Seen and Unseen, by E. Katharine Bates

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Title: Seen and Unseen

Author: E. Katharine Bates

Release Date: April 12, 2007 [EBook #21041]

Language: English

Character set encoding: ISO-8859-1

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SEEN AND UNSEEN

BY E. KATHARINE BATES

NEW YORK DODGE PUBLISHING COMPANY 214-220 EAST 23RD STREET

1908

First Published July 1907

Second Impression October 1907

Third Impression March 1908

Popular Edition 1908

To

C. E. B.

IN MEMORY OF

ONE WHO LOVED AND SUFFERED

AND IN THE SURE AND CERTAIN HOPE

OF A JOYFUL MEETING WITH

HIM, AND WITH OTHERS

WHO HAVE CROSSED

THE BAR

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INTRODUCTION

Many years ago, whilst living at Oxford, I was invited by a very old friend, who had recently taken his degree, to a river picnic; with Nuneham, I think, as its alleged object.

Unfortunately, the day proved unfavourable, and we returned in open boats, also with open umbrellas; a generally drenched and bedraggled appearance, and nothing to cheer us on the physical plane except a quantity of iced coffee which had been ordered in anticipation of a tropical day.

Under these rather trying conditions I can remember getting a good deal of amusement out of the companions in the special boat which proved to be my fate. Our host, being a clever and interesting man himself, had collected clever and interesting people round him, on the "Birds of a Feather" principle, and I happened to sit between two ladies, one the wife (now, alas! the widow) of a man who was to become later on one of our most famous bishops; the other--her bosom friend and

deadly rival--the wife of an equally distinguished Oxford don.

The iced coffee combined with the pouring rain may have been partly to blame, but certainly the conversation that went on between the two ladies, across my umbrella, was decidedly *Feline*.

To pass the time we were valiantly endeavouring to play "Twenty Questions" from the bottom of the boat, and the Bishop's widow was asking the questions. She had triumphantly elicited the fact that we had thought of a *cinder*--and an historical cinder--and the twentieth and last permissible question was actually hovering on her lips. "It was the cinder that Richard Coeur de Lion's horse fell upon," she said eagerly. Of course, we all realised that this was a most obvious "slip" in the case of so highly educated a woman; but the Bosom Friend could not resist putting out the velvet paw: "A little confusion in the centuries, I think, dear," she said sweetly. The unfortunate questioner practically "never smiled again" during *that* expedition. But a still more crushing blow was in store for her.

The conversation turned later upon questions of style in writing or speaking, and with perhaps pardonable revenge, she said to her rival:

"I always notice that you say 'one' so often--'*one* does this or that,' and so forth."

"Really, dear? That is curious. Now I always notice that *you* say 'I' so continually!"

The cut and thrust came with the rapidity of expert fencers.

And this brings me to the real gist of my story.

It is considered the most heinous offence "*to say I*," and every conceivable device is resorted to, no matter how clumsy, in order to prevent the catastrophe of a writer being forced to speak of himself in the first person.

To my mind, there is a good deal of affectation and pose about this, and

in anything of an autobiography it becomes insupportable.

"The writer happened upon one occasion to be present, etc." "He who pens these unworthy pages was once travelling to Scotland, etc. etc."

Which of us has not groaned under these self-conscious euphemisms? "Why not say '*I*' and have done with it?" we are wont to exclaim in desperation after pages of this kind of thing.

Now I propose "to say *I*" and "have done with it," and not waste time in trying to find ingenious and wearisome equivalents.

That is my first point.

Secondly, in this record of psychic experiences I mean to keep clear of another intolerable nuisance--I mean the continual introduction of capital letters and long dashes in order to conceal identity in such episodes.

The motive is admirable, but the method is detestable.

One can only judge by personal experience. I know that when I read a rather involved narrative of sufficiently involved psychic doings, and Mr Q----, Miss B----, Mr C----, and Mr C.'s maternal aunt Mrs G---- figure wildly in it, I am driven desperate in trying to force some idea of personality into these meaningless letters of the alphabet.

