is another notable London clairvoyante belonging to the older school, and bringing with her an atmosphere of religion which is sometimes wanting. There are many others, but no notice would be complete without an allusion to the remarkable higher teaching which comes from Johannes and the other controls of Mrs. Hester Dowden, the daughter of the famous Shakespearean scholar. A reference should be made also to Captain Bartlett, whose wonderful writings and drawings enabled Mr. Bligh Bond to expose ruins of two chapels at Glastonbury which were so buried that only the clairvoyant sense could have defined their exact position. Readers of "The Gate of Remembrance" will understand the full force of this remarkable episode.

Direct Voice phenomena are different from mere clairvoyance and trance-speaking in that the sounds do not appear to come from the medium but externalise themselves often to a distance of several yards, continue to sound when the mouth is filled with water, and even break into two or three voices simultaneously. On these occasions an aluminium trumpet is used to magnify the voice, and also, as some suppose, to form a small dark chamber in which the actual vocal cords used by the spirit can become materialised. It is an interesting fact, and one which has caused much misgiving to those whose experience is limited, that the first sounds usually resemble the voice

of the medium. This very soon passes away and the voice either becomes neutral or may closely resemble that of the deceased. It is possible that the reason of this phenomenon is that the ectoplasm from which the phenomena are produced is drawn from him or her, and carries with it some of his or her peculiarities until such time as the outside force gains command. It is well that the sceptic should be patient and await developments, for I have known an ignorant and self-opinionated investigator take for granted that there was fraud through noting the resemblance of voices, and then wreck the whole séance by foolish horseplay, whereas had he waited his doubts would soon have been resolved.

The author has had the experience with Mrs. Wriedt of hearing the Direct Voice, accompanied by raps on the trumpet, in broad daylight, with the medium seated some yards away. This disposes of the idea that the medium in the dark can change her position. It is not uncommon to have two or three spirit voices speaking or singing at the same moment, which is in turn fatal to the theory of ventriloquism. The trumpet, too, which is often decorated with a small spot of luminous paint, may be seen darting about far out of reach of the medium's hands. On one occasion at the house of Mr. Dennis Bradley, the author saw the illuminated trumpet whirling round and tapping on the ceiling as a moth might have done. The medium (Valiantine) was afterwards asked to stand upon his chair, and it was found that with the trumpet in his extended arm he was unable to touch the ceiling. This was witnessed by a circle of eight.

Mrs. Wriedt was born in Detroit some fifty years ago, and is perhaps better known in England than any American medium. The reality of her powers may best be judged by a short description of results. On the occasion of a visit to the author's house in the country she sat with the author, his wife, and his secretary, in a well-lighted room. A hymn was sung, and before the first verse was ended a fifth voice of excellent quality joined in and continued to the end. All three observers were ready to depose that Mrs. Wriedt herself was singing all the time. At the evening sitting a succession of friends came through with every possible sign of their identity. One sitter was approached by her father, recently dead, who began by the hard, dry

cough which had appeared in his last illness. He discussed the question of some legacy in a perfectly rational manner. A friend of the author's, a rather irritable Anglo-Indian, manifested, so far as a voice could do so, reproducing exactly the fashion of speech, giving the name, and alluding to facts of his lifetime. Another sitter had a visit from one who claimed to be his grand-aunt. The relationship was denied, but on inquiry at home it was found that he had actually had an aunt of that name who died in his childhood. Telepathy has to be strained very far to cover such cases.



Henrietta "Etta" Wriedt.

Altogether the author has experimented with at least twenty producers of the Direct Voice, and has been much struck by the difference in the volume of the sound with different mediums. Often it is so faint that it is only with some difficulty that one can distinguish the message. There are few experiences more tensely painful than to strain one's ears and to hear in the darkness the panting, labouring, broken accents beside one, which might mean so much if one could but distinguish them. On the other hand, the author has known what it was to be considerably embarrassed when in the

bedroom of a crowded Chicago hotel a voice has broken forth which could only be compared with the roaring of a lion. The medium upon that occasion was a slim young American lad, who could not possibly have produced such a sound with his normal organs. Between these two extremes every gradation of volume and vibration may be encountered.

George Valiantine, who has already been mentioned, would perhaps come second if the author had to make a list of the great Direct Voice mediums with whom he has experimented. He was examined by the committee of the Scientific American and turned down on the excuse that an electric apparatus showed that he left his chair whenever the voice sounded. The instance already given by the author, where the trumpet circled outside the reach of the medium, is proof positive that his results certainly do not depend upon his leaving his chair, and their effect depends not only on how the voice is produced, but even more on what the voice says. Those who have read Dennis Bradley's "Towards the Stars" and his subsequent book narrating the long series of sittings held at Kingston Vale, will realize that no possible explanation will cover Valiantine's mediumship save the plain fact that he has exceptional psychic powers. They vary very much with the conditions, but at their best they stand very high. Like Mrs. Wriedt, he does not go into trance, and yet his condition cannot be called normal. There are semi-trance conditions which await the investigations of the student of the future.

Mr. Valiantine is by profession a manufacturer in a small town in Pennsylvania. He is a quiet, gentle, kindly man, and as he is in the prime of life, a very useful career should still lie before him.

As a materialization medium, Jonson, of Toledo, who afterwards resided in Los Angeles, stands alone, so far as the author's experience carries him. Possibly his wife's name should be bracketed with his, since they work together. The peculiarity of Jonson's work is that he is in full view of the circle, sitting outside the cabinet, while his wife stands near the cabinet and superintends the proceedings. Anyone who desires a very complete account of a Jonson séance will find it in the author's "Our Second American Adventure," and his mediumship is also treated very thoroughly by Admiral

Usborne Moore.⁷⁴ The admiral, who was among the greatest of psychic researchers, sat many times with Jonson, and obtained the co-operation of an ex-chief of the United States Secret Service, who established a watch and found nothing against the medium. When it is remembered that Toledo was at that time a limited town, and that sometimes as many as twenty different personalities manifested in a single sitting, it will be realized that personification presents insuperable difficulties. Upon the occasion of the sitting at which the author was present, a long succession of figures came, one at a time, from a small cabinet. They were old and young, men, women, and children. The light from a red lamp was sufficient to enable a sitter to see the figures clearly but not to distinguish the details of the features. Some of the figures remained out for not less than twenty minutes and conversed freely with the circle, answering all questions put to them. No man can give another a blank cheque for honesty and certify that he not only is honest but always will be. The author can only say that on that particular occasion he was perfectly convinced of the genuine nature of the phenomena, and that he has no reason to doubt it on any other occasion.

Jonson is a powerfully built man, and though he is now verging upon old age his psychic powers are still unimpaired. He is the centre of a circle at Pasadena, near Los Angeles, who meet every week to profit by his remarkable powers. The late Professor Larkin, the astronomer, was a habitu  of the circle, and assured the author of his complete belief in the honesty of the mediumship.

Materialization may have been more common in the past than in the present. Those who read such books as Brackett's "Materialised Apparitions," or Miss Marryat's "There Is No Death," would say so. But in these days complete materialization is very rare. The author was present at an alleged materialization by one Thompson, in New York, but the proceedings carried no conviction, and the man was shortly afterwards arrested for trickery under circumstances which left no doubt as to his guilt.

There are certain mediums who, without specializing in any particular way, can exhibit a wide range of preternatural manifestations. Of all whom the

⁷⁴ *Glimpses Of The Next State*, pp. 195, 322

author has encountered he would give precedence for variety and consistency to Miss Ada Besinnet, of Toledo, in America, and to Evan Powell, formerly of Merthyr Tydvil, in Wales. Both are admirable mediums and kindly, good people who are worthy of the wonderful gifts which have been entrusted to them. In the case of Miss Besinnet the manifestations include the Direct Voice, two or more often sounding at the same time. One masculine control, named Dan, has a remarkable male baritone voice, and anyone who has heard it can certainly never doubt that it is independent of the lady's organism.



Miss Ada Besinnet.

A female voice occasionally joins with Dan to make a most tuneful duet. Remarkable whistling, in which there seems to be no pause for the intake of

breath, is another feature of this mediumship. So also is the production of very brilliant lights. These appear to be small solid luminous objects, for the author had on one occasion the curious experience of having one upon his moustache. Had a large firefly settled there the effect would have been much the same. The Direct Voices of Miss Besinnet when they take the form of messages—as apart from the work of the controls—are not strong and are often hardly audible. The most remarkable, however, of all her powers is the appearance of phantom faces which appear in an illuminated patch in front of the sitter. They would seem to be mere masks, as there is no appearance of depth to them. In most cases they represent dim faces, which occasionally bear a resemblance to that of the medium when the health of the lady or the power of the circle is low. When the conditions are good they are utterly dissimilar. Upon two occasions the author has seen faces to which he could absolutely swear, the one being his mother and the other his nephew, Oscar Hornung, a young officer killed in the war. They were as clear-cut and visible as ever in life. On the other hand, there have been evenings when no clear recognition could be obtained, though among the faces were some which could only be described as angelic in their beauty and purity.⁷⁵

On a level with Miss Besinnet is Mr. Evan Powell, with the same variety but not always the same type of powers. Powell's luminous phenomena are equally good. His voice production is better. The author has heard the spirit voices as loud as those of ordinary human talk, and recalls one occasion when three of them were talking simultaneously, one to Lady Cowan, one to Sir James Marchant, and one to Sir Robert McAlpine. Movements of objects are common in the Powell séances, and on one occasion a stand weighing 60 lb. was suspended for some time over the author's head. Evan Powell always insists upon being very securely tied during his séances, which is done, he claims, for his own protection, since he cannot be responsible for his own movements when he is in a trance. This throws an interesting sidelight upon the possible nature of some exposures. There is a good deal of evidence, not only that the medium may unconsciously, or under the

⁷⁵ Various estimates and experiences of this mediumship will be found in the author's *Our American Adventure*, pp. 124-132; Admiral Moore's *Glimpses Of The Next State*, pp. 226, 312; and finally Mr. Hewat McKenzie's report, *Psychic Science*, April, 1922.

influence of suggestion from the audience, put himself into a false position, but that evil forces which are either mischievous or are actively opposed to the good work done by Spiritualism, may obsess the entranced body and cause it to do suspicious things so as to discredit the medium. Some sensible remarks upon this subject, founded upon personal experience, have been made by Professor Haraldur Nielsson, of Iceland, when commenting upon a case where one of the circle committed a perfectly senseless fraud, and a spirit afterwards admitted that it was done by its agency and instigation.⁷⁶ On the whole, Evan Powell may be said to have the widest endowment of spiritual gifts of any medium at present in England. He preaches the doctrines of Spiritualism both in his own person and while under control, and he can in himself exhibit nearly the whole range of phenomena. It is a pity that his business as a coal merchant in Devonshire prevents his constant presence in London.

Slate-writing mediumship is a remarkable manifestation. It is possessed in a high degree by Mrs. Pruden, of Cincinnati, who has recently visited Great Britain and exhibited her wonderful powers to a number of people. The author has sat with her several times, and has explained the methods in detail. As the passage is a short one and may make the matter clear to the uninitiated, it is here transcribed:

It was our good fortune now to come once again into contact with a really great medium in Mrs. Pruden of Cincinnati, who had come to Chicago for my lectures. We had a sitting in the Blackstone Hotel, through the courtesy of her host, Mr. Holmyard, and the results were splendid. She is an elderly, kindly woman with a motherly manner. Her particular gift was slate-writing which I had never examined before.

I had heard that there were trick slates, but she was anxious to use mine and allowed me carefully to examine hers. She makes a dark cabinet by draping the table, and holds the slate under it, while you may hold the other corner of it. Her other hand is free and visible. The slate is double with a little bit of pencil put in between.

⁷⁶ *Psychic Science*, July, 1925.

After a delay of half an hour the writing began. It was the strangest feeling to hold the slate and to feel the thrill and vibration of the pencil as it worked away inside. We had each written a question on a bit of paper and cast it down, carefully folded, on the ground in the shadow of the drapery, that psychic forces might have correct conditions for their work, which is always interfered with by light.

Presently each of us got an answer to our question upon the slate, and were allowed to pick up our folded papers and see that they had not been opened. The room, I may say, was full of daylight and the medium could not stoop without our seeing it.

I had some business this morning of a partly spiritual, partly material nature with a Dr. Gelbert, a French inventor. I asked in my question if this were wise. The answer on the slate was—"Trust Dr. Gelbert. Kingsley." I had not mentioned Dr. Gelbert's name in my question, nor did Mrs. Pruden know anything of the matter.

My wife got a long message from a dear friend, signed with her name. The name was a true signature. Altogether it was a most utterly convincing demonstration. Sharp, clear raps upon the table joined continually in our conversation.⁷⁷

The general method and result is the same as that used by Mr. Pierre Keeler, of the United States. The author has not been able to arrange a sitting with this medium, but a friend who did so had results which put the truth of the phenomena beyond all question. In his case he received answers to questions placed inside sealed envelopes, so that the favourite explanation, that the medium in some way sees the slips of paper, is ruled out. Anyone who has sat with Mrs. Pruden will know, however, that she never stoops, and that the slips of paper lie at the feet of the sitter.

A remarkable form of mediumship is crystal gazing, where the pictures are actually visible to the eye of the sitter. The author has only once encountered this, under the mediumship of a lady from Yorkshire. The pictures were clear-cut and definite, and succeeded each other with an

⁷⁷ *Our American Adventure*, pp. 144-5.

interval of fog. They did not appear to be relevant to any past or future event, but consisted of small views, dim faces, and other subjects of the kind.

Such are a few of the varied forms of spirit power which have been given to us as an antidote to materialism. The highest forms of all are not physical but are to be found in the inspired writings of such men as Davis, Stainton Moses, or Vale Owen. It cannot be too often repeated that the mere fact that a message comes to us in preternatural fashion is no guarantee that it is either high or true. The self-deluded, pompous person, the shallow reasoner, and the deliberate deceiver all exist upon the invisible side of life, and all may get their worthless communications transmitted through uncritical agents. Each must be scanned and weighed, and much must be neglected, while the residue is worthy of our most respectful attention. But even the best can never be final and is often amended, as in the case of Stainton Moses, when he had reached the Other Side. That great teacher admitted through Mrs. Piper that there were points upon which he had been ill-informed.

