

# DO THE DEAD DEPART?

And Other Questions

By  
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*Author of "Seen and Unseen"*



NEW YORK  
DODGE PUBLISHING COMPANY

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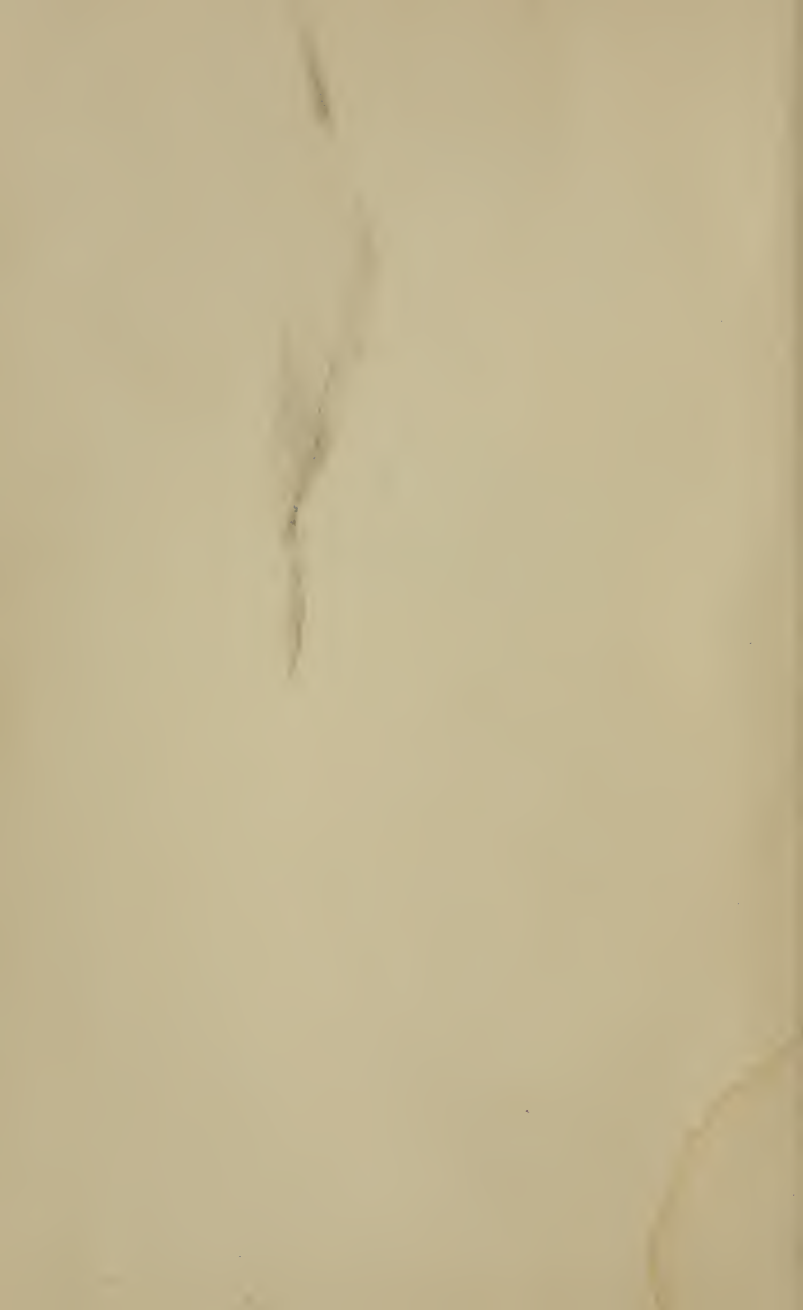
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[DO THE DEAD DEPART?]

Dedication

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TO THE MEMORY OF  
RICHARD HODGSON, LL.D.





## PREFACE

THIS book is not evidential. That is not its aim. There is already a flood of literature on these subjects, written by experts for experts.

After twenty-five years of constant study and investigation and of meeting other psychic students in every quarter of the globe, I suppose I may consider myself somewhat of an expert?

When writing *Seen and Unseen* it occurred to me: Why should not some one, who has a little knowledge in these matters, write a simple book for the general public, telling frankly and accurately a few simple personal experiences, without technical dissertations upon the theories connected with such experiences?

It is difficult for some of us to realize that a story may be told quite accurately, and yet, not from the *purely* evidential point of view. The latter, of necessity, involves a mass of small details, very

wearisome for the ordinary reader, and in many cases of no essential importance to the narrative; but not one of which can be omitted in an exhaustive evidential report.

In spite of the very genial and kindly reception given to my last book, some of my reviewers have missed this point. They have lamented the absence of "evidence" in *Seen and Unseen*, not realizing that the presence of "evidence" would have entailed page upon page of wearisome repetitions; wearisome, I mean, of course, to those who have not yet begun to take a *scientific* interest in psychic matters.

It is to these people that both my books are primarily addressed.

I wanted to talk to them through my writing, just as I should have talked to them in real life, had we met, and had they said to me, "Now do tell me, as a sensible woman, what first attracted your attention to these questions? Have you had any personal experience, apart from professional mediums, etc., etc.?"

Some kind friends, on both sides of the Veil, have deeply regretted my writing

in a style "so far below my capacity and brain power." But it seems to me that our only justification for writing at all in these overburdened days, is the fact that we have something to say to somebody. It is not a question of trying to impress people with the amount or quality of one's brain power (every one has brains nowadays!) but of getting them to listen to what one says. And in psychic matters, at any rate, it has been made very plain to me that so far as I am concerned, the public prefers a genial chat to a more elaborate presentation of my views and experiences.

The late Dr. Alfred Williams Momerie (one of our most brilliant Cambridge scholars and at one time an intimate friend of mine) often said to me, "*Always remember that it is extremely easy to make simple things complicated, and extremely difficult to make complicated things appear easy.*"

All those who know his books or remember his lectures, will admit that he gave a brilliant example of how the latter difficulty could be met and overcome.

So I have written the present little book on much the same lines as the last, so far as that is compatible with the difference of subject-matter.

I shall be more than satisfied if it receive as kind and genial a welcome as that which greeted my *Psychic Reminiscences*.

E. KATHARINE BATES.

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# Do the Dead Depart?

## CHAPTER I

### SOME OBJECTIONS TO SPIRIT RETURN

A FEW months ago, I published with Messrs. Dodge Publishing Company, a book entitled *Seen and Unseen*, in which I related as simply as possible some of the events in my own life which distinctly suggest a supernormal cause. I say *supernormal* advisedly, for I think we have all learned by this time that nothing *which happens* can possibly be supernatural. That would be a contradiction in terms. Any event of which the immediate cause does not at present enter into the ordinary racial knowledge must of necessity be supernormal. It is equally certain that it cannot be supernatural.

It has been suggested that I should write a second book dealing with similar

experiences but more specially touching upon the question, "Do the dead return?" Were I criticising this title instead of writing upon it I should be inclined to put the query, "Do the so-called dead return?" for there is a finality about the word *dead* which at once prejudices the case.

How *can* the dead return or do anything else involving movement and action?

It is the living who return. It is the living who depart, for that matter. How can a *dead man* depart or return? We hear a great deal about the worthlessness of words. It often seems to me that the worth and the *power* of words are incalculable and almost infinite.

How many delusions have been generated and built up and have flourished for centuries owing to a loose or incorrect use of words?

Both science and theology have curious records and strange tales to tell us on this subject. A whole creed may rest upon so frail a foundation as the omission or addition of a tiny word of three letters: such a word as "not," for example.



Again, the whole structure of the doctrine of the resurrection of our present flesh bodies, devoutly believed in for centuries and still held fervently by many good people, has rested upon the text, "Yet *in* my flesh shall I see God." But the revised version of the Bible translates this text, "Yet *from* my flesh shall I see God," and the marginal note to this gives "without" as an equivalent for "from," thus making the sense of the whole sentence the exact antithesis of that which we have been hitherto taught. "Yet in my flesh shall I see God" thus becomes, "Yet without my flesh shall I see God."

Who can say that words are of little value when one short word can thus create or destroy the whole doctrine of a resurrection of the *flesh*?

So much for the worthlessness of words! Now when people talk of a dead man they are really using words in a contradictory sense, no matter how firmly custom and tradition have justified them in doing so.

A body can die but a *man* cannot die, although I suppose we all talk about

dead men occasionally just as we all talk about a rising and setting sun when we really know that we mean the exact contrary of what we say.

An absolutely convinced and absolutely logical materialist—if such a being really exists—may say, “But I entirely deny your premises. I maintain that a man *can* die, because I deny the existence in him of anything beyond perishable material which dies as *man* and can only endure through transmutation into other forms of matter.” Such a materialist has perfect liberty to make such an assertion; but it is *assertion pur et simple*, and the presumption of evidence is against him; enormously and increasingly against him as the years go on and metaphysics begin to take their due place as a subject for scientific investigation.

It may however be well to clear the ground at once by saying that this book is not addressed to that mythical and expiring dodo—the thorough-paced materialist. He is quite as rare nowadays as the historical dead Donkey that nobody ever saw.

Assuming, therefore, that no one is likely to read this little book who is not prepared to admit that man *is* a spirit, however little we may comprehend the exact nature of spirit, and *has* a body, we can go on to the next point.

Speaking just now of the enormous influence of words—rightly or wrongly used—reminds me of Shakspeare's dogmatic and most unfortunate assertion as regards the "bourne from which no traveler returns." It is unnecessary to point out how he contradicts his own words again and again in his plays by describing, as well as suggesting, visitors from that distant bourne. In spite of this, his words have been quoted again and again by all those who deprecate such visits and object to such visitors, and we are continually reminded that our greatest poet and philosopher demonstrated the *impossibility* of any intercourse between the living and the so-called dead; whilst in the same breath they will point out as a further clinching of the argument, that "Holy Writ" specially deprecates the attempt to establish such intercourse.

Oh, blessed inconsistency! Why should the writers of the Bible forbid and denounce a practice that is *impossible*? And why again, should those who quote Shakspeare's well-worn words as proof of the *impossibility* of the practice quote Scripture at the same moment as proof of its *wickedness*?

Why? Simply because human nature is inconsistent *ab initio*, and never so inconsistent as when it is led by strong prejudice either to condemn or to approve.

I think any intelligent observer must be struck by the fact that taking humanity (as it now stands) as a whole, there is both undoubted indifference to, and most undoubted fear of, any possible intercourse between our present sphere and that which we believe will follow it.

No doubt this is partly theological—especially the fear.

To acknowledge that our departed friends not only can but do return to us—(I would rather say that they have never wholly left us)—here and now, is a complete bouleversement of Orthodox

Theology—by which latter I mean theology, not even as it has been presented in the Bible, but as it has been interpreted to us from the Bible, by our various Churches or teachers.

I remember once in America having a deeply interesting talk with Dr. Phillips Brooks of Boston, in connection with a letter I had written to him. When we met to discuss the latter, my first words were, "I am afraid, Dr. Brooks, you will have thought my letter rather unorthodox?" I have never forgotten his look of genuine surprise as he answered quietly, "Such an idea never crossed my mind. I was deeply interested in your letter—I never thought about its being orthodox or unorthodox. In fact, I don't quite know how people define those words. Nor do I think I have much respect for orthodoxy *unless it means the Truth.*"

How characteristic these courageous words are, read in the light of his own broad grasp of truth and impatience of those who would place stumbling-blocks in the way of its attainment! "I asked

for bread and you gave me a stone." I asked for Truth and you gave me—Orthodoxy. How many of us can say this in bitterness and loneliness of heart and spirit!

It was this great preacher's passionate love of Christ and love of Truth and hatred of all that tends to diversion and separation that gave him his marvelous influence over not only his country but his century, in all truly *religious* thought. But for us smaller souls who have not yet reached these heights, the theological measuring tape is ever at hand and we are desperately afraid, some of us, of being the eighth of an inch out in our theological calculations. Also I think we are naturally more eager to put our neighbors, than ourselves, through what may be termed the theological yard measure.

People have said to me again and again, "But how can you reconcile" (oh, how I hate that word "reconcile" by this time!) "the statements of the Bible about the blessed dead awaiting the last Trump and the final Resurrection with your idea

that your dead friends can be with you and talk to you and give you messages and so forth? I don't attempt to reconcile anything—I can only speak of those things which have come to me as facts. There are so many *apparently* contradictory statements in the Bible that nobody can reconcile at present, if he be quite honest. I am willing to believe that we may misunderstand many of these statements owing to our own spiritual limitations. I am *forced* to believe that mistranslation may account for other discrepancies. But a long experience has convinced me personally that the Bible contains all that is necessary for our spiritual evolution and education, and common sense has convinced me that no *truth* on any plane can be in real conflict with Bible statements *where such statements convey spiritual facts*. All real facts must harmonize, although our present ignorance may not permit us to put the various blocks together and make a perfect map of the whole processes of the universe.

Is it not *unthinkable* that we should be



able to do this under the circumstances of our present existence?

To be quite honest, we must admit that modern theology is not nearly so *comfortable* as were the generally-accepted religious ideas of thirty or forty years ago. In those days people were divided into two camps as a rule, *i. e.*, the "wholly worldly," who declined to trouble themselves about the future at all, boldly declaring the "one world at a time" theory as their rule in life, and the "worldly-holy," by which I mean those anxious to make the best of both worlds and to pay a sort of Fire Insurance by attending to their religious duties for some part at least of one day in seven. To these latter it is obvious that no scheme of salvation could be more convenient than one which put belief above character, and in fact rather deprecated any special development of the latter on any other lines, save those of a narrow theology, as tending to self-righteousness. To ignore the painful and strenuous education of life in building up character (a process seemingly as slow as that of forming corals beneath



the sea), would naturally appeal to the second camp of which I speak. So also would the doctrine of instant salvation through an act of belief, and of a clean slate from which all the *consequences* of our errors and sins are rubbed out by that mysterious sponge called the Grace of God.

Far be it from me to say one irreverent word as regards the latter, which is a blessed fact, known to so many of us, thank God !

The mistake has been in confusing absolution from sin with absolution from the consequences of sin—a totally different matter. The latter is a question of law, and so far as we have any experience, God never acts in contradiction to His laws. When such appears to be the case, we may be quite sure that some unknown factor has been left out in our calculation and that the apparent inconsistency lies in this unknown quantity, through which the law is acting, and not in any difference in the working of that law. Now I think if there is one thing which the experience of life teaches each one of us

more definitely than anything else, it is the fact that as we sow so we must reap, and that for every action of our lives, good or bad, we shall receive payment or some day be called upon to make it. There can be no doubt that the sowing *may* have been done for us to some extent, greater or less, as the case may be. In old days this seemed a terrible "injustice," but now that science, as well as progressive theology are teaching us something of the cosmic consciousness and the solidarity and unity of life, a gleam of light has come to us.

This is an illustration of what I said before. Injustice and inconsistency are not inherent in any law of God. Where they appear so, be very sure there is an unknown factor—an  $\times$  which must be added to all our calculations and which one day will have the Divine sign = added to it. Still the old ideas die slowly and die hard. People are wary enough to see that if they accept the pleasant trend of the new ideas they will be bound to accept the unpleasant trend also, and most of them (I am speaking now of the

“religious world,” as it is called) prefer to leave well alone, to go on in the beaten tracks and to refuse the satisfaction of intercourse with their departed friends and relations, rather than open the door to some very inconvenient facts, which are bound to follow.

Some years ago, when staying at Cairo, Lady Dunmore and I paid a visit to a very old friend of mine, who had lived there for many years and held a high official position in the Government Finance Department. His wife was dead and his only daughter married, and I think Lady Dunmore's kindly idea was that we might together, persuade him to look into psychic matters and thus bring some consolation into a lonely life by getting into touch perhaps with those who had gone on. But this was not his view of consolation at all. He hastened to assure us that there was nothing he should dislike more! “It seems to me a horrible idea,” he said quite frankly, “that those we loved here should know what we are doing and thinking about, now that they have left us! I am sure it

would make them most unhappy," he continued. "*And you rather uncomfortable,*" was my mental note at the time.

There was something almost pathetic in his eager disclaimer to any such hope or wish. I am sure there are many hundreds, nay, thousands, who feel just the same, although they might not put it so frankly.

When I first realized the constant presence of friends in the Unseen as a matter of absolute conviction, I can remember feeling distinctly uncomfortable. It gave me at first a feeling of being overlooked, of never being alone and so forth. But as the months and years passed and some feeble idea of the cosmic consciousness awoke, this trivial *self*-consciousness as regards that special question passed away forever. In the larger consciousness, believe me, there is no room for small, self-conscious doubts and fears of this kind. And as regards the more serious questions of our sins and shortcomings, surely Tennyson has once for all answered these, in his exquisite verses.

- “ Shall he for whose applause I strove,  
I had such reverence for his blame,  
See with clear eye some hidden shame,  
And I be lessened in his love ?
- “ I wrong the grave with fears untrue ;  
Shall Love be blamed for want of faith ?  
There must be wisdom with great death ;  
The dead shall look me through and through.
- “ Be near us when we climb or fall ;  
Ye watch, like God, the rolling hours,  
With larger, other eyes than ours,  
To make allowance for us all.”

## CHAPTER II

### SOME INSTANCES OF SPIRIT RETURN

I HAVE always felt very strongly that nothing but personal experience can really help us in deciding the momentous question, "Do our dead return?" Our friends may tell us of *their* experiences and still more frequently of the experiences of their friends; we may read dozens of books full of the most circumstantial and well-attested evidence; we may hear the most convincing testimony to an affirmative answer to our question; and yet in the end to what does it all amount? Absolute conviction overnight has become absolute incredulity by the morning.

I have seen this again and again and must even confess to personal experience of this undeniable fact. Something happens, so abnormal and yet so absolutely convincing to our bodily senses of sight and hearing, that we feel at the moment,

“Well, this settles matters once for all. There is no question of professional mediumship here. That which has happened has come about quite spontaneously. I am in full possession of my faculties and am neither dreaming nor romancing. So far as this fact is concerned I can never again entertain a doubt.”

My dear friend! probably by next morning—certainly by next week or next month or at latest next year—you will be full of doubts not only as to what really happened but even more as to your own powers of critical judgment. This is true even where purely physical phenomena are in question.

Some years ago, when staying on a large sheep station in Queensland, Australia, with a son of the late Sir Arthur Hodgson, who had married an old acquaintance of mine, I witnessed a curious illustration of this point.

Two Englishmen, friends of my hosts, from distant stations, had arrived one evening unexpectedly, in the charming Colonial fashion, and were to be hospitably entertained for a day or two.

My host and hostess were extremely anxious that I should consent to a little "sitting" on the evening of their guests' arrival and very unwillingly I felt obliged to fall in with this suggestion. To begin with, however, I made all four solemnly give me their word of honor that no trickery should take place and that if nothing happened I should not be reproached; whereas, if anything not to be explained except by trickery, should occur, they would at least be willing to bear testimony to the facts. Under these conditions only, I consented to sit at the table with them, it being distinctly understood that each one separately had given me his or her word of honor that he or she would be entirely passive and willing to receive what came. Some extremely unpleasant things came, as a matter of fact.

The conditions were far from ideal. The two visitors were perfect strangers to me and knew nothing of psychic matters; my host and hostess were in an equally elementary stage, and therefore mentally there was no sort of harmony. Physic-



ally, however, there must have been a great deal of latent energy. There was *full light* upon the proceedings all the time and, apart from the solemn promise given, I could see that no normal force was being used. Yet the table rose several inches from the ground, whilst the three men and we two women had our hands upon it in full view and in a way which would naturally have prevented its rising, had not a stronger force been acting in the contrary direction. Later, this power, whether intelligent or unintelligent, was at least extremely destructive.

This special "station" was very charmingly furnished, more like a London drawing-room than an Australian sheep farm; the table was beautifully inlaid with woods and several of the chairs used were also inlaid, with porcelain designs. When the sitting was over, the table was broken and two at least of the chairs were smashed and the pretty porcelain designs hopelessly wrecked.

Our visitors were well-born and well-bred Englishmen and would scarcely have

*wished* to ruin the property of their host and hostess. Certainly the latter would not have yearned to break up their own furniture, in a part of the world where such things are not easily replaced!

That night at least, there was no question of some extraneous force being present and *all the men agreed that they could not suggest any reasonable explanation.*

At the breakfast-table next morning every one of them had practically retracted his confession of faith! Night had brought, not counsel, but false shame. The old tradition of the normal, in which they had lived for years, proved too strong for their judgment upon this abnormal experience. When taxed with the facts of the broken chairs and table they indignantly refuted my satirical suggestion that *they* must have broken them in some occult manner, under our very eyes, in full light, without detection!

But they appeared to have forgotten all their remarks of the previous evening. They had slept over it, the pendulum of "the familiar" had swung back into place, dislodging the consciousness of

something abnormal and inexplicable, and it was useless to remind them of their solemn vow that if anything happened to baffle ordinary explanations they should admit the fact. They *had* admitted it overnight but recanted their confession within twelve hours, although absolutely incapable of suggesting any normal explanation.

This is only a specimen of what is continually occurring. It is quite natural that it should do so, but it shows the uselessness of any phenomenal marvels with a view to shaking materialistic convictions in the ordinary observer and the ordinary sceptic.

This is why I do not propose to add to the innumerable cases which are at hand on every side, testifying to the continued existence of our so-called dead.

The most telling "case" of another person's experience does not "begin to compare" with the smallest experience of your own. An ounce of personal experience is worth pounds of other people's evidence when related by them and tons of other people's evidence when printed

and not spoken. It is not by breaking an extra chair or table, nor by the exceptional and very occasional experience of a vision or a dream that we shall gain *conviction*. It is by the daily and hourly consciousness of the *presence* of our unseen friends—by their kindly help and loving warnings and by the constant proofs they give us of a watchful companionship and an untiring love.

And this must come to each one of us individually. We cannot hand over our own experience to another. We can only tell him what has happened to us and suggest that there is no reason in the world, *except his own attitude of mind*, to prevent his having a similar experience.

Developed clairaudience and developed clairvoyance may be indeed, and probably are, to a great extent the result of heredity, the inheritance left us perchance by previous experiences. But I believe that in every human being lies the germ of these higher senses and that if we would only take some simple measures to develop these germs under favorable con-

ditions, we should be astounded by the results obtained.

Professor Pritchard (Savilian Professor of Astronomy in Oxford, and one of the most successful and celebrated educationists of the last century) said to me once, "No human being of common intelligence comes into this world, who is incapable of drawing to some extent—of reproducing what he sees. I am convinced of this through experience and have never known it fail." Yet the professor would have been the first to admit that every boy is not a budding Turner nor an undeveloped Raphael.

I am equally sure that the same truth holds good as regards psychic matters.

*Love* is the great developer here as elsewhere, and if we don't succeed in getting into touch with our "lost" friends and relations, I do not for one moment believe it is from lack of capacity; but either from lack of true purpose and incentive or from the presence (even unconsciously to ourselves) of some deterring influence, due to prejudice or tradition.

Again, we are apt not to be sufficiently

*simple* in our methods—we think some great step is necessary, some washing in Abana or Pharphar. We must go to this or that medium, “having no power ourselves.” And we go, not feeling quite sure that it is *right* to do so. Perhaps we are met by incompetence or by that which appears to us an attempt at “fishing,” or even fraud. Old investigators know well that the same medium who succeeds in one case will make an abject failure in the next. Why? simply because there are mental laws as well as physical ones and some mental affinity must be established between sitter and medium, just as there must be sending and receiving stations established for wireless telegraphy. When one says this, people are apt to answer, “Ah, yes! that proves that it is merely a question of telepathic transference from the mind of the sitter to the mind of the medium,” and they look greatly pleased by their own intelligent and final, if somewhat vague, assertion.

You might just as well say that the necessity for receiving and despatching

“stations” in wireless telegraphy and for the vibrations being tuned to the same pitch, proves that there is no sender of the message. It is doubtless true that the difficulties of discrimination and transmission are greater, where the telegraphic lines to be used are *human* and not material and vibratory. But these difficulties exist to be *overcome*, not to be shunted by a slipshod and unscientific dictum that it is “mere telepathy between sitter and medium,” and therefore not worthy of investigation. This lazy assertion is at once challenged and denied in the fairly numerous cases, where facts, neither in the conscious nor unconscious mind of the sitter (unless he be omniscient!) have been truthfully conveyed to the inquirer.