To conceal the identity of Mr Brown, who was once guilty of seeing a ghost, may be and most frequently is, a point of honour, but why not call him Mr Smith, and say he lived in Buckinghamshire, and thus rouse a definite mental conception in your reader's brain, instead of calling him Mr Z. of W----, and thus setting up mental irritation before the ghost comes upon the scene?

Having cleared the ground so far, I will now mention my third and last point.

It is usual when writing reminiscences of any kind to anticipate your

reader's criticisms, and try to increase his interest in your experiences by a sort of false humility in deprecating their value. The idea is doubtless founded on a sound knowledge of Human Nature, but it may easily fall into exaggeration. Nothing is, of course, so disastrous as to praise beforehand a person, a picture, a voice, a poem, a book, or anything else in the wide world, in which we wish our friends to take any special interest. Such a course naturally rouses unconscious antagonism in poor, fallen Human Nature before we even see or hear the object of our later bitter aversion. But there is a medium in all things, and it is scarcely polite to put the intelligence of our readers sufficiently low to be manipulated by such obvious arts.

Moreover, it has been well said that the history of any one human being--truthfully told (I would add, intelligently assimilated)--would be of enthralling interest and value. If this be true on the ordinary physical, intellectual, and spiritual planes it should not be *less* true, surely, where a fourth plane of psychic experience is added to the other three?

Then again, there is no need to apologise for experiences limited in interest or in amount.

These terms are of necessity comparative. For example, my experiences are limited compared with those of some people I have known, who have been either more highly endowed with psychic gifts or who have considered it advisable to cultivate such gifts to a high point of efficiency; or lastly, with whom opportunities for experience have been more numerous. But, on the other hand, my experiences have been great compared with those of some people at least equally interested in these subjects.

Geographically speaking, I have been peculiarly fortunate, having had the opportunity of witnessing phenomena of this kind in many countries, differing widely in Race, Climate, and other conditions.

I have been told many times that I could develop clairvoyance, clairaudience, or sit as a materialising medium, but have had no desire to go further in these matters.

I have seen quite as much as I wish to see, I have heard quite as much as I wish to hear, and should be very sorry personally to increase either of these psychic possibilities by the practice that makes more perfect.

Some consider this lamentable cowardice and want of faith. Each one must judge for himself in such a matter. Faith in this connection may easily degenerate into foolhardiness.

"Greater is He that is for you than all those who are against you" has been quoted to me again and again in deprecation of my attitude in these things. It has always appeared to me a matter in which individual judgment must be exercised, and upon which no broad and general lines of conduct can be laid down.

One man can cycle fifty miles in the day, and dance all night, and be the better for the experience. Another attempting the same feat, but not having the same constitution, might do himself lasting injury. It is exactly the same thing on the psychic plane. Our psychic constitutions differ at least as much as our physical ones. We may overtax either, and with similar consequences. We have no right to expect protection or immunity on either plane, where we neglect the warnings of that inner monitor who is always our best guide.

As a final word of warning, I would say: "Beware of your motives in cultivating psychic capacity." It is so easy to mistake love of notoriety, even in one's own little *milieu,* for love of Truth. There is always an eager, curious crowd anxious to get "messages" or "hear raps," or to see any other little psychic parlour tricks which we may be induced to play for their benefit. At first one feels it is almost a sacred duty to satisfy, or attempt to satisfy, these psychic cormorants; but later, wisdom comes with experience.

At one time I felt bound to collect my friends and acquaintances round me and tell them all I knew upon these subjects, and doubtless it was right to do so whilst I "*felt that way*," to quote an expressive Americanism.

But the inevitable day came when I realised that I had spent my

strength and my muffins in vain; for these gatherings generally took the form of tea-parties, not too large to cope with single-handed--say from ten to twenty people. They came at 4.30 P.M. and stayed till 8 P.M., when most of them remembered they ought to have dined at 7.45 P.M., and went away saying "How immensely they had enjoyed themselves," and "How interesting it all was."

And so far as any permanent good came of it, there the matter ended.

Believe me, when people are prepared for this development of their finer senses *they will come to you*. There is no need to go into the highways and hedges and compel them to come in. If they do come they won't stay--why should they? *They have not got there yet*, to use a thoroughly hateful and ungrammatical but absolutely accurate sentence.