The mediums mentioned have been chosen as types of their various classes, but there are many others who deserve to be recorded in detail if there were space. The author has sat several times with Sloan and with Phoenix, of Glasgow, both of whom have remarkable powers which cover almost the whole range of the spiritual gifts, and both are, or were, most unworldly men with a saintly disregard of the things of this life. Mrs. Falconer, of Edinburgh, is also a trance medium of considerable power. Of the earlier generation, the author has experienced the mediumship of Husk and of Craddock, both of whom had their strong hours and their weak ones. Mrs. Susanna Harris has also afforded good evidence upon physical lines, as has Mrs. Wagner, of Los Angeles, while among amateurs John Ticknor, of New York, and Mr. Nugent, of Belfast, are in the very first flight of trance mediumship.

In connexion with John Ticknor the author may quote an experiment which he made and reported in the "Proceedings" of the American Society for Psychical Research, a body which has been held back in the past by non-conductors almost as much as its parent in England. In this instance the

author took a careful record of the pulse-beat when Mr. Ticknor was normal, when he was controlled by Colonel Lee, one of his spirit guides, and when he was under the influence of Black Hawk, a Red Indian control. The respective figures were 82, 100 and 118.

Mrs. Roberts Johnson is another medium who is unequal in her results, but who has at her best a very remarkable power with the Direct Voice. The religious element is wanting at her sittings, and the jocose North Country youths who come through create an atmosphere which amuses the sitters, but which may repel those who approach the subject with feelings of solemnity. The deep Scottish voice of the Glasgow control, David Duguid, a famous medium himself in his lifetime, is beyond all imitation by the throat of a woman, and his remarks are full of dignity and wisdom. The Rev. Dr. Lamond has assured me that Duguid at one of these sittings reminded him of an incident which had occurred between them in life—a sufficient proof of the reality of the individual.

There is no more curious and dramatic phase of psychic phenomenon than the apport. It is so startling that it is difficult to persuade the sceptic as to its possibility, and even the Spiritualist can hardly credit it until examples actually come his way. The author's first introduction to occult knowledge was due largely to the late General Drayson, who at that time—nearly forty years ago—was receiving through an amateur medium a constant succession of apports of the most curious description—Indian lamps, amulets, fresh fruit, and other things. So amazing a phenomenon, and one so easily simulated, was too much for a beginner, and it retarded rather than helped progress. Since then, however, the author has met the editor of a well-known paper who used the same medium after General Drayson's death, and he continued, under rigid conditions, to get similar apports. The author has been forced, therefore, to reconsider his view and to believe that he has underrated both the honesty of the medium and the intelligence of her sitter.

Mr. Bailey, of Melbourne, appears to be a very remarkable apport medium, and the author has no confidence in his alleged exposure at Grenoble. Bailey's own account is that he was the victim of a religious conspiracy, and in view of his long record of success it is more probable than that he should,

in some mysterious way, have smuggled a live bird into a séance room in which he knew that he would be stripped and examined. The explanation of the Psychic Researchers, that the bird was concealed in his intestines, is a supreme example of the absurdities which incredulity can produce. The author had one experience of an apport with Bailey which it is surely impossible to explain away. It was thus described:

We then placed Mr. Bailey in the corner of the room, lowered the lights without turning them out, and waited. Almost at once he breathed very heavily, as one in a trance, and soon said something in a foreign tongue which was unintelligible to me. One of our friends, Mr. Cochrane, recognized it as Indian, and at once answered, a few sentences being interchanged. In English the voice then said that he was a Hindoo control who was used to bring apports for the medium, and that he would, he hoped, be able to bring one for us. "Here it is," he said, a moment later, and the medium's hand was extended with something in it. The light was turned full on and we found it was a very perfect bird's nest, beautifully constructed of some very fine fibre mixed with moss. It stood about two inches high and had no sign of any flattening which would have come with concealment. The size would be nearly three inches across. In it lay a small egg, white, with tiny brown speckles. The medium, or rather the Hindoo control acting through the medium, placed the egg on his palm and broke it, some fine albumen squirting out. There was no trace of yolk. "We are not allowed to interfere with life," said he. "If it had been fertilized we could not have taken it." These words were said before he broke it, so that he was aware of the condition of the egg, which certainly seems remarkable.

"Where did it come from?" I asked. "From India."

"What bird is it?"

"They call it the Jungle Sparrow."

The nest remained in my possession and I spent a morning with Mr. Chubb, of the local museum, to ascertain if it was really the nest of such a bird. It seemed too small for an Indian Sparrow, and yet we could not match either nest or egg among the Australian types. Some of Mr. Bailey's other nests and eggs have been actually identified.

Surely it is a fair argument that while it is conceivable that such birds might be imported and purchased here, it is really an insult to one's reason to suppose that nests with fresh eggs in them could also be in the market. Therefore, I can only support the far more extended experience and elaborate tests of Dr. MacCarthy of Sydney, and affirm that I believe Mr. Charles Bailey to be upon occasion a true medium, with a very remarkable gift for apports.

It is only right to state that when I returned to London I took one of Bailey's Assyrian tablets to the British Museum, and that it was pronounced to be a forgery. Upon further inquiry it proved that these forgeries are made by certain Jews in a suburb of Bagdad—and, so far as is known, only there. Therefore the matter is not much farther advanced. To the transporting agency it is at least possible that the forgery, steeped in recent human magnetism, is more capable of being handled than the original taken from a mound. Bailey has produced at least a hundred of these things, and no Custom House officer has deposed how they could have entered the country. On the other hand, Bailey told me clearly that the tablets had been passed by the British Museum, so that I fear I cannot acquit him of tampering with truth—and just there lies the great difficulty of deciding upon his case. But one has always to remember that physical mediumship has no connexion one way or the other with personal character, any more than the gift of poetry.⁷⁸

It is forgotten by those critics who are continually quoting Bailey's exposure, that immediately before the Grenoble experience he had undergone a long series of tests at Milan, in the course of which the investigators took the extreme and unjustifiable course of watching the medium secretly when in his own bedroom. The committee, which consisted of nine business men and doctors, could find no flaw in seventeen sittings, even when the medium was put in a sack. These sittings lasted from February to April in 1904, and have been fully reported by Professor Marzorati. In view of their success, far too much has been made of the subsequent accusation in France. If the same analysis and scepticism were shown towards "exposures" as towards phenomena, public opinion would be more justly directed.

⁷⁸ *The Wanderings Of A Spiritualist*, pp. 103-5. *Annals Of Psychical Science*, Vol. IX.

The phenomenon of apports seems so incomprehensible to our minds, that the author on one occasion asked a spirit control whether he could say anything which would throw a light upon it. The answer was:

"It involves some factors which are beyond your human science and which could not be made clear to you. At the same time you may take as a rough analogy the case of water which is turned into steam. Then this steam, which is invisible, may be conducted elsewhere to be reassembled as visible water." This is, as stated, an analogy rather than an explanation, but it seems very apt none the less. It should be added, as mentioned in the quotation, that not only Mr. Stanford, of Melbourne, but also Dr. MacCarthy, one of the leading medical men of Sydney, carried out a long series of experiments with Bailey, and were convinced of his genuine powers.

The mediums quoted by no means exhaust the list of those with whom the author has had opportunities of experimenting, and he cannot leave the subject without alluding to the ectoplasm of Eva, which he has held between his fingers, or the brilliant luminosities of Frau Silbert which he has seen shooting like a dazzling crown out of her head. Enough has been said, he hopes, to show that the succession of great mediums is not extinct for anyone who is earnest in his search, and also to assure the reader that these pages are written by one who has spared no pains to gain practical knowledge of that which he studies. As to the charge of credulity which is invariably directed by the unreceptive against anyone who forms a positive opinion upon this subject, the author can solemnly aver that in the course of his long career as an investigator he cannot recall one single case where it was clearly shown that he had been mistaken upon any serious point, or had given a certificate of honesty to a performance which was afterwards clearly proved to be dishonest. A man who is credulous does not take twenty years of reading and experiment before he comes to his fixed conclusions.

No account of physical mediumship would be complete which did not allude to the remarkable results obtained by "Margery," the name adopted for public purposes by Mrs. Crandon, the beautiful and gifted wife of one of the first surgeons in Boston. This lady showed psychic powers some years ago, and the author was instrumental in calling the attention of the Scientific

American Committee to her case. By doing so he most unwillingly exposed her to much trouble and worry, which were borne with extraordinary patience by her husband and herself. It was difficult to say which was the more annoying: Houdini the conjurer, with his preposterous and ignorant theories of fraud, or such "scientific" sitters as Professor McDougall, of Harvard, who, after fifty sittings and signing as many papers at the end of each sitting to endorse the wonders recorded, was still unable to give any definite judgment, and contented himself with vague innuendoes. The matter was not mended by the interposition of Mr. E. J. Dingwall of the London S.P.R., who proclaimed the truth of the mediumship in enthusiastic private letters, but denied his conviction at public meetings. These so-called "experts" cache out of the matter with little credit, but more than two hundred common-sense sitters had wit enough and honesty enough to testify truly as to that which occurred before their eyes. The author may add that he has himself sat with Mrs. Crandon and has satisfied himself, so far as one sitting could do so, as to the truth and range of her powers.

The control in this instance professes to be Walter, the lady's dead brother, and he exhibits a very marked individuality with a strong sense of humour and considerable command of racy vernacular. The voice production is direct, in a male voice, which seems to operate some few inches in front of the medium's forehead. The powers have been progressive, their range continually widening, until now they have reached almost the full compass of mediumship. The ringing of electric bells without contact has been done *ad nauseam*, until one would imagine that no one, save a stone-deaf man or a scientific expert, could have any doubt about it. Movement of objects at a distance, spirit lights, raising of tables, apports, and finally the clear production of ectoplasm in a good red light, have succeeded each other. The patient work of Dr. and Mrs. Crandon will surely be rewarded, and their names will live in the history of psychic science, and so in a very different category will those of their traducers.

Of all forms of mediumship the highest and most valuable, when it can be relied upon, is that which is called automatic writing, since in this, if the form be pure, we seem to have found a direct method of obtaining teaching from the Beyond. Unhappily, it is a method which lends itself very readily to self-

deception, since it is certain that the subconscious mind of man has many powers with which we are as yet imperfectly acquainted. It is impossible ever to accept any automatic script whole-heartedly as a hundred per cent statement of truth from the Beyond. The stained glass will still tint the light which passes through it, and our human organism will never be crystal clear. The verity of any particular specimen of such writing must depend not upon mere assertion, but upon corroborative details and the general dissimilarity from the mind of the writer, and similarity to that of the alleged inspirer. When, for example, in the case of the late Oscar Wilde, you get long communications which are not only characteristic of his style, but which contain constant allusions to obscure episodes in his own life and which finally are written in his own handwriting, it must be admitted that the evidence is overpoweringly strong. There is a great outpouring of such scripts at present in all the English-speaking countries. They are good, bad, and indifferent, but the good contain much matter which bears every trace of inspiration. The Christian or the Jew may well ask himself why parts of the Old Testament should admittedly have been written in this fashion, and yet its modern examples be treated with contempt. "And there came a writing to him from Elijah the prophet, saying," etc. (2 Chronicles xxi. 12) is one of several allusions which show the ancient use of this particular form of spirit communion.

Of all the examples of recent years there is none which can compare in fullness and dignity with the writings of the Rev. George Vale Owen, whose great script, "The Life Beyond the Veil," may be as permanent an influence as that of Swedenborg. It is an interesting point, elaborated by Dr. A. J. Wood, that even in most subtle and complex points there is a close resemblance between the work of these two seers, and yet it is certain that Vale Owen is very slightly acquainted with the writings of the great Swedish teacher. George Vale Owen is so outstanding a figure in the history of modern Spiritualism that some short note upon him may not be out of place. He was born in Birmingham in 1869 and was educated at the Midland Institute and Queen's College, Birmingham. After curacies at Seaforth, Fairfield, and the low Scotland Road division of Liverpool, where he had a large experience among the poor, he became vicar of Orford, near Warrington, where his energy has been instrumental in erecting a new

church. Here he remained for twenty years working in his parish which deeply appreciated his ministrations. Some psychic manifestations came his way, and finally he found himself impelled to exercise his own latent power of inspired writing, the script purporting to come in the first instance from his mother, but being continued by certain high spirits or angels who had come in her train. The whole constitutes an account of life after death, and a body of philosophy and advice from unseen sources, which seems to the author to bear every internal sign of a high origin. The narrative is dignified and lofty, expressed in slightly archaic English which gives it a curious flavour of its own.

Some extracts from this script appeared in various papers, attracting the more notice as being from the pen of a vicar of the Established Church. The manuscript was finally brought to the notice of the late Lord Northcliffe, who was much impressed by it and also by the self-denial of the writer, who refused to take any emuneration for its publication. This followed weekly in Lord Northcliffe's Sunday paper, the Weekly Dispatch, and nothing has ever occurred which has brought the highest teachings of Spiritualism so directly to the masses. It was shown incidentally that the policy of the Press in the past had been not only ignorant and unjust, but actually mistaken from the low point of view of self-interest, for the circulation of the Dispatch increased greatly during the year that it published the script. Such doings were, however, highly offensive to a very conservative bishop, and Mr. Vale Owen found himself, like all religious reformers, an object of dislike, and suffered veiled persecution from his Church superiors. With this force pushing him, and the pull in front of the whole Spiritualist community, he bravely abandoned his living and cast himself and his family on the mercy of whatever Providence might please to direct, his brave wife entirely sympathizing with him in a step which was no light matter for a couple who were no longer young. After a short lecturing tour in America and another in England, Mr. Vale Owen is at present presiding over a Spiritualist congregation in London, where the magnetism of his presence draws considerable audiences. In an excellent pen-portrait, Mr. David Gow has said of Vale Owen:

The tall, thin figure of the minister, his pale, ascetic face lit by large eyes, luminous with tenderness and humour, his modest bearing, his quiet words charged with the magnetism of sympathy, all these revealed in full measure what manner of man he is. They disclosed a soul of rare devotion kept sane and sweet by a kindly, humorous sense and a practical outlook on the world. He seemed to be charged more with the spirit of Erasmus or of Melanchthon than of the bluff Luther. Perhaps the Church needs no Luthers to-day.

If the author has included this short notice under the head of personal experience, it is because he has been honoured by the close friendship of Mr. Vale Owen for some years, and has been in a position to study and endorse the reality of his psychic powers. The author would add that he has succeeded in getting the independent Direct Voice sitting alone with his wife. The voice was a deep, male one, coming some feet above our heads, and uttering only a short but very audible greeting. It is hoped that with further development consistent results may be obtained. For years the author has, in his own domestic circle, obtained inspired messages through the hand and voice of his wife, which have been of the most lofty and often of the most evidential nature. These are, however, too personal and intimate to be discussed in a general survey of the subject.