But why not be independent of all such assistance? It may be a longer road but it will be more satisfactory in the end. The river Jordan is always at our doors. Why not learn to be our own mediums?

It is *not* impossible but it does call for more perseverance and concentration of



purpose than most of us are willing to give or perhaps think ourselves capable of giving. Love is the great developer and Love is the great teacher. We *are* capable, if we are willing to submit to that teaching, and to be simple and persevering and receptive.

When people come to me sometimes in deep distress and loneliness of heart and say, "Do help me; won't you get a message for me from my husband or child or mother?" my answer is always the same and much on these lines —

"I am so sorry I cannot help you in the way you wish. I am not a test medium." (Here I explain why it is not well to *force* this type of mediumship.) "I only take what comes to me spontaneously. You are a stranger to me yourself and if I attempted to get in touch with *another* perfect stranger, your husband or child, I should probably receive something untrue and possibly the result of my own mental activity. Far better try for yourself and infinitely more satisfactory to you. Give up a few minutes every day when you are quite



peaceful and quite alone, to concentrate your mind on the one you wish to speak to. Think of him or her as simply as possible; not as a far-away, mysterious spirit, divided from you by illimitable space, but as your very own child or mother or wife or husband as the case may be.

Call them by name, by any pet name you used to use. Speak to them as if they were close to you, as I fully believe they are. If this concentration of thought is earnest and real you had better not try it for more than ten minutes at first. We are not accustomed to absolute concentration where every extraneous thought is banished and at first we shall feel tired by the effort to keep the channel absolutely clear. But in time I feel quite sure, *if you persevere and do not lose heart*, some realization of the presence of the beloved one will come to you, so undeniable and so convincing to your own consciousness that a whole college of philosophers or scientists will not be able to persuade you that the one you loved and lost was *not* in close touch with you. There will be a feeling of personal

identity in time, impossible to describe still more impossible to deny. For Love is the great Revealer and you will *know* that His testimony is true."

In some such words I have again and again answered some such inquiry. Personally I have never found the advice to fail. In one case (already published under the pseudonym of Mrs. Forbes) the mother of a dearly-loved and only son took my suggestion literally and acted upon it and *within ten days* wrote to tell me of her great surprise and great joy to find that after some days of apparent uselessness, the daily sitting had been crowned with success.

"*It is almost too wonderful to believe and yet I know that it is true. My boy is with me every day now and I can talk to him quite easily.*" This was the testimony of a woman of certainly marked intelligence, who had spent her whole married life in legal circles and was not likely to be ignorant of the rules of evidence nor to be overcredulous.

Similar statements have come to me from other quarters, where I have recom-

mended this very simple and certainly perfectly harmless step.

There are cases of course where, after a long period of suffering or a busy and strenuous life, it is necessary that the spirit freed from earth conditions should have absolute rest. In these cases we must not be disappointed or doubting, if our communion is delayed. Should such be the case, we can still set that short time sacredly apart, to be spent in loving sympathy with them, rejoicing in their freedom from care and pain and in their well-earned and much-needed rest.

It is impossible for us to know beforehand which spirits will be active and anxious to make themselves recognized by us and which ones will be appointed to rest for longer or shorter periods. The facts do not always tally with our own notions of probability and expediency.

A marked instance of this came lately within my personal experience.

In September, 1906, a dearly-loved brother was taken from my physical consciousness. He had had a brilliant and strenuous military career for over twenty

years, and for nearly thirty years later had been completely paralyzed and confined to his armchair.

It is almost impossible for any outsider to conceive the tragedy and the weariness of such a life, coming to such an active man in the very prime of his years.

When he was taken from me and my whole life was overshadowed by his loss, there was at least the great consolation of knowing that for *him* the change was comparable to that of a lifelong prisoner emerging from a dreary prison-cell. And the weariness of constant weakness had been such that one never doubted for a moment but that a long resting time would be necessary before one could hope or even *wish* to hear of him. I was in the house with a friend (the Mrs. Finch of *Seen and Unseen*) at the time, and as she has decided psychic gifts we had discussed the matter together and entirely agreed upon it; although Mrs. Finch is a staunch Theosophist and I am no sort of "ist" at all!

Within a fortnight of my brother's death, I had left her at the seaside and

had returned to London where some rather trying and tiresome business matters required my presence. I was looking forward with some anxiety and discomfort to a business interview impossible to postpone, but which *might* have led to a lengthy and unpleasant discussion under the special circumstances of the case, when to my profound astonishment and rather to my dismay, a message came to me from my brother.

He said, "Do not trouble about tomorrow. It will be all right. I am so sorry you have had all this worry. I thought I had arranged everything for the best, but fear it has not been so after all."

I was so grieved and so astonished by the communication that I answered in hot haste, "Please don't worry yourself, dear, about anything of this kind. I hoped you were resting and sleeping after all your sad life. For goodness' sake, don't trouble about me or any of these earthly matters!"

"But it is my duty and it is also my *wish* to do so," he answered at once.

“But I thought you were unconscious still,” was my reply.

“No. I am awake now. I have been resting and unconscious for a time; but I am here now to help you.”

Next morning the interview took place and proved to be a brilliant success. Instead of the disagreeable episodes which had seemed inevitable, I was completely reassured within the first quarter of an hour; after a most satisfactory visit which lasted two hours, my fears, which had been amply justified by previous events, were finally dispersed and I have had no further ground for entertaining them. I do not claim that this was due to my brother's influence; because I should not be justified in doing so in a case where absolute evidence upon such a point is obviously absent. I may close the story however by mentioning a very curious coincidence.

I have already said that Mrs. Finch and I had both agreed as to the necessity of a long rest for my brother, probably lasting several months.

After the interview mentioned I wrote

to Mrs. Finch telling her of my great surprise at receiving so early an intimation of my brother's presence with me. She was still at Eastbourne, a single post from London.

The morning upon which she received my letter there, *I received a letter from her*, saying how greatly she had been surprised by a message from her special guide, "Who told me that your brother had already come to consciousness in his new surroundings. Are you not surprised to hear this? We both felt so sure that it could not be so in his case." I need scarcely say that Mrs. Finch was greatly delighted to receive my independent testimony to the same effect, crossing her letter. As she said at the time, "It was very satisfactory for both of us."



## CHAPTER III

### A MOTHER'S GUARDIANSHIP IN AMERICA

I HAVE said already that *personal* experience is the only argument that can really appeal to us. I believe most firmly that this is the case and that the piling up of extraneous stories and statements can have little value *except for the expert*, who is, as the naturalist, collecting specimens on all sides which he may sort out at leisure and from which he may finally extract some valuable tentative generalization.

Such a course, as I have stated in my Preface, is in no way the aim and scope of this little book. The opening sentence of this chapter admits, however, of slight modification. Although an individual personal experience can alone *convince*, the individual personal experience of a reliable witness may at least suggest to us that what is taking place consciously in the experience of a sensitive, may be tak-



ing place unconsciously in the experience of the world at large.

Physical phenomena exist and go on all round us, whether we be normal men and women or blind and deaf men and women. Is it not reasonable to conclude that the same law holds good on the psychic plane which impinges upon and interpenetrates our own material existence? This, by the bye, suggests a common-sense answer to the question so often asked, "If the departed really do appear, why do they so often appear to the wrong people?" "Why don't *I* see my father or mother instead of hearing that somebody else has seen them?"

The only reasonable answer is that the "wrong people" happen to have the power of seeing and you don't happen to have it. A blind woman might just as well ask why *she* cannot see her husband, whilst others are able to do so, although obviously she must be more interested in him than they can possibly be? Even were she deaf as well as blind it would not occur to her to use these facts as arguments for his non-existence! It is the

sense of personality and identity, so difficult to put into words, so undeniable in effect, which makes our experiences, whether psychic or spiritual, *actual to us* and distinct from the numerous impressions which pass away like the morning mists.

Marvelous as were my experiences of materialization in America, it is not to them that I owe my conviction of the presence of my unseen friends.

The most sensational experiences on the objective plane, no matter how keenly engraved upon the *memory*, are bound to lose their weight of impression on the intellectual and spiritual faculties, as time passes. It is not that which has struck your eyes and ears and affected your physical senses which remains with you as a permanent conviction. It is the subjective knowledge of truth and identity which makes an experience *your own*. Nothing less than this will bear the test of time and change, and all the critics and philosophers in the world cannot take this from you, any more than they could give it to you. Not the blaring

trumpets of "miracles" and "phenomena," but the "still, small voice" is that which remains with you in the long run.

It is the constant loving care and companionship of my friends in the Unseen—not their occasional recognition through some medium—that enables me to assert without one moment's doubt, and with the authority of *one* who *knows*, that the dead do return, or rather that they never really depart.

Richard Jefferies, in one of his exquisite bits of writing, tells us how the unity of life was revealed to him when he stood by the grave of one he loved, and *knew* that "Love could kiss the lips of Death." But I think we must stand as he did before that *absolute conviction* can come to us. To some poor souls it seems never to come at all. In any case it appears to me a hopeless task to attempt to prove to the intellect that which transcends without contradicting the intellectual and which appeals to the *spirit* of man. So long as the spirit sleeps, we may knock in vain at the door of the intellect.

We shall have sore knuckles for our pains but nothing more, and the sooner we realize this the better. It will save us *all* annoyance and spare some of us much misdirected energy.

Amongst the apparently trivial and yet most satisfying evidences of my mother's presence with me during my first American journey I have noted two instances.

My companion, Miss Greenlow, and I were traveling west after spending the winter of 1885-1886 in the Eastern States.

Not knowing the conditions of climate, we had arranged to leave Washington very early in April, whilst the weather was still unsettled and almost wintry; so soon as we had said good-bye to Washington. The consequence was that our first experience of extensive American travel was a pretty bad "Washout." The water was over the wheels of the cars in many places and the delays were numerous and most aggravating. All the arrangements of the railway companies were dislocated; we were hours behind our time and literally there was no means

of knowing, within a day or two, when we should arrive at Cincinnati. Naturally everything depended upon the state in which we found conditions farther on, and no one attempted to make any calculations where the necessary factors were non-existent.

Being already twenty-four hours behind our advertised time, I asked an official how long he thought it would be before we reached Cincinnati.

"Two or three days, I guess," was his grim and uncompromising answer, so I took the hint and did not trouble him again. It was a dreary start for our journey west, to be hung up at some wayside station hour after hour, waiting for the waters to subside, then to go on for a bit and have a similar experience a little later.

Several clairvoyants in Boston, Philadelphia and Washington had independently told me of my mother's constant guardianship and had given me her two names after very little hesitation; so one evening when I was feeling very hopeless over our innumerable halts and waits, it

suddenly struck me that I would consult *her* in the matter. I think at that time I used my watch as a means of communication, holding a hairpin or anything of the kind, loosely over it in the right hand and repeating the alphabet until my hand was pushed downward to the back of the watch, at a special letter.

First I asked whether we should really reach Cincinnati next day at all, as it seemed doubtful—a most reassuring “*Yes*” was tapped out. Next I asked at what time, and “*four o'clock in the morning*” was given. Now this appeared absolutely improbable, for we were still many miles distant and the state of the road-bed gave no reasonable hope of such a possibility. If the answer had been “*four p. m.*” I should have felt more confidence in it. As it was, I supposed that my own mentality had become mixed up with the message and that the wish as usual had been father to the thought. We went to bed early, after I had told my companion of my experience and we had both agreed not to believe in any such impossibly good news.

We were traveling, although very slowly, at the time I turned in. I must have slept for some hours, when I was awakened by a sudden jolt and found that we were once more stationary. "Another stoppage as usual," I thought. There was absolute darkness and absolute silence as I lay awake musing. Then from the farther end of the sleeping-car I recognized soft, stealthy steps creeping past the thick curtains of my lower berth. I drew these cautiously aside and confronted the conductor, who instantly put his finger to his lips to enjoin silence for the sleeping-car. "Where are we?" I whispered cautiously. "Cincinnati," was his equally cautious reply. "What o'clock is it?" I asked with some excitement, as the remembrance of the previous evening came back to me.

Even now I can recall the eerie feeling with which I listened for his answer.

"*Four o'clock,*" he answered rather impatiently and turned away, to prevent the possibility of any further questions.

It turned out that we had arrived considerably ahead of the most sanguine ex-



pectations, and when daylight came and we were able to gain the shelter and comparative comfort of the hotel, my thankfulness for a safe journey after much difficulty and discomfort, was much enhanced by the proof of my mother's power as well as wish to help and cheer me.

Some months later, a similar experience came to me, also at a time of considerable suspense. Very much against the advice of our American friends, Miss Greenlow and I had arranged to visit the Grand Cañon of the Colorado—in Arizona, and not in the Rocky Mountains, as some people suppose.

In those days it was a much more difficult expedition than, I am told, it is at present. There was absolutely no accommodation up there except a small wooden shanty only used when some stray photographer or naturalist found his way to this then remote district and was driven up to it for a night's lodging, taking his provisions with him. We turned a deaf ear to our prudent counselors, telling them that we should never have seen *anything* in America had we



listened to every one's advice in our travels! In this special case the advice was more than justified, but we could not know this beforehand, and we were extremely anxious to see the beauties of which we had heard such extravagant (but not really exaggerated) accounts.

We reached Peach Springs (where the railway was to be left) safely, and after a few hours' rest in a miserable wayside inn, our host told us that all arrangements had been made for our comfort and convenience and that at eleven o'clock a buckboard (a very primitive vehicle without springs) would be ready to carry us and the provisions ordered for us, some thirty-five miles up the cañon to the wooden shanty aforesaid. We found that we were to be consigned to the care of a good-looking but rather taciturn young man of twenty-six or twenty-seven, who was later on to combine the offices of cook, housemaid and guide, companion and friend in one. For our host after driving us up to the shanty and giving us in charge to "Billy," calmly announced that he proposed to take the

buckboard back again, leaving us entirely dependent upon our feet for locomotion.

This was rather a shock as we had been led to suppose that he would "boss the expedition" himself and that Billy was only taken up as his lieutenant. However we had already committed ourselves to a three days' stay, Friday being the day of our arrival, and the man assured us that he had arranged the provisions accordingly and that Billy was an absolutely dependable and estimable person.

Poor Billy! He certainly did well by us, but it was a little discouraging to hear from himself (as soon as the Peach Spring impostor had disappeared) that *he* had been picked up from a gambling saloon two or three weeks previously and that this was his only claim to respectability!

Moreover he was quite frank in telling us that his dearest friend had been *Billy the Kid*, a notorious character who had been hanged in 'Frisco five years previously, having no less than nineteen murders to his account, although barely

twenty years old at the time of his death—hence I suppose his soubriquet of *the Kid*. Unfortunately for my peace of mind I had come upon a small life of *Billy the Kid* in San Francisco and had read it with some interest as indicating the lawless state of California, even so short a time as five years before our visit.

Our Billy regaled us every evening with the other Billy's adventures which sounded far more lifelike from the lips of his bosom friend but followed very much the lines of the biography. We ended by thinking *Billy the Kid* rather a hero in spite of his crimes, and almost regretting the treachery of a woman which gave justice the "drop on him," for the first time in all his wild career. Still we would not have exchanged him for our own Billy, who never but once gave me a moment's anxiety, during our visit to the cañon.

This was on the Sunday morning when he and I started at 6 A. M. to climb a mountain in front of the shanty, which had been tempting me since my arrival.

It was only some 3,000 feet above us, but the view was said to be most extensive and magnificent, which proved to be quite true. We had spent the intermediate day strolling up and down the cañon and gathering exquisite flowers from the sides of the narrow creek or brook which ran through it. We had to climb a good many rocks during our investigations, and Miss Greenlow had unfortunately sprained her ankle over one of these and was quite unequal to the Sunday expedition which we had planned, but said she should really enjoy a few hours alone. So I had no scruples in taking her at her word.

After a hasty cup of tea, Billy and I set out together and a pretty stiff climb brought us at length to the plateau of the mountain just below the real top.

“Got a light about you?” said Billy, rather gruffly, as we negotiated the last bit of climbing before reaching this plateau. Englishwomen did not smoke much in those days and the question seemed a little curious. I could only express my sorrow that I could not accom-

modate him, when he suddenly exclaimed, "Never mind—more ways than one of getting a light," and with that he pulled out his revolver rather suddenly and began some mysterious operations with a cartridge from which he extracted the shot and with a bit of rag.

Perhaps being tired and hungry I was rather fanciful, but his manner seemed a little queer and suddenly my absolute helplessness, miles away from any habitation, or human being (except poor Miss Greenlow, equally helpless and with a sprained ankle) broke upon me with overwhelming strength. How devoutly I wished Billy would put that revolver away! What in the world was there to prevent his giving me a little push over the edge of the narrow plateau and returning to Miss Greenlow with the story of my fall? She could not start off to look for me in any case and without more words, nothing could be easier than for Billy to give her a blow on the head, sufficient to stun her for some little time at least.

She had a very valuable gold watch and of course we both had a certain

amount of money with us. After securing this, Billy had only to make tracks over the mountains by another route, drop down on the railroad at the first convenient spot and soon be lost once more in some gambling den in 'Frisco.

These thoughts passed through my mind in a flash. Billy meanwhile had lost his glum look and was getting more and more excited as he worked away at his cartridge. In my blank terror, I thought, "He is trying to work himself up to the point. He can't do it in cold blood." Just then he jumped up suddenly with a wild, ear-piercing shriek, a sort of Red Indian war-cry, and cried out, "*I've done it!*"

I really did think my last hour had come then! I am still thankful to remember that I gave a moment's thought to poor Miss Greenlow's helpless condition even at that horrible crisis.

When I found that Billy's terrifying war-cry meant nothing more murderous than that he had blown out the rag from the blank cartridge and ignited it, I was still intensely anxious for my friend.

She could not have failed to hear the cry in that clear air, even at such a considerable distance, and I feared *she* might be entertaining the very ideas which had so recently filled me with terror. As a matter of fact, I found later that this had literally been the case, but felt that I might have saved myself much anxiety when she said quite placidly on my return, "Yes, I thought very likely you had fallen or *that Billy had thrown you over!* If you had fallen I knew he would come and tell me, and if he had thrown you over, he would have come to take what he could find, before going over the mountains. I should have given him the watch and the money and then waited till the man from Peach Springs came back. You see, with my foot bad, I could not have gone to look after you anyway."

How bitterly I repented my hurrying haste in getting home to relieve her fears, when this cheerfully calm and masterly summing up of the matter was unfolded to me!

However even Miss Greenlow's philoso-



phy became dimmed for a moment when we found on that very Sunday morning that our Sunday dinner must consist of beans, as there was no meat left! It then turned out that our host had only brought up enough meat for one whole day, although we had told him we wished to stay until Monday!

Billy was a real gentleman at heart and suffered vicariously for the sins of his employer, although it was obviously not *his* fault. He had known nothing about the commissariat's deficiencies, it appeared, until after the man drove away. Moreover, Billy also was put upon short commons. We had a little tea left for the afternoon and our supper again consisted of a handful of beans and some dry bread, the butter being also exhausted. Billy went all over the cañon in the afternoon, in a vain attempt to shoot something for our next meal. He had absolutely no success. Monday morning came and we stayed in bed as late as possible, feeling rather hungry by this time. Breakfast was a fresh shock to us, for even the dry bread was failing us



now! Billy, with an assumption of sulky bravado which was intended to hide his very real mortification, put down a piece of very dry bread, certainly not so large as the palm of my hand and said, "There! you two ladies had better settle with a six-shooter, which of you is to eat that—there isn't enough for both!" Things were really looking rather desperate; all the more so because we had naturally lost all confidence in the man at Peach Springs and yet were completely at his mercy. Obviously we could not walk thirty-five miles back; nor could I, in any case, have left my companion with a sprained ankle. We knew by this time how much faith to put in the man's promises and had therefore no reason to suppose he would come for us on Monday, if it should suit him better to come the following day or even on Wednesday. We could only feel really certain that he would act in the matter entirely as best suited his convenience and would have no more scruple in starving us for an extra day or two than he had shown in leav-

ing one day's provisions for a three days' stay.

It was really a case of "not knowing where your next meal would come from," and as such was perhaps an experience worth having. There was literally not a crumb of bread left in the shanty and there was obviously no need for laying the cloth for dinner. The hours dragged wearily on and we felt more and more weak and helpless and depressed. Once more I appealed to my mother, "Do say something to cheer me, what is going to happen? It is five o'clock now and there seems no hope of that wretched man coming for us; it is getting too late for the long drive back; we have had nothing but a few beans and a little dry bread since yesterday morning, and now we have nothing at all in the house, and a long night before us."

— In some such words I spoke to my mother and told her of our trouble.

"Be patient," came the answer; "your trouble is almost ended now. He is coming up the valley. He will be here within half an hour."

It was just 5 : 30 P. M. when he appeared, bringing a piece of tough meat and some hard biscuits and a bottle of Californian port with him. He did not show the smallest sorrow for the discomfort entailed upon us by his niggardly carelessness, but calmly observed, "You may think yourselves lucky that I came at all to-day; fact is I meant to wait till to-morrow, to drive a gentleman up here, but at the last moment he made up his mind to give it up; so thought I might as well come to-day."

We were so eager to get out of his clutches as quickly as possible that we would not even wait to have the very tough bit of meat cooked; we drank the port and ate the biscuits and insisted upon being driven back at once to more civilized quarters, whilst Billy remained behind for the night to put things straight, and kept the meat for his share of the entertainment. We gave him a royal tip for his services and parted with mutual regret I think. I have often wondered what became of Billy. It was soon a question what would become of

us! We sat up all night at Peach Springs for fear of losing our 4 A. M. train and we had not been an hour in our "sleepers" when a terrific jolt sent us flying to the bottom of our berths and made us fully aware that "something had happened." After some minutes of perfect silence and inaction, one imper-turbable American at length got up, yawned and stretched himself and said gently, "I guess I will just go round and see what is up?" He returned shortly with the pleasing announcement that we had run into a freight train, gone off the track, that our engine was lying down the embankment "*as flat as a pancake,*" and that the two baggage cars next to it were telescoped. He said words failed him to describe the state of the freight train and no wonder!

We got up and investigated for ourselves later and I can testify to the truthful description of our engine because I climbed down the embankment and saw it for myself. It seems that a very heavy freight train coming from San Francisco had had to be switched on to the line of

our express going north. A signalman was sent off a quarter of a mile, to signal our train, as it came round a particular curve. The man got tired of waiting, said he was afraid of wolves and calmly walked back, letting our "express" come on to destruction!

We dashed into the freight train but mercifully owing to the curve, were not going at our highest speed. The freight train was completely annihilated however, and the debris was so great that our train had to return to Peach Springs and remain there till 11 P. M. that night whilst an extra track was made by a wrecking crew, to take us by a circuitous route round the scene of the collision.

I have a nightmare recollection of that bit of the journey and our slow progress over the temporary rails. The night was very dark and only the flaring tow and pitch torches lit up the crowds of workmen and the endless tomato tins and other canned goods, diversified here and there by wrecked furniture and household goods, which we passed on our perilous path. Here again the troubles

of our journey were lightened for me by the recollection of my mother's true and reassuring prophecy and by the continuous consciousness of her presence with me.

## CHAPTER IV

### A CURIOUS ILLUSTRATION OF SPIRIT METHODS

ALTHOUGH I have spoken so strongly against multiplying cases of psychic events, with the smallest hope that they can bring conviction to any single mind, I consider it permissible and advisable to illustrate one's own convictions occasionally, by giving the sort of facts that may have led to them in the first place and which continually arise in support of them.

Far from regretting that stories of our own experiences cannot convince anybody else, I rejoice in it. What poor, flabby creatures our friends and neighbors would be were they capable of such easy manipulation ! And what a heterogeneous mass of convictions they would hold, if they went much about the world and happened to possess the congenial

nature which attracts acquaintances and invites sympathy!