CHAPTER 9. SPIRITUALISM AND THE WAR

MANY people had never heard of Spiritualism until the period that began in 1914, when into so many homes the Angel of Death entered suddenly. The opponents of Spiritualism have found it convenient to regard this world upheaval as being the chief cause of the widening interest in psychical research. It has been said, too, by these unscrupulous opponents that the author's advocacy of the subject, as well as that of his distinguished friend, Sir Oliver Lodge, was due to the fact that each of them had a son killed in the war, the inference being that grief had lessened their critical faculties and made them believe what in more normal times they would not have believed. The author has many times refuted this clumsy lie, and pointed out the fact that his investigation dates back as far as 1886. Sir Oliver Lodge, for his part, says⁷⁹

It must not be supposed that my outlook has changed appreciably since the event, and the particular experiences related in the foregoing pages; my conclusion has been gradually forming itself for years, though, undoubtedly, it is based on experience of the same sort of thing. But this event has strengthened and liberated my testimony. It can now be associated with a private experience of my own, instead of with the private experiences of others. So long as one was dependent on evidence connected, even indirectly connected, with the bereavement of others, one had to be reticent and cautious, and in some cases silent. Only by special permission could any portion of the facts be reproduced; and that permission might in important cases be withheld. My own deductions were the same then as they are now, but the facts are now my own.

While it is true that Spiritualism counted its believers in millions before the war, there is no doubt that the subject was not understood by the world at large, and hardly recognized as having an existence. The war changed all that. The deaths occurring in almost every family in the land brought a sudden and concentrated interest in the life after death. People not only

⁷⁹ Raymond, p. 374.

asked the question, "If a man die shall he live again?" but they eagerly sought to know if communication was possible with the dear ones they had lost. They sought for "the touch of a vanished hand, and the sound of a voice that is still." Not only did thousands investigate for themselves, but, as in the early history of the movement, the first opening was often made by those who had passed on. The newspaper Press was not able to resist the pressure of public opinion, and much publicity was given to stories of soldiers' return, and generally to the life after death.

In this chapter only brief reference can be made to the different ways in which the spiritual world intermingled with the various phases of the war. The conflict itself was predicted over and over again; dead soldiers showed themselves in their old homes, and also gave warnings of danger to their comrades on the battlefield; they impressed their images on the photographic plate; solitary figures and legendary hosts, not of this world, were seen in the war area; indeed, over the whole scene there was from time to time a strong atmosphere of other-world presence and activity.

If for a moment the author may strike a personal note he would say that, while his own loss had no effect upon his views, the sight of a world which was distraught with sorrow, and which was eagerly asking for help and knowledge, did certainly affect his mind and cause him to understand that these psychic studies, which he had so long pursued, were of immense practical importance and could no longer be regarded as a mere intellectual hobby or fascinating pursuit of a novel research. Evidence of the presence of the dead appeared in his own household, and the relief afforded by posthumous messages taught him how great a solace it would be to a tortured world if it could share in the knowledge which had become clear to himself. It was this realization which, from early in 1916, caused him and his wife to devote themselves largely to this subject, to lecture upon it in many countries, and to travel to Australia, New Zealand, America, and Canada upon missions of instruction. Indeed, this history of the subject may be said to derive from the same impulse which first caused him to throw himself wholeheartedly into the cause.

This work may well fill a very small space in any general history, but it becomes apposite in a chapter dealing with the war, since it was the atmosphere of war in which it was engendered and grew.

Prophecy is one of the spiritual gifts, and any clear proof of its existence points to psychic powers outside our usual knowledge. In the case of the war, many could, of course, by normal means and the use of their own reason, foresee that the situation in the world had become so top-heavy with militarism that equilibrium could not be sustained. But some of the prophecies appear to be so distinct and detailed that they are beyond the power of mere reason and foresight.⁸⁰

The general fact of a great world catastrophe, and England's share in it, is thus spoken of in a spirit communication received by the Oxley Circle in Manchester and published in 1885:

For twice seven years—from the period already noted to you – the influences that are brought to bear against the British Nation will be successful; and after that time comes a fearful contest, a mighty struggle, a terrible bloodshed—according to human modes of expression, a dethronement of kings, an overthrow of Powers, great riot and disturbance; and still greater commotion amongst the masses concerning wealth and its possession. In using these words I speak according to human apprehension.

The most important question is—shall Britain for ever be lost? We see the prophecies of many, and the attitude of many Representatives upon the outer plane, and we see more clearly than many upon the Earth give us credit for, that amongst the latter-named there are those who are lovers of gold more than the interior principle which that gold represents.

Unless at the coming crisis the Great Power intervenes, that is, the Grand Operating Power of which I have spoken before, and in calm dignity flows forth and issues the mandate—Peace, be still!—the prophecy of some, that England shall sink in the depths for ever, will be fulfilled. Like the specific atoms of life who compose the State called England, who must sink for a time

⁸⁰ Reference to some of these will be found in the following publications; *Prophecies And Omens Of The Great War*, by Ralph Shirley, *The War And The Prophets*, by Herbert Thurston, and "War Prophecies," by F. C. S. Schiller (*Journal Of The S.P.R.*, June, 1916).

in order that they may rise again, even so must the Nation sink, and that to a great depth for a season; because she is immersed in the love of what is false, and has not yet acquired the intelligence that will act as a powerful lever to raise her up to her own dignity. Will she, like a drowning man going down for the third and last time, go down and be lost for ever? Once in the grand whole of the Mighty One, so she must continue an integral part. There is a kindly hand that will be stretched forth to save her, and bear her up from the billows of the self-hood that would otherwise engulf her. With an energy that is irrepressible, that power says – England once, England forever! But not in the same state will that continuance be. She must and will sink the lower, in order that she may rise the higher. The how, why, and in what manner, and by what treatment we shall use to bring about her safety and serenity, I shall speak of further on; but, here I affirm, that in order to save her, England must be drained of her best blood.

Angelic Revelations, Vol. V, pp. 170-1.

For particulars of M. Sonrel's famous prophecy in 1868 of the war of 1870, and his less direct prophecy of that of 1914, readers are referred to Professor Richet's book, "Thirty Years of Psychical Research" (pp. 387-9). The essential part of the latter prophecy is expressed as follows:—

Wait now, wait... years pass. It is a vast war. What bloodshed! God! What bloodshed! Oh, France, oh, my country, thou art saved! Thou art on the Rhine!

The prophecy was uttered in 1868, but was not put on record by Dr. Tardieu until April, 1914.

The author has previously referred⁸¹ to the prophecy given in Sydney, Australia, by the well-known medium, Mrs. Foster Turner, but it will bear repeating. At a Sunday meeting in February, 1914., at the Little Theatre, Castlereagh Street, before an audience of nearly a thousand people, in a trance-address in which Mr. W. T. Stead purported to be the influence, she said, as reported in notes taken on the occasion of her address:

Now, although there is not at present a whisper of a great European War at hand, yet I want to warn you that before this year 1914 has run its course,

⁸¹ The Wanderings Of A Spiritualist, (1921), p. 260.

Europe will be deluged in blood. Great Britain, our beloved nation, will be drawn into the most awful war the world has ever known. Germany will be the great antagonist, and will draw other nations in her train. Austria will totter to its ruin. Kings and kingdoms will fall. Millions of precious lives will be slaughtered, but Britain will finally triumph and emerge victorious.

The date of the ending of the Great War was given correctly in "Private Dowding," by W. T. P. (Major W. Tudor Pole), who calls his book "A Plain Record of the After-Death Experiences of a Soldier killed in Battle." In this book, which was first published in London in 1917, we find (p. 99) a communication which reads:

Messenger: In Europe there will be three great federations of states. These federations will come to birth naturally and without bloodshed, but Armageddon must first be fought out.

Tom. T. P.: *How long will this take?*

Messenger: I am not a very high being, and to me are not revealed details of all these wonderful happenings. So far as I am allowed to see, peace will be re-established during 1919, and world-federations will come into being during the following seven years. Although actual fighting may end in 1918, it will take many years to bring poise and peace into actual and permanent being.

In the list of prophecies, that of Mrs. Piper, the famous trance-medium of Boston, U.S.A., deserves a place, though it may be considered by some to have an element of vagueness. It occurred about 1898 at a sitting with Dr. Richard Hodgson, who was so prominently associated with the English and American Societies for Psychical Research.

Never since the days of Melchizedek has the earthly world been so susceptible to the influence of spirit. It will in the next century be astonishingly perceptible to the minds of men. I will also make a statement which you will surely see verified. Before the clear revelation of spirit communication, there will be a terrible war in different parts of the world. This will precede much clear communication. The entire world must be purified and cleansed before mortal man can see, through his spiritual vision, his friends on this side, and it will take

*just this line of action to bring about a state of perfection. Friend, kindly think on this.*⁸²

Mr. J. G. Piddington, in the "Proceedings" of the Society for Psychical Research,⁸³ speaks at length of the war predictions contained in various automatic scripts, particularly in those of Mrs. Alfred Lyttelton. In his summing up he says:

The scripts in general terms predicted the War; so did many people. Some half-dozen scripts written between July 9 and 21, 1914, predicted that the War was close at hand; so also, and earlier, had Sir Cecil Spring-Rice. The scripts predict that the War will eventually lead to a great improvement in international relations and social conditions; so, too, tens of thousands of ordinary citizens throughout the British Empire believed or hoped that the Great War was, as the phrase went, "a war to end war."

But this last parallel between the predictions in the scripts and the beliefs or aspirations that declared themselves with such strange ubiquity and intensity when war broke out, is in truth only a superficial parallel; for whereas the wave of idealism that swept over the Empire followed, or at best synchronized with, the beginning of the War, for many years before August, 1914, the scripts had repeatedly combined predictions of a Utopia with predictions of war, and had combined them in such a manner as to imply that the one is to be the outcome of the other. I know of no parallel to that. The writers, the soldiers, the diplomatists, and the politicians who forewarned us of the War, preached its dangers and its horrors, but they did not tell us that this perilous and horrible tragedy would yet prove to be the birth-throes of a happier world. Nor did the propagandists of Hague Conferences and other schemes for allaying international rivalries warn us that a world-war must precede the attainment of their desires. All alike predicted or feared a coming chaos; the scripts alone, so far as I know, spoke a hope for the world in the coming wars, and hailed the approaching chaos as the prelude to a new kosmos.

The predictions of the War in the scripts cannot be separated from the predictions of an eventual Utopia. The scripts do not say, "There will be a war,"

⁸² Quoted in *Light*, 1914, p. 349.

⁸³ *Proceedings Of The S.P.R.*, Vol. XXXIII. (March, 1923).

stop there, and then start afresh and say, "There will be a Utopia." They clearly imply that the Utopia will result from the War. Yet it cannot be said that the two component parts of the whole prophecy stand or fall together, because the predictions of war have been fulfilled; but the fulfilment or the failure of the Utopian predictions must eventually influence opinion as to the source of the war predictions. Should the Utopia foreshadowed in the scripts be translated into fact, it would be very difficult to attribute the prediction of it as an outcome of the War to ordinary human prescience, and a strong case would arise for admitting the claim made in the scripts, and for giving the credit of the prediction to discarnate beings. And if the Utopian predictions were held to be the work of discarnate minds, in all probability the predictions of the War, which are so closely bound up with them, would be assigned to the same source.

There are very many other prophecies which have been more or less successful. A perusal of them, however, cannot fail to impress the student with the conviction that the sense of time is the least accurate of spiritual details. Very often where the facts are right the dates are hopelessly at fault.

The most exact of all the prophecies concerning the War seems to have been that of Sophie, a Greek young woman who, having been hypnotized by Dr. Antoniou of Athens, delivered her oracles vocally in a state of trance. The date was June 6, 1914. She not only predicted the Great War and who the parties would be, but gave a great deal of detail such as the neutrality of Italy at the beginning, her subsequent alliance with the Entente, the action of Greece, the place of the final battle on the Vardar, and so forth. It is interesting, however, to note that she made certain errors which tend to show that the position of the Fatalist is not secure, and that there is at least a broad margin which can be affected by human will and energy.⁸⁴

There is much testimony regarding the occurrence of what may be called spirit intervention during the war. Captain W. E. Newcome has related the following⁸⁵:

⁸⁴ *Revue Métaphysique*, December, 1925, pp. 380, 390.

⁸⁵ *Pearson's Magazine*, August, 1919, pp. 190-1.

It was in September, 1916, that the 2nd Suffolks left Loos to go up into the northern sector of Albert. I accompanied them, and whilst in the front line trenches of that sector I, with others, witnessed one of the most remarkable occurrences of the war.

About the end of October, up to November 5th, we were actually holding that part of the line with very few troops. On November 1st the Germans made a very determined attack, doing their utmost to break through. I had occasion to go down to the reserve line, and during my absence the German attack began.

I hurried back to my company with all speed, and arrived in time to give a helping hand in throwing the enemy back to his own line. He never gained a footing in our trenches. The assault was sharp and short, and we had settled down to watch and wait again for his next attack.

We had not long to wait, for we soon saw Germans again coming over No Man's Land in massed waves; but before they reached our wire a white, spectral figure of a soldier rose from a shell-hole, or out of the ground about one hundred yards on our left, just in front of our wire and between the first line of Germans and ourselves. The spectral figure then slowly walked along our front for a distance of about one thousand yards. Its outline suggested to my mind that of an old pre-war officer, for it appeared to be in a shell coat, with field-service cap on its head. It looked, first, across at the oncoming Germans, then turned its head away and commenced to walk slowly outside our wire along the sector that we were holding.

Our SOS signal had been answered by our artillery. Shells and bullets were whistling across No Man's Land, but none in anyway impeded the spectre's progress. It steadily marched from the left of us till it got to the extreme right of the sector, then it turned its face right full on to us. It seemed to look up and down our trench, and as each Verey light rose it stood out more prominently.

After a brief survey of us it turned sharply to the right and made a bee-line for the German trenches. The Germans scattered back and no more was seen of them that night.

The Angels of Mons seemed to be the first thought of the men; then some said it looked like Lord Kitchener, and others said its face, when turned full on to

us, was not unlike Lord Roberts. I know that it gave me personally a great shock, and for some time it was the talk of the company.

Its appearance can be vouched for by sergeants and men of my section.

In the same article in Pearson's Magazine the story is told of Mr. William M. Speight, who had lost a brother officer, and his best friend, in the Ypres salient in December, 1915, seeing this officer come to his dug-out the same night. The next evening Mr. Speight invited another officer to come to the dugout in order to confirm him should the vision reappear. The dead officer came once more and, after pointing to a spot on the floor of the dug-out, vanished. A hole was dug at the indicated spot, and at a depth of three feet there was discovered a narrow tunnel excavated by the Germans, with fuses and mines timed to explode thirteen hours later. By the discovery of this mine the lives of a number of men were saved.

Mrs. E. A. Cannock, a well-known London clairvoyant, described⁸⁶ at a Spiritualist meeting how a number of deceased soldiers adopted a novel and convincing method of making known their identity. The soldiers (as seen in her clairvoyant vision) advanced in single file up the aisle, led by a young lieutenant. Each man bore on his chest what appeared to be a large placard on which was written his name and the place where he had lived on earth. Mrs. Cannock was able to read these names and descriptions, and they were all identified by various members of the audience. A curious feature was that as each name was recognized the spirit form faded away, thus making way for the one who was following.

As a type of other reports of a similar nature we may quote a case of what is described as "Telepathy from the Battle-front." On November 4, 1914, Mrs. Fussey, of Wimbledon, whose son "Tab" was serving in France with the 9th Lancers, was sitting at home when she felt in her arm the sharp sting of a wound. She jumped up and cried out, "How it smarts!" and rubbed the place. Her husband also attended to her arm, but could find no trace of anything wrong with it. Mrs. Fussey continued to suffer pain and exclaimed: "Tab is wounded in the arm. I know it." The following Monday a letter arrived from Private Fussey, saying that he had been shot in the arm and

⁸⁶ Light, 1919, p. 215.

was in hospital,⁸⁷ The case coincides with the recorded experiences of many psychics who by some unknown law of sympathy have suffered shocks simultaneously with accidents occurring to friends, and sometimes strangers, at a distance.

In a number of cases dead soldiers have manifested themselves through psychic photography. One of the most remarkable instances occurred in London on Armistice Day, November 11, 1922, when the medium, Mrs. Deane, in the presence of Miss Estelle Stead, took a photograph of the crowd in Whitehall, in the neighbourhood of the Cenotaph. It was during the Two Minutes Silence, and on the photograph there is to be seen a broad circle of light, in the midst of which are two or three dozen heads, many of them those of soldiers, who were subsequently recognized. These photographs have been repeated on each succeeding year, and though the usual reckless and malicious attacks have been made upon the medium and her work, those who had the best opportunity of checking it have no doubt of the supernormal character of these pictures.

We must content ourselves with one more case as typical of many hundreds of results. Mr. R. S. Hipwood, 174, Cleveland Road, Sunderland, writes⁸⁸:

We lost our only son in France, August 27, 1918. Being a good amateur photographer I was curious about the photos that had been taken by the Crewe Circle. We took our own plate with us, and I put the plate in the dark slide myself and put my name on it. We exposed two plates in the camera and got a well-recognized photo. Even my nine-year-old grandson could tell who the extra was, without anyone saying anything to him. Having a thorough knowledge of photography, I can vouch for the veracity of the photograph in every particular. I claim the print which I send you to be an ordinary photograph of myself and Mrs. Hipwood, with the extra of my son, R. S. Hipwood, 13th Welsh Regiment, killed in France in the great advance in August, 1918. I tender to our friends at Crewe our unbounded confidence in their work.

Of the many cases recorded of the return of dead soldiers, the following stands out because the particulars were received from two independent

⁸⁷ Light, 1914, p. 595.

⁸⁸ *The Case For Spirit Photography*, by Sir A. Conan Doyle, p. 108.

sources. It is related by Mr. W. T. Waters, of Tunbridge Wells, who says that he is only a novice in the study of Spiritualism⁸⁹:

In July last I had a sitting with Mr. J. J. Vango, in the course of which the control suddenly told me that there was standing by me a young soldier who was most anxious that I should take a message to his mother and sister who live in this town. I replied that I did not know any soldier near to me who had passed over. However, the lad would not be put off, and as my own friends seemed to stand aside to enable him to speak, I promised to endeavour to carry out his wishes.

At once came an exact description which enabled me instantly to recognize in this soldier lad the son of an acquaintance of my family. He told me certain things by which I was made doubly certain that it was he and no other, and he then gave me his message of comfort and assurance to his mother and sister (his father had died when he was a baby), who, for over two years, had been uncertain as to his fate, as he had been posted as "missing." He described how he had been badly wounded and captured by the Germans in a retreat, and that he had died about a week afterwards, and he implored me to tell his dear ones that he was often with them, and that the only bar to his complete happiness was the witnessing of his mother's great grief and his inability to make himself known.

I fully intended to keep my promise, but knowing that the lad's people favoured the High Church party and would most likely be absolutely sceptical, I was puzzled how to convey the message, as I felt they would only think that my own loss had affected my brain. I ventured to approach his aunt, but what I told her only called forth the remark: "It cannot be," and I therefore decided to await an opportunity of speaking to his mother direct.

Before this looked-for opportunity came, a young lady of this town, having lost her mother about two years ago, and hearing from my daughter that I was investigating these matters, called to see me, and I lent her my books. One of these books is "Rupert Lives," with which she was particularly struck, and she eventually arranged a sitting with Miss McCreadie, through whom she received such convincing testimony that she is now a firm believer. During this sitting,

⁸⁹ Light, December 20, 1919, p. 407.

the soldier boy who came to me came to her also. He repeated the same description that I had received, mentioned in addition his name —Charlie— and begged her to give a message to his mother and sister—the selfsame message which I had failed to give. So anxious was he in the matter, that at the close of the sitting he came again and implored her not to fail him.

Now, these events happened at different dates—July and September—the same message exactly being given through different mediums to different persons, and yet people tell us it is all a myth and that mediums simply read our thoughts.

When my friend told me of her experience I at once asked her to go with me to the lad's mother, and I am pleased to state that this double message convinced both his mother and his sister, and that his aunt is almost brought to the truth if not quite.

Sir William Barrett⁹⁰ records this evidential communication which was obtained in Dublin through the ouija board, with Mrs. Travers Smith, the daughter of the late Professor Edward Dowden. Her friend, Miss C, who is mentioned, was the daughter of a medical man. Sir William calls it "The Pearl Tie-pin Case."

Miss C., the sitter, had a cousin an officer with our Army in France, who was killed in battle a month previously to the sitting: this she knew. One day after the name of her cousin had unexpectedly been spelt out on the ouija board, and her name given in answer to her query: "Do you know who I am?" the following message came:

"Tell mother to give my pearl tie-pin to the girl I was going to marry. I think she ought to have it." When asked what was the name and address of the lady both were given; the name spelt out included the full Christian and surname, the latter being a very unusual one and quite unknown to both the sitters. The address given in London was either fictitious or taken down incorrectly, as a letter sent there was returned and the whole message was thought to be fictitious.

⁹⁰ On The Threshold Of The Unseen, p. 184.

Six months later, however, it was discovered that the officer had been engaged, shortly before he left for the Front, to the very lady whose name was given; he had, however, told no one. Neither his cousin nor any of his own family in Ireland were aware of the fact, and had never seen the lady nor heard her name until the War Office sent over the deceased officer's effects. Then they found that he had put this lady's name in his will as his next-of-kin, both Christian and surname being precisely the same as given through the automatist; and what is equally remarkable, a pearl tie pin was found in his effects.

Both the ladies have signed a document they sent me, affirming the accuracy of the above statement. The message was recorded at the time, and not written from memory after verification had been obtained. Here there could be no explanation of the facts by subliminal memory, or telepathy or collusion, and the evidence points unmistakably to a telepathic message from the deceased officer.

The Rev. G. Vale Owen describes⁹¹ the return of George Leaf, one of his Bible Class lads in Orford, Warrington, who joined the R.F.A. and was killed in the Great War.

Some weeks later his mother was tidying up the hearth in the sitting-room. She was on her knees before the grate when she felt an impulse to turn round and look at the door which opened into the entrance hall. She did so, and saw her son clad in his working clothes, just as he used to come home every evening when he was alive. He took off his coat and hung it upon the door, an old familiar habit of his. Then he turned to her, nodded and smiled, and walked through to the back kitchen where he had been in the habit of washing before sitting down to his evening meal. It was all quite natural and lifelike. She knew that it was her dead boy who had come to show her that he was alive in the spirit land and living a natural life, well, happy and content. Also that smile of love told her that his heart was still with the old folks at home. She is a sensible woman and I did not doubt her story for a moment. As a matter of fact, since his death he had been seen in Orford Church, which he used to attend, and has been seen in various places since.

⁹¹ Facts And The Future Life (1922), pp. 53-4.

There are many instances of visions of soldiers coinciding with death. In Rosa Stuart's "Dreams and Visions of the War" this case is given:

A very touching story was told me by a Bournemouth wife. Her husband, a sergeant in the Devons, went to France on July 25th, 1915. She had received letters regularly from him, all of which were very happy and cheerful, and so she began to be quite reassured in her mind about him, feeling certain that whatsoever danger he had to face he would come safely through.

On the evening of September 25th, 1915, at about ten o'clock, she was sitting on her bed in her room talking to another girl, who was sharing it with her. The light was full on, and neither of them had as yet thought of getting into bed, so deep were they in their chat about the events of the day and the war.

And then suddenly there came a silence. The wife had broken off sharply in the middle of a sentence and sat there staring into space.

For, standing there before her in uniform, was her husband! For two or three minutes she remained there looking at him, and she was struck by the expression of sadness in his eyes. Getting up quickly she advanced to the spot where he was standing, but by the time she had reached it the vision had disappeared.

Though only that morning the wife had had a letter saying her husband was safe and well, she felt sure that the vision foreboded evil. She was right. Soon afterwards she received a letter from the War Office, saying that he had been killed in the Battle of Loos on September 25th, 1915, the very date she had seemed to see him stand beside her bed.

A deeper mystical side of the visions of the Great War centres round the "Angels of Mons." Mr. Arthur Machen, the well-known London journalist, wrote a story telling how English bowmen from the field of Agincourt intervened during the terrible retreat from Mons. But he stated afterwards that he had invented the incident. But here, as so often before, truth proved fiction to be a fact, or at least facts of a like character were reported by a number of credible witnesses. Mr. Harold Begbie published a little book, "On the Side of the Angels," giving much evidence, and Mr. Ralph Shirley,

editor of *The Occult Review* (London), followed with "The Angel Warriors at Mons," in which he added to Mr. Begbie's testimony.

A British officer, replying to Mr. Machen in the *London Evening News* (September 14, 1915), mentions that he was fighting at Le Cateau on August 26, 1914, and that his division retired and marched throughout the night of the 26th and during the 27th. He says:

On the night of the 27th I was riding along in the column with two other officers. We had been talking and doing our best to keep from falling asleep on our horses.

As we rode along I became conscious of the fact that, in the fields on both sides of the road along which we were marching, I could see a very large body of horsemen. These horsemen had the appearance of squadrons of cavalry, and they seemed to be riding across the fields and going in the same direction as we were going, and keeping level with us.

The night was not very dark, and I fancied that I could see the squadron of these cavalrymen quite distinctly.

I did not say a word about it at first, but I watched them for about twenty minutes. The other two officers had stopped talking.

At last one of them asked me if I saw anything in the fields. I then told him what I had seen. The third officer then confessed that he, too, had been watching these horsemen for the past twenty minutes.

So convinced were we that they were really cavalry that, at the next halt, one of the officers took a party of men out to reconnoitre, and found no one there. The night then grew darker, and we saw no more.

The same phenomenon was seen by many men in our column. Of course, we were all dog-tired and overtaxed, but it is an extraordinary thing that the same phenomenon should be witnessed by so many people.

I myself am absolutely convinced that I saw these horsemen; and I feel sure that they did not exist only in my imagination. I do not attempt to explain the mystery—I only state facts.

This evidence sounds good, and yet it must be admitted that in the stress and tension of the great retreat men's minds were not in the best condition to weigh evidence. On the other hand, it is at such times of hardship that the psychic powers of man are usually most alive.

A profound aspect of the World War is involved in the consideration that the war on earth is but one aspect of unseen battles on higher planes where the powers of Good and Evil are engaged. The late Mr. A. P. Sinnett, a prominent Theosophist, deals with this question in an article entitled "Super-Physical Aspects of the War." ⁹²

We cannot enter into the subject here, except to say that there are evidences from many sources to indicate that what Mr. Sinnett speaks of has a basis of fact.

A considerable number of books, and a very much larger number of manuscripts, record the alleged experiences of those who passed over in the war, which differ, of course, in no way from those who pass over at any other time, but are rendered more dramatic by the historical occasion. The greatest of these books is "Raymond." Sir Oliver Lodge is so famous a scientist and so profound a thinker that his brave and frank avowal produced a great impression upon the public. The book appeared later in a condensed form, and it is likely to remain for many years a classic of the subject. Other books of the same class, all of them corroborative in their main details, are "The Case of Lester Coltman," "Claude's Book," "Rupert Lives," "Grenadier Rolf," "Private Dowding," and others. All of them depict the sort of after-life existence which is described in a subsequent chapter.

⁹² *The Occult Review*, December 1914, p. 346.

CHAPTER 10. THE RELIGIOUS ASPECT OF SPIRITUALISM

SPIRITUALISM is a system of thought and knowledge which can be reconciled with any religion. The basic facts are the continuity of personality and the power of communication after death. These two basic facts are of as great importance to a Brahmin, a Mohammedan, or a Parsee as to a Christian. Therefore Spiritualism makes a universal appeal. There is only one school of thought to which it is absolutely irreconcilable: that is the school of materialism, which holds the world in its grip at present and is the root cause of all our misfortunes. Therefore the comprehension and acceptance of Spiritualism are essential things for the salvation of mankind, which is otherwise destined to descend lower and lower into a purely utilitarian and selfish view of the universe. The typical materialistic state was prewar Germany, but every other modern state is of the same type if not of the same degree.

It may be asked, why should not the old religions be strong enough to rescue the world from its spiritual degradation? The answer is that they have all been tried and all have failed. The Churches which represent them have themselves become to the last degree formal and worldly and material. They have lost all contact with the living facts of the spirit, and are content to refer everything back to ancient days, and to pay a lip service and an external reverence to an outworn system which has been so tangled up with incredible theologies that the honest mind is nauseated at the thought of it. No class has shown itself so sceptical and incredulous of modern Spiritual manifestations as those very clergy who profess complete belief in similar occurrences in bygone ages, and their utter refusal to accept them now is a measure of the sincerity of their professions. Faith has been abused until it has become impossible to many earnest minds, and there is a call for proof and for knowledge. It is this which Spiritualism supplies. It founds our belief in life after death and in the existence of invisible worlds, not upon ancient tradition or upon vague intuitions, but upon proven facts, so that a science of religion may be built up, and man given a sure pathway amid the quagmire of the creeds.