Personally I consider it a positive insult when people make an elaborate apology for not becoming instant converts to some of my most remarkable experiences. I can only most truthfully reassure them by saying that I should hold them in the meanest contempt if their judgment and reason could be so easily captured. I go even further than this. I do not think that *any fact can be, or ought to be, established upon the bona fides of even the most estimable character in the world.* I resent the tyranny of "great names," quite as much in this respect as in any other. There can be great names as regards character, or great names in social, scientific and philosophical circles. But to base a *scientific* fact upon *character* has always appeared to me ridiculous—and if psychic facts are not "scientific" so much the worse for them! In saying this it is, "*bien entendu,*" that science is capable of being legitimately stretched to the far side of Sir Ray Lankester, for example!

Yet we are constantly invited to give



*credence* to some "case," because it has been well attested by people of exceptional "character." That is certainly a good ground for claiming respectful consideration ; nothing more. I knew Mr. Stainton Moses and had the greatest respect for him, but I decline to accept a fact solely upon the *bona fides* of Mr. Stainton Moses, and I think many people have been very unfairly handled because they have dared to discuss or criticise "facts" of a psychic nature testified to by some dead man or woman of irreproachable character. Such facts demand the serious *attention* of competent researchers. They do not demand instant acceptance, as anything beyond working hypotheses, for further personal investigation.

Putting aside the really irreproachable and truly accurate witnesses, we have, in quite unprofessional circles, the pseudo irreproachable and accurate people whose accuracy is beyond human description, and who have proved themselves capable of deceiving even the very elect in that stronghold of level-headed criticism—The Society for Psychical Research.

I speak in parables; but the older members of that society will sorrowfully acknowledge to themselves the truth of my words.

Therefore let us dismiss in these matters the sentimentality connected with great names (morally speaking), and acknowledge once for all that apart from the question of *respectful attention*, the "irreproachable one" has no more reason to claim acceptance of his fact on the score of his general character than a chemist would have, to present the same plea, in favor of his researches.

And now to return to my little bit of personal history as regards the watchful care of our friends on the other side. In this case I was the percipient and not the object of their ministrations. About eighteen months ago I was spending some weeks in London during the dull and rainy autumn months, and one Saturday evening a sudden thought came to me that it would be advisable to go and see the recently opened Westminster Cathedral the following afternoon. Although with no leanings toward Roman Ca-

tholicism, I often spend a spare half-hour in the Brompton Oratory, because I find the spiritual atmosphere there very helpful. I had, however, no special interest in the new cathedral at the time and the idea of visiting it on that special day came to me rather "out of the blue," as it were. However I determined to carry out the suggestion and on my way to the Gloucester Road District Railway, thought *for the first time* that I could combine the visit with a cup of tea later in Ashley Gardens, where I have an old "young" friend. Now I wish to make clear that the Westminster Cathedral idea *preceded* the Ashley Gardens idea by some hours—in fact a whole night.

It rather surprised me at the time that this should have been the case as I knew the Ashley Gardens friend very well and have often stayed in her flat. However such was the case. I left the train at Victoria Station and made my way to the Roman Catholic Cathedral where I spent the best part of an hour. Coming out I found that the day, not very pleasant to start with, had become distinctly dis-

agreeable, cold and windy and with a threatening of rain.

I hurried on to my friend's flat, rejoicing in the knowledge that she was always "at home" on Sunday afternoons.

To my disgust and astonishment the porter said that Miss Lloyd was *not at home*. I stared at him in astonishment. "Do you mean that she has not yet returned to town?" It was well on toward winter, so this possibility had not even occurred to me.

"Oh, yes, she came back some weeks ago, madam; but she is out of town for a few days—gone to Berkshire, I think."

There was nothing for it but to return to Queen's Gate Gardens as quickly as possible and by degrees as I neared the station once more, the vision of my comfortable sitting-room with blazing fire and plenty of interesting books to read, quite dispelled my passing disappointment. But as I reached the Victoria Station, a curious thing happened. A strong and distinct mental impression came to me that I must turn back. "*There is some one else you ought to see*" was the form in

which it came. As a mere matter of personal preference I should certainly have discarded any such suggestion at the time. It was already nearly five o'clock and cold and windy in addition. Still the feeling was strongly upon me that I "ought" to turn round. So I walked down Victoria Street, pondering whom I knew there and whom I ought to go and see. I could think only of Lady Russell (the wife of Sir W. Howard Russell) who had asked me to call upon her years before, which I had never yet done. It seemed absurd to do so now, after so long an interval, so I dismissed *that* idea. Next came into my mind a very intelligent young lady, a member of Canon Wilberforce's congregation whom I knew slightly and who lived certainly in Victoria Street. I was almost at her door when it struck me forcibly that there was really no reason for my calling upon her at such a late hour and thus delaying my return home; so I deliberately turned round and walked back in the direction of the station once more. Just before arriving at the entrance, a still stronger im-

pression came to me in these words, heard by the inner ear, "*You have forgotten somebody—think once more.*" I turned mechanically and walked back for two or three minutes, both puzzled and cross, if the truth must be told. Then it flashed upon me that I *had* forgotten a third lady living close by, whom I had known for some years past but not at all intimately. She is a very pretty and charming woman, well placed socially, and I had always supposed one to be greatly envied, as an especially happy wife and mother. I have had no reason to alter my opinion so far as these domestic details are concerned.

Perhaps rather superficially, I had thought of her only as one of the charming people who add to the grace and delight of life but who have never had occasion to probe its deeper and more sorrowful paths. She is certainly the very last person I should have associated with any deep sorrow or anxiety.

At this point I should like to say that this lady has most kindly given me permission to relate the following experience,

upon my request that she would do so, if possible, as it may so greatly help others to realize the practical protection and guidance ever round them in times of difficulty and sorrow. None of the circumstances or localities have been altered. The names of Miss Lloyd and this lady, whom I will call Mrs. Mansfield, have alone been changed. I suggested changing the Westminster Cathedral episode but she considers this unnecessary.

To proceed with my story. There was some little delay in getting the elevator and the late hour made me once more anxious to get home as the repeated impression was again weakening and I murmured "*self-suggestion*," as I sat waiting in the hall. In fact I was trying to find the porter's wife to tell her I could not wait longer, when she appeared from the back premises and announced the arrival of Mrs. Mansfield's maid, who had come down to take me up, in the absence of the porter.

This decided the question and I was soon seated in Mrs. Mansfield's pretty flat, drinking a much-needed cup of tea.



She was as bright and genial as ever and begged me to stay on for a little after other visitors had departed.

There are weird stories connected with some of these flats and she asked me laughingly whether I felt anything peculiar in the atmosphere.

Now almost as soon as I had finished my tea, I had been conscious of a nervous headache coming on, which by the time she said this, had become very acute and most painful. A really bad headache is a very rare occurrence with me, I am thankful to say, and I do not have such a thing once in two or three years as a rule. It was becoming so painful on this occasion that I was obliged to tell her so quite frankly and take my leave as soon as the elevator could be procured. As I said good-bye she made another laughing remark, after expressing concern about my head. "Do find out if there is anything connected with the flat that is uncanny. Perhaps some murder has been committed just where you sat when your headache came on so suddenly!" As a matter of fact I had been sitting next to



her on the sofa ever since I had entered the flat. My violent headache still continued in spite of the open air and I was very thankful to find myself at home. I lay down on a Chesterfield couch and closed my eyes; but the pain was still so bad that at last in despair I went to the writing-table and asked if there were any explanation of the matter and any possible truth in Mrs. Mansfield's joke about the flat having been the scene of any past tragedy? The answer came at once and was certainly practical. "Wait till you have had your supper. We cannot say more at present—you are too much exhausted. We are very sorry to have caused you suffering but it was so hard to make you attend and understand. We could only do so by pressure on the brain itself and this caused the trouble, we suppose. We could not get through to you in any other way to-day and it is most important. Take our message later."

The moment I had taken even thus much, the pressure and tension in my head were greatly relieved. In fact although

tired, the *headache* had disappeared *before* I went down to supper; a point which I commend to the consideration of the candid inquirer. An hour later I came back, greatly refreshed by the food, and sat down to take the important message which had been intimated. This was most carefully worded so as to give me no slightest clue to the affairs of Mrs. Mansfield, but the opening sentence was a very curious one.

I said, "Now do tell me about the flat. *Was* there any murder committed there and did you wish to impress me about it as a test?"

The answer was, "*We know nothing about the previous history of the flat you mention; many tragic events may have happened on the site where it stands or in the rooms themselves. We have no concern and no knowledge about this.*"

"Then why did this terrible headache come on?" was my next question.

"*Because you were sitting next to a very unhappy woman and we wanted to help her through you and found it hard to impress you, as we are strange to you.*"

A message was then given, most carefully worded, as I have already said, and giving no sort of detail as to the causes of the misery to which they referred. In fact they said quite plainly, "*We do not wish to discuss her affairs with a comparative stranger, but we were drawn to you through your acquaintance with her and saw that you could be employed to give her incontestible proof of our loving help in this time of terrible strain and grief. We wish you to write to her at once and to tell her truthfully and in detail the whole history of this afternoon and just how you were led, step by step, to her door, apart from any special wish to call upon her to-day. We could not get the idea straight into your head at once as we have explained. It was a complicated affair but this is all the better except for your own physical suffering, because she will realize the various steps which were necessary. First came the suggestion of the cathedral service—next of your old friend in the neighborhood. When that failed we had great difficulty in keeping you from going home at once. We had still more difficulty in getting the name of our*

*charge through to you. In fact this was only achieved by a process of elimination. There were two mistaken self-suggestions to be dispersed before you realized the right person. Even then you were on the eve of giving it up, for we could not make the impression strong enough. This is why we were obliged to use an amount of pressure which, translated on to the physical plane, brought suffering to your head. Do not fear to send the message. You will hear of its truth and will not then regret your expedition."*

I have explained that Mrs. Mansfield was, and still is, a friendly acquaintance rather than an intimate friend, and it was anything but pleasant for me to receive such a commission.

At the worst she might think that I was trying to worm myself into her confidence. At the best, she would probably look upon it as an idle freak of my imagination.

So far as her personality was concerned, I could not have received a message apparently more wide of the mark; but I was certainly impressed by the straight-

forward and sensible way in which her guardian spirits had explained their action and the steps forced upon them through my own stupidity. They were polite enough to suggest a reason for this latter in the fact that they were working through a hitherto unknown channel.

It only remains to say that by return of post I received a most grateful and charming letter from Mrs. Mansfield. She said, "It is all *quite true*," and then went on to refer in very touching words to the fact of a great sorrow and testing-time in her life, adding that no doubt it was necessary discipline and expressing great thankfulness for the undeniable proof she had received in so strange a way of help and guidance during her conflict.

As Mrs. Mansfield will certainly see this record of my experience, I think my readers may be sure that my story is correct, and they will—I have no doubt—join with me in feeling grateful to her for her generous permission that this true incident should be related for the

encouragement of others when passing through deep waters of trial or temptation.

Surely such a case is just one of those where we *can* help our fellow-creatures through our own suffering, if we are capable of putting personal preferences in the background and our duty to our neighbor in the van.

The hosts of the Lord "encompass us always round about," but our eyes are generally holden that we do not see and our ears are deaf that we do not hear.

Surely if any one of us can catch a flash or hear a sound, however feebly, from that encamping army, the least we can do is to carry the glad news to our neighbors. It is open to them to receive or reject the testimony.

At the time of writing this chapter, I am reading a new book, dated 1907, by

NOTE.—It will be at once suggested as an "explanation" that I received a telepathic impression of Mrs. Mansfield's state of mind subconsciously whilst sitting by her side. But my reader has still to "explain" the various steps by which I was sent so unwillingly into the flat that afternoon. Subconscious telepathy from Mrs. Mansfield perhaps? That only makes the problem more complicated and the solution less probable.

David P. Abbott, entitled *Behind the Scenes with Mediums*. Such a book is undoubtedly a most useful "drag" upon overcredulity in investigators. We must however keep a perfectly level head in these questions and be on our guard also against *overcredulity in explanations*. Mr. Abbott has been remarkably unfortunate in never finding a single genuine medium during the whole of his investigation and therefore is very naturally prejudiced in favor of his own explanations as covering the whole ground. Where these explanations consist in "palming cards," substituting dummy papers for those containing questions and so forth, I bow as a layman to the dicta of an expert conjurer and trickster.

But when I find that this gentleman has never received a single "test" that could not have been easily obtained through a *City Directory* concealed below the platform or in the rear of the audience, then I feel I must get a good grip upon my credulity and not allow it to run away with my judgment.

A *City Directory* and an elaborate



“book of mediums” carefully kept and passed on secretly to each newcomer, may explain a great deal under the conditions of provincial American life and yet fail to explain other experiences which some of us have had under widely differing conditions. In my own remarkable experiences in materialization during my first visit to America it was not the appearance of my friends in very fair light which astonished me, abnormal as this may have been; it was their intimate knowledge of “trivial matters” *which they and they alone could have known, had they been the persons they professed to be.*

Now this point is scarcely ever noticed, certainly never emphasized in any “explanations” of materialization which I have read. We are always told how “the form” can be built up, thanks to expanding sticks and lazy tongs and pink silk masks and muslin and so forth, and personally I feel most thankful for all these useful hints and have always allowed for such possibilities. Again when various departed friends have made themselves known to me and spoken of matters



known only to themselves and me and yet matters of the most trifling *intrinsic* importance, I have always been on the alert to imagine collusion, where such experiences have been repeated in the house of some other medium. Before I had been told as a matter of *fact* that such records were kept and exchanged amongst mediums, even in such large cities as New York and Boston, this very obvious possibility had occurred to me. At the same time I was logical enough to realize that this did not and could not account for the *first experience*. How did *that* come about? When people at once suggested the employment of detectives from England to put these mediums *au courant* with *insignificant and trifling events in my life*, covering the scenes of my childhood, some 3,000 miles distant in space and some thirty years distant in time—well, such explanations seemed to me both ridiculous and insulting to my intelligence. We must always remember that from the *evidential* point of view, trifles are obviously of far greater value than the more marked events of a life. In

fact we may put it that metapsychic evidence increases in importance in direct inverse ratio to its "face value."

*These* are the facts which need "explaining," far more than the muslin and the masks; as to which latter most of us nowadays have few illusions.

In some of the very kindly and genial reviews of *Seen and Unseen* I was amused by the inference that some of the more obvious "explanations," telepathic and otherwise, had never entered my head. I think it may safely be taken for granted that any *intelligent* investigator of many years' standing, has either heard or read all the "explanations" that it has as yet entered into the heart of man to conceive. Also I think by this time it may be safely conceded that "sensitiveness to impressions" does not invariably imply mental degeneracy and is sometimes to be found amongst otherwise level-headed men and women. A tropical imagination will run wild whether you are a psychic or cannot even spell the word, far less realize its meaning. But it is also possible to possess the great blessing of

imagination and yet be competent to drive your own horses instead of being run away with by them. Some people have no horses to drive, in which case they must remain in the coach, comfortably housed and sheltered and padded but without any means of progress. The almost universal outside opinion at present is this: given a pair of horses and it follows, as the night the day, that they are running away with you and that you have no power to control them. What would a country squire say to such an argument against having a stable? Then why should it be used continually, and without protest, about all "sensitives," as they are called?

To be *aware* of an outside impression and to be *dominated* by it are two very different things—in many cases two contradictory things. It is the people who do not know whence their impressions come who are liable to be at the mercy of them. If a woman has proved herself sensible and level-headed in other matters, no one has a right to assume in an

arbitrary and dogmatic manner that she must of necessity lose these qualities the moment she affirms something which you do not understand. By doing so you make a *cul-de-sac* of that which ought to be one day a thoroughfare for all the world to walk in.

As an instance of the sort of fact that cannot be covered by any ingenious theory of the excitation of "old impressions left on the brain structure," or "telepathic transmission" (within sane limitations), or "imagination run wild," I would remind my readers of the well-known and well-attested case in the archives of the Society for Psychical Research.

I refer to the case of a percipient well known both to Professor Royce and to my friend Dr. Hodgson of Boston. This percipient, whilst on a business expedition to a distant city, suddenly saw the form of his dead sister, in such material fashion that he sprang forward with delight, calling her by name, whereupon she vanished instantly in truly ghostly fashion. But the vital point in the story

comes later. In relating the occurrence to his parents, on his return home, he mentioned particularly *a bright red line or scratch* which he had noticed upon his sister's face. I will finish the story in his own words.

“When I mentioned this, my mother rose trembling to her feet and nearly fainted away, and as soon as she sufficiently recovered her self-possession, with tears streaming down her face, she exclaimed that I had indeed seen my sister, *as no living mortal but herself was aware of the scratch*, which she had accidentally made whilst doing some little act of kindness after my sister's death. In proof, neither my father nor any of our family had detected it, and positively were unaware of the incident; *yet I saw the scratch as bright as if just made*. So strangely impressed was my mother, that even after she had retired to rest, she got up and dressed, came to me and told me *she knew* that I had seen my sister. A few weeks later my mother died.”

*This* is the sort of fact we want to have

explained to us, when the explainers have finished explaining the far more obvious and less interesting phenomena of "Masks and Faces!"

## CHAPTER V

### BIBLICAL INCIDENTS

A BOOK upon psychic subjects, however short and unpretentious, can scarcely ignore the very numerous references to these matters which are so freely scattered over the Bible, more especially, of course, in the New Testament.

This fact has been so fully and exhaustively treated by numerous earnest students who have given us more or less comprehensive statistics, that I do not propose to give more than a passing glance to the Biblical events, but I should like to speak at greater length upon the curious yet undeniable fact that, *as a rule*, no body of men deprecate more fiercely any attempt to parallel what happened in New Testament days with what is happening now, than orthodox Christians and orthodox clergymen. They appear to regard any such remarks as irreverent and blasphemous and unless we have a

very polemical turn of mind we shall certainly, as a matter of courtesy and politeness, refrain from emphasizing the fact that modern psychology is simply the outcome and continuity of the psychology to be met with from the first chapter of the Gospel according to St. Matthew to the last chapter of the Revelation of St. John the Divine.

But let us begin with the Old Testament. We have the well-known instance in the second book of the Kings, where Elisha the prophet wanted the King of Israel to avoid certain places where the enemy (the King of Syria) was about to pitch his tent. Again and again we are told the King of Israel profited by being thus put in possession of facts, spoken of only in the secrecy of the King of Syria's bedchamber.

Later, when the hostile king, hearing by whom he had been betrayed, sent a great host of horses and chariots to Dothan, to surround and capture the prophet, and the servant or minister of the latter became unduly alarmed, we all know what happened. Elisha prayed



earnestly that the eyes of the young man's spirit body might be opened so that he should be able to *see* that the mountain was full of horses and chariots of fire round about the prophet, and that the army of protection was stronger than the army of destruction.

Then we have Jacob's vision of angels ascending and descending the Ladder in his dream and his wrestling all night through with the mysterious angel at Peniel. We have the innumerable visions of the prophet Ezekiel where again and again he speaks of the dealings of "the spirit" with him.

To take an example at random. "Then the spirit took me up, and I heard behind the voice of a great rushing. . . . I heard also the noise of the wings of the living creatures that touched one another and the noise of the wheels over against them and a noise of a great rushing. So the spirit lifted me up and took me away and I went in bitterness, in the heat of my spirit. . . ." Again he tells us of an appearance, "as a fire and amber" that "put forth the *form* of an hand and took

him by a lock of his head and brought him in a vision to Jerusalem ;" to see the image of Jealousy at the gate of the altar, looking northward.

The whole book of Ezekiel is full of such visions and such experiences, involving clairvision, clairaudience and levitation.

These things happened in the time of Ezekiel and were perfectly legitimate. *They do not happen nowadays and they are illegitimate.* It is this double and simultaneous assertion which is so very puzzling. Yet I have heard devout and otherwise quite intelligent persons affirm again and again that psychic events do not take place and are exceedingly wrong and devilish ! I do not mean to say that the two propositions are always made in the same sentence ; but I can stake my reputation upon it, that I have heard them again and again, by the same person, within five or ten minutes.

To resume. We are told that Solomon received the pattern of the Temple, of the courts and the chambers, and the treasuries from his father ; and that David in turn

had received those plans from a spiritual source.

We have Joseph claiming for himself powers of divination, and Daniel receiving great gifts and much honor as a revealer of secrets.

Later we hear of the famous Feast of Belshazzar when the king saw the "*fingers of a man's hand*" materializing and writing the doom of his kingdom "*on the plaister of the wall of the palace.*"

It has always seemed to me, by the bye, that although Belshazzar was overcome by pride and ambition, and forgetful of the God "in whose hand his breath lay," he must have had some fine and generous instincts or the prophet of evil omen might have shared the usual fate of those who do not prophesy smooth things; whereas Daniel was clothed in scarlet with a chain of gold about his neck and made third ruler, by the king's orders, in the kingdom the latter was so soon to lose. That King Darius should exalt Daniel to be first president in his newly-acquired kingdom is quite natural. The prophecy of doom to Belshazzar was a

prophecy of power and dominion to him. Therefore I think Belshazzar proved himself in this instance the nobler man of the two. Also he took Daniel's prophecy on trust and ordered these honors for him *before* that prophecy was fulfilled. Whereas Darius allowed himself to be hoodwinked by a very clumsy device for the destruction of Daniel, and did not dare to deliver the prophet of the Lord from prison and cast his accusers into it, until the prophet had given very convincing ocular demonstration of his supernormal powers in claiming Divine protection.

The accounts of physical manifestations in the Bible are too numerous to need much emphasis. We have the two materializations just mentioned : of the form of a hand and the form of a finger in the case of Ezekiel ; and the materialized fingers of a man's hand in the palace of Belshazzar. We have the angel who released St. Peter from prison, the angels who rolled away the stone from the door of the Sepulchre, the "cloven tongues of fire" and the "rushing mighty wind"

which filled the house at Pentecost, and the shaking of the house on other occasions when the disciples were gathered together for prayer, and the Holy Spirit gave them "great power" to testify to the Resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ.

We have Balaam falling into a trance with his eyes open and then taking up his parable at the word of the Lord and blessing Israel instead of cursing the people at the instigation of their enemy Balak.

We have descriptions of the trances of Ezekiel in full detail. We hear of St. Peter falling into a trance on the housetop and receiving his grand lesson on the unity and value of life and of St. Paul falling into a trance in the Temple when he returned to Jerusalem after his famous vision in the neighborhood of Damascus. St. Paul speaks of his trances when he was caught up into the third heaven and heard "unspeakable words."

There are several cases of levitation in the Bible in addition to the one already mentioned with regard to Ezekiel. Philip was "caught away" by the spirit of the

Lord and found later at Azotus. Elijah was parted from Elisha and carried away in a chariot of fire; and other instances may be quoted from the same source.

All of us who have had any experience in psychical research must have come across instances of spirit lights. These are generally put down in every final fashion to "phosphorous and fraud," but many of us can see these spirit lights without any assistance from professional mediums. It is so in my own case. Some years ago I had an interesting experience, when I had gone with Admiral Usborne Moore to introduce him in a private house where a séance was to be held.

For many years I have given up phenomenal research, having satisfied myself of the residuum of truth in such manifestations, after making all due allowance for occasional and undeniable deception. I went therefore upon this occasion with a special object in view.

Soon after the sitting began, the whole side of the room where the cabinet was placed was lighted up by the most magnificent display of a soft and yet brilliant

violet light. It was so beautiful and so unmistakable that I could not resist whispering to the admiral, "What an exquisite light, is it not?" He made no answer and I concluded that he did not wish to be disturbed and was afraid of having his attention distracted, for a moment even, from the proceedings. It never occurred to me that *he did not see what I saw* and therefore could not understand the meaning of my question! For this was not a case of a small flashing light such as I often see and recognize as probably visible to myself alone. It was a broad expanse of the most beautiful violet light, illuminating the whole cabinet and that part of the room in general. Even now I find it difficult to believe that any one in the room could have failed to see such a brilliant and extensive coloring. Yet the fact remains that amongst some twenty sitters or more, the lady of the house and I were the only two people who had seen the light. The others probably thought we were romancing or suffering from hallucination—not phosphorous in this case!



The spirit lights mentioned in the Bible are too numerous for quotation. We can begin with Moses and the burning bush—or with the smoking furnace and the burning lamp seen by Abraham when the horror of great darkness fell upon him, on the same day that the Lord made a covenant with him.