When one asserts that Spiritualism may be reconciled with any religion, one does not mean that all religions are of the same value, or that the teaching of Spiritualism alone may not be better than Spiritualism mixed with any other creed. Personally, the author thinks that Spiritualism alone supplies all that man needs, but he has found many men of high soul who have been unable to cast off the convictions of a lifetime, and yet have been able to accept the new truth without discarding the old belief. But if a man had Spiritualism alone as his guide, he would not find himself in a position which was opposed to essential Christianity, but rather in one which was explanatory. Both systems preach life after death. Both recognize that the after-life is influenced in its progress and happiness by conduct here. Both profess to believe in the existence of a world of spirits, good and evil, whom the Christian calls angels and devils, and the Spiritualist guides, controls, and undeveloped spirits.

Both believe in the main that the same virtues, unselfishness, kindness, purity, and honesty, are necessary for a high character. Bigotry, however, is looked upon as a serious offence by Spiritualists, while it is commended by most Christian sects. To Spiritualists every path upwards is commendable, and they fully recognize that in all creeds there are sainted, highly developed souls who have received by intuition all that the Spiritualist can give by special knowledge. The mission of the Spiritualist does not lie with these. His mission lies with those who openly declare themselves to be agnostic, or those more dangerous ones who profess some form of creed and yet are either thoughtless or agnostic at heart.

From the author's point of view the man who has received the full benefit of the new revelation is the man who has earnestly tried the gamut of the creeds and has found them all equally wanting. He then finds himself in a valley of gloom with Death waiting at the end, and nothing but plain, obvious duty as his acting religion. Such a condition produces many fine men of the Stoic breed, but it is not conducive to personal happiness. Then comes the positive proof of independent existence, sometimes suddenly, sometimes by slow conviction. The cloud has gone from the end of his prospect. He is no longer in a valley but upon the ridge beyond, with a vista of successive ridges each more beautiful than the last in front of him. All is

brightness where once gloom girt him round. The day of this revelation has become the crowning day of his life.

Looking up at the lofty hierarchy of spiritual beings above him, the Spiritualist realizes that one or another great archangel may from time to time visit mankind with some mission of teaching and hope. Even humble Katie King, with her message of immortality given to a great scientist, was an angel from on high. Francis d'Assisi, Joan of Arc, Luther, Mahomet, Bab-ed-Din, and every real religious leader of history are among these evangels. But above all, according to our Western judgment, was Jesus the son of a Jewish artisan, Whom we call "The Christ." It is not for our mosquito brains to say what degree of divinity was in Him, but we can truly say that He was certainly nearer the Divine than we are, and that His teaching, upon which the world has not yet acted, is the most unselfish, merciful, and beautiful of which we have any cognizance, unless it be that of his fellow saint Buddha, who also was a messenger from God, but whose creed was rather for the Oriental than for the European mind.

When, however, we hark back to the message of our inspired Teacher, we find that there is little relation between His precepts and the dogmas or actions of His present-day disciples. We see also that a great deal of what He taught has obviously been lost, and that to find this lost portion, which was unexpressed in the Gospels, we have to examine the practice of the early Church who were guided by those who had been in immediate touch with Him. Such an examination shows that all which we call Modern Spiritualism seems to have been familiar to the Christ circle, that the gifts of the spirit extolled by St. Paul are exactly those gifts which our mediums exhibit, and that those wonders which brought a conviction of other-world reality to the folk of those days can now be exhibited and should have a similar effect now, when men once again ask for assurance upon this vital matter. This subject is treated at large in other books, and can here be simply summed up by saying that, far from having wandered from orthodoxy, there is good reason to believe that the humble, undogmatic Spiritualist, with his direct spirit message, his communion of saints, and his association with that high teaching which has been called the Holy Ghost, is nearer to primitive Christianity than any other existing sect.

It is quite amazing when we read the early documents of the Church, and especially the writings of the so-called "Fathers," to find out the psychic knowledge and the psychic practice which were in vogue in those days. The early Christians lived in close and familiar touch with the unseen, and their absolute faith and constancy were founded upon the positive personal knowledge which each of them had acquired. They were aware, not as a speculation but as an absolute fact, that death meant no more than a translation to a wider life, and might more properly be called birth. Therefore they feared it not at all, and regarded it rather as Dr. Hodgson did when he cried, "Oh, I can hardly bear to wait!" Such an attitude did not affect their industry and value in this world, which have been attested even by their enemies. If converts in far-off lands have in these days been shown to deteriorate when they become Christians, it is because the Christianity which they have embraced has lost all the direct compelling power which existed of old.

Apart from the early Fathers, we have evidence of early Christian sentiment in the inscriptions of the Catacombs. An interesting book on early Christian remains in Rome, by the Rev. Spence Jones, Dean of Gloucester, deals in part with these strange and pathetic records. These inscriptions have the advantage over all our documentary evidence that they have certainly not been forged, and that there has been no possibility of interpolation.

Dr. Jones, after having read many hundreds of them, says: "The early Christians speak of the dead as though they were still living. They talk to their dead." That is the point of view of the present-day Spiritualists—one which the Churches have so long lost. The early Christian graves present a strange contrast to those of the heathen which surround them. The latter always refer to death as a final, terrible and irrevocable thing. "Fuiſti Vale" sums up their sentiment. The Christians, on the other hand, dwelt always upon the happy continuance of life. "Agape, thou shalt live for ever," "Victorina is in peace and in Christ," "May God refresh thy ſpirit," "Mayeſt thou live in God." Theſe inſcriptions alone are enough to ſhow that a new and infinitely conſoling view of death had come to the human race.

The Catacombs, alſo, it may be remarked, are a proof of the ſimplicity of early Chriſtianity before it became barnacled over with all ſorts of complex

definitions and abstractions, which sprang from the Grecian or Byzantine mind, and have caused infinite evil in the world. The one symbol which predominates in the Catacombs is that of the Good Shepherd—the tender idea of a man carrying a poor helpless lamb. One may search the Catacombs of the first centuries, and in all those thousands of devices you will find nothing of a blood sacrifice, nothing of a virgin birth. You will find the Kind Shepherd, the anchor of hope, the palm of the martyr, and the fish which was the pun or rebus upon the name of Jesus. Everything points to a simple religion. Christianity was at its best when it was in the hands of the humblest. It was the rich, the powerful, and the learned who degraded, complicated, and ruined it.

It is not possible, however, to draw any psychic inferences from the inscriptions or drawings in the Catacombs. For these we must turn to the pre-Nicene Fathers, and there we find so many references that a small book which would contain nothing else might easily be compiled. We have, however, to tune-in our thoughts and phrases to theirs in order to get the full meaning. Prophecy, for example, we now call mediumship, and an Angel has become a high spirit or a Guide. Let us take a few typical quotations at random.

Saint Augustine, in his "De cura pro Mortuis," says: "The spirits of the dead can be sent to the living and can unveil to them the future which they themselves have learned either from other spirits or from angels" (i.e. spiritual guides) "or by divine revelation." This is pure Spiritualism exactly as we know and define it. Augustine would not have spoken so surely of it and with such an accuracy of definition if he had not been quite familiar with it. There is no hint of its being illicit.

He comes back to the subject in his "The City of God," where he refers to practices which enable the ethereal body of a person to communicate with the spirits and higher guides and to receive visions. These persons were, of course, mediums—the name simply meaning the intermediate between the carnate and discarnate organism.

Saint Clement of Alexandria makes similar allusions, and so does Saint Jerome in his controversy with Vigilantius the Gaul. This, however, is, of course, at a later date—after the Council of Nicaea.

Hermas, a somewhat shadowy person, who was said to have been a friend of St. Paul's, and to have been the direct disciple of the Apostles, is credited with being the author of a book "The Pastor." Whether this authorship is apocryphal or not, the book is certainly written by someone in the early centuries of Christianity, and it therefore represents the ideas which then prevailed. He says: "The spirit does not answer all who question nor any particular person, for the spirit that comes from God does not speak to man when man wills but when God permits. Therefore, when a man who has a spirit from God" (i.e. a control) "comes into an assembly of the faithful, and when prayer has been offered, the spirit fills this man who speaks as God wills."

This exactly describes our own psychic experience, when séances are properly conducted. We do not invoke spirits, as ignorant critics continually assert, and we do not know what is coming. But we pray—using the "Our Father," as a rule—and we await events. Then such spirit as is chosen and permitted comes to us and speaks or writes through the medium. Hermas, like Augustine, would not have spoken so accurately had he not had personal experience of the procedure.

Origen has many allusions to psychic knowledge. It is curious to compare the crass ignorance of our present spiritual chiefs with the wisdom of the ancients. Very many quotations could be given, but a short one may be taken from his controversy with Celsus.

Many people have embraced the Christian faith in spite of themselves, their hearts having been suddenly changed by some spirit, either in an apparition or in a dream.

In exactly this way leaders among the materialists, from Dr. Elliotson onwards, have been brought back to a belief in the life to come and its relation to this life by the study of psychic evidence.

It is the earlier Fathers who are the most definite upon this matter, for they were nearer to the great psychic source. Thus Irenaeus and Tertullian, who lived about the end of the second century, are full of allusions to psychic signs, while Eusebius, writing later, mourns their scarcity and complains that the Church had become unworthy of them.

Irenaeus wrote: "We hear of many brethren in the Church possessing prophetic" (i.e. mediumistic) "gifts, and speaking through the spirit in all kinds of tongues and bringing to light for the general advantage the hidden things of men, and setting forth the mysteries of God." No passage could better describe the functions of a high-class medium.

When Tertullian had his great controversy with Marcion, he made the Spiritualistic gifts the test of truth between the two parties. He claimed that these were forthcoming in greater profusion upon his own side, and includes among them trance-utterance, prophecy, and revelation of secret things. Thus the things, which are now sneered at or condemned by so many clergymen, were in the year 200 the actual touchstones of Christianity. Tertullian also in his *De Anima* says: "We have to-day among us a sister who has received gifts on the nature of revelations which she undergoes in spirit in the church amid the rites of the Lord's Day, falling into ecstasy. She converses with angels"—that is, high spirits—"sees and hears mysteries, and reads the hearts of certain people and brings healings to those who ask. 'Among other things,' she said, 'a soul was shown to me in bodily form, and it seemed to be a spirit, but not empty nor a thing of vacuity. On the contrary, it seemed as if it might be touched, soft, lucid, of the colour of air, and of the human form in every detail.'"

One mine of information as to the views of the primitive Christians is to be found in the "Apostolic Constitutions." It is true that they are not Apostolic, but Whiston, Krabbe and Bunsen are all agreed that at least seven out of the eight books are genuine ante-Nicene documents, probably of the early third century. A study of them reveals some curious facts. Incense and burning lamps were used at their services, so far justifying present-day Catholic practices. On the other hand, bishops and priests were married men. There was an elaborate system of boycott for anyone who transgressed the Church rules. If any clergyman bought a living he was cut off, and so was any

man who obtained his ecclesiastical post by worldly patronage. There is no question of a supreme Bishop or Pope. Vegetarianism and total abstinence from wine were both forbidden and punished. This latter amazing law was probably a reaction against some heresy which enjoined both. A clergyman caught in a tavern was suspended. The clergy must eat bloodless meat after the modern Jewish fashion. Fasting was frequent and rigorous—one day a week (Thursday, apparently) and forty days at Lent.

It is, however, in discussing the "gifts," or varied forms of mediumship, that these ancient documents throw a light upon psychic subjects. Then, as now, mediumship took different forms, the gift of tongues, of healing, of prophecy and the like. Harnack says that in each early Christian Church there were three discreet women, one for healing and two for prophecy. The whole subject is freely discussed in the "Constitutions."

It appears that those who had gifts became conceited over them, and they are earnestly adjured to remember that a man may have gifts and yet have no great virtue, so that he is really the spiritual inferior of many who have no gifts.

The object of phenomena is shown, as in Modern Spiritualism, to be the conversion of the unbeliever, rather than the entertainment of the orthodox. They are "not for the advantage of those who perform them, but for the conviction of the unbelievers, that those whom the word did not persuade the power of signs might put to shame, for signs are not for us who believe, but for the unbelievers, both Jews and Gentiles" (Constitutions, Book VIII, Sec. I).

Later the various gifts, which roughly correspond with our different forms of mediumship, are given as follows. "Let not therefore anyone that works signs and wonders judge anyone of the faithful who is not vouchsafed the same. For the gifts of God which are bestowed through Christ are various, and one man receives one gift and another another. For perhaps one has the word of wisdom" (trance-speaking), "and another the word of knowledge" (inspiration), "another discerning of spirits" (clairvoyance), "another foreknowledge of things to come, another the word of teaching"

(spirit addresses), "another long-suffering,"—all our mediums need that gift.

One may well ask oneself where, outside the ranks of the Spiritualists, are these gifts or these observances to be found in any of those Churches which profess to be the branches of this early root?

The high spiritual presences are continually recognized. Thus in the "Ordination of the Bishops" we find, "The Holy Ghost being also present, as well as all the holy and ministering spirits." On the whole, however, I should judge that we have now a far fuller grasp of psychic facts than the authors of the "Constitutions," and that these documents probably represent a declension from that intimate "Communion of Saints" which existed in the first century. There is reason to believe that psychic power is not a fixed thing, but that it comes in waves, which ebb and flow. At present we are on a rising tide, but we have no assurance that it will last.

It may reasonably be said that, since our knowledge of the events connected with early Church history is very limited, it should be possible to get into touch with some high Intelligence who took part in those events and so supplement our scanty sources of information. This has actually been done in several inspired scripts, and even as the proofs of this book were being corrected there has been an interesting development which must make it clear to all the world how close may be the connexion between other-world communication and religion. Two long scripts have recently appeared which have been written by the hand of the semi-conscious medium, Miss Cummins, the writing coming through at the extraordinary pace of 2,000 words per hour. The first purports to be an account of Christ's mission from Philip the Evangelist, and the second is a supplement to the Acts of the Apostles, which claims to be from Cleophas, who supped with the risen Christ at Emmaus. The first of these has now been published,⁹³ and the second will soon be available for the public.