We read also of the pillar of fire which guided the Israelites in the land of Egypt by night but became at the same time a cloud and darkness to their enemies, so that “the two camps came not near each other all night.”

Of course the transcendent example of shining spirit light was on the Mount of Transfiguration when our Lord was transfigured in the presence of St. Peter, St. James and St. John, and Moses and Elias appeared, talking with Him. We are told that a bright cloud overshadowed them all and the disciples became clairaudient—the ears of their spirit bodies being opened. This clairaudience had a terrifying effect upon the three disciples, who fell on their faces and were sore afraid. It was only when Jesus touched and re-



assured them that they had courage to open their eyes, when they found that the abnormal sight as well as sound had disappeared and "they saw no man, save Jesus only."

The Reverend Arthur Chambers, in his new book, *Problems of the Spiritual*, makes a very interesting and pertinent suggestion with regard to this story of the Transfiguration. He says, "May there not have been a significance in our Lord selecting only three of the Apostolic men to be the witnesses of the manifestation of departed Moses on the mountain of Transfiguration? May not St. Peter, St. James and St. John, *alone* of the twelve, have possessed the psychic powers which made the revelation possible to them, whilst not possible to others?" This seems a very legitimate question.

Our Lord appears to have worked always through the limitations of earth conditions, even when employing the advanced powers of humanity. He required faith as the most necessary of all conditions for the working of the higher forces, and quite frankly told His dis-

ciples that their results would and must be in proportion to their faith. This being the case, it is surely very conceivable that He should have chosen from the disciples for this great experience those who were physically and psychically best fitted to realize it? I am using the word physically, of course, in the sense of the *higher physics*. At present we only know the psychic temperament by its results and don't know enough of the properties of etheric matter to formulate any opinion as to how far this temperamental development is due to special mental, and how far to special "higher physical," conditions, in persons who are found to be mediumistic. Mr. Chambers suggests that one of the various reasons why our departed friends cannot always manifest themselves to us may be that we are so psychically undeveloped as to render such a course impossible. People are so apt to say, "If the dead can return as you say, why does not my husband or my father or my mother or my child come back and prove it to me?" And these questions are sometimes, from their

very crudity, difficult to answer without hurting the feelings of the questioner. *How* can they come back unless we make some sort of conditions for their reception? The very people who ask this question so glibly have probably never dreamed of setting apart even ten minutes in the day for silent meditation on their beloved ones, with the view of giving any reasonable condition for their return. I know that I am right in saying this for whenever I have suggested such a simple and obvious proceeding I have been thanked in a manner indicating that the thought of anything so practical has been presented to them for the first time.

Again some of those who have left us may not themselves be specially gifted in the way of psychic communication, which seems to present as many difficulties (and difficulties of much the same quality) on the other side of the Veil, as on our side. Then again some of our friends are enjoying a well-earned and much-needed rest and we have not the power, even had we the wish, to disturb

them. Others again may have been near us and *longing* to make themselves known under the new conditions, but month after month or year after year may have passed, during which we were ignorant, or indifferent or prejudiced and therefore blind and deaf and incapable. Then a little light gleams upon us and perhaps by that time our loved ones have passed on into higher spheres of existence, where they can no longer reach us through physical manifestation. We are not sufficiently spiritually developed perhaps to be able to follow them on any spiritual or even mental plane. Like Thomas we crave for physical proof *which we could not or would not accept when it was possible for us*. Later we feel much aggrieved that no sign comes to us, in the special way which we dictate, and we use this fact as an argument against the truth of any spirit intercourse. "If they *could* come they *would* come." "If my father and mother don't come to me, that proves that nobody's father and mother can come to their children. If other people think they

have had such experiences it must be purely subjective speculation and the result of disordered nerves and hallucination." This is the usual argument used and it is, at any rate, very final, if not entirely convincing.

A few theological "bogies" still remain to be "laid" before the more timid and the more conscientious inquirers can be encouraged to see for themselves if it be not possible to hold helpful and comforting communion with their departed friends.

The special circumstances under which the prohibitions of the Mosaic law were uttered to ancient Israel have again and again been made very clear.

Here was a race, at that time in a very low moral and social condition, very materialistic and elementary in most of its conceptions, demoralized by the influences of foreign captivity and given to idolatry, quite incapable therefore of any high spiritual ideals. Such a race would of necessity be specially susceptible of all low and undeveloped influences on the well-known principle of like attracting

like. The Israelites moreover were journeying through hostile lands and were forced to mark their progress by shedding the blood of their foes. These latter were falling in thousands before them, being hurried into the next sphere in a crude, elementary state, full of hatred and revenge toward their conquerors.

No wonder that a wise lawgiver, knowing something of occult science, should promulgate most stringent laws, with the most severe penalties against any opening of the doors between the two spheres of existence; *doors through which at that time and under those circumstances, only evil and malignant spirits were likely to throng.* The marvel would have been if these strong prohibitions had *not* been sent forth. Certainly such an omission would have said little for the wisdom and forethought of their Ruler.

*But to hurl this prohibition down all the centuries as binding upon all nations, at all times and under all possible circumstances, is absurd and unreasonable.*

In times of war and disturbance our ports must of necessity be closed against

all foreign ships. This might just as reasonably be made a final argument against all international intercourse during the whole existence of our planet. To suppose that God should allow devils a free pass but prohibit departed saints from using the open door between the spheres is a *reductio ad-absurdum*. Yet many people practically tell us that this is really the case. They *say* they believe in the communion of saints, but if any modern instance of any such communion takes place, even between an excarnate saint and an incarnate one, you are told at once that the excarnate saint must be an impostor and a devil and the incarnate one a credulous fool, if no worse.

Why are we told to "try the spirits"? Why are we given a test by which we may discriminate between the true and the false if *all* who come through that open door are alike wicked impostors? If the Mosaic law still holds good, why not be consistent with our belief and insist upon a big bonfire for our Bond Street clairvoyants and mediums?

"The moral sense would be against



any such drastic measures and would not permit them for a moment." Then cannot the moral *common sense* admit that we are not living in the fifteenth century nor in Salem, Massachusetts; but in a more enlightened and humane age, thank God! and that instead of collecting *fag-gots* and *burning* our mediums, we prefer to collect *facts* by investigating them?



## CHAPTER VI

### CLAIRVOYANCE

I SHOULD like to say something now upon the subject of clairvoyance. For me this question is always bound up with that wider question, "What is the spirit body?"

St. Paul has done his best to tell us something about this in the fifteenth chapter of the first epistle to the Corinthians, where he distinctly says that there *is* (not shall be) a spiritual as well as a natural body. He speaks of the resurrection of the dead—not the resurrection of the *flesh*. He tells us that it is the natural body which is sown (in the grave) in corruption; to be raised in incorruption when the spirit body has thrown off the mortal and enveloping coil; and he closes this part of his subject by the distinct assertion that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God nor can corruption inherit incorruption. This

seems sufficiently plain and sensible and in support of it we have the experiences of many seers who have been able to distinguish this ethereal or spirit body as it was withdrawn, shortly after death, from the physical body, before the burial of the latter.

The famous Doctor Gully of Malvern (the father of Lord Selby), had some extremely interesting drawings lithographed, which had been made by a young child he knew, and chosen out from a large quantity which were equally suggestive. Oddly enough, I was first introduced to these pictures when living with the mother of Sir Ray Lankester!

The story connected with them was quite a romance. The little artist's grandmother had been deeply and hopelessly loved by a young man in the days of her youth. She married some one else, but he remained faithful. In the course of time a daughter was born to her who became a great pet with the disconsolate lover who seems to have been accepted later as "*ami de la maison.*" Years passed and in due

course this daughter also married, and *she* had a daughter—the little girl who drew the pictures.

By this time the grandmother was dead and the faithful lover had become an old and infirm man, no longer able to visit the daughter of his old love and therefore quite unknown to her children. Meanwhile the little granddaughter had shown no marked talent for drawing. The old gentleman died when she was about twelve years old and the curious coincidence (?) lay in the fact that within three months of his death, this little girl, who had never personally known him, suddenly developed a taste and talent for drawing most weird and impressive pictures of the spirit life and the spirit body. These pictures were nothing very striking as regards the mere *drawing* which was about what might be expected from an intelligent child of twelve years old; but the *composition* was marvelously good, and the subjects chosen most remarkable under the circumstances. All those I saw were connected either with the

moment of death or with the experiences of life immediately after death. Some were adorned by curious and sometimes beautiful flowers and foliage, not quite like anything we see upon earth, but very reminiscent to me in later years of some of Mrs. Alaric Watt's exquisite spirit flower drawings; although in her case the execution was faultless and naturally far superior to that of the little girl. But the child's picture which remains most vividly in my memory is one where you see in the right-hand corner a bed, and on it a corpse of a man who has evidently just died. His weeping relations stand round the bed and innumerable fine lines are drawn out from the eyes, ears, nostrils and mouth of the corpse and rising in a misty cloud from the latter *form into a diaphanous second body over the dead man's head*, this second body being attached to the corpse on the bed below by a very fine cord or string passing from one to the other. In the left-hand corner of the picture is given in a cramped, childish hand its explanation.

The fine mist, drawn out from the physical body and gathering into the form of a second likeness of the man overhead, is the "spirit body" and it is attached to the physical body by an "umbilical cord." Needless to point out that the latter piece of information could scarcely be normal to a child of twelve years old. The writing went on to explain that this cord was sometimes intact for several days after physical death had taken place, and in such case the spirit man could not get away from his body and often attended his own funeral; more specially when the latter took place shortly after the decease. Doubtless some occult knowledge of this kind led to the old Egyptian practice of leaving provisions in the tombs of their dead—a sort of materialized recognition of this close tie between the natural and the spiritual bodies of the deceased.

"Psychics" are those persons who appear to be born with some special and abnormal capacity for functioning through the spirit body, to some slight and often intermittent extent. Probably all of us

have had some small indication of this capacity at some special crisis in life. We may see something abnormal for the first and only time in our lives; or some warning may be conveyed to us, through a mysterious voice which possibly we never hear again, or under some strain of emotion, joyous or sorrowful, we may be conscious for the moment of being *outside of ourselves* as it were; conscious of some avenue of knowledge hitherto closed to us; of some strength or courage which comes to us at a critical moment, apparently "from the blue." What mother is not capable of some heroic deed when the life of husband or child is at stake? For the moment she is "out of herself" very literally; outside of her own physical limitations, and whether it be a case of abnormal strength or abnormal perception which averts the danger, it is probably a fact that for those moments she has left the limitations of the physical body—her prison-house—and is functioning from the etheric or spirit body.

For most of us, these moments are few and far between; we are quickly put back

behind our bars and when any such experience is over, even the memory of it is apt to pass away and the normal reasserts its iron sway. But some few—an ever-increasing number—seem less heavily manacled by the physical senses. They can peep between the bars and even thrust their heads through now and then and have a few whiffs of the life-giving air outside. The bars of their cells seem somewhat wider apart than ours, but when they return to our stifling atmosphere and begin to tell us something from their more extended vision, we are not always very grateful, nor even very polite. We are apt to say they must be romancing (if not something less civil!) and that probably they are suffering from hysteria or some such form of degeneracy. It does not seem to strike us that we, with our absurdly limited power of sight and sound, may be the *degenerates*, and that our “fanciful friends” may be slowly emerging from that state!

If clairvoyance be seeing through the eyes of the etheric or spirit body and clairaudience be hearing through its ears,



then we have some reason to infer that telepathic impressions are in all probability conveyed through the etheric or spirit body *brain*.

It will be at once objected to this suggestion that *Thought* has always been a universal and not a special possession with the human race, so soon as *self-consciousness* is reached, and that thought is independent of space and also of time, so far as we know. Certainly the immense area of events sometimes realized by us in a dream, between the opening of a door and the entrance of the person who wakes us up, would seem to indicate the latter fact.

Granted; but how do we know that thought is not and has not always been our one universal working link between the two spheres of existence to which the two bodies—the natural body and the spiritual body—belong?

Thought lies beyond the five senses. We cannot see it, nor hear it, nor smell it, nor taste it, nor touch it. Yet thought has to work *through* the physical brain, as normal sight works *through* the phys-



ical eye. It is however less restricted than any other part of our earth consciousness. As that consciousness develops, so do our thoughts rise into the blue skies above us and pierce beyond them ; or descend into the lowest depths and try to wrest their secrets. From the earthly point of view, THOUGHT is already unfettered and unlimited—our closest touch with the Infinite. For most of us thought is an undisciplined, unconcentrated, unsystematized experience. None the less it transcends in scope and magnitude all other experiences. It comes into our consciousness through the highest point in our physical organization, the brain, working thence through the highest point in our etheric organization. That we should already be capable of functioning through the highest part of our etheric body and bringing it into physical manifestation (*whether consciously or not*) does not affect the question of functioning through other organs of the spirit body. We may be thankful that the general link between the spheres has been made at the highest and not at the lowest point ; that to all of

us has been given the Freedom of the City of Thought, whilst the "higher physical" organs of sight and hearing are the possession alone of the privileged few.

To return to the more practical side of telepathy. I have often wondered why it is so much more respectable to be *telepathic* than to be clairvoyant or clairaudient? There is no doubt about the fact. Not one of us is ashamed of pleading guilty to the soft impeachment of a "brain wave," whereas the very words "clairvoyance" and "clairaudience" conjure up visions of Bond Street waiting-rooms or even the lower depths of Ladbroke Grove Road and a room full of credulous clients longing to be pleasantly deceived. I think the reason is obvious. Science has begun with telepathy and the reason for this is also obvious. Thought is a universal possession and in telepathy we are only touching upon methods for conveying thought in an orderly fashion; whereas the sights and sounds experienced by "Sensitives" are *not* a universal possession, and even when veridical are

far less capable of immediate proof to the busy or superficial investigator.

If you sit in your study in Edinburgh and try to impress your friend in London (who is experimenting with you) to go to a particular shop in Bond Street and buy himself a tie of a certain color, you can hear well within twenty-four hours whether your telepathic experiment has been a success or not. But if you are clairvoyant and see a friend stepping into an omnibus or a hansom cab at a particular hour, and you write and ask him about it, it is ten to one that he cannot accurately answer your question, which is connected with a general and spontaneous action, not with a definite and special one, as in the former case. Or if you have a vision of a coffin and see a friend or an acquaintance inside of it, it may be weeks and months before the vision is verified. Perhaps you have not cared to mention such a gruesome experience, fearing it might get round to the person you have seen, and so a good bit of evidence is lost.

For these and many other reasons

which will easily suggest themselves, telepathy is at present the point of least resistance from the scientific outlook and therefore quite rightly the first object for the researches of scientists. In time we may now hope that they will pass on to other well-attested manifestations of the etheric body and that these in turn will receive scientific recognition and become respectable and legitimate subjects for conversation and research. I am afraid we must admit that both *clairvoyance* and *clairaudience* have sometimes been in "very bad company," as Mr. Frederic Myers used to say about "spirits," when reproached for evading the expression.

An honest and intelligent clairvoyant will always tell you that the difficulty is not in *seeing* but in *placing* what is seen. I will illustrate my meaning by one or two personal experiences. Some years ago I went to see a Mrs. Chester in Drayton Gardens, who was both honest and intelligent and who drew my attention to the difficulty I have mentioned. Curiously enough she gave me uncon-

sciously an illustration of it during that same visit.

She described accurately a man and a woman, the latter having very beautiful hair both in color and quantity, and then told me that I should soon be made the confidante of their love-affairs and be deeply interested in them. "They are very much in love with each other and they are going to tell you all about it, yes, almost immediately, and you will be intensely interested in it all." I could not place the statement at all and told her so. I knew no two people at the moment who were, or were likely to be, engaged to each other, corresponding with her very accurate description of features and coloring; nor did I know any two young people likely to confide their love-affairs to me just then, but Mrs. Chester persisted in what she saw and in the fact that I should hear about it almost immediately, certainly within a day or two.

This was on a Friday. The very next day I went to see *The Little Minister*, which made a great and most charming impression upon me, and when Cyril

Maude and Winifred Emery were enacting the two principal parts in their fascinating love scene, I recognized at once the personal descriptions given to me by Mrs. Chester and the extreme interest that I was to take in hearing their confidence—shared in this case by the whole theatre!

It sounds absurd when written down, but nothing is absurd which increases our knowledge or enlightens our ignorance.

Most certainly Mrs. Chester must have been seeing the two actors mentioned, when describing them to me so accurately, and must have sensed the love scene between them. I believe I had already made up my mind to go to this special theatre next day, but am not absolutely certain of this. I *am* absolutely certain that the idea was not present in my mind during my sitting, and that I did not make any reference to it. Here the facts were correct enough; but *the application of them was in error.*

I remember some years ago taking a niece of Archbishop Maclagan to a "Monday evening" in Southampton Row,

when Mr. John Burns gave such interesting and wise lectures on Phrenology and other subjects.

This young lady sat next to a coachman who combined clairvoyance with his driving business and they entered into conversation. I saw her hand him a small gold brooch but heard no more about it until we left the house. She then told me that he had given a most wonderful and accurate account not only of the giver of the brooch but also of his appearance and his character, which latter she said was by no means a very ordinary one. So far the man went by his true clairvoyant instinct or knowledge. But then unfortunately the "guesswork" began. As the lady was young and seemed very keen about the matter and anxious to hear all the particulars possible with regard to the character of the giver, the coachman naturally concluded he must be her *fiancé* and unfortunately for his own clairvoyance reputation, he boldly stated this as a fact. This is just where clairvoyance is so apt to break down. Seeing so much, it must



be an almost irresistible temptation to put the finishing touch which may be so telling—the coping-stone to the whole structure—but which we do not actually “see” in the picture presented to us. Yet clairvoyance can be extraordinarily accurate even in detail, as another story connected with Mrs. Chester and which came under my personal knowledge, will show.

I went to see some friends in London a few years ago on my return from abroad and was at once hailed by the following incident which had just happened to them. A friend of *theirs* (whom I did not know until later in the afternoon) had lost a very large and valuable ruby set in a ring with small diamonds surrounding it. The stone had been given to this lady’s grandfather by an Indian Rajah in the old Company’s days, and was quite an heirloom for its historical associations in addition to its great intrinsic value.

The lady lived near Elm Park Gardens and on a very wet and muddy morning had been into several shops in that neigh-



borhood on her way from morning service close by. She had taken off her gloves in church and had not replaced them, was holding up her skirts out of the rain and mud and carrying several small parcels as she stood at her own front door and rang the bell. As a matter of fact she and her mother were expecting a lady and gentleman to lunch, who will figure in the story later on. As she stood waiting at the door, muffled up in a waterproof and holding her dripping umbrella, she chanced to glance at her bare hand and to her horror saw that the enormous ruby had disappeared, leaving the diamond setting intact. She turned back instantly, after depositing her parcels with the maid, and retraced her steps to the two or three shops visited, but all in vain! She was forced to return home and to conceal her trouble and annoyance as best she could whilst entertaining her guests. The moment she could leave the house, she went round to my friends in Evelyn Gardens and told them of her sad loss and asked if one of them would consult a clairvoyant for her.

Her reason for not going herself to a clairvoyant was that she considered all such things wrong and therefore evidently preferred that her friends should take any moral risks that might attach to the possible recovery of her property. I think I had given Mrs. Chester's address to these ladies. Anyway they promised Miss X. (the owner of the ruby) that they would see what could be done in the matter. The stone was lost on a Thursday morning and on Friday they visited Mrs. Chester, having settled beforehand to bargain with her that she should not be paid unless the lost article was recovered *through her*. She agreed to these terms and took up the crystal. Nothing had been said about a ring, brooch, or any other piece of jewelry but merely the statement made that they came to consult her about some "lost property."

"You need not tell me anything more," she said quickly; "I can see what it is in the crystal. *It is a stone—a stone out of a ring.*" Then she turned round and said, "But you have not lost it, either

of you ; the person who lost it ought to have come about it herself. It is giving me a very poor chance." However this may have been, she seemed very quickly to get into Miss X.'s atmosphere and began describing a peculiar dining-room table with carved corners ; and this my friend at once recognized as the dining-room table belonging to Mrs. X. Then she said, " The stone has been picked up by an honest man but he does not know what to do with it. He is a workman and has a white cap and working clothes. At first he thought it was a bit of red glass because it is so large, but he has taken it home. I see his home and a narrow mantel-shelf there—he has put the stone in a little pill-box and placed it on the mantel-shelf. You must advertise the stone at once, so that he may read the advertisements and bring it back. Put the advertisements in shop-windows near to the place where it was lost—no use advertising in papers—he won't get a chance of reading."

Then Mrs. Chester went on to describe a scene and people acting in the scene, all

utterly unknown to my friends. "I see a church and there is a wedding going on. It is either a widower or a widow who is being married, because there is a little child at the wedding and she belongs to either the bride or the bridegroom. Now they are coming down the church and I can see their faces as they pass."

She then described both of the principal actors in the scene, neither of whom could be recognized by my friends. This, they confessed, disappointed them greatly, for on first hearing of the church and the wedding they were trying to work in some possible romance for their elderly friend who might some day meet a suitable widower!

As a curious fact, I may here mention that the wedding took place on the following Tuesday, but Miss X. was only present as a spectator. It is still more interesting to note that the bride and bridegroom were the two people who had lunched with Mrs. X. on the day the stone was lost and that the lady *was* a widow, with one little girl who was pres-

ent at the ceremony. Either the lady or gentleman was a relation of Miss X. and the scene of their wedding must have been read from *her* psychic atmosphere four days before it took place.

Finally Mrs. Chester returned to the question of the stone and made the very definite statement that it would be found and probably within five days. "I can see a big 5," she said, "so if it is not five days, it must indicate weeks or months but five days is more probable because I see so distinctly the scene when it is returned. There is an old lady sitting at that table I described and she has white hair and a white cap. There is a maid-servant in the room and also a working man. He has brought the pill-box I saw on the mantel-shelf. There is a lot of white wool and the stone in the middle. Some one has brought down the ring and he won't give up the stone until he sees if it fits or not."

This was all that passed and my friends went away, promising to have the advertisement printed at once and put in the shop-windows according to

Mrs. Chester's instructions; also to return and give her the fee, should the stone be found within any reasonable time. On the following *Tuesday* morning, before lunch time Miss X. returned home to find the dining-room door open and the exact scene going on which had been so accurately foretold by Mrs. Chester.

Her mother, the working man, and the maid were all present, the latter having been sent up-stairs to fetch the empty ring which Miss X. had taken off her finger five days before.

The man had picked up the stone just outside the church door in all the rain and mud, and supposed at first that it was a valueless bit of glass. He took it home and washed it and then put it in the pill-box as described, being struck by the beautiful coloring and determined to look out for any advertisements in the neighborhood of the church where he had found the stone. He had declined to give it up without seeing the ring for himself, and this bit of identification was actually going on when Miss X. walked

through the open door of the dining-room! The man received his five pounds with great delight and the X.'s were equally pleased to get back their precious heirloom. One last coincidence, to make the story quite complete.

Just as my friend had finished giving me all these details, the butler threw open the door and announced—Miss X.! So I made her acquaintance on the spot, and she not only showed me the magic ring, but allowed me to put it on my finger; endorsing every word of the story to which I had just been listening.



## CHAPTER VII

### CLAIRAUDIENCE

As a *clairvoyant* person sees through the eye of the spirit or etheric body, of which our physical body is the envelope, so a *clairaudient* person hears through the inner ears or to put it more simply, the ear of the etheric body. We must bear in mind that we possess already these two bodies, the etheric and the physical bodies, the one encasing the other as the atmospheric air represents the lower physical manifestation of the "higher physical" etheric element, which it encloses.

It is a wonderful and beautiful fact in science that Nature is coming into her etheric kingdom just in time to keep pace with our own discoveries as regards the existence and the higher powers of our etheric bodies, hitherto called our spirit bodies. In wireless telegraphy we

have the material symbol and equivalent of our mental telegraphy which we have christened telepathy. In the marvelous properties of the newly-discovered and magical radium have we not the material symbol and equivalent of those spiritual influences which surround and emanate from all beautiful natures, affecting so subtly and yet surely, all who come within their radius?