So far as the author is aware, no critical examination has been made of the Philip script, but a careful reading of it has convinced him that in dignity and power it is worthy to be that which it claims, and that it explains in a clear,

⁹³ *The Gospel Of Philip The Evangelist*. (Beddow, 46 Anerley Station Road, S.E.)

adequate way many points which have puzzled the commentators. The case of the Cleophas script is, however, still more remarkable, and the author is inclined to accept this as the highest intellectual document, and the one with the most evident signs of supernormal origin, in the whole history of the movement. It has been submitted to Dr. Oesterley, Examining Chaplain of the Bishop of London, who is one of the foremost authorities upon Church history and tradition. He has declared that it bears every sign of being from the hand of one who lived in those days, and who was intimately connected with the Apostolic circle. Very many fine points of scholarship are noticed, such as the use of the Hebrew Hanan as the name of the High Priest, whereas he is only known to English-speaking readers by the Greek equivalent Annas. This is one of a great number of corroborations quite beyond the possible powers of any forger. Among other interesting points, Cleophas describes the Pentecost meeting, and declares that the Apostles sat round in a circle, with hands clasped, as the Master had taught them. It would, indeed, be a wonderful thing if the true inner meaning of Christianity, so long lost, should now be uncovered once more by the ridiculed and persecuted cult whose history is here recorded.

These two scripts represent, in the opinion of the author, two of the most cogent proofs of spirit communication which have ever been afforded upon the mental side. It would seem to be impossible to explain them away.

The Spiritualists, both of Great Britain and of other countries, may be divided into those who still remain in their respective Churches, and those who have formed a Church of their own. The latter have in Great Britain some four hundred meeting-places under the general direction of the Spiritualists' National Union. There is great elasticity of dogma, and while most of the Churches are Unitarian, an important minority are on Christian lines. They may be said to be roughly united upon seven central principles. These are:

1. The Fatherhood of God.
2. The Brotherhood of Man.
3. The Communion of Saints and Ministry of Angels.

4. Human survival of physical death.
5. Personal Responsibility.
6. Compensation or retribution for good or evil deeds.
7. Eternal progress open to every soul.

It will be seen that all of these are compatible with ordinary Christianity, with the exception perhaps of the fifth. The Spiritualists look upon Christ's earth life and death as an example rather than a redemption. Every man answers for his own sins, and none can shuffle out of that atonement by an appeal to some vicarious sacrifice. It is not possible for the tyrant or the debauchee, by some spiritual trick of so-called repentance, to escape his just deserts. A true repentance may help him, but he pays his bill all the same. At the same time, God's mercy is greater than man has ever conceived, and every possible alleviatory circumstance of temptation, heredity and environment is given full weight before punishment is meted out. Such in brief is the general position of the Spiritualistic churches.

In another place⁹⁴ the author has pointed out that though psychical research in itself may be quite distinct from religion, the deductions which we may draw from it and the lessons we may learn, "Teach us of the continued life of the soul, of the nature of that life, and of how it is influenced by our conduct here. If this is distinct from religion, I must confess that I do not understand the distinction. To me it IS religion—the very essence of it." The author also spoke of Spiritualism as a great unifying force, the one provable thing connected with every religion, Christian or non-Christian. While its teachings would deeply modify conventional Christianity, the modifications would be rather in the direction of explanation and development than of contradiction. He also referred to the new revelation as absolutely fatal to materialism.

In this material age it may be said that, without a belief in man's survival after death, the message of Christianity falls to a great extent on deaf ears. Dr. McDougall in his presidential address to the American Society for

⁹⁴ *The New Revelation*, pp. 67-9. *Journal Of The American S.P.R.*, January, 1923.

Psychical Research points out the connexion between the decay of religion and the spread of materialism. He says:

Unless psychical research can discover facts incompatible with materialism, materialism will continue to spread. No other power can stop it; revealed religion and metaphysical philosophy are equally helpless before the advancing tide. And if that tide continues to rise and to advance as it is doing now, all the signs point to the view that it will be a destroying tide, that it will sweep away all the hard-won gains of humanity, all the moral traditions built up by the efforts of countless generations for the increase of truth, justice and charity.

It is important, therefore, to endeavour to see to what degree Spiritualism and psychical research tend to induce or to strengthen religious beliefs.

In the first place, we have many testimonies to the conversion of materialists, through Spiritualism, to a belief in a hereafter, as, for instance, Professor Robert Hare and Professor Mapes in America, with Dr. Alfred Russel Wallace, Dr. Elliotson, Dr. Sexton, Robert Blatchford, John Ruskin, and Robert Owen in England. Many others might be mentioned.

If Spiritualism were understood properly there should be little question of its harmony with religion. The definition of Spiritualism that is printed in each issue of the London Spiritualist weekly journal Light is as follows:

"A belief in the existence and life of the spirit apart from and independent of the material organism, and in the reality and value of intelligent intercourse between spirits embodied and spirits discarnate."

Both the beliefs therein expressed are articles of the Christian faith.

If there is one class beyond all others who should be able to talk with authority on the religious tendencies of Spiritualism, it is the clergy. Scores of the more progressive have expressed their views on this subject in no uncertain terms. Let us look at their utterances.

The Rev. H. R. Haweis, M.A., in an address delivered before the London Spiritualist Alliance on April 20, 1900, said he had come there to say that he did not see anything in what he believed to be true Spiritualism in the least degree contrary to what he believed to be true Christianity. Indeed,

Spiritualism fitted very nicely into Christianity; it seemed to be a legitimate development, not a contradiction—not an antagonist. The indebtedness of the clergy—if they knew their business—to Spiritualism was really very great. In the first place, Spiritualism had rehabilitated the Bible. It could not for a moment be denied that faith in and reverence for the Bible were dying out, in consequence of the growing doubts of people regarding the miraculous parts of the Bible. Apologists were thrown entirely on the beauty of the Christian doctrine—but they could not swallow the miraculous element in the Old Testament or the New. They were asked to believe in Bible miracles, and at the same time taught that, outside of the Bible records, nothing supernatural ever happened. But now the whole thing had been reversed. People now believed in the Bible because of Spiritualism; they did not believe in Spiritualism because of the Bible. He went on to say that when he began his ministry he tried to get rid of the miracles out of the Bible by explaining them away. But later on he found that he could not explain away the researches of Crookes, Flaimnarion, and Alfred Russel Wallace.

The Rev. Arthur Chambers, formerly vicar of Brockenhurst, Hants, has done valuable work by drawing men's minds to a consideration of their spiritual life here and their existence hereafter. His book, "Our Life after Death," has run through over one hundred and twenty editions. In an address on "Spiritualism and the Light it casts on Christian Truth," he says:

Spiritualism, by its persistent investigation of psychic phenomena, by its openly-proclaimed insistence that intercommunication between the two worlds is a present-day fact, has brought great masses of our fellow beings to realize that "There are more things in heaven and earth" than had been previously "dreamed of in their philosophy," and have made many of them, as Christian men and women, understand a mighty truth interwoven with religion—a truth fundamental to a right understanding of our place in a great universe—a truth which mankind in all ages has clung to, in spite of the incredulous frowns and disapproval of the teachers of religion. There comes to my mind, in conclusion, the thought of a particular way in which the teachings of Spiritualism have uplifted the religious ideas of the present age. It has helped us to form a truer and grander notion of God and His purpose.

In another fine passage he says:

Yes, Spiritualism has done much, very much, towards the better understanding of those grand basal facts which are inseparable from the Gospel of Jesus. It has helped men and women to see with clearer vision the Great Spirit Father-God, in whom we live, move and have our being, and that vast spirit universe of which we now are, and ever must be, a constituted part. As a Christian Spiritualist, I have one great hope—one great conviction of what will be—viz., that Spiritualism, which has done so much for Christian teaching and for the world at large, in scaring away the bugbear of death, and in helping us better to realize that which a magnificent Christ really taught, will recognize fully what that Christ is in the light of spiritual verities.

Mr. Chambers further added that he had received many hundreds of letters from all parts of the world from writers who expressed the relief and comfort, as well as the fuller trust in God, which had come to them from reading his own book, "Our Life After Death."

The Rev. F. Fielding-Ould, M.A., vicar of Christ Church, Regent's Park, London, is another of those who boldly proclaim the good work to be done by Spiritualism. In an address (April 21, 1921) on "The Relation of Spiritualism to Christianity," he said:

The world needs the teaching of Spiritualism. The number of irreligious people in London to-day is astonishing in the last degree. There are an immense number of people in every class of society (and I am speaking from my own experience) who are totally without any religion whatever. They do not pray, they never attend any church for common worship, in their consciousness and habit of thought death stands at the end. There is nothing beyond but a thick, white mist into which their imagination is sternly forbidden ever to wander. They may call themselves of the Church of England, Roman Catholics, or Jews, but they are like empty bottles in a cellar still marked with the labels of famous vintages.

He adds:

It is no unusual thing for struggling and distressed souls to be helped through Spiritualism. Do we not all know people who had given up all religion and who

have been brought back by its means? Agnostics who had lost all hope of God and immortality, to whom religion seemed mere formality and dry bones, and who at last turned upon it and reviled it in all its manifestations. Then Spiritualism came to them like the dawn to a man who has tossed all night fevered and sleepless. At first they were astonished and incredulous, but their attention was arrested, and presently they were touched to the heart. God had come back into their lives and nothing could express their joy and gratitude.

The Rev. Charles Tweedale, vicar of Weston, Yorkshire, a man who has laboured bravely in this cause, refers to the consideration of Spiritualism by the Bishops' Conference held at Lambeth Palace from July 5 to August 7, 1920, and, speaking of modern psychical research, says:⁹⁵

While the world at large has been filled with an eager awakening interest, the Church, which claims to be the custodian of religious and spiritual truth, has, strange to say, until quite recently, turned a deaf ear to all modern evidences bearing upon the reality of that spiritual world to which it is the main object of her existence to testify, and even now is only just showing faint signs that she realizes how important this matter is becoming for her. A recent sign of the times was the discussion of psychic phenomena at the Lambeth Conference, and the placing by the secretary of my brochure "Present Day Spirit Phenomena and the Churches" in the hands of all the Bishops present, with the Archbishops' consent. Another significant sign of the times is the choice of Sir William Barrett to address the Church Congress on psychical subjects.

The Report of the Proceedings of the Lambeth Conference, already referred to, alludes as follows to psychic research:

It is possible that we may be on the threshold of a new science, which will, by another method of approach, confirm us in the assurance of a world behind and beyond the world we see, and of something within us by which we are in contact with it. We could never presume to set a limit to means which God may use to bring man to the realization of spiritual life.

Having made this precautionary utterance, the report flies to safety with the added proviso:

⁹⁵ Light, October 30, 1920.

But there is nothing in the cult erected on this science which enhances, there is, indeed, much which obscures, the meaning of that other world and our relation to it as unfolded in the Gospel of Christ and the teaching of the Church, and which depreciates the means given to us of attaining and abiding in fellowship with that world.

Under the heading "Spiritualism," the Report says:

While recognizing that the results of investigation have encouraged many people to find a spiritual meaning and purpose in human life, and led them to believe in survival after death, grave dangers are seen in the tendency to make a religion of Spiritualism. The practice of Spiritualism as a cult involves the subordination of the intelligence and the will to unknown forces or personalities and, to that extent, an abdication of self-control.

A well-known contributor to *Light*, who takes the pseudonym of "Gerson," thus comments on the above:

There is undoubted danger in "the subordination of the intelligence and the will to unknown forces or personalities," but the practice of spirit communication does not, as the Bishops appear to think, necessarily involve such subordination. Another danger, in their view, is "the tendency to make a religion of Spiritualism." Light, and those who associate themselves with its attitude, have never felt any inclination to do this. The possibility of spirit communication is simply a fact in Nature, and we do not approve of exalting any fact in Nature into a religion. At the same time a lofty form of religion may be associated with a fact in Nature. The recognition of the beauty and order of the universe does not in itself constitute religion, but in so far as it inspires reverence for the Source of that beauty and order it is a help to the religious spirit.

At the English Church Congress in 1920 the Rev. M. A. Bayfield read a paper on "Psychic Science an Ally of Christianity," and in the course of it he said:

Many of the clergy regard psychic science with suspicion, and some with positive antagonism and alarm. Under its popular name, Spiritualism, it had even been denounced as anti-Christian. He would endeavour to show that this branch of study was altogether an ally of our faith. Everyone was a

Spiritualist who was not a materialist, and Christianity itself was essentially a Spiritualistic religion.

He went on to refer to the service Spiritualism had rendered to Christianity by making possible a belief in the miraculous element in the Gospel.

Dr. Elwood Worcester, in a sermon entitled "The Allies of Religion,"⁹⁶ delivered at St. Stephen's Church, Philadelphia, on February 25, 1923, spoke of psychical research as the true friend of religion and a spiritual ally of man. He said:

It also illuminates many an important event in the life of the Lord, and it helps us to understand and accept occurrences which otherwise we should reject. I think, particularly, of the phenomena attending the baptism of Jesus, His appearance on the Sea of Galilee, His transfiguration, above all His resurrection appearance to His disciples. Moreover, this is our only real hope of solving the problem of death. From no other source is any new solution of this eternal mystery likely to come to us.

The Rev. G. Vale Owen reminds us that though there are Spiritualists who are distinctly Christian Spiritualists, Spiritualism is not confined to Christianity. There is, for instance, a Jewish Spiritualist Society in London. The Church at first regarded Evolution as an adversary, but finally came to accept it as in accordance with Christian faith. So he concludes that:

Just as the acceptance of Evolution gave to Christianity a broader and more worthy conception of Creation and its Creator, so the acceptance of the great truths for which psychic science stands should turn an agnostic into a believer in God, should make a Jew a better Jew, a Mohammedan a better Mohammedan, a Christian a better Christian, and certainly a happier and more cheerful one.⁹⁷

It is clear from the foregoing extracts that many clergymen of the Church of England and other Churches are agreed upon the good influence Spiritualism has upon religion.

⁹⁶ *Journal Of The American S.P.R.*, June, 1923, p. 323.

⁹⁷ *Facts And The Future Life* (1922), p. 170.

There is another important source of information for opinions respecting the religious tendencies of Spiritualism. That is from the spirit world itself. There is a wealth of material to draw from, but we must be content with a few extracts. The first is from that well-known book, "Spirit Teachings," given through the mediumship of Stainton Moses:

Friend, when others seek from you as to the usefulness of our message, and the benefit which it can confer on those to whom the Father sends it, tell them that it is a gospel which will reveal a God of tenderness and pity and love, instead of a fabled creation of harshness, cruelty and passions.

Tell them that it will lead them to know Intelligences, whose whole life is one of love and mercy and pity and helpful aid to man, combined with adoration of the Supreme.

Or this from the same source:

Man has gradually built around the teachings of Jesus a wall of deduction and speculation and material comment similar to that with which the Pharisee had surrounded the Mosaic law. The tendency has been increasingly to do this in proportion as man has lost sight of the spiritual world. And so it has come to pass that we find hard, cold materialism deduced from teachings which were intended to breathe spirituality and to do away with sensuous ritual.