Miss Lilian Whiting has very truly said, "Just as rapidly as the power of the spiritual man develops and demands methods of life pertaining to the spiritual world, these methods are evolved. It is a part of the divine inheritance of humanity." And further on in the same article she remarks, "There is a natural body and there is a spiritual body." Here is the basis of the true explanation. This spiritual body is the real, the permanent being. We are all, here and now, spiritual beings in the spiritual body and in touch with spiritual forces. But this spiritual body is temporarily clothed with a physical covering, in order that the individual

may temporarily enter into relations with the physical world."

Miss Whiting's general meaning is quite clear, but as a matter of strict accuracy I should rather take exception to the sentence, "*This spiritual body is the real, the permanent being.*"

I have myself appropriated the name "spirit body" because St. Paul speaks of it in that way. As a matter of fact we are naturally inclined to use the word "spirit" about everything which transcends the material as we at present comprehend matter. Therefore we speak of the spirit body in somewhat vague but convenient fashion and most people know exactly what we mean. In the same way we speak of sunrise and nobody is really misled by an inaccurate and essentially untrue expression. In like manner we talk sometimes of having "seen a spirit" and certainly read about other people who have done so. As a matter of fact nobody has ever seen a spirit, nor can we have the least idea what is really comprehended in such a term. We "see spirits" in our flesh and blood friends quite as

truly and quite as dimly as in those who have put off the outer physical covering. But nobody is really deceived by the inaccurate expression. Every one understands that what we mean is that we have seen, or suppose we have seen, an individual who is clothed no longer by the physical but by the etheric body. Yet the etheric body is still *matter*, in a greater state of tenuity. Therefore we are not strictly justified in saying, "This spiritual body is *the real—the permanent being*," because we do not know how many still more attenuated forms of manifestation may exist beyond the etheric, and in due time form envelopes for the ever-advancing human entity.

Form changes infinitely, whilst essence remains stable—the same yesterday, today, and forever. But of that essence no one of us can form any adequate idea; we can know of it only within the limits of our present powers of apprehension.

To return to more practical matters. If you live for some weeks or months with a really sensible, level-headed

woman who happens to be clairaudient, it is curious how quickly one comes to look upon her power in this direction as quite normal and not in the least miraculous. It is only like extending the circle of your visiting acquaintances by going to live in London after vegetating in the country. I have had this experience with the lady who figures in *Seen and Unseen* as Mrs. Finch. She is one of the most capable women in mundane matters whom I know. There is nothing of the dreamy artistic, imaginative temperament about her. Music is the channel through which her artistic sympathies flow; but even here she is essentially *modern*, a thoroughgoing Wagnerite. When I add that she is a devoted wife and an admirable stepmother to two young girls, who need and receive all her care and attention and most of her time, I shall have said enough to show that any psychic power she possesses exists and persists in anything but favorable soil for dreamy abstractions of thought and feeling. Attending to the education of two growing girls and trotting about after them from morning to

night, leaves small space for encouraging the imagination!

Yet Mrs. Finch is one of the most normal clairaudients I know. She is always in touch with the next sphere in this way and has experience both grave and gay.

Being an essentially good, kind-hearted woman, she does a great deal of philanthropic work on the psychic as well as on the physical plane, and personally I have had occasion to be grateful to her more than once for help in time of need, which has come through her clairaudient faculty. It is as natural for her to speak to those in the next sphere as to any other embodied spirit; and instead of accepting their communications as final and omniscient wisdom, she sifts them as carefully as she would criticise the opinions of earth friends and uses her own judgment in the one case as in the other. Sometimes in the middle of a most practical conversation, she will look up for a moment with a smile and answer a remark which I have not heard. This sounds uncanny but no one living with her could think it so after

the first experience ; for there is not the smallest trace of hysteria or any want of balance about her. Most people would probably place her as a very kind and pleasant but rather prosaic person on the surface. This may be a rather exceptional case but I quote it because it is one with which I am very familiar and because it shows how natural and non-sensational intercourse between us and the next sphere of existence can be, and surely ought to be if it take place at all? It is when looked upon as something extraordinary and miraculous that weak-minded people become hypnotized by it to the neglect of all their earthly duties and avocations ; and then you are told how poor Mrs. Browne's household has been put completely out of joint and the whole family demoralized since " Mrs. Browne's took to spiritualism."

Mrs. Finch is most particular in not allowing vague messages from unknown sources, any more than she would allow a crowd of strangers to intrude upon her time and attention without proper introduction and observance of the ordinary



courtesies of life. In this way she remains mistress of the situation, is always ready to help those who really need help, but will not permit idle vagrants and gossips to make "*charpie*" of her life from the other side, any more than her incarnate friends would dare to do. That seems to me an ideal exercise of these etheric faculties and I think such cases should be studied as an object lesson. What a gulf lies between this and the disorderly incursions made through the etheric faculties of those poor people whose inner ears have been opened, without knowledge to guide them in dealing with evil or undesirable psychic acquaintances. This happens, to my certain knowledge, quite as frequently in the cases of those persons who are entirely ignorant of psychic matters, as in the case of so-called spiritualists. As a matter of fact the latter, knowing more, are better able to protect themselves. In any case they can apply more readily for assistance in the direction whence it can be given to them ; whereas there is nothing for it for the unfortunate man or woman who

has become clairaudient through some physical catastrophe or weakened vitality, but to consult a doctor and probably end in a lunatic asylum. The doctor, from his own limited experience, naturally pronounces the "voices" and "sentences" complained of by the patient, to be illusion and self-suggestion, arising from brain trouble; and quite honestly prescribes treatment which probably ends in making the unfortunate person actually insane as well as unfortunately clairaudient. I can speak with some authority here for I have known such cases in my own immediate circle of friends and acquaintances. I knew of two such cases happening almost simultaneously—both were men and *men entirely ignorant of anything connected with our present subject*. Both were active men and hard riders, who had led exceptionally healthy outdoor lives. They were also old friends and companions in by-gone days.

By a curious coincidence both these cases came under my immediate observation. The one man *was* confined in an

asylum. The greatest efforts were made to provide the same treatment for the second man. These efforts mercifully failed, although endorsed by medical advice.

The results have been as follows:— The first man, after eighteen months of misery and quite ineffectual “treatment,” was at length with great difficulty removed from the asylum through the unceasing efforts of his devoted mother, and spent the rest of his few remaining years in his own home but under supervision, rendered necessary by the circumstances of the case.

When an educated gentleman, accustomed to rule rather than to be ruled, is put under the irksome restraint of uneducated officials, who are no more perfect than any other human beings, what wonder that the latter should often grow weary and impatient, a little elated by having in their power and at their command a man so much their superior in rank and capacity? It is all so natural and so inevitable. In this particular case, when the patient gave

trouble or was slow in dressing, etc., his mother's and his wife's letters (his one consolation) were taken from him by these uneducated and ignorant attendants and he was told he should not have them again until he had obeyed orders.

All very natural, when tactless and ignorant attendants are in question. They were probably quite unintentionally cruel; but what treatment could be worse for a man accustomed to command other men and for a brain already in a state of irritation and discomfort?

Meanwhile the second man, whose wife was an exceptionally brave woman, had been kept out of an asylum, in spite of doctors and magistrates combined. A surgical blunder was found to have been the immediate cause of the disaster in this case. Low vitality and great physical irritation and suffering had resulted in the unfortunate and unprepared functioning of the etheric body and the "spirit ears" had been prematurely opened, with the result, apparently, that a crowd of undeveloped and undesirable psychic visitors had surged through, tormenting

and worrying the poor man, who had no knowledge of the possibility of such a phenomenon and therefore no knowledge of how to treat it. The doctors of course assured his wife that he was suffering from mental delusions. What else could they say?

I went down to stay with them during the worst of the experience. I shall never forget his evident relief when I accepted his stories of the "voices" as a matter of fact and not of fancy, and gave him a few simple suggestions for dealing with his unwelcome visitors. He said to me one day, "Nobody has ridiculed your ideas and laughed them to scorn more than I have done; *but I know now that they are true.*"

Well, I am thankful to say that this gentleman is still alive and able to enjoy the care and companionship of his wife and the comfort of his home. He will never be so strong physically as before, but his shrewd intelligence is restored to him and he has developed a love of reading, which in great measure makes up to him for the loss of his more active life.

These two cases show how disastrous may be the results of an abnormal and untimely development of the etheric, as distinguished from the atmospheric hearing.

St. Paul knew what he was talking about when he spoke of the "principalities and powers and rulers of darkness and spiritual wickedness in high places." Until we are normally and carefully prepared for the higher perceptive and auditory powers belonging to our etheric bodies, let us pray that we may be kept from any immature and ill-advised opening out of these etheric avenues of the spirit! Those who have been natural clairaudients all their lives may reasonably suppose that the development is in their cases timely and normal. But where it has been brought about suddenly and through some untoward physical catastrophe or condition, it is above all things essential that such cases should be dealt with by competent and experienced psychic healers before being relegated to the hands of orthodox medical doctors, however skilful and conscientious they may be.

Very few doctors have any developed knowledge of mental disease and mental treatment, except from a purely physical standpoint, and the few who may have this would not dare to treat a patient from any but duly prescribed and registered standards. It would be a sin against professional etiquette. Therefore in 999 cases out of 1,000, such a mental sufferer as we have described, has only the asylum before him. We hear much of the admirable treatment in asylums of mental trouble. Far be it from me to assert that this is not sometimes efficacious, but such cases are seldom permanent, for the sufficient reason that the usual root of the disease has never been treated *nor even discovered*. If we do not know what is the matter with a person, we may by chance prescribe the right remedy for him; but it must be a "hit or miss" sort of business at best.

"When in doubt about sudden illness give a dose of castor-oil" used to be the old nursery dictum, and this still obtains in the remote sheep stations of Australia and New Zealand. A very excellent piece



of advice for the usual physical ills, but unfortunately we have no such universal nostrum for mental troubles. The greatest drawback, as regards asylums, lies in the fact that their very existence is in direct opposition to all intelligent laws of mental treatment. I concede willingly that it is difficult to suggest what should replace them under present conditions of humanity. Yet we must also acknowledge that if any one requires, more urgently than another, to live amongst sane people and sane influences, it is the man or woman whose mental functions have become disordered and unhinged. We must also be aware from daily experience of the enormous effect upon us all of our own mental and spiritual surroundings.

Judged from either standpoint, our present-day asylums are certainly not ideal institutions.

## CHAPTER VIII

### REINCARNATION

SOME years ago, a man who had come into communication with his deceased father through my help, begged me to ask the latter "if there were any truth in reincarnation."

The answer was practically as follows: "I do wish that George would not ask me these very definite questions about that which, although a truth on a certain plane of existence, is not a vital nor essential truth." He went on to explain that he meant by this that reincarnation might be advisable and even necessary at certain stages in the soul's progression, or might be the outcome of the soul's affinities and predilections; or again the result of choice in the case of some noble soul voluntarily undertaking missionary work in this elementary and sorrowful world. All this he inferred was possible and probable but he declined to make

any definite and sweeping assertions as to reincarnation *per se*, as universally necessary for all souls at all stages of their education.

This shows that there is at least as much diversity of opinion on the other side with regard to this vexed question as on this side. We have the followers of Madame Blavatsky and Mrs. Besant and Mr. Sinnett, dogmatically asserting the absolute reign of this law, independent of race or individual. They are prepared to tell us in round numbers how many reincarnations are necessary for us and what intervals of time take place between them. On the other hand, we have had Dr. Wyld and a very large section of "spiritualists" equally fierce in their denunciation of the law which, with them, becomes a *theory*. They support their views by assuring us that all the communications *they* receive are from spirits who affirm most positively that there is not a grain of truth in the idea of reincarnation; that if earth's lessons have not been fully learned here, then something may be permitted occasionally

in the way of "looking over the other boy's lesson book," by overshadowing him as it were; but that it is not possible to enter the schoolroom once more and sit down again on the form. I can recall that Dr. Wyld had an elaborate *numerical* argument against any possibility of the truth of reincarnation and that it never convinced me in the smallest degree; but as I have forgotten the exact details, I will not risk misrepresenting him. Now I do not think that we have any proof in this, that communications purporting to come from beyond the Veil are merely *subjective*. It is more probable, I think, that these divergences of opinion truly represent in many cases divergence of opinion amongst the unseen friends, and that *we naturally attract toward ourselves those who are most in sympathy with us in our conceptions*. The objection will at once be made, "But surely they *must* know whether reincarnation is a truth or an error?" But why *must* they know? It remains an open question for many of us upon earth; and yet if there be lower spheres than the one we now know, and

any entity from such a sphere could communicate with us, he would receive a very definite affirmative from a great many thousands of this world's inhabitants. Yet he would not be receiving the *consensus* of opinion from this planet. It is a question that cannot certainly be absolutely settled upon this earth and the extreme divergence of opinion, as shown in automatic writing, suggests that it will be equally difficult to come to any unquestionable conclusions, even in the next sphere.

I do not look upon our personal "glimpses of reincarnation" as of much evidential value, although they are certainly curious at times and not always easy to account for. Of course I am not here referring to the mere general impression that we have shared a few popular historical characters amongst us, nor even to the fact that our personal impression may have been strengthened by the independent corroboration of half a dozen mediums, to whom we may not have breathed a word of our own pleasant suspicion. Once get any idea of that

kind firmly imbedded in your own mind and the ordinary clairvoyant will read it there, as easily as any other fact in your life. You may even have made a thought image in your astral atmosphere by constant brooding over the idea. No, the only sort of "coincidence" which is worth a moment's consideration in this respect is one which I can best illustrate by a small and apparently trivial occurrence in my own life.

I must begin by confessing that I have for many years had a vague, floating impression, that a closer tie than usual binds me to an ancestor of my own—to be quite honest, I have sometimes thought that I might be carrying on his life at the present moment. I have absolutely no ground for such an assumption except an extraordinary feeling of affinity with a man who died many years before my birth and of whom (through force of circumstances) nobody has ever spoken to me. So far the matter is very plain sailing—simply a case of imagination, strengthening as years have passed and fully accounting for a curious coin-

cidence in an experience I had once with a clairvoyant, whom I visited for the first time, when I was quite unknown in English psychic circles. Some letters written by this ancestor when a young and dashing Life Guardsman, more than a hundred years ago, had been unearthed in our solicitor's office and I had been allowed a sight of them. The morning they arrived I was visiting this clairvoyant and thought I would take one of the old-fashioned large squares of discolored ancient letter paper and see what came of it through psychometry. I did not intend that the woman should read the letter or even glance at the writing; but simply hold it in her hand and give me her impression. Naturally I expected that these would at once and obviously, refer to the age of the letter and to the opening years of the nineteenth century. Nothing of the kind occurred. The character of the writer was the only fact demonstrated or apparently observed by the psychometrist, who evidently realized that the writer was not alive but made no special point of this fact until she said



at the end of her character reading, "This was a crowning incarnation, *I think.*"

I noted the tentative last words, for hitherto she had spoken with great decision of the contradictions in character and the special spiritual difficulties of the man she was describing. I was not in a position either to affirm or deny the truth of what she said, for although nearly related to me, there had never been any one in my life to tell me about his character or spiritual views and surroundings. I had written a few lines myself and signed them and had brought them with me, wondering whether the clairvoyant, when touching them, might sense any relationship between me and the writer of the letter she held. So I took the latter away from her and substituting my own modern note-paper, with the writing only upon the inner sheet, I placed her hand upon this, sitting opposite to her all the time and said, "Here is quite a different person ; I wonder what you will say about *this* character ? "

The moment her fingers touched the

writing *on the inner side of the note-sheet*, she looked startled and said, "I have made a mistake, they tell me. I must ask for information about this—there is something wrong. I was speaking those last words from my own impressions; they tell me I was mistaken in what I said at the last." She closed her eyes and waited for a few moments in perfect stillness, still grasping the note-paper. Then she opened them again and said at once very quickly and impressively —

"I was mistaken in saying about the other spirit that it was a crowning incarnation. They tell me that spirit is incarnated again *here* in the writer of this note, and that this is a far more favorable incarnation."

"Far less favorable," I said, "so far as money and position are concerned."

"Bah! what do we think or care about that?" she answered, evidently under some control; "*it is far more favorable for spiritual development*—that is the only thing that really matters." She had already spoken in connection with the first letter, of the writer being greatly baulked

and hindered in his spiritual progress and possessing far more spiritual intuition than his surroundings gave him any chance to develop.

Now it will be naturally and quite reasonably suggested that this clairvoyant (Mrs. Howarth) read my own impression and was reproducing it in a slightly dramatic form. Granted—but I have something further to tell, which happened several years later and does not admit of the same interpretation, although I can myself easily suggest an alternative one, which, however, I do not personally believe to be the true one.

I had made the acquaintance in London of Mr. and Mrs. Poulteney Bigelow, he being a literary man and the son of the well-known American Minister, Mr. John Bigelow. When I was leaving town in July and Mrs. Poulteney Bigelow heard that I was going to stay with a favorite cousin in Worcestershire, she made me promise that we would come over and spend a long day with her at Broadway. Her husband had undertaken some literary work for Harper Brothers which

would entail three months on the Danube and Mr. Alfred Parsons was going with him to illustrate the letter-press. Meanwhile Mrs. Bigelow was to spend the summer at Broadway with her daughters, then quite young children.

Nowadays every one knows Broadway, but fifteen years ago it was less famous and I am ashamed to confess that I had never heard of the place, in spite of knowing Worcestershire from childhood. I had a dim impression at the time that it must be some American discovery in the county, and hence the name! I was quite surprised to find that my cousin knew there was such a place, although she had never been there. Anyway she told me it was very unget-at-able from our side of Worcester, but that if I wished to go very much, of course we could manage it. It was a long expedition, even with the kind loan of a private carriage for the last six miles or more. The owner of the carriage (with whom we had lunched) dropped us at one end of the green and went on to pay a visit in the place, so we made our way alone to Mrs.

Bigelow's house, which was situated in another part of the unknown village. I had had no special impression about Broadway, apart from the wish to see Mrs. Bigelow, and it was not until the carriage had left us behind that a curiously strong sense of familiarity with the village set in. The quaint old green and the pretty Tudor houses charmed us both but suggested no special associations to my cousin, nor, at first, to me. But as we wandered on, not at all sure of our bearings and turning corners here and there in our search for the right house, it seemed to me as though I knew the place just as well as if I had been born there and had come back to revisit the scenes of my childhood. Several times before rounding a corner I said quite naturally, "Oh, I know what there is here. It is only some farm buildings or an old barn (as the case might be). It is no use going on here. Let us turn back." But my cousin said very sensibly, "Nonsense, Emmie!—how *can* you know? Perhaps this is the very house we want." It was only when three or four times my remarks

had proved true that either she or I recognized there was anything odd about them. It all seemed so natural to me and so fanciful to her, even when she was forced to admit that it was "rather queer." There was not a shadow of doubt that I had never been in the place before, nor even heard of it, and she knew it no better than I did, *except by name*.

Later when Mrs. Bigelow had taken us both to tea with Mrs. Millet (the wife of the American artist), some joking remark was made about my curious "guesses" and there the matter ended.

Now I must mention that in my ancestor's old-fashioned letters, written in his youth and some of them from Worcester where he had been sent with a sergeant as a recruiting-officer in those past days, there had been several mentions of General Lygon who commanded the Second Life Guards at the time. I think he may have been Colonel Lygon then and he had doubtless taken a fancy to the handsome young officer under his command, who was asked in consequence to balls and other festivities. "*Just been staying*

*with my colonel for a few days*” was a fairly constant remark in his letters; but there was no mention of the special locality and as I knew this General Lygon had later become the first Lord Beauchamp, I naturally concluded that these visits were paid to Madresfield Court, the Beauchamp property in the neighborhood of Malvern.

About a week after our Broadway expedition, my cousin and I were having tea with a cousin of *hers*, who lived near and who had known me from my childhood.

“Well, Ellen! what have you and your cousin been doing this last week?—gadding about somewhere as usual, I suppose!” was this gentleman’s first remark to us. He led such a quiet, country squire life himself that the smallest variety was looked upon as “gadding about” in search of amusement.

“No, we have been very quiet,” she answered, smiling; “we have not been anywhere lately except to Broadway. Fancy my cousin knowing Worcester-shire all these years and never having heard of Broadway!”



“ Ah, well, it’s rather out of the way from here; how did you get there? That is where the Beauchamps lived, you know,” he added very casually. It flashed across me in a moment that this might be a clue to my sense of having known the place already.

“ The *Beauchamps*? ” I said with some incredulity. “ But their place is Madresfield Court, surely, not Broadway? ”

“ Oh, yes; they have lived at Madresfield for the last fifty years or so, but Broadway was the old family place originally,” he answered carelessly, and the conversation turned into other channels.

Now my alternative suggestion is the obvious one that a departed ancestor could easily impress upon any descendant with whom he was in special sympathy, the details of his own knowledge of a village which he must have known well and where he must have spent many happy days in his youth. Perhaps it was so. On the other hand I am equally at liberty to suppose—if I wish—that my Broadway experiences were a slight but

personally suggestive indication of the truth of my theory. In the absence of any possibility of definite proof, one supposition is as good as the other, because both transcend our normal experiences and are therefore equally repugnant to science—as it was!

It has always seemed to me that the question of reincarnation, although it can never be absolutely demonstrated here one way or the other, admits at least of common-sense analogy. If the whole aim and object of our present existence be the education of the individual and the development of character, with a dawning sense of cosmic unity then surely some such method as that offered by reincarnation is far from unreasonable? It has been constantly urged that reincarnation, if true, would still be demonstrated as useless, from the fact that its presumed object is baffled entirely by loss of memory. This has never appeared to me a very sensible objection. If all human beings came into the world as similar in character as some cynics say all babies are in features, there might be some

sense in the remark ; but we know this is not the case. After giving all due consideration to the question of environment, we are still confronted by enormous differences in temperament and quite gigantic differences in capacity. Everyone realizes this in the case of genius and we are daily being forced to realize it in a grade below genius—the grade of *abnormal capacity*. Whence comes this extraordinary facility for some special development of art? “Heredity,” we say glibly and think that disposes of the matter. But very often it is *not* heredity in any immediate sense ; and if you are reduced to “throwing back ” for several generations in search of your argument, you have watered down that argument very considerably. Again there may often be only one child in a large family with any special and abnormal talent in a particular direction. When heredity acts in such spasmodic and uncertain fashion, it does not cover the ground.

I asked Oliver Wendell Holmes once whether he thought “ children came into the world like blank sheets of paper ? ”

“No, certainly not—scribbled all over,” was his characteristic answer. The question is, *where was the scribbling done?* In this same earth school or in some other planetary academy? It does not really seem so very vital; and this brings us back to the opening sentences of this chapter.

Is it so very vital a matter whether a man received his education at Eton or Harrow or Rugby? Is not the question of *what he learned* more important than *where he learned?* Some men know more after leaving an obscure grammar-school than others after a long course of Eton, with every advantage that money can give.

In earth education, it is generally considered advisable to send a boy, for several terms at least, *to the same school*. Why should it be so unreasonable to imagine a similar method in the great universal scheme of education? To say that we lose permanently, all that we forget temporarily, is absurd. Moreover when we see children coming into the world with varied gifts of so definite a nature; varied

characters of so definite a kind ; varied temperaments of so unmistakable a trend ; *what right have we to affirm* (allowing the possible truth of reincarnation) *that the result of all former experiences has been lost, simply because we cannot remember whether we lived in Italy or Russia or England, nor the names of our fathers and mothers and friends and acquaintances.* It is a confusion of ideas which has led to this apparently clinching argument against rebirth on this planet. We have confused *circumstances* with *results*, and have assumed that to lose the memory of the former, is to lose our heritage in the latter.

I hold no brief for this or for any other unproved theory. I have only tried to set down as simply and fairly as I can, a few stray thoughts on the subject, illustrating them from my own experiences of life ; but wishing to keep clear of any sort of dogmatism, with regard to either the thoughts or the illustrations.

## CHAPTER IX

### AUTOMATIC WRITING

THE word "automatic" has always appeared to me rather unfortunate and even misleading as applied to writing received from the other side of Life.

To begin with, I believe there are as many differences in automatic writing as there are differences in brands of champagne. I should personally make three broad distinctions, beginning with *Intuitional*, then *Inspirational* and finally *Automatic* writing; dividing the last of the three into *conscious* and *unconscious automatic* messages.

I will now go on to explain just what I mean by these four divisions —

1. *Intuitional writing*. This, in my category, would be where pen or pencil is used, but where only the broad general idea is given from the Unseen, the whole detail being consciously added by using the medium's own brain capacity; with

its individuality of wording and expression. This kind of writing, although lowest in the scale from the automatic point of view, has its own very obvious advantages. It is more usually found in agents of some strength of character and power of intellect and such persons are the least likely to be victims of trifling or deceptive messages. Their own strong personality drives off the mere tramp or vagrant from the spirit spheres.

2. *Inspirational writing.* This is perhaps the most desirable of all, given a person of solid character and high aspirations, likely to attract inspiration of the noblest kind. We are too apt to forget that inspiration merely indicates a *method* and may be divine or infernal. In inspirational writing not only the main idea would be given, but also as much of the clothing of the idea in earth language as is compatible with an absence of entire control over the personality of the agent.

3. *Automatic writing in the exact sense of the term.* This would be where the personality of the scribe is completely overshadowed and in such cases the



process is generally slower, more deficient and necessarily more exhausting. It is probably more exhausting for the communicating intelligence also and perhaps not always more really accurate, except, as a matter of verbal expression.

When I am receiving a short message of any great importance (for a friend, I mean) in this laborious way, I always feel rather like poor Smike in his frenzied efforts to repeat "Who knocks so loud?" after his kindly teacher, Nicholas Nickleby.

4. This last class comprises automatic writing of the above description, but where the control is so absolute that the *message does not pass through the conscious physical brain at all*, but seems to take place as though some unseen hand guided the fingers of the recipient, without impressing the physical brain. There are naturally a host of "automatic writers" who should really be placed in Class II who place themselves in Class III. Class IV is a small one and few can place themselves there without conscious, though perhaps not entirely intentional, imposture.

In all my life I have only known *one* truly and absolutely unconscious automatic writer. It will suggest itself at once to the intelligent reader that Classes III and IV carry far more possibilities of danger than Classes I and II, and this for obvious reasons.

The more we remain masters of our own mental processes the better for us, unless we have exceptionally strong characters and feel that we can admit a *temporary* control for some really good and unselfish purpose. Otherwise we had much better leave the whole thing alone. For we may become slowly but surely hypnotized into conducting all our affairs on the lines laid down in our automatic script; our own powers of judgment and independent action will then atrophy by degrees and we shall become flabby *automata* in real earnest, unable to act in the smallest detail of daily life without receiving constant advice and assistance from the other side. As the higher and wiser spirits entirely decline to help people to their destruction in this sort of way, we can easily calculate the intrinsic

worth of the advice received in such cases!

This is "Spiritualism gone mad" and has wrecked many a happy home. So also has orthodox theology of the old type, as the head of any lunatic asylum will assure you.

And now to give a few personal details that may throw a little light upon the preceding statements.

For fully five years after I had discovered the *possibility* of getting automatic writing, my spirit friends most urgently and insistently begged me not to exercise the gift "*at present.*" "It will be dangerous for you. Leave it alone. Have nothing to do with it," and so forth. I did not care to persevere in the face of such decided and continual discouragement, and am thankful that I took their counsel, which subsequent events proved to have been loving and wise.

Later, when Mrs. Forbes told me she could communicate with her son (see *Seen and Unseen*) quite easily, I took it for granted that she meant in the way I

had first suggested to her, *i. e.*, by silent communion with him.

When she told me one day by letter of a rather frightening and exceedingly disagreeable experience she had had, which almost induced her to give up everything connected with the subject, I found that she had been using pencil and paper at the very beginning of her experiences.

Remembering the warnings and prohibitions I had received for so many years, it struck me that this might point to some of the dangers that had been indicated to me though not explained in detail.

Asking for some information on the subject from my own guides, I received a very reasonable and sensible answer.

They told me that Mrs. Forbes was probably not sufficiently developed at the time to make use of automatic writing without knowing how to protect herself from wandering influences.

They said that one danger arose from the *material* means of communication. It is obviously easier to control a pen than to control a thought, one being on the

material and the other on the higher mental plane; that this was the reason I had not been allowed to make use of my own gift for so many years and that it would be well for me to warn tyros in this research against having recourse to means so liable to abuse, until they were sufficiently versed in mental science to be on guard against undesirable intruders. Even where the original communicator is above suspicion, he may be ousted and replaced from time to time by other entities; especially when, as in the above case, the communicator was himself quite inexperienced and new to the work.

With reference to my saying I had only known *one* absolutely unconscious automatic writer, I may add a few details.

There is nothing more difficult to prove, apart from a question of *bona fides*, than whether a claim of entire ignorance of facts can be accepted. We all know the old and excellent arguments connected with the somewhat mythical maid-servant who talked Greek or Hebrew in her delirium and was considered a

miraculous person until some one discovered that she had once lived with an old clergyman (twenty or thirty years previously) who was wont to read Hebrew out loud in his study. The suggestion was that the sounds remained in the young girl's memory, although no sense attached itself to them and that these sounds were correctly reproduced as Hebrew words, when some physical disturbance had set the gramophone to work, as it were.

As a matter of fact I believe there is no satisfactory evidence of the truth of this generally quoted story; but it has been so often repeated to us to "explain" unaccountable "spirit" statements, that we are apt to think there *must* be some truth in it. Anyway, it illustrates very well a certain proposition.

"If we are told something we don't know normally, then we may be sure we did really know it, though we did not know that we knew it!" Granting this, we have only to assume that the medium picked it out of our submerged memory and reproduced it as a spirit communica-

tion. And the same arguments would cover a good many instances in automatic communications, where the writer is presumably ignorant of the facts given through him or her and professes to be entirely unconscious during the performance.

In the instance I am about to relate, however, I think there is a reasonable amount of evidence, from the very nature of the episode, that the automatic writer *was* unconscious of her written communications.

This writer was Miss Lizzie Maynard, the Australian girl mentioned in the George Eliot episode of my former book.

Lizzie Maynard lived at Melbourne. Hearing that I was about to return to Sydney, she expressed a strong wish that I should make the acquaintance in the latter city of a very charming friend of hers, a Mrs. Cockshott, the sister of the famous *Rolf Boldrewood*. I took an introduction to this lady, therefore. Now Miss Maynard, when speaking of her friend who had been left a widow, told me what happiness it had been to her to



be allowed to help Mrs. Cockshott by receiving communications from her deceased husband. In the innocence of my heart I made some remark as to the nature of these communications—whether they showed that the husband was happy or some such general question. Lizzie Maynard looked genuinely shocked and said reproachfully, “Oh, Miss Bates, surely you cannot suppose I would glance at a single word in the letter of a man to his wife?” I felt rather snubbed by this view of the case and answered rather feebly that I had supposed it would be impossible not to *know* what she wrote, though of course it would be a point of honor not to *repeat it* and to forget it as soon as possible. I apologized for my own indiscreet question but said truly it arose only from a kindly hope that the husband was quite happy in his new surroundings.

“But I *don't* know what is written,” Lizzie persisted earnestly. “I should hate to know a single word that is written from a husband to a wife. I could not agree to form the channel be-

tween them if my automatic writing were not quite unconscious."

I had accepted this statement at the time, but later, when talking to Mrs. Cockshott about Lizzie, scepticism had once more reasserted itself and I said —

"Do you really believe Lizzie Maynard is absolutely unconscious of what she writes? She gave me the impression of being a very conscientious and truthful girl, but do you think she *deceives herself* in the matter? Perhaps she is conscious of what is said at the moment of writing, but forgets it immediately and cultivates this short memory as a question of honor?"

"No," said Mrs. Cockshott, very decidedly. "I am sure Lizzie Maynard is not at any moment aware of what she writes, and I have the best of reasons for knowing this." Then she told me the following story —

"As you have heard, I used to live in Melbourne myself and only came to Sydney a few years ago. I had grown very fond of Lizzie, and looked upon her almost as a child of my own. She has a

most sweet and true nature, but she is rather inclined to think every one as good as she is herself and to be a little uncritical sometimes in making fresh acquaintances. There were some people whom she knew and was fond of in Melbourne whom I, with my wider knowledge of life, knew were not quite desirable as the friends of such a young and inexperienced girl. I had never said much to her on the subject, but when leaving Melbourne and when Lizzie expressed such great sorrow at losing me and 'wished she could think of anything to do that would please me,' I saw my chance and I said, 'Well, Lizzie, if you really wish to please me, do let me beg you to give up your acquaintance with the X family. They will do you no good. When I am away you will probably drop into still greater intimacy with them and I am sure it will not be good for you—you are very young and you are easily influenced by people you like. I wish you would make a promise before I go, that you will drop this acquaintanceship before it grows into a real friendship.'

Rather reluctantly Lizzie did give me the promise and I never gave another thought to the subject, knowing that she was absolutely reliable.

“I settled down in my Sydney house and several months passed, during which I was in the habit of receiving letters from my dear husband, through Lizzie’s instrumentality. The girl also wrote to me herself from time to time, telling me of all her doings and giving me all the chit-chat of a young girl’s life. All went well at first, but after a few months, the letter from my husband, forwarded by Lizzie, did not begin as he was wont to address me but in the following astonishing words which I have since realized did not come from my husband at all. *His communication began lower down on the paper.*

“The opening words were: ‘*False Friend! Do not trust her! She has broken her word to you. She has been to see the X family since you left. Tax her with it and she cannot deny it.*’

“Now this communication *in Lizzie’s own handwriting* was very distressing to

me. I could not in the least understand how it had come about and I was most reluctant to accept it as fact. At length I determined not to write to her on the subject but to write as usual and thank her for my husband's letter, making no comment upon the astonishing words which headed the page.

"In a few weeks I was going to Melbourne to stay with friends and knew I should have the opportunity of speaking quietly to Lizzie and finding out the truth.

"This came about shortly afterward. When I 'taxed' her with having broken her word to me, poor Lizzie was terribly upset. She made no attempt to deny the fact but burst into tears and said, 'I do think it is very, very unkind of people to have told you about it and to have tried to make mischief between us. I meant to tell you all about it the moment you came here and to explain how it happened. We were all down at Port Philip when a naval review was going on and I found myself absolutely side by side with the X family in the crowd of

spectators. My mother and sisters were with me, and they begged us so hard to have a cup of tea with them before we went home that I could not refuse without surprising my own family, and acting very unkindly all round. I was not in the house for a quarter of an hour and I have never been there except that once, since you left Melbourne. It was *cruel* to tell you about it when I was not there to explain,' and poor Lizzie's tears burst out afresh.

"I put my hand gently on her shoulder and said, 'My dear child, nobody has told me about it; nobody has been cruel *except yourself*. *You were my informant*.' Lizzie looked up in blank astonishment and it was not until I had shown her the statement *in her own handwriting* that she could really be convinced that no third person had interfered."

This was Mrs. Cockshott's evidence and I am bound to say I consider it strong, especially for any one who knew both the lady and the young girl. Others can, of course, spin elaborate theories of a subtly-concocted plan on the part of Lizzie for

securing the confidence of Mrs. Cockshott, and vindicating her own claims.

Such a thing would involve marvelous histrionic talent in this young and innocent girl, living a quiet, retired life with her mother and sisters and with no love of notoriety, nor chance of gaining it. Her mother, a greatly respected widow, came of a noted Scotch family, and her uncle was, at the time of my visit to the colonies, the owner of some of the most famous of the Scotch islands and was living on the family estates. This Scotch blood may have had something to do with Lizzie's exceptional psychic gift. She had never been to a séance and had never even seen a medium or professional clairvoyant in her life; so her powers were quite natural and quite spontaneous. From a child she had been accustomed to the open doors which are closed for most of us—mercifully, perhaps.

Lizzie Maynard's pure and innocent young life seemed to give her an immunity from any disturbing experiences, with the exception of the one instance given, which was probably intended as a



stern but necessary lesson. She only spoke to me of the naturalness of these experiences in her life. She had never known anything else and said it was her greatest happiness to be able now and then to help some friend by exercising her psychic power.

Sir Oliver Lodge, in a kind letter of congratulation to me about the success of *Seen and Unseen*, says in referring to my automatic script, "*I don't know how far you regard your writings as really apart from your own consciousness. I suppose in any case that the medium modifies and colors them?*" This is a very pertinent question and remark. I quite agree with Sir Oliver Lodge that the channel through which such writings come, does and must color and modify them to some extent; especially where the writings belong (as in my own case) to Classes I and II.

Class III is perpetually confused with Class II by the writers themselves. It requires a *very* level head and an extremely honest intelligence to "place" one's own performances accurately. So much passes as automatic writing that

really ought not to be "placed" at all, being merely the outcome of one's normal intelligence; but I do not think it is possible for writing to amount to no more than this without our being aware of the fact *if we are quite honest with ourselves*. Therefore we may discuss this as belonging to the domain of *conscious imposture*, of which we are not at present speaking. But when Sir Oliver Lodge in the same letter says, "*But on the other hand, the thoughts are not beyond your own range,*" he opens up a vast and very interesting question.

In the logic of most people, to say this is synonymous with saying, "*Therefore the thoughts emanate from your own subconscious self—if we are courteous enough to exclude the conscious self!*"

Now I am sure my distinguished correspondent is far too logical to have meant this. He points out possibilities, without dogmatizing about them, and leaves it at that.

I see very strongly the force of his remark and recognize that in intuitional or inspirational writing it is impossible to

convince any one but one's self and quite sufficiently hard to do *that*.

I would point out, however, that thoughts may not be *beyond* your range and yet need not *of necessity* on that account be fathered upon your subconscious self—that long-suffering parent of such a multitudinous and heterogeneous offspring!

It is of course quite legitimate and right that a scientific man should *assume* this source, in the absence of other proof, and where philosophical and not evidential utterances are on the *tapis*. I do not see why we should expect, or wish, to change his position.

Only you yourself—the supposed writer—can have that sense of *identity* which makes you feel you are writing from dictation and not reproducing your own ideas; *you cannot convey this bit of the personal equation to anybody else*.

It is a different matter when intuitional writing has to do with the practical affairs of other people. Here my writing has again and again been justified by events, often months later; which events

make it difficult to imagine any other source for the message than the one suggested.

Admiral Usborne Moore has quoted in general outline one or two such cases which came to him through me, in his lectures upon psychic subjects.

These are the only satisfactory proofs of the *source* of one's automatic script and it is through these experiences, in addition to the sense of identity (the personal presence of the communicator), which lead me to trust also the less evidential cases, where philosophical or literary questions alone are involved. If you have been inspired by an outside intelligence in the one case, why not also in the other?

To draw a hard and fast line that all questions relating to family affairs, etc., come "out of the blue," but that all questions connected with theology or philosophy are *of necessity* the outcome of your extremely deceitful or hopelessly hoodwinked subconscious self, seems to me to be both arbitrary and absurd.

Each case must be weighed upon its

own merits and we cannot expect to convey to any other person the fact of spirit recognition, which practically satisfies us that our friends are with us.

And here we must for the present be content to leave this much vexed and not altogether satisfactory subject. It may lead to much self-deception and is probably a greater factor in the production of "swelled head" than anything else upon earth!

It is obviously easy to get opinions from the Unseen to back up all our pet prejudices, if the latter are only strong enough and we ourselves not sufficiently on guard. To be looked upon as a Delphic oracle, ready to reel out cryptic sentences of warning and advice, or to act as Mistress of the Ceremonies between this sphere and the next, is surely enough to turn any but the strongest head amongst us?

A famous music-master in the days of my girlhood, once gave me his best advice for "practicing." "*The rule for practicing is always to play slowly, and the*

*rule for playing slowly is always to play slower.*" I think we may say the same as regards metapsychics.

Let us learn to go slowly, for if we do not go *piano* we shall certainly not go *sano*; and the psychic researcher who does not pray for a *level* head will inevitably discover some day that he has developed a "*swelled*" one!

## CHAPTER X

### MATERIALIZATION

IN one sense, all "physical phenomena" (to use a technical expression) may be classed as *materialization*, but we are speaking here more specially of the materialization of the physical form. I prefer this latter word, to the *human* form, simply because the most complete and satisfactory materializations which I have seen could not be described as identical with the human form, either in appearance, or to the touch—a still more stringent test.

My own experiences with regard to materialization have been already fully described in a book written many years ago and entitled *A Year in the Great Republic*, and also in my recent work *Seen and Unseen*. It is unnecessary to go over the well-trodden ground once more. I should like, however, to mention (for the point needs emphasis) that I have never



found these materialized figures *identical* with human beings in outward appearance, but I have found them identical with those they profess to be in *personality*, in knowledge of small details of affectionate intercourse in past years and in just those little touches of *actuality* so difficult to convey to one's readers but so convincing to one's self.

This is just what makes the theory of personation by evil spirits of one's friends and relations from the other side so difficult to entertain. A designing spirit would naturally find out and learn up facts, even small and telling ones, in prosecution of his deceitful purpose, but he would find it hard to recall the special perfume used upon earth and which you have yourself forgotten until the scent is once more wafted to you ; the little tricks of manner and expression which were as much a part of your friend as his features. On the assumption of fraud, all these are far more difficult to reproduce than the actual physical features, yet these are just what *have* been reproduced in my own experience, when the general " make up "

of the manifesting entity was sketchy and unfinished. Therefore when I read long descriptions of silk masks and "lazy tongs," and concealed muslin and so forth, or when these are produced *as a full and satisfactory explanation of all I have seen and heard in this way*, I feel that the real essence of the experiences is being evaded. This demonstrates the presence of strong prejudice and the entire absence of the scientific instinct. Science, if it takes up these subjects at all, must reckon with *all* the facts, not pick and choose just those which pink silk and fluffy muslin can cover and then say, "We have explained the facts which admit of the most obvious explanation and therefore it is unnecessary to go into the other facts which you affirm. No doubt the rest was all imagination." This is a very loose and unsatisfactory way of working, if the work is worth doing at all. Far be it from me to say that it is only scientists who sin in this manner. On the contrary I should say it is the almost universal method of approaching inconvenient experiences. "Give the

easiest explanation that occurs to you of the more strictly material part of the phenomena and leave severely alone the more difficult and less objective parts of the narrative. Don't dispute the forms, because you can explain them away; but fight tooth and nail against the little touches of *actuality* which you cannot explain and put these all down to imagination." Then why not put the forms also down to imagination? That would at least be logical. All this is very human but it is not *science*. That is all I wish to point out. A chemist doesn't fall in love with certain chemical bodies and analyze them and explain their component parts and ignore and refuse to analyze other bodies because he does not like them and therefore prefers to ignore their existence!

It is just these apparently trivial but really enormously important details of actuality which need understanding and explaining. We know so much nowadays about trap-doors and concealed assistants and silk muslin hoisted on long sticks and phosphorus floating about in secret

places. Let us get on a step further and confront honestly the undoubted facts which are more difficult to explain or to explain away.

Some years ago, when Eusapia Palladino was "found out cheating" (as I was told on my arrival near Cambridge at the time) I accepted the statement as final. There was absolutely no appeal from it and I knew Mr. and Mrs. Frederick Myers as being above suspicion and certainly competent to decide the question, having had Eusapia for many weeks in their house, under close observation.

The first thing which shook my incredulity was the elaborate account given by Mr. Maskelyne (who had been invited to go down to Cambridge with his son and investigate the fraud) in the *Daily Chronicle*. I think that was the paper. He explained so exhaustively how the physical movement of furniture, etc., *might* have been effected and therefore no doubt *was* effected. The explanation involved swallowing the curious suggestion that a woman could lean back in her chair and seize another chair in her

teeth whilst held on either side; could convey this chair in her teeth over her own head and place it on the floor about three feet in front of her, without detection by the intelligent observers who were holding her hands meanwhile. This was rather a "large order" upon my common sense, but my faith in her unfaith was very robust and I managed to swallow even this, *pro tem*. But the limit of my credulity was reached when I found that Mr. Maskelyne left severely alone the small facts which were so significant and yet did not admit of an explanation, even upon these heroic lines. Here my powers of belief broke down and I realized that I was reading the letter of a special pleader, starting with foregone conclusions and not of a scientific mind, with keen powers of observation and anxious only for truth.

Therefore when Eusapia was rehabilitated later through the more scientific methods of the French *savants* and Mr. Myers himself had generously assisted at these investigations and reconsidered his previous verdict, I was not at all sur-

prised. It must ever remain to the credit of the scientific instinct of Sir Oliver Lodge that he steadfastly refused to throw up his cap on the side of the crowd, and remained firm in his conviction that mere trickery could not and did not cover the ground of his personal researches in the Palladino case.

Apart from professional materializing mediums I had the great interest and privilege of meeting Mrs. Corner (the Florrie Cook of old) in the flat of a private friend, who kindly gave me this chance and allowed me to invite two personal friends—Mr. and Mrs. Harrington—to share it. We were a very small party on that occasion, only seven or eight persons in all. As I am rather a punctual person I arrived in very good time and found my hostess (whom I have known and respected for several years past) entirely alone in her tiny flat. A few minutes later Mrs. Corner arrived and Miss Macartney went to the front door of the flat and let her in. She came into the drawing-room almost immediately with her hostess; a small

woman in a tight-fitting black dress; and we all three chatted together for a time. A little behind time my two friends arrived and then two friends of Miss Macartney and we sat down for the séance. There was not even room for a cabinet, so a piece of cretonne chintz had been stretched across an angle of the little drawing-room with a running tape secured by a nail to either wall. A less elaborate preparation could scarcely have been made and the chintz could not have been hung more than five feet from the ground, for I looked over it quite easily before taking my seat, and there were only some cushions placed on the floor for Mrs. Corner when she went into trance. In a very short time Mrs. Corner's guide "Marie" appeared at the opening of the curtains, a tall woman dressed in white whom little Mrs. Corner and her small, fragile hostess could certainly not have brought into the room concealed beneath their skirts, whilst I was talking to them both for a good twenty minutes before the rest of our friends arrived and this in full light!



The moment Marie's white figure appeared at the opening of the chintz curtains, my friend, Mrs. Harrington, eagerly stretched forward from her chair—(the room was so small that we were quite close to the angle already described)—and attempted to shake hands with the materialized figure. This was sternly resented by the latter, a Frenchwoman, who spoke excellent and rather voluble French.

“Non! Non! Je ne veux pas que tu fasses comme ça. Je ne te connais pas. Je ne t'ai pas demandé,” etc., etc.

She seemed very much put out by this breach of the *convenances*, which amused Mrs. Harrington and me very much. We should doubtless have thought the incident very “suspicious” if Marie had not almost instantly dispersed such an idea by putting her hand out to me and begging me to come nearer to her. I stood up at once and clasped both her hands which she placed in mine without any hesitation, saying a few sentences of kindly welcome, thus showing that she did not object to contact in itself, but

liked to exercise choice in making the acquaintance of her sitters. Surely a not unreasonable prejudice? Marie talked very freely and with none of the physical difficulty so often to be observed with these mysterious visitors.

Miss Macartney accounted for this by the fact that she was thoroughly accustomed to her earth visits and not in the position of those friends of the sitters who only come at long intervals and have had little practice in speaking through the temporary embodiment.

Some one asked her about her earth life and I have never forgotten the pathetic answer. "I don't want to tell you about it," she said gently. "I don't want to recall it. I was not very happy and I was not very good." This was all said in excellent French. I think we all regretted that the question had been asked and had stirred such sad memories. I cannot recall the exact words, but she certainly gave us to understand that her present work was a sort of expiation for the past. Perhaps she had been the cause of leading her fellow-creatures

astray in the old earth days and was now allowed to make restitution by helping those sunk in the world of matter, to a more spiritual realization of life, by demonstrating a further life to be lived when this one has ceased. That such demonstration should come in the most material and the least spiritual way is only what might be expected under the circumstances.