It is our task to do for Christianity what Jesus did for Judaism. We would take the old forms and spiritualize their meaning, and infuse into them new life. Resurrection rather than abolition is what we desire. We say again that we do not abolish one jot or one tittle of the teaching which the Christ gave to the world. We do but wipe away man's material glosses, and show you the hidden spiritual meaning which he has missed. Our mission is the continuation of that old teaching which man has so strangely altered; its source identical; its course parallel; its end the same.

And this from W. T. Stead's "Letters from Julia":

You have had teaching as to the communion of saints; you say, and sing all manner of things as to the saints above and below being one army of the Living God, but when any one of us on the Other Side tries to make any practical effort to enable you to realize the oneness, and to make you feel that

you are encompassed about by so great a cloud of witnesses, then there is an outcry. It is against the will of God! It is tampering with demons!

It is conjuring up evil spirits! Oh, my friend, my friend, be not deceived by these specious outcries! Am I a demon? Am I a familiar spirit? Am I doing what is contrary to the will of God when I constantly, constantly try to inspire you with more faith in Him, more love for Him and all His creatures, and, in short, try to bring you nearer and closer to God? You know I do all this. It is my joy and the law of my being.

And, finally, this extract from "Messages from Meslom".

Any teaching which helps humanity to believe that there is another life and that the soul is strengthened by trials bravely met and weaknesses conquered is good, for it has that much fundamental truth. When, in addition, it reveals a God of love, it is better; and if humanity could comprehend this Divine love, all suffering, even on earth, would cease.

These passages are lofty in tone and certainly tend to draw men's minds to higher things and to the understanding of the deeper purposes of life.

F.W.H. Myers's lost faith in Christianity was restored through Spiritualism. In his book "Fragments of Prose and Poetry," in the chapter entitled "The Final Faith," he says:

I cannot, in any deep sense, contrast my present creed with Christianity. Rather I regard it as a scientific development of the attitude and teaching of Christ.

You ask me what is the moral tendency of all these teachings—the reply is unexpectedly simple and concise. The tendency is, one may say, what it must inevitably be—what the tendency of all vital moral teaching has always been—the earliest, truest tendency of Christianity itself. It is a reassertion—weighed now with new evidence of Christ's own insistence on inwardness, on reality; of His proclamation that the letter killeth but the spirit giveth life, of His summation of all righteousness in sheer love to God and man.

Many writers have spoken of the light thrown on the Bible narrative by modern psychical research, but the finest expression of this view is to be found in F.W.H. Myers's "Human Personality":

I venture now on a bold saying; for I predict that, in consequence of the new evidence, all reasonable men, a century hence, will believe the Resurrection of Christ, whereas, in default of the new evidence, no reasonable men, a century hence, would have believed it. And especially as to that central claim, of the soul's life manifested after the body's death, it is plain that this can less and less be supported by remote tradition alone; that it must more and more be tested by modern experience and inquiry. Suppose, for instance, that we collect many such histories, recorded on first-hand evidence in our critical age; and suppose that all these narratives break down on analysis; that they can all be traced to hallucination, misdescription, and other persistent sources of error; can we then expect reasonable men to believe that this marvellous phenomenon, always vanishing into nothingness when closely scrutinized in a modern English scene, must yet compel adoring credence when alleged to have occurred in an Oriental country, and in a remote and superstitious age? Had the results (in short) of "Psychical Research" been purely negative, would not Christian evidence—I do not say Christian emotion, but Christian evidence—have received an overwhelming blow?

Many testimonies from eminent public men might be cited. Sir Oliver Lodge writes:

Although it is not by my religious faith that I have been led to my present position, yet everything that I have learned tends to increase my love and reverence for the personality of the central figure in the gospels.

Lady Grey of Fallodon⁹⁸ pays an eloquent tribute to Spiritualism, describing it as something that has vitalized religion and brought comfort to thousands. Speaking of Spiritualists, she says:

As a body of workers they are closer to the spirit of the New Testament than many Church folk would be ready to believe. The Church of England should look upon Spiritualism as a valuable ally. It makes a central attack upon Materialism, and it not only identifies the material with the spiritual universe, but it has a store of useful knowledge and advice.

She adds:

⁹⁸ Fortnightly Review, October, 1922.

I find in it a vitalizing current that brings the living breath to old beliefs. The Word that we are wont to associate with Holy Writ is, in essence, identical with the message that is coming to us in these later scripts. Those of us who have the New Revelation at heart, know that Spiritualism gives a modern reading of the Bible, and this is why—if the Churches would but see it—it should be considered religion's great ally.

These are brave words and true.

Dr. Eugene Crowell⁹⁹ shows that the Roman Catholic Church holds that spiritual manifestations are constantly occurring under the divine authority of the Church; but the Protestant Churches, while professing to believe in the spiritual manifestations occurring with Jesus and His disciples, repudiate all similar happenings at the present day. He says:

Thus the Protestant Church, when approached by the spiritually starved—and millions are in this condition—from the depths of whose natures arises an overpowering demand for spiritual aliment, has nothing to offer—or at best nothing but husks....

Protestantism to-day finds itself pressed between the upper and nether millstones of materialism and Catholicism Each of these powers is bearing upon it with increasing force, and it must assimilate and incorporate within itself one or other of these, or itself be ground to powder. In its present condition it lacks the necessary strength and vitality to resist the action of these forces, and its only hope is in the fresh blood which Spiritualism alone is able to infuse into its exhausted veins. That it is part of the mission of Spiritualism to accomplish this task, I fully believe, and this belief is founded upon the palpable needs of Protestantism, and a clear conception of the adaptability of Spiritualism to the task, and its ability to perform it.

Dr. Crowell declares that the diffusion of knowledge has not made modern men less regardful of questions concerning their spiritual life and future existence, but to-day they demand proof of what was formerly accepted upon faith alone. Theology is unable to furnish this proof, and millions of earnest minds, he says, stand aloof waiting for satisfactory evidence.

⁹⁹ *The Identity Of Primitive Christianity And Modern Spiritualism.* (2 Vols., 2nd Edition, New York, 1875.)

Spiritualism, he contends, has been sent to furnish this evidence, and from no other source can it be supplied.

Some reference should be made to the views of the Unitarian Spiritualists. Their very able and wholehearted leader is Ernest W. Oaten, Editor of *The Two Worlds*. Mr. Oaten's view, which is shared by all save a small body of extremists, is rather a reconstruction than a destruction of the Christian ideal. After a very reverent account of the life of Christ as explained by our psychic knowledge, he continues:

Men tell me I despise Jesus of Nazareth. I will trust His judgment rather than theirs, but I think I know His life more intimately than any Christian can. There is no soul in history that I hold in higher esteem. I hate the false and misleading place in which He has been put by folks who are no more able to understand Him than they are to read Egyptian hieroglyphics, but I love the man. I owe Him much, and He has much to teach the world which the world can never learn until they take Him from the pedestal of worship and idolatry, and walk with Him in the garden.

It may be said that my reading of His life is "naturalistic." I am content that it should be so. There is nothing more divine than the laws which govern life. The God who laid down such laws made them sufficient for all His purposes and has no need to supersede them.

The God who controls earthly processes is the same as He who controls the processes of spiritual life.¹⁰⁰

There the matter may be left. This history has endeavoured to show how special material signs have been granted by the invisible rulers of earth to satisfy the demand for material proofs which come from the increasing mentality of man. It has shown also how these material signs have been accompanied by spiritual messages, and how these messages get back to the great primitive religious forces of the world, the central fire of inspiration which has been ashed over by the dead cinders of what once were burning creeds. Man had lost touch with the vast forces which lie around him, and his knowledge and aspirations had become bounded by the

¹⁰⁰ *The Relation Of Modern Spiritualism To Christianity*, p. 23.

pitiful vibrations which make up his spectrum and the trivial octaves which limit his range of hearing. Spiritualism, the greatest movement for 2,000 years, rescues him from this condition, bursts the thin mists which have enshrouded him, and shows him new powers and unlimited vistas which lie beyond and around him, Already the mountain peaks are bright. Soon even in the valleys the sun of truth will shine.

CHAPTER 11. THE AFTER-LIFE AS SEEN BY SPIRITUALISTS

THE Spiritualist has one great advantage over those of the older dispensations. When he establishes communication with intelligences upon the Other Side who once inhabited earthly bodies, he naturally questions them eagerly as to their present conditions, and as to the effect which their doings here have had upon their subsequent fate. The answers to the latter query do in the main justify the views already held by most religions, and show that the path of virtue is also the road to ultimate happiness. A definite system is presented, however, for our consideration which greatly elucidates the vague cosmogonies of former ages. This system has been set forth in many books which recount the experience of those who have led the new life. It is to be remembered that these books are not written by professional penmen. On this side is the so-called "automatic" writer who receives the inspiration, on the other is the intelligence which transmits it; but neither may have been gifted by Nature with the least literary power, or have had any previous experience in putting together a narrative. It has also to be borne in mind that whatever comes through is the result of a cumbrous process, which must in most cases be irksome for the composer. If we could imagine an earthly writer who has to use a long-distance telephone instead of a pen, one would have some rough analogy to the difficulties of the operator. And yet in spite of these grave disabilities, the narratives are in many cases clear, dramatic, and intensely interesting. They can hardly fail to be the latter, since the pathway which they describe to-day is that which we shall follow to-morrow.

It has been said that these narratives vary greatly and are contradictory. The author has not found them so. In a long course of reading in which he has perused many volumes of alleged posthumous experiences, and also a great number of scripts obtained privately in families and reserved from the public, he has been struck by their general agreement. Here and there one comes upon some story which bears self-deception written plainly across it, and occasionally there is a lapse into sensationalism, but in the main the descriptions are sober, reasonable, and agree in general type with each

other, even when they differ in details. Descriptions of our own life would certainly differ in details, and a critic from Mars who was presented with accounts from a Hindu peasant, an Eskimo hunter, and an Oxford professor, might well refuse to believe that such divergent experiences were to be found upon the same planet. This difficulty does not arise upon the Other Side, and there are, so far as we know, no such extreme contrasts upon the same sphere of life—indeed, it might be said that the characteristic of this present life is the mingling of various types or degrees of experience, while that of the next is a subdivision and separation of the human elements. Heaven there is distinct from hell. In this world at present man might, and sometimes for a short time does, make it a heaven, but there are large tracts of it which are very tolerable imitations of hell, while purgatory may well be called the normal condition.

The conditions upon the Other Side may roughly be divided into three. There are the earth-bound who have exchanged their mortal for their etheric bodies, but are held on or near the surface of this world by the grossness of their nature or by the intensity of their worldly interests. So coarse may be the texture of their other-world form, that they may even bring themselves within the cognizance of those who have no special gift of clairvoyance. In this unhappy wandering class lies the explanation of all those ghosts, spectres, apparitions, and haunted houses which have engaged the attention of mankind at every epoch of history. These people have, so far as we can understand the situation, not even commenced their spiritual life either for good or evil. It is only when the strong earth ties are broken that the new existence begins.

Those who have really begun that existence find themselves in that stratum of life which corresponds to their own spiritual condition. It is the punishment of the cruel, the selfish, the bigoted and the frivolous, that they find themselves in the company of their like, and in worlds the illumination of which, varying from mist to darkness, typifies their own spiritual development. Such an environment is not a permanent one. Those who will not make an upward effort may, however, remain in it an indefinite time, while others who turn an ear to the ministrations of helpful spirits, even of rescue circles upon earth, soon learn to struggle upwards into brighter

zones. In the author's own family communion, he has known what it was to come in contact with these beings from the outer darkness, and to have the satisfaction of receiving their thanks for having given them a clearer view of their position, its causes and its cure.¹⁰¹

Such spirits would seem to be a constant menace to mankind, for if the protective aura of the individual should be in any way defective, they may become parasitic, establishing themselves within it and influencing the actions of their host. It is possible that the science of the future may trace many cases of inexplicable mania, senseless violence, or sudden surrender to bad habits to this cause, and it forms an argument against capital punishment, since the result might be to give enlarged powers of mischief to the criminal. It must be admitted that the subject is still obscure, that it is complicated by the existence of thought forms and memory forms, and that in any case all earth-bound spirits are not necessarily evil. It would appear, for example, that the devoted monks of some venerable Glastonbury might be held to their old haunts by the pure force of their devotion.

If our knowledge of the exact condition of the earth-bound is defective, that of the punitive circles is even more so. There is a somewhat sensational account in Mr. Ward's "Gone West"; there is a more temperate and credible one in the Rev. Vale Owen's "Life Beyond the Veil," and there are corroborative ones in Swedenborg's visions, in Judge Edmonds's "Spiritualism," and in other volumes. Our lack of clear first-hand information is due to the fact that we are not Hamlets, and that we do not get into direct touch with those who live in these lower spheres. We hear of them indirectly through those higher spirits who do missionary work among them, work which seems to be attended with such difficulties and dangers as might surround the man who tried to evangelize the darker races of earth. We read of the descent of high spirits into the lower spheres, of their combats with the forces of evil, of high princes of evil who are formidable in their own realms, and of a whole great cloaca of souls into which the psychic sewage of the world incessantly pours. Everything, however, has to be regarded from the remedial rather than from the penal point of view.

¹⁰¹ Dr. Wickland's *Thirty Years Among The Dead*, and the Appendix to Admiral Osborne Moore's *Glimpses Of The Next State*, give the fullest account of earth-bound conditions.

These spheres are grey waiting-rooms – hospitals for diseased souls—where the chastening experience is intended to bring the sufferer back to health and to happiness.

Our information is fuller when we turn to the happier regions which seem to be graduated in joy and beauty in accordance with the spiritual development of the inmates. It makes the matter clearer if one puts kindness and unselfishness for "spiritual development," for in that direction all soul growth is to be found. It is certainly a matter which is quite apart from intellect, though the union of intellect with spiritual qualities would naturally produce the more perfect being.

The conditions of life in the normal beyond—and it would be a reflection upon the justice and mercy of the Central Intelligence if the normal beyond was not also the happy beyond—are depicted as being extraordinarily joyous. The air, the views, the homes, the surroundings, the occupations, have all been described with great detail, and usually with the comment that no words could do justice to their glorious reality. It may be that there is some degree of parable or analogy in these descriptions, but the author is inclined to take them on their face value, and to believe that "the Summerland," as Davis has named it, is quite as real and objective to its inmates as our world is to us. It is easy to raise the objection: "Why, then, do we not see it?" But we must realize that an etheric life is expressed in etheric terms, and that just as we, with five material senses, are attuned to the material world, so they with their etheric bodies are attuned to the sights and sounds of an etheric world. The word "ether" is, of course, only used for convenience to express something far more subtle than our atmosphere. We have no proof at all that the ether of the physicist is also the medium of the spirit world. There may be other fine essences which are as much more delicate than ether as ether is when compared with air.