Marie told us however that her work of expiation was nearly accomplished, that she would shortly be withdrawn to less material spheres and that her present medium would also soon leave the world. "What do you mean by *soon*?" said Mr. Harrington. "Within about a year," she answered, "but nobody must speak to her about it." Of course we made the desired promise. As a matter of fact Mrs. Corner did pass away within the year. Doubtless Marie saw the event as imminent, but such prophecies are frequently falsified. More than ten years ago a similar prophecy was made in my hearing with regard to Mr. Charlton Speer and I am happy to say this has not

been verified although it came from an accredited source. So we are bound in such things to take the "misses" as well as the "hits," and in my experience the misses "have it" as regards accuracy in time prophecies. Many things, apparently impossible at the time, come to pass truly enough, but very seldom at the date indicated. It is far better to face and acknowledge this fact and try to see what is indicated by it, than to attempt to stretch facts to fit prophecies.

To finish my sketch of the Corner evening I may mention a small incident which interested me greatly. During Marie's visit we heard a thud on the floor, behind the chintz, and Miss Macartney said at once, "Oh, I'm afraid Mrs. Corner's head must have fallen off the cushion." She stepped at once between the curtains, *leaving them open for the moment*. There was quite enough light to see Miss Macartney bending over the prostrate form of Mrs. Corner who lay on the floor with her head to the right as we faced her. The cushions *had* slipped and were carefully readjusted by

our hostess. *At the same moment I saw the tall figure of Marie to the left facing us and looking down with anxiety upon her medium.*

It was all over in a few moments, but it was a most interesting experience and one I could not have had, if Miss Macartney's eagerness to replace the pillows under Mrs. Corner's head had not resulted in leaving the curtains open for the time being. In the interest of non-psychics I may mention that although none of us *know* the actual conditions of materialization, the suggestion is that as infinite particles of matter are known to be floating about in our atmosphere (witness the dust revealed by sunbeams, etc.), these can be extracted and added to the emanations from the medium and other sitters and worked up through some process at present unknown to us, into a temporary covering for the etheric body of the communicating intelligence, who thus comes within the cognizance of the normal five senses of the physical body, as at present constituted. There must certainly be some special and peculiar quality in the

individuality of the medium which appears to be essential to the process, for all mediums are not *materializing* mediums. The process as indicated on these broad and vague lines is no more essentially unscientific than the chemical process through which a charge of electricity can be put through a solution and result in a deposit at the bottom of the glass.

*Given the solution.* The atmosphere including emanations from medium and sitters.

*The charge of electricity.* The process through which the infinite particles can be collected and condensed round the etheric body.

*The deposit.* The materialization of the latter.

Nowadays such a theory can scarcely be called illegitimate or very fanciful. Science has had to accept theories quite as wonderful as necessary working hypotheses.

We are told that the process of materialization is far from being an easy one on either side of the Veil and that it has to be taught and practiced like any other

art. We are also told that those who appear to us require much assistance from friends better versed in the necessary conditions. It is to be regretted that we cannot, as a rule, receive more definite particulars as to these latter. The difficulty may lie, partly at least, in our inability to grasp conditions with which we are not personally familiar. This requires imagination and unfortunately there is a prejudice against exercising this divine gift, even to gain knowledge. Imagination is too generally considered synonymous with inaccuracy and want of judgment. Yet the big things of the world would never have come to pass had not some scientists at least, been endowed with this heaven-born capacity. Their imagination pointed out a possible road, where others saw only a *cul de sac*, and their calm judgment and critical faculty were used as legs for walking in it—not merely as irons for the manufacture of drags.

Materialization is one of the various ways in which our "dead" may return to us. I have great sympathy with those



who say they would rather never see their beloved ones again than see them under these circumstances, in a séance room. Probably most of us feel this and with good reason. But I think there is often a failure to recognize that one man's poison may be literally another man's meat. I do not think it is a very desirable or edifying process to be always haunting the materializing séance room. It may easily degenerate into a sort of psychic dram-drinking, but this form of phenomena is not to be despised in its legitimate place, as affording proof of the continuity of existence to many people who demand the most *material* proofs obtainable, and can be approached in no other way. It makes me sometimes very impatient when I hear so many people say, "I don't like the idea of materializing séances. They would never convince *me*. They are so vulgar and such silly, stupid jokes are often made by the so-called spirits. I should hate to see *my* husband or father or mother in a crowd of vulgar curiosity-seekers," and so forth. And then they proceed to condemn the whole

subject wholesale and to declare that this particular form of phenomena ought not to be countenanced at all.

Sometimes I feel inclined to say, " My dear, good creatures ! Does it ever suggest itself to you that *you* and *your* likes and dislikes and ideas and prejudices are not the only existences in the world ? Personally *I* don't like materializations. Neither do I like tripe and onions, which I look upon as a rather vulgar and undesirable food. But if I were upon a desert island and a well-cooked dish of tripe and onions floated toward me I should accept it gladly, as a sign that friendly, if not entirely refined, neighbors might be near me in my desolation. So many people are on a desert island as regards the future. If we ourselves are upon the mainland, all the more reason we should sympathize with those less fortunately placed ! Why grudge them the ray of light, no matter through what window it may chance to come ? "

Before closing this chapter I should like to make a short but earnest plea on a subject already dealt with in so efficient

a way by Mrs. Charles Finch of the *Psychic Annals*, the subject of the investigation of fraud, specially in materializing circles and in the case of mediums *who have at other times proved themselves efficient and able to produce phenomena without any resort to normal assistance.*

It seems almost impossible to induce anybody to take up this subject from a scientific and unprejudiced point of view. The very mention of it is enough to make most people foam at the mouth. You are accused of wishing to condone fraud, to extenuate the sin and whitewash the sinner and so forth and so on. It is a case of "Strike but hear" and that is just what nobody will do. "*Punish the cheat but, as a matter of science, investigate the conditions under which the cheating took place.*" Of course I am not referring to the cases of hardened and well-known impostors whose whole stock-in-trade is a bag of conjuring tricks. But there are numerous cases where mediums of known probity, under ordinary circumstances, who have given test after test under conditions perfectly satisfactory to the most

critical investigator, have yet been found cheating in the most unmistakable manner, after years of honest work. Now these are cases which I maintain should be carefully investigated, not with a view of minimizing facts but of trying to see whether some interesting scientific knowledge of the best instruments to use and the best way of protecting these instruments, may not merge. I do not wish to go further in a book of this kind. I would only suggest that our instruments in this scientific research *are our mediums*, and that we are all lamentably ignorant as to the use and abuse of these instruments. Unfortunately our professional investigators are the most ignorant of all as a rule. Most of them have obviously cultivated only one of the many facts of that wonderful and as yet mythical stone—truly the *philosopher's stone* which makes the ideal investigator. Our professional investigators are, as a rule, mere detectives, excellent where a crime has really been committed but inclined to find a thief in every household, as unerringly as a great specialist is apt to de-

tect his speciality in every human body. Even to mention a calm investigation of certain acts of premeditated fraud is enough to make these psychic detectives show you the door and decline to hear another word of such pernicious nonsense. They feel that the world's eye is upon them. They have won approbation through their drastic methods and intend to keep it by the same means. It is quite natural—but again *it is not science*. True science investigates every mud heap, if the smallest chance of the least little bit of a fact emerging from the bottom of the mud can possibly exist. She does not pick up her skirts and pass by, saying to the admiring public, "See how I hate all this dirt and mud! How repugnant it is to me! Just notice how clean my feet are! I would not pass within a yard of that horrible mud and refuse!" The scientist does not do this, but the professional investigator is very apt to do it. This is why he is not the *ideal* investigator.

Those of us who have any *personal*, as well as practical, experience of psychic

laws know only too well what the force of hypnotic suggestion may be. I have heard distinguished doctors and scientists who use hypnosis for remedial purposes, declare enthusiastically that it cannot possibly tamper with the moral character of the patient. Possibly not when used from the highest motives and in their own individual case; but once open the door and good as well as bad can enter in here as elsewhere. Add to this fact the enormous amount of unconscious hypnotism that is going on around us every day and every hour of the day, hypnotism that may be as unconscious on the part of the agent as it is with the unfortunate victim. Add to this again the innumerable cases where the influence is consciously used and used for a bad purpose. How many men and women can trace their ruin, physical or spiritual or both, to bad companions; to some one who lured them on and whose influence they were not strong enough to resist; by degrees the silken threads of attraction and infatuation became iron chains of destiny, What has this been, all along

the ages, but hypnotism *pur et simple*? Some people seem to think that a certain process only began when a modern name had been found for it! In the face of these known facts, how absurd to say that hypnotic suggestion cannot interfere with the moral instinct of the one who receives the suggestion! In one sense no doubt the doctor is right. What he means is this: He gives a suggestion for health to the patient and it is acted upon. He takes a paper-knife in his hand and tells the patient to stab him or some one else in the room and this suggestion is not acted upon. Then the doctor reads a paper upon the curative properties of hypnotic suggestion and boldly asserts that he is in a position to state from personal experiment that hypnotic suggestion *cannot tamper with moral instincts*. He forgets that he is probably more or less a stranger to his patient and may exercise no special magnetic attraction over the latter. He forgets also that when he puts the ivory paper-cutter into the patient's hands he does not *wish* the latter to kill anybody—it is merely a



*verbal* suggestion of murder—not a suggestion that comes from his own heart and will, but exactly the contrary. It is the very crudest experiment and a most misleading one.

We all need to be on our guard against hypnotic influences and I think most people are wise if they refuse physical cures that can only be obtained at the risk of leaving open doors, through which less scrupulous operators may enter.

Now postulate the presence of this magnetic attraction and influence, exercised by discarnate entities from a less limited sphere than our own. Allow for the moment that such entities have a strong wish to discredit their victims and thus delay a movement which threatens to throw light upon their deed of darkness, and we have here the exact conditions that *may be present* when a medium—who has given evidence of true psychic gifts again and again—is caught out in some clumsy trick. It will be objected to this, “Yes, that may be specious enough where a sudden and spontaneous bit of trickery is in question, such as some of Eusapia

Palladino's movements, for example, but how about *premeditated frauds*, where secret recesses are found in armchairs or silk muslin is hidden in a musical box?" Remember that I am referring only to those mediums who have given indisputable proof of capacity to produce genuine phenomena in past years. In such cases I do not see that even musical boxes or dummy armchairs make the hypothesis *impossible*. My own personal experience has been that there are practically no bounds to the powers of evil suggestion acting upon a sensitive brain. *I know this to be true*. It is no theory. These suggestions naturally work upon the plane of each person's individual circumstances. Many of us are quite unconscious of the real source of our thought suggestions. That is worst of all, because these can only be effectually routed through prayer and exercise of strong will power. If I were an over-sensitized medium, obliged to exercise my powers for a living, giving sittings for materialization two or three times a week; with waning genuine power and enfeebled

brain and intellect (thanks to constant and promiscuous control) I can imagine it quite possible that a stronger vitality might obsess and even completely rule out my own moral sense and subjugate my common sense as well.

For nobody whose common sense was intact would leave an incriminating arm-chair stuffed with "stage properties" in the house of a rival medium for a fortnight! I do not think it is necessary to postulate the influence of discarnate entities in such a case. It might be the uprush of the medium's *lower ego*, where the normal *ego* had submitted to deteriorating conditions—or again it might very possibly be the mental suggestion from some one in the flesh—perhaps even a rival operator in these fields of investigation. I suggested the discarnate entities first merely because I have received unquestionable proof that they have tried again and again to put stumbling-blocks in my own path whenever it has led in the direction of any attempt to help my fellow-creatures. They leave me blissfully and peacefully undisturbed and un-

hampered when I am only occupied in personal enjoyment or success.

I am not trying to whitewash anybody. I am speaking solely in the interests of science. I believe that what we most need just now in this research is a *knowledge of conditions*. This is the point where we are most ignorant. And I see that in a sane, unprejudiced investigation of possible causes of unaccountable fraud where a previous good record has been observed, lies one of our best clues—hitherto neglected and ignored—but which may yet prove of inestimable value in leading us through the maze.

Far away the *best* conditions for scientific investigation of the materialization problem would be to discard professional mediumship altogether and form a circle of known and trusted friends. The process would probably be a long one and would need much patience, perseverance, and, above all, *self-sacrifice*, even after the particular quality of mediumship involved might have been obtained.

Science has demanded stern sacrifices in the past—health and even life itself—

and she has never asked in vain. Therefore there need be no difficulty here as regards a little sacrifice of time and inclination. With the "lay" world it is another matter, and doubtless we find here the reason for the absence of any strenuous private investigations of the most startling and sensational of all psychic phenomena.

I can best illustrate this point by a personal reminiscence —

A few years ago, an old friend of mine—a well-known consulting civil engineer—made me a very "sporting" offer. He said to me, "You seem to believe in the possibility of these so-called materializations. *I* believe that the whole show is unmitigated humbug. *But* if you can succeed in convincing me that the facts are genuine, I will promise, on my side, to read a paper on the subject at the next General Meeting of Civil Engineers." I closed with this magnificent offer on the spot and proceeded to discuss preliminaries.

"Of course you would not accept anything happening in the house of a professional medium?"

“Certainly not—nor in my own house, if one of those scoundrels were present,” was the uncompromising reply.

“Just so; you are quite right; the only satisfactory plan is to find your own circle and submit to a fairly long investigation. Probably no results would be obtained for two or three months, amongst absolute novices, and it would not be wise to sit more than once a week as there is considerable drain on the vitality.”

He assented cheerfully to all this, with a suspicious gleam of merriment when I referred to the supposed loss of vitality involved by the experiments. Then came the real *crux* of the matter. Quite innocently I reminded him that a little physical training would be expedient and even necessary, under the circumstances.

“Of course you must train a bit if you hope to qualify as a materializing medium—not much meat at first and none at all for the last few weeks. Plasmon and grape nuts and quaker oats are very nutritious, I am told.” His face fell, but he nodded assent nevertheless; “and of course you must give up stimulants for

the time being entirely—oh, yes! and I forgot tobacco—that is *most* obstructive—you cannot possibly get any results if you drink whiskies and sodas and smoke cigars or even cigarettes. Meat and alcohol and tobacco smoke are quite prohibitive if you are hoping to develop a private circle.”

This was the final straw! “Good heavens!” he exclaimed in very unaffected astonishment, “you don’t expect me to go in for all that? of course that is quite impossible.”

So he cried off the bargain and went away surprised, if not “sorrowful.” Anyway I heard no more of that paper which might have been read—by a convinced sceptic—before the General Meeting of Civil Engineers.



## CHAPTER XI

### HOW THE DEAD DEPART

THE previous chapters of this book have had to do—more or less directly—with the return of the dead. It may be interesting to my readers if I may make a few notes here upon circumstances connected with the *departure* of some whom I have known.

Three years ago I was spending a month of convalescence in a pleasant hotel on the South Coast. I had heard of this hotel for some years past and its greatest recommendation for comfort was the fact that a certain distinguished officer and his wife had made it their home for nine years. A friend of mine was in the house at the time and she introduced me to this lady and gentleman. I liked them both extremely and found many points of contact with the wife, who had much knowledge and experience of psychic matters. I never

discussed these subjects with her kindly and courteous husband but understood from her that he was in no way inimical to them. The year after my visit there I was grieved to hear of the general's death. He was such a modest man that it was only after reading the long obituary notices of his distinguished military services in *The Times* and elsewhere, that I realized what a gallant soul had been hidden under that very quiet, unassuming personality.

Some months later I met his widow once more in London; and she then gave me the following curious details about the passing away of her husband. He had been ailing for some time but had not kept his bed for very long. A professional nurse had been engaged and the lady (whom I will call Mrs. Burdett) was always in attendance upon her husband when the former was "off duty" for a time. Upon one of these occasions and *before* the last change had taken place, Mrs. Grove (the nurse) had left the room and Mrs. Burdett took up her position on a rather uncomfortable chair at

the foot of the general's bed. He *appeared* to be suffering a great deal and she thought to herself rather bitterly, "Surely this suffering might be spared him," when at that very moment she heard with the "inner ear" a voice that said, "*Go and sit on that other chair. It will be more comfortable for you.*" She obeyed almost instinctively and seated herself in an armchair, farther from the bed but within sight of the patient, who seemed now to be breathing very heavily. The voice by her side then said, as if in answer to her thought, "*I am not there. I am here, close to you.*"

"Where are you?" she answered calmly. "*Close to your right knee. I have withdrawn from the body; what you are watching is only the withdrawal of the cosmic life.*" At that moment Mrs. Grove entered the room and quietly bent over her patient.

"There has been a great change here," she said in a low voice before Mrs. Burdett had spoken to her. Yet the general "lived" (in ordinary parlance) for some sixteen or eighteen hours after this

remarkable experience ; but he never regained consciousness. I have always felt convinced that in the case of the passing away of a favorite brother of mine in September, 1906, something of the same kind took place.

Through very trying circumstances I was unable to be with him at the time and was living through a most miserable and anxious experience at Eastbourne, with a kind friend who was also a friend of my brother.

I had received news of a change for the worse which made my continued absence unnecessary, but the final telegram came on Sunday morning and there was no means of reaching my brother that day.

By leaving Eastbourne at 6 A. M. the next morning I could have arrived about noon, but a special family circumstance made it advisable for his sake that I should not arrive until the afternoon. I was racked with anxiety, not knowing what to do for the best, and went to bed in this state, feeling that if a strong impulse came upon me to get up at five o'clock and catch this early train I had

better act upon it and take any possible consequences. Had I known then, what proved to be the case, that my brother had been already unconscious when the telegram was sent, my course would have been plain, and I should have taken the early train.

For many nights I had had no natural sleep and had been forced to take drugs, and my kind friend was in the habit of coming in every morning to my bedside at 7 A. M. by which time I was always awake.

That night I never closed my eyes in spite of the sedative. All night long the questions raced through my distraught brain: "Shall I take the early train? or shall I go later?"

There was no definite answer possible, for either action would involve risks. But as the dawn broke (it was about 5 A. M.), instead of my being more and more tormented by anxiety a profound sense of calm and peace fell upon me—I had no desire to get up and catch the train in feverish haste.

The feeling of peace came quite sud-

denly and through no conscious exercise of thought. "It is all right now. I have to lie still and keep quiet. It is all quite right." I did not fall asleep at all but for the next two hours I felt this curious sense of peace and satisfaction, although nothing was altered since I came to bed.

When my friend arrived at 7 or 7:30 A. M. to see whether I had left the hotel or not, she found me quite calm and composed, to her great surprise and satisfaction.

I told her at once of my sudden feeling of repose and certainty that "all was quite right," and she said at once, "Then you think he has rallied again and taken a turn for the better?" "I don't know about that," I said. "I had no impression about a rally but I feel it is all right and that I am to stay quiet until I hear more."

For the first time that morning I did not receive the usual telegram. By 1 P. M., just before I should have started, a telegram from a relative was handed to me, saying that my brother had passed away *at noon*, but not telling me that he

was unconscious. This naturally distressed me very much for a few hours ; but ample details reached me from his trusted valet saying that he had been unconscious, as a matter of fact, since the previous Saturday evening.

In the face of Mrs. Burdett's experience, I can explain the mystery of my sudden sense of calm and peace at 5 A. M., on the Monday morning. I feel sure that the *spirit* of my brother left the physical body at that hour and that he was with me, although I was too miserable to receive a more definite impression of his presence just then. I have no doubt at all that the cosmic life alone remained until noon and that its departure alone was watched during the last half hour by the relative who sent me the telegram.

Only the other day I received an interesting and consoling incident from one of my brother's oldest friends. This lady—Mrs. Packard—has had a tragic story connected with the mutiny. She went out to India as a young bride six months before the fatal 10th of May, 1857. Her



husband was the adjutant of my brother's regiment and was mortally wounded on the same occasion when my brother was severely wounded at Jullundar, *i. e.*, 7th June, 1857. Adjutant Packard lingered from the fatal Sunday until the following Friday. On the intervening Tuesday morning his poor little son was born, and lived a few hours. The heroic wife had been placed the day previously in a bed by the side of her dying husband and the little dead child lay in her arms all Tuesday afternoon and evening, until they took it from her to be buried. On the Tuesday there had appeared to be a short rally in the adjutant's condition, but these symptoms soon disappeared. The devoted wife and now desolate mother managed to drag herself on to his bed and lay there with her arms round him, whispering comfort and consolation, until he also was removed from her and the poor young creature was left alone in a strange land and in the midst of unspeakable horrors. My brother was a mere boy at the time, but he always recalled her goodness to him after her husband's death and before

she was taken away to the hills by kindly fellow sufferers. In later years they met again and there was naturally a strong bond of friendship between them, based upon these old tragic associations. Their friendship, however, had no common ground in theological beliefs. Mrs. Packard has remained faithful to the evangelical traditions to which she was born and in which both her father and husband had been educated; whilst my brother had emerged from these into a wider conception of spiritual evolution. Unfortunately *he* felt bound to try and impart something of his own enlarged vision to her; whereas she naturally felt equally bound to be loyal to the convictions of a lifetime.

Although this could not break the bond between them, it occasioned a little friction sometimes. This always appeared to me regrettable and unnecessary. I pointed out to my brother that as Mrs. Packard so obviously possessed the mysterious but unmistakable gift of true spirituality, why not meet upon that ground and leave all minor details (even

those that appeared to her essentials) alone? But he always continued to send her progressive books and to insist upon his broader view of things, and I believe really felt it a conscientious duty to do so.

She was one of the first people to whom I wrote within three or four days of my brother's death.

This last summer I fulfilled a long promise by spending a week in her house, which I think was a great pleasure and satisfaction to us both. It was not until the very morning of my departure that she told me, to my infinite astonishment, that she had *seen my brother*, about a fortnight after he passed away. I think nothing but a strong sense of duty would have induced her to tell me about it even then; for I know she disapproves of anything to do with spiritualistic research.

She said: "It happened about ten days after I had received your letter with the sad news. It was in the morning, about eight o'clock; I was fully awake and had been so for some time but had not yet left my bed. Suddenly, just opposite the bed and rather high up in the room, al-

most as if he were in a boat (though I did not see any boat), I saw your brother quite distinctly but looking so wonderfully young, younger than I had ever seen him in life." I reminded her that he *had* been very young (barely eighteen) when she had first known him and that perhaps he looked as he did then. "No," she persisted quietly, "*younger than that—more like a young boy of sixteen; but it was undeniably your brother. It was impossible to mistake him for a moment. He had on a sort of striped gray shirt and his face was turned toward me.*"

"Did he look unhappy?" I said.

"Oh, dear no—not at all; but he had such a curious smile on his face as he looked at me—a sort of triumphant look and a little bit satirical; as if he were saying, 'You see I was right after all!'"

Now I am quite sure that an ordinary woman of strong theological bias would not have repeated those last sentences. Only a very sweet, as well as a very truthful, woman would have told me the story so accurately.

I felt all along that she only spoke at

all from a strong sense of duty and would not abate the least particle from the exact facts, even although they seemed to tell against her own religious convictions.

It was the more curious because the time exactly tallied with the date when he impressed me with regard to business details and when my letter to that effect crossed one from Mrs. Finch, saying that she had just heard from her guide, that my brother had come to consciousness in his new surroundings. It is these "cross-references" which are so valuable in this research.

I will end this chapter by an account of another abnormal visitation connected with the departure of the dead, a story which I heard from the principal actor in it, a few days before his sudden and quite unexpected departure.

I was paying a short visit to Oxford after a long absence, when my friends who lived in a certain terrace there, told me of some strange happenings in a house on the same terrace. This house was rented by a very well-known clergyman of markedly artistic and literary instincts

and also of a very highly developed spiritual nature. I had seen this gentleman several times after my return from a first visit to America and we had discussed many of the interesting people I had met there whom he also had known when holding a prominent official position on the Continent. He was a very scholarly Christian and a strong Universalist and had known and been on intimate terms with many of the most noted men on both sides of the Atlantic.

I was now told of a most curious event in the household. My visit to Oxford was paid in February and I heard that a favorite maid in the Baillie household had had three visions of angels since the preceding November and that nobody could account for the strange fact, as the girl was quite truthful and normal and not given to romancing. My friend added, "I told Mr. and Mrs. Baillie you were coming to me and they want me to take you in there to tea to-morrow (Sunday) so you can hear all about it."

We went next day and found a very sceptical old Indian gentleman staying



with the Baillies, so I could not speak to Mr. Baillie at the moment; but asked his wife quietly if she objected to telling me the details of the case. "Not at all," she said readily, "but would you not like to see Mary herself and hear her account?" The pretty young housemaid was summoned and I was invited to question her. She felt naturally a little embarrassed before strangers, and Mr. Baillie noticing this, very sensibly came to the rescue. Having read for the Bar before taking orders, he was the better able to put questions which would elicit information without suggesting it.

"Come, Mary, tell these ladies and gentlemen just what you have told your mistress and me. What you were doing the night you first saw 'the angels'? What time was it?"

"If you please, sir, it was just after eleven o'clock at night. I had been brushing mistress's hair and was going down the flight of stairs outside her room when I looked up and saw three figures, all in white, just outside your door, sir, and I was so frightened, I fell down at



the top of the stairs and mistress came out and found me and gave me some sal volatile."

"You say you *saw* three figures in white. How could you see them? Had you a candle in your hand?"

"No, sir."

"Then how could you see them? There would be no light in the passage at that hour and the lamp-post is too much to the right of us to throw any reflection upon the rooms or passages in this house."

The girl looked puzzled; then she said quietly, "I don't know, sir, how it was I saw them. But I did see them quite distinctly; they seemed to bring their own light and I saw some beautiful flashing stones like diamonds on one of them." (This curiously bears out what I saw in America once. It was explained to me as a mark of rank in the spirit-world, much to the mystification and contempt of one of my reviewers.—E. K. B.)

The cross-examination meanwhile continued. "Well, Mary, tell us what you were talking about with your mistress

before you saw this vision. Had she been reading the Bible to you or speaking about spirits or angels?"

"No, sir," answered the truthful Mary. "Mistress had been talking about your shirts, sir—she said they were not sufficiently starched and that I must speak to the laundress next morning."

This very mundane and matter-of-fact answer made us all smile a little.

"Well, Mary, when did you see them again?"

"About a month later, sir. They were standing by your door again, but I was not so much frightened that time," she added conscientiously.

"Well, and the third time?" Mr. Baillie continued.

"That was a few days ago, sir."

"And were they in the same part of the passage as before?"

"Yes, sir—just the same place—close to the door of your room."

"Well, you can go now, Mary," he said kindly, and the girl turned round to leave the room.

As she passed my chair, I said to her

casually, "Do you think you will ever see them again?"

"Oh, I hope so, ma'am!" she answered. "They looked beautiful the last time, and I was not a bit frightened," she added brightly.

As we left the house I said to my friend, "Did you notice that Mary said the angels were always close to Mr. Baillie's room?"

"Yes, I did," she answered; "but I don't think Mrs. Baillie noticed it. I am very glad of that. It might have made her nervous."

Two days later I returned to London and in the middle of the week had a note from my Oxford friend in which she said —

"I met Mr. Baillie in the street just now. He is very anxious to have an interview with you *alone* next time you come here. He says he fully believes in all the American experiences you have told him since you returned from America, but he thinks they were all FIENDS. He is going to stay with his brother at Cheltenham on Saturday next

for a week or two; but hopes to see you later if you are down here."

This letter reached me on Wednesday or Thursday. On the Saturday Mr. Baillie traveled to Cheltenham as arranged, to pay the visit to his brother, was taken suddenly ill and became unconscious. His wife was telegraphed for immediately and arrived on Sunday morning but he did not recover consciousness and passed away in the evening, exactly within one week of the day when he was cross-examining his maid-servant about her three visions!

Doubtless the "angels" were in the house during those three months preceding his decease, preparing him, perhaps unconsciously, for his journey to the unseen shores.

Probably he lived so much already in those spheres that it was easy for them to draw nearer than ever to him at this crisis in his life. Yet it was not *his* spiritual vision, but the etheric eyes of the little maid that really "*saw*" the spirit messengers so close to his room.

A year or two after Mr. Baillie's tran-

sition, his wife told me of a beautiful dream she had had the previous night in which she had seen and spoken to her husband.

“I was sitting in a lovely garden in my dream,” she said, “and as I admired the exquisite flowers and wondered where I could be, dearest Arthur (her husband) came toward me and took my hand, saying, ‘Come, dear, and let us take a walk together in this beautiful place,’ and I got up and went with him and then I woke. The next morning Mary came in to brush and arrange my hair, and before I had said a word about the dream to her, she said to me, ‘I had such a curious dream last night about you and the master. I thought you were sitting in a beautiful garden full of all kinds of curious flowers that I had never seen before, and master came up to you suddenly and took your hand and said, “Come, dear, let us take a walk together in this beautiful place.”’ She had dreamed the same dream as myself in every detail and she told it to me before I had spoken of mine.”

This shows that some strong bond of

affinity must have existed between mistress and maid, and that fact may have had something to do with Mary's previous experiences.

## CHAPTER XII

### GUARDIAN CHILDREN

WHILST preparing this small volume for the press, I have quite suddenly remembered such a remarkable case of return of the so-called dead, so excellent as regards tests, and coming so entirely and forcibly within my own experience, that I cannot understand how the incidents (of quite recent occurrence) can have remained latent in my memory until the last chapter in my book has been reached.

There may be some good reason for the curious obliteration of this most excellent testimony until I had written other and perhaps equally valuable, though less fascinating chapters.

In any case I think the good wine has been kept for the last, for which we have, at any rate, Biblical precedent.

As the lady whose experiences are involved in this story has been for two or



three years in South Africa, I wrote to Mr. Stead as soon as the door of this special chamber in my memory had been unlocked, to ask him if he considered that I was at liberty to mention the case. I know how passionately eager this lady has always been to share her own privileges with other less fortunate mothers ; but I also know that there has been some talk for several years past of publishing a record of her constant communion with her young son, and of course I would not, upon any consideration, anticipate such a book in any way that could be detrimental to it.

As the manuscripts and the whole question of publication will pass through the hands of Mr. W. T. Stead, I felt that I was going to the fountain-head in asking his permission to devote my last chapter to giving some account of this guardian child.

As I do not know whether the mother will decide to publish under her own name, I think it advisable to call her Mrs. Hope. Mr. Stead telegraphed his approval of my suggestion and has fol-

lowed this up by a letter just received, from which I quote the following sentences :—

“ As for the question in your letter—I cannot for a moment think there can be any doubt in the matter. Mrs. Hope is only too anxious to have the proof which she has found out by experience made accessible to the largest number of people. I have not yet received her manuscript but I believe it is on its way. Nothing you can say will in the least degree injure the sale of her book.”

I trust that this chapter may on the contrary be an *avant coureur* to her interesting records.

She kindly placed several folios of typewritten manuscript in my hands before she sailed for South Africa, and I can truthfully say that I felt after reading them that Gordon Hope's character was as sharply defined in my mind as that of any other boy-friend of my acquaintance. Far more so, I think ; because the child's impulsive, lovable and highly sensitive character was revealed in this systematic and intimate intercourse between mother

and child in a far more impressive way than any outsider could, as a general rule, come to know during any boy's earth life.

And now for the facts of the case.

Some years ago I was in the habit of hearing Mr. Stead refer to some remarkable experiences that a young mother had had through automatic writing with her son, a boy recently deceased. I don't think he entered into any special detail but he mentioned the name, which was quite unknown to me, and I took no very vital interest in the matter.

I did once happen, however, to speak of Mrs. Hope in the hearing of my friend Colonel Edward Seymour, and he said: "I think that Mrs. Hope was a Miss Edith Molyneux, the very pretty girl with whom the Duke of Clarence insisted upon dancing the whole night when the *Bacchante* put in at Ceylon, much to the disgust of the old dowagers to whom he ought by rights to have been paying attention."

I remembered hearing of this incident years ago, but my special interest lay in

the fact that the name of Molyneux at once recalled a very old friend of my own, who had recently died in Egypt.

Sir Augustus Molyneux had been sent to Egypt years ago as a celebrated financier, and for many years had been employed by the English Government in that capacity. I had spent weeks under his hospitable roof in Cairo and wondered whether this lady might be a niece of his.

A few weeks later we were introduced to each other and I found that my surmise was correct. She spoke with the greatest affection of "dear old Uncle Augustus," and had spent much of her early life with him and his wife in Egypt and London.

This at once formed a bond between us. I invited her to come and see me and this was the beginning of our lengthy and interesting acquaintance. She had very soon told me the facts which I am now about to relate. I think she and I first met each other in 1902, and her boy, Gordon Hope, had passed away two years previously, dying at Tunbridge

School, at the early age of twelve. Mrs. Hope has two elder sons and is a most devoted little mother, but Gordon was her "Benjamin," and she spoke pathetically of her overwhelming and rebellious grief when he was taken from her.

At the time of his death she had no deep religious convictions nor spiritual experience to console her, and the whole world seemed a blank when her dear little youngest son died so suddenly.

After Gordon's death in February, 1900, his mother had taken a small flat and was living there with her two other sons when I knew her.

She had at first a young servant, Nellie, who did not live in the flat but came there every day to do the work.

One summer morning, about six months after her terrible loss, she was lying in bed thinking over her great sorrow and had been crying very much, when Nellie arrived at the flat and good-naturedly proposed making a cup of early tea for her mistress, who seemed so much upset.

Nellie had not only never seen Gordon but had never heard of his existence.

"Is your head bad, ma'am?" she said sympathetically, when she brought the tea to the bedside.

"No, Nellie, it is not my head. I have been crying so much because I have been thinking of my dear little son who left me six months ago."

"Dear me, ma'am! I never knew there were more than the two young gentlemen."

"Oh, yes, Nellie. I had a dear, dear boy of twelve. He died at Tunbridge School last February."

Now Nellie had been in the Salvation Army, and, true to her training, began at once, with the best intentions, to quote the usual texts about God's love in taking our beloved from us, and how the Lord gave and therefore could take away, and how we must submit and believe that it was all done in love, etc., etc.

Mrs. Hope, who is an essentially *natural* woman, could not stand this "empty chaff well meant for grain," and in spite of her gratitude for poor Nellie's

sympathy, begged that she would not go on repeating texts which brought her no consolation and sounded only like empty words in her ears. So Nellie wisely refrained from any more speeches and showed a more practical sympathy by proposing to come and live in the flat and thus look after her young mistress more effectually. Nellie had a good home and was not actually forced to take permanent service anywhere, but said she thought she should like to live with Mrs. Hope and "do for her and try to cheer her up a bit." So the bargain was struck and Nellie became a permanent member of the household.

Months passed and Christmas came. Mrs. Hope gave her younger son, Frank, a silver pencil as a Christmas present, which she had bought from Messrs. Derry & Tom's bazaar in High Street, Kensington. Frank, after the manner of boys, did not care much for the pencil and hinted that he should have preferred choosing for himself, as he wanted some new sort of game to play in the evenings. So Mrs. Hope said: "Well, Frank,



I cannot afford to give you two Christmas presents, but if you like, we will go to Derry & Tom's together and ask if you may change the pencil and choose something else for yourself." Derry & Tom's at once gave permission and suggested that the "young gentleman" and his mother should "step down-stairs" into the Christmas bazaar and look about for themselves. No sooner said than done!

Now, Mrs. Hope knew so little about psychic matters in those days—never having heard about such things, as she told me—that when Frank looked up and saw a card box on a top shelf with *Planchette* written on it and appealed to his mother to know what it was, she answered at once:

"I don't quite know what it is, Frank, but I believe it is some sort of drawing-room game. Do you think you would like it?" Frank thought he *would* like it and rather hurriedly at the last, the exchange was made, and it was only on reaching home that mother and son found to their great disgust that it was no parlor game at all, but a stupid, spiritualistic

fraud! However they could not go back again to the bazaar, so there was nothing for it but to read the instructions and see if any kind of amusement could be extracted from the silly little instrument, on its three little wooden legs.

In this mood of annoyance and careless investigation, Mrs. Hope approached the crowning experience of her life!

What trivial incidents lead up generally to these great moments! But there was to be some delay still in this particular case.

As soon as Mrs. Hope and her boy had put their fingers on the despised Planchette, a pet name, used only between Gordon and his mother, was given at once, and this shocked and distressed her so much that she insisted upon packing the uncanny "toy" away on the top shelf of a cupboard and did not look at it again for a month.

During this month, however, she was constantly tormented by the thought that somehow Gordon knew what she had done and was sorry about it. Little by little, this impression became stronger.

At last she could resist the pressure of

it no longer and one day she went to the cupboard and took down the card box from the upper shelf. I think Nellie must have been present at this moment. Anyway she and her mistress sat down to test the thing once more, and it was then and there proved that Nellie was a very strong medium ; and very quickly, quite long and coherent messages came through the battery formed by Mrs. Hope and herself. This was the more satisfactory because Nellie, having never heard of Gordon previously, could not be accused of trickery and certainly knew nothing of his peculiarities of speech nor of the many little sayings and doings of the past, to which he constantly referred.

Telepathy from Mrs. Hope will be naturally at once suggested and might cover some of the facts but certainly not all of them, as we shall see later.

I have read all these early records, typed out *exactly as they were received* and without the smallest attempt at editing. The loving, impulsive, eager and often over-sensitive child is photographed in these records for any one who reads them

with sympathy and intelligence. The repetition of words, the almost pathetic eagerness to impress his real meaning, his deprecating assurance again and again that he was telling the "real, real truth," however strange it might appear; in fact the absolute *actuality* of the child's presence and personality, all this makes these pages not only very thrilling but very pathetic reading.

I do not envy any one who can read them through without feeling at the end that he has been in touch with a very loving and beautiful little nature and has been allowed access into that Holy of Holies—a child's intimate communion with its mother.

I cannot recall, in thinking over these records, that Mrs. Hope's own personality (so well known to me by then) ever intruded in the least degree upon her boy's utterances. Of course her own questions or answers and remarks were duly noted in the typed script; but I am referring to Gordon's own words. The channel seemed to me extraordinarily clear and quite unusually free from the coloring

matter which so often stains similar communications, with the thoughts and prejudices of the receiver. Perhaps Mrs. Hope's genius for motherhood and absorbing love for her child may have had something to say to these pure and unembellished records.

Gordon always spoke of being in the "*Happy Land*," as he called it, and never confounded this with *heaven*. In fact it was clearly differentiated in his mind; for he spoke constantly of an Aunt Etta (a young sister of his mother's who had died years before in India) as being with him at first, and later told us that "Aunt Etta was soon going to heaven."

When his mother suggested that he would be sorry for this, as he would miss her so much, he said at oncé: "Oh, no, mummy! Nobody is ever sorry here when any one goes to heaven because, of course, it is so happy for them." There was never the slightest suspicion of "cant" about any of Gordon's speeches. They were absolutely natural and just what a sweet-natured boy of twelve years old, living in beautiful and harmonious

conditions, might have uttered. It only seemed strange to him that anybody could be supposed to regret that which would make a much-loved aunt still more happy. I think if a favorite schoolfellow had been put into a higher Form at Tunbridge School, he would have spoken of it in much the same way.

He talked often about his lessons, which seemed to be going on with a teacher whom he called "Love"—probably some symbolical name suggested to him in the Happy Land. Several times when his mother, after the natural manner of people who suppose that the next sphere means unlimited knowledge, had asked him some question beyond his depth, he would say that he would ask his teacher, but could not answer the question himself. "You must remember, mummy, darling, that I am not a philosopher—only a little boy still."

It interested me very much, at the time of reading these records, to compare his description of his surroundings with that given by an entirely different personality, *i. e.*, the son of Judge Forbes, whom



I have mentioned in my previous book as *Talbot Forbes*. The latter was twenty years old when he passed over, and having been killed so suddenly, he seemed for some little time to cling to the scenes of his earth life, or, more probably, to be unable physically to leave them entirely. He spoke of being "*in the trenches with the men of my company,*" and of trying to help and encourage them. But this phase soon passed away and then Talbot also spoke to his mother of a continued education going on. He seemed to be specially "*studying natural history with my tutor, Wordsworth.*" All Etonians will recognize the essentially Etonian form of the last words; but we never quite made out which member of the Wordsworth family was referred to. At first Talbot could see earthly scenes *with his mother*, as it were. I mean that if she were riding or walking in beautiful scenery, he seemed able to be with her invisibly and able to enjoy it together, as they had so often done upon earth. But later *he told her he was losing touch with earth in these ways and could only see earth scenes as they were*



*pictured in his mother's brain.* This seems to me a very interesting and suggestive point. Talbot would say, "*You must think the picture you want me to see and then I can see it in your thoughts, but I cannot see the earth scenery directly any longer;*" or words to that effect.

Now the interesting point to me, when I had the opportunity of comparing these records simultaneously, was the fact that both Gordon Hope and Talbot Forbes were evidently describing the same conditions and the same locality (if we may use the word), but the one from the standpoint of a child of twelve and the other from the standpoint of a young man of twenty. The two had never met upon earth nor even heard of each other, although, as a matter of fact, they passed over within five or six weeks of one another; one at Ladysmith, 6th January 1900, and little Gordon at Tunbridge in February of the same year. Mrs. Forbes and Mrs. Hope only met once, for an hour at a restaurant, through my arrangement. They were, and still remain, strangers to each other, and the writing

was entirely independent in every possible way. Yet the child and the young man were undoubtedly describing similar experiences from different standpoints.

To turn now to the more evidential side of some of Gordon's remarks. After the communicating channel had been opened as described, he spoke often to his mother of a *Mr. Frost* who had been very kind to him in his new surroundings. The name cropped up constantly but with no indication of the identity. Mrs. Hope was naturally interested in anybody who had been kind to her boy. Moreover she hoped to get some sort of test by asking for further particulars, so she begged Gordon to find out something about Mr. Frost, his Christian name, former place of residence, in fact anything that could be tested from this side. She did not tell Gordon her reason for this but merely said, quite truly, that she would like to know more about any one who had been good to her little son. In a few days the desired information was given and far more abundantly than could have been hoped for or expected. I will

reproduce it as nearly in the original words as possible but wish it to be clearly understood that in this case I am trusting to the "unusually retentive memory" with which Mr. Stead is good enough to credit me. Fortunately Mrs. Hope's own records will soon be available and then small details can be corrected. I am sure that in all essentials my story is exact and I shall also in this case give the real name of the Mr. Frost in question.

*Gordon, communicating,* said: "I asked Mr. Frost what you wanted to know, mummy. He was going out riding and I ran after him and caught hold of his stirrup and told him you wanted to know who he was. He looked so amused and he said, 'Well, little shrimp! you can tell your mother that my name was John Noble Oakshott Frost. I lived near Portsmouth (he mentioned the town, street and number, which for obvious reasons I withhold). I passed over here nine years ago. I had influenza, and pneumonia afterward and that killed me. I was engaged to be married at the time to Blanche—no, I won't give her

other name, because she has forgotten me; but you can tell your mother all I have told you.' ”

Mrs. Hope did not happen to know the town indicated but she wrote to the post-master and verified the street mentioned and then thought it worth while to go further in the matter. After other inquiries had been made through friends on the spot, all the facts were verified, even to the surname of the *fiancée*, which had been withheld by her deceased lover!

This naturally gave Mrs. Hope faith in her power to take the messages from her little son truthfully, and without mingling them with her own thoughts and preconceptions. She has had numberless other tests. I mentioned the above because it involved several distinct statements of definite facts, entirely outside of the knowledge of either Mrs. Hope or of Nellie.

Having met Mrs. Hope's elder surviving son, a handsome young fellow of nineteen or twenty at the time of which I am speaking, I asked her one day what *he* thought of the writings and whether

he accepted them as coming from his brother.

“Percy cannot very well doubt them,” she said, smiling, “after some of the experiences he has had. I will tell you one of them that happened quite lately.”

Percy Hope had gone on the stage and had been fortunate enough to obtain a good position in the company of Mr. and Mrs. Kendal, then on tour. He had been very anxious to have a reliable watch and his mother had been saving money to send him the best she could afford, which was a silver one with good works. She had sent this to the town—Scarborough, I think—where the company was due to be playing at that special time; but she heard nothing from Percy of its arrival and as the weeks passed on, she became anxious both about the watch and also about Percy himself.

In her trouble she confided in Gordon and begged him to try and find out something about the watch if it were possible, also as to Percy's health and well-being, as his silence troubled her so much. A

few days later Gordon announced (in answer to an urgent appeal) that he *had* found out, but that he would rather not tell her. This naturally increased her fears and she pressed him to tell her at once, as the suspense was worse than any news could be.

“ But, mummy, I don’t want to tell you. It’s nothing very bad. Percy isn’t ill, but he will call me a little sneak if I tell you.” Mrs. Hope still begged him to relieve her fears and promised not to write to Percy about anything Gordon might say, but to wait until she saw him. She then added, “ So do tell me, darling. *Did* Percy ever receive the watch I sent him? ”

“ Yes, he got it all right, but he has taken it to the pop-shop (!) That is why he does not like to write to you about it. He got 2s. 6d. for it (I cannot be sure of exact sums) and 1s. 9d. for a pencil he took with it. It was a shop in —— Street.” Gordon also gave the number and the name of the shop in Scarborough.

Mrs. Hope waited patiently for Percy’s

return to London, and then confronted him with Gordon's script.

"Good God!" he said in his astonishment. "How on earth did he know all that? It is all perfectly true, mother."

So Percy Hope's scepticism received a final blow and he became greatly interested in his mother's experiences.

To my great regret, Mrs. Hope made up her mind to go to South Africa two or three years ago, still guided by the mother instinct, though not in this case as regards Gordon. Her second boy had the chance of a position out there, thanks to some of her own relations, and she did not like him to go out to a strange colony alone, at the age of sixteen. Percy was able to manage for himself by this time; so she and Nellie shipped themselves off to Johannesburg, and she has only paid one short visit to this country since, when unfortunately we were unable to arrange a meeting.

Nellie meanwhile has married in the colony. At first this was a terrible trial to her mistress. Not only did she lose a faithful maid but also the only means



she then had of communicating with her boy. It seemed like losing him over again; but brighter days were in store for her, I am thankful to say.

The curious point was that although Nellie seemed necessary to make the battery, Nellie alone could not receive Gordon's messages. For a time—after parting with Nellie—the world once more seemed a terrible wilderness to the poor mother. But love as usual has "found out the way." By dint of perseverance and prayer (for the little son had been the means of opening her spiritual perceptions) Mrs. Hope has developed at length the capacity for receiving messages from her child without any outside assistance.

This is the last I heard of her. Possibly by this time, the more material method may have been superseded altogether, in favor of some clairaudient process.

We must wait for more definite information on all these points, until the promised manuscript is published. I have said enough, I hope, to rouse the

attention of my readers and put them on the *qui vive* for the appearance of this unique record.

Will Gordon still return as the little boy of twelve? I think not. I believe we shall have a later development of his personality, still evolving in one of the Father's "many mansions"; but I feel sure that he will have kept his sweet and joyous nature and that touch of magnetic attraction which I myself felt so keenly. And I have no doubt at all that all who read about him will love him as much as I did when these earlier records were placed in my hands.

One small but important point has been omitted in my story. On several occasions Gordon referred to matters, often trifling in themselves, which he declared that he had already mentioned to his mother.

"But, darling, you did not really tell me this or that," she would say.

"But I did, mummy, darling. I truly did. Oh, you don't think I would tell you a story about it?"

Sometimes in reading these things it

was hard to restrain one's tears. The loving, sensitive little heart was so plainly visible, obliged to tell the exact truth but hating to contradict his mother and terribly afraid she might think him obstinate or untruthful. It was sometimes too pathetic for words. At length, to my infinite relief, the mystery was solved to the satisfaction of all of us.

Poor little Gordon had evidently asked his teacher or some other kind spirit to explain matters and the explanation was so simple and so interesting.

"You see, mummy, darling, you always come to see me when you go to sleep. I mean when your body goes to sleep. And then of course I tell you things. And then I tell you things when we walk together like this. And I get it all mixed up, and you cannot remember the things I tell you when you come here and sometimes I think I have told them to you in our talks together down here. Do you understand me now, darling?"

So the loving little heart was set quite at rest and that trouble was laid forever.

And so we must leave them—the child guardian and the happy mother—alone together.

In the face of such testimony surely we can all reëcho—if only for a moment—the triumphant cry — *grave*

“Oh, ~~Death~~, where is thy victory? Oh, Death, where is thy sting?”

FINIS



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