The spiritual heavens, then, would appear to be sublimated and ethereal reproductions of earth and of earth life under higher and better conditions. "As below—so above," said Paracelsus, and struck the keynote of the Universe as he said it. The body carries on, with its spiritual or intellectual qualities unchanged by the transition from one room of the great universal mansion to the next one. It is unaltered also in form, save that the young

and the old tend towards the normal full-grown mature expression. Granting that this is so, we must admit the reasonableness of the deduction that all else must be the same, and that the occupations and general system of life must be such as to afford scope for the particular talents of the individual. The artist without art or the musician without music would indeed be a tragic figure, and what applies to extreme types may be extended to the whole human race. There is, in fact, a very complex society in which each person finds that work to do which he is best fitted for, and which gives him satisfaction in the doing. Sometimes there is a choice. Thus in "The Case of Lester Coltman" the dead student writes: "For some time after I had passed over I was undecided as to whether music or science would be my work. After much serious thought I determined that music should be my hobby, and my more earnest intent should be directed upon science in every form."

After such a declaration one would naturally wish some details as to what scientific work was done and under what conditions. Lester Coltman is clear upon each point.

The laboratory over which I have control is primarily concerned with the study of the vapours and fluids forming the barrier which, we feel, by dint of profound study and experiment we may be able to pierce. The outcome of this research, we believe, will prove the Open Sesame to the door of communing between earth and these spheres.¹⁰²

Lester Coltman gives a further description of his work and surroundings, which may well be quoted as being typical of many more. He says:

The interest evinced by earth beings as to the character of our homes and the establishments where our work is carried on, is natural, of course, but description is not too easy to convey in earth terms. My state of being will serve as an example from which you may deduce others' modes of life, according to temperament and type of mind.

My work is continued here as it began on earth, in scientific channels, and, in order to pursue my studies, I visit frequently a laboratory possessing

¹⁰² *The Case Of Lester Coltman*, by Lilian Walbrook, p. 34.

extraordinarily complete facilities for the carrying on of experiments. I have a home of my own, delightful in the extreme, complete with library filled with books of reference—historical, scientific, medical—and, in fact, with every type of literature. To us these books are as substantial as those used on earth are to you. I have a music-room containing every mode of sound-expression. I have pictures of rare beauty and furnishings of exquisite design. I am living here alone at present, but friends frequently visit me as I do them in their homes, and if a faint sadness at times takes possession of me, I visit those I loved most on earth.

From my windows undulating country of great beauty is seen, and at a short distance away a house of community exists, where many good souls working in my laboratory live in happy concord. A dear old Chinaman, my chief assistant, of great help in chemical analysis, is director, as it were, of this community. He is an admirable soul, of huge sympathy and endowed with a great philosophy.

Here is another description which deals with this matter¹⁰³:

It is very difficult to tell you about work in the spirit world. It is allotted to each one his portion, according to how he has progressed. If a soul has come direct from earth, or any material world, he must then be taught all he has neglected in the former existence, in order to make his character grow to perfection. As he has made those on earth suffer, so he himself suffers. If he has a great talent, that he brings to perfection here; for if you have beautiful music, or any other talent, we have them here much more. Music is one of the great moving forces of our world; but although arts and talents are carried to their fullest, it is the great work of all souls to perfect themselves for the Eternal Life.

There are great schools to teach the spirit children. Besides learning all about the universe and other worlds, about other kingdoms under God's rule, they are taught lessons of unselfishness and truth and honour. Those who have learned first as spirit-children, if they should come into your world, make the finer characters.

Those who have spent all their material existence in merely physical labours, have to learn everything when they come here. Work is a wonderful life, and

¹⁰³ "Thought Lectures," from *The Spiritualists' Reader*, p. 53.

those who become teachers of souls learn so much themselves. Literary souls become great orators, and speak and teach in eloquent language. There are books, but of quite a different kind from yours. One who has studied your earth-laws would go into the spirit-school as a teacher of justice. A soldier, when he himself has learned the lessons of truth and honour, will guide and help souls, in any sphere or world, to fight for the right faith in God.

In the author's Home Circle an intimate spirit spoke of her life in the beyond in answer to the question, "What do you do?"

"Music and children, loving and mothering and lots of other things besides. Far, far more here than on the old grey earth. Nothing in the people round ever jars. That makes everything happier and more complete."

"Tell us about your dwelling."

"It is lovely. I never saw any house on earth to compare with it. So many flowers!—a blaze of colour in all directions and they have such wonderful scents, each one different, but all blending so deliciously."

"Can you see other houses?"

"No, it would spoil the peace if you could. One wants nature only at times. Every home is an oasis, as it were. Beyond is wonderful scenery and other sweet homes full of dear, sweet, bright people full of laughter and joy from the mere fact of living in such wonderful surroundings. Yes, it is beautiful. No earth mind can conceive the light and wonder of it all. The colours are so much daintier, and the whole scheme of the home life is so much more radiant."

Another extract from the author's Home Circle may, perhaps, be excused, since these messages have been mixed with so much evidential matter that they inspire complete confidence in those who have been in touch with the facts:

"For God's sake, strike at these people, these dolts who will not believe. The world so needs this know ledge. If I had only known this on earth it would have so altered my life—the sun would have shone on my grey path had I known what lay before me."

"Nothing jars over here. There are no crosscurrents. I am interested in many things, mostly human, the progress of human development, above all the regeneration of the earth-plane. I am one of those who are working for the cause on this side hand-and-glove with you.

"Never fear; the light will be the greater for the darkness you have passed through. It will come very soon, as God wills it. Nothing can stand against that. No powers of darkness can stand for one minute against His light. All the crowd working against it will be swept away. Lean more on us, for our power to help is very great.

[Where are you?]

"It is so difficult to explain to you the conditions over here. I am where I would most wish to be, that is, with my loved ones, where I can keep in close touch with you all on the earth-plane.

[Have you food?]

"Not in your sense, but much nicer. Such lovely essences and wonderful fruits and other things besides, which you don't have on earth.

"Much awaits you which will very much surprise you, all beautiful and high, and so sweet and sunny. Life was a preparation for this sphere. Without that training I could not have been able to enter this glorious, wonderful world. The earth is where we learn our lessons, and this world is our great reward, our true and real home and life—the sunshine after the rain."

The subject is so enormous that it can only be touched upon in general terms in a single chapter. The reader is referred to the wonderful literature which has grown up, hardly noticed by the world, around the subject. Such books as Lodge's "Raymond," Vale Owen's "Life Beyond the Veil," Mrs. Platts's "The Witness," Miss Walbrook's "Case of Lester Coltman," and many other volumes give clear and consistent representations of the life beyond.

In reading the numerous accounts of life in the hereafter, one naturally asks oneself how far they are to be trusted. It is reassuring to find how greatly they are in agreement, which is surely an argument for their truth. It might be contended that this agreement is due to their all being derived,

consciously or not, from some common source, but this is an untenable supposition. Many of them come from people who could by no means have learned the views of others, and yet they agree even in small and rather unlikely details. In Australia, for example, the author examined such accounts written by men living in remote places who were honestly amazed at what they had themselves written. One of the most striking cases is that of Mr. Hubert Wales.¹⁰⁴ This gentleman, who had been, and possibly is, a sceptic, read an account by the author of after-life conditions, and then hunted up a script which he had himself written years before and had been received by him with amused incredulity. He wrote: "After reading your article I was struck, almost startled, by the circumstance that the statements which had purported to be made to me regarding conditions after death coincided—I think almost to the smallest detail—with those you set out as the result of your collation of material obtained from many sources." The remainder of Mr. Wales's conclusions will be found in the Appendix.

Had this philosophy all turned upon the great white throne and perpetual adoration around it, it might be set down as some reflection of that which we have all been taught in our childhood. But it is very different—and surely very much more reasonable. An open field is predicated for the development of all those capacities with which we have been endowed. Orthodoxy has permitted the continued existence of thrones, crowns, harps, and other celestial objects. Is it not more sensible to suppose that if some things can survive, all things can survive, in such form as suits the environment? As we survey all the speculations of mankind, perhaps the Elysian fields of the ancients and the happy hunting-grounds of the Red Indians are nearer the actual facts than any fantastic presentation of heaven and hell which the ecstatic vision of theologians has conjured up.

So workaday and homely a heaven may seem material to many minds, but we must remember that evolution has been very slow upon the physical plane, and it is slow also upon the spiritual one. In our present lowly condition we cannot expect at one bound to pass all intermediate conditions and attain to what is celestial. This will be the work of centuries—possibly of moons. We are not fit yet for a purely spiritual life.

¹⁰⁴ *The New Revelation*, p. 146.

But as we ourselves become finer, so will our environment become finer, and we shall evolve from heaven to heaven until the destiny of the human soul is lost in a blaze of glory whither the eye of imagination may not follow.

APPENDIX

NOTE TO CHAPTER II

THE MEDIUMSHIP OF THE REV. W. STANTON MOSES

DESCRIBING an experience of levitation, Stainton Moses writes:

As I was seated in the corner of the inner room my chair was drawn back into the corner and then raised off the floor about a foot, as I judged, and then allowed to drop to the floor whilst I was carried up in the corner. I described my apparent movement to Dr. and Mrs. S., and took from my pocket a lead pencil with which, when I became stationary, I made a mark on the wall opposite to my chest. This mark is as near as may be six feet from the floor. I do not think my posture was changed, and I was lowered very gently until I found myself in my chair again. My sensation was that of being lighter than the air. No pressure on any part of the body; no unconsciousness or entrancement. From the position of the mark on the wall it is clear that my head must have been close to the ceiling. My voice, Dr. S. told me afterwards, sounded oddly away up in the corner, as if my head were turned from the table, as it was according to my observation and the mark I made. The ascent, of which I was perfectly conscious, was very gradual and steady, not unlike that of being in a lift, but without any perceptible sensation of motion other than that of feeling lighter than the atmosphere. My position, as I have said, was unchanged. I was simply levitated and lowered to my old place.

Of the passage of matter through matter we have this instance related:

On August 28 (1872) seven objects from different rooms were brought into the séance-room; on the 30th, four, and amongst them a little bell from the adjoining dining-room. We always left gas brightly burning in that room and in the hall outside, so that if the doors were opened even for a moment a blaze of light would have been let into the dark room in which we sat. As this never happened, we have full assurance from what Dr. Carpenter considers the best authority, Common Sense, that the doors remained closed. In the dining-room there was a little bell. We heard it commence to ring, and could trace it by its

sound as it approached the door which separated us from it. What was our astonishment when we found that in spite of the closed door the sound drew nearer to its! It was evidently within the room in which we sat, for the bell was carried round the room, ringing loudly the whole time. After completing the circuit of the room, it was brought down, passed under the table, coming up close to my elbow. It rang under my very nose, and went round about my head, then passed round the circle, ringing close to the faces of all. It was finally placed upon the table. I do not wish to theorize, but this seems to the to dispose of arguments which would put forward the theory of our being psychologized, or of the object coming down the chimney, as an explanation of this difficult subject.

Dr. Speer thus describes the appearance of a spirit light and a materialized hand on August 10, 1873:

A large globe of light rose from the side of the table opposite to me, and sailed up to the level of our faces, and then vanished. It was followed by several more, all of which rose up from the side opposite to me, and sometimes to the right and sometimes to the left of the medium. At request the next light was placed slowly in the centre of the table. It was apparently as large as a shaddock, and was surrounded with drapery. At this time the medium was entranced, and the controlling spirit informed me that he would endeavour to place the light in the medium's hand. Failing in this, he said he would knock on the table in front of me. Almost immediately a light came and stood on the table close to me. "You see; now listen—I will knock." Very slowly the light rose up and struck three distinct blows on the table. "Now I will show you my hand." A large, very bright light then came up, and inside of it appeared the materialized hand of the spirit. He moved the fingers about close to my face. The appearance was as distinct as can be conceived.

An example of strong physical force is thus recorded by Stainton Moses:

We had ventured on one occasion, contrary to direction, to add to our circle a strange member. Some trivial phenomena occurred, but the usual controlling spirit did not appear. When next we sat, he came, and probably none of us will easily forget the sledge-hammer blows with which he smote the table. The noise was distinctly audible in the room below and gave one the idea that the

table would be broken to pieces. In vain we withdrew from the table, hoping to diminish the power. The heavy blows increased in intensity, and the whole room shook with their force. The direst penalties were threatened if we again interfered with the development by bringing in new sitters. We have not ventured to do so again; and I do not think we shall easily be persuaded to risk another similar objurgation.

NOTES TO CHAPTER XI

MR. WALES'S AUTOMATIC WRITING

MR. WALES writes to the author:

I cannot think there was anything in my antecedent reading to account for this coincidence. I had certainly read nothing you had published on the subject, I had purposely avoided "Raymond" and books like it, in order not to vitiate my own results, and the Proceedings of the S.P.R. which I had read at that time, do not touch, as you know, upon after-death conditions. At any rate I obtained, at various times, statements (as my contemporary notes show) to the effect that, in this persisting state of existence, they have bodies which, though imperceptible by our senses, are as solid to them as ours to us, that these bodies are based on the general characteristics of our present bodies but beautified; that they have no age, no pain, no rich and poor; that they wear clothes and take nourishment; that they do not sleep (though they spoke of passing occasionally into a semiconscious state which they called "lying asleep"—a condition, it just occurs to me) which seems to correspond roughly with the "hypnoidal" state); that, after a period which is usually shorter than the average lifetime here, they pass to some further state of existence; that people of similar thoughts, tastes, and feelings gravitate together; that married couples do not necessarily reunite, but that the love of man and woman continues and is freed of elements which with us often militate against its perfect realization; that immediately after death people pass into a semi-conscious rest-state lasting various periods, that they are unable to experience bodily pain, but are susceptible at times to some mental anxiety; that a painful death is "absolutely unknown," that religious beliefs make no difference

whatever in the after-state, and that their life altogether is intensely happy, and no one having ever realized it could wish to return here. I got no reference to "work" by that word, but much to the various interests that were said to occupy them. That is probably only another way of saying the same thing. "Work" with us has come usually to mean "work to live," and that, I was emphatically informed, was not the case with them—that all the requirements of life were somehow mysteriously "provided." Neither did I get any reference to a definite "temporary penal state," but I gathered that people begin there at the point of intellectual and moral development where they leave off here; and since their state of happiness was based mainly upon sympathy, those who came over in a low moral condition failed at first for various lengths of time to have the capacity to appreciate and enjoy it.