If you try to carry them on the back of your own knowledge and experiences, you can do so for a time, but eventually they will struggle down, or you will put them down from sheer fatigue, and then they will run back to the spot where you found them, and thence work out their own psychic evolution either in this or in some future term of existence.

When their interest is exhausted--to say nothing of your patience--you will hear that they have called you a crank and lamented your "wasting your time over such nonsense." That will be *your* share of the transaction.

I know this *because I have been there--moi qui vous parle*.

"Let every man be persuaded in his own mind," but don't try to persuade anyone else. When the right time comes he will ask your help and counsel without any persuasion.

Of course, I am speaking only of private work. Lectures and congresses are of the greatest possible value; for no one knows whom he may be addressing on these occasions, and the seed may be falling into soil prepared, but often unconsciously prepared, for its reception.

To sum up the whole matter:

1. Be strong in the conviction that eventually good must always conquer evil, but remember also that you individually may have a very bad time meanwhile if you go amongst mixed influences and evoke that which at present you are not strong enough to withstand.

2. Know when to speak and when to be silent.

3. Receive what comes to you spontaneously, but never allow yourself to be cajoled or persuaded into developing your mediumship to gratify curiosity; not even on the plea of scientific duty, unless you are fully conscious in your own mind that this is the special work which is laid upon you.

And bearing these three simple rules in mind, we may go forward with brave hearts and level heads on the Quest which has been so plainly opened out to us in this twentieth century. E. KATHARINE BATES.

SEEN AND UNSEEN

CHAPTER I

EARLY RECOLLECTIONS

Having set myself to write a personal record of psychic experiences, I must "begin at the beginning," as the children say.

When only nine years old I lost my father--the Rev. John Ellison Bates of Christ Church, Dover--and my earliest childish experience of anything supernormal was connected with him. He had been an invalid all my short life, and I was quite accustomed to spending days at a time without seeing him. His last illness, which lasted about a fortnight, had therefore no special significance for me, and my nurse, elder brother, and godmother, who were the only three people in the house at the time, gave strict orders that none of the servants should give me a hint of his being dangerously ill. These instructions were carefully carried out, and

yet I dreamed three nights running--the three nights preceding his decease--that he was dead. I was entirely devoted to my father, who had been father and mother to me in one, and these dreams no doubt broke the terrible shock of his death to me. How well I remember, that cold, dreary February morning, being hastily dressed by candle-light by strange hands, and then my dear old nurse (who had been by his bedside all night) coming in and telling me the sad news with tears streaming down her cheeks. It seemed no news at the moment; and yet I had spoken of my dreams to no one, "for fear they should come true," having some pathetic, childish notion that silence on my part might avert the catastrophe. In all his previous and numerous illnesses I had never dreamt that any special one was fatal.

During the next few years of school life my psychic faculty remained absolutely in abeyance. In a fashionable school, surrounded by chattering companions and the usual paraphernalia of school work, classes, and masters, etc., I can, however, recall many a time when suddenly everything around me became unreal and I alone seemed to have any true existence; and even that was for the time merged in a rather unpleasant dream, from which I hoped soon to wake up. This sensation was quite distinct from the one--also well known to me in those days and later--of having "done all this before," and knowing just what somebody was about to say.

Probably both these sensations are common to most young people. It would be interesting to note which of the two is the more universal.

I pass on now to the time when I was about eighteen years old, and a constant visitor, for weeks and months at a time, in the house of my godfather, the archdeacon of a northern diocese. His grandson, then a young student at Oxford, of about my own age, must have been what we should now call a very good sensitive. It was with him that I sat at my first "table," more as a matter of amusement than anything else, and certainly young Morton Freer treated the "spirits" in the most cavalier fashion. They did not seem to resent this, and he could do pretty much what he liked with them. This may be a good opportunity for explaining that when I speak in this narrative of "spirits" I do so to save

constant periphrasis, and am quite consciously "begging the question" very often, as a matter of verbal convenience.

In those days I don't think we troubled ourselves much about theories, and when we found that Morton and I alone could move a heavy dining-room table, or any other piece of heavy furniture quite beyond our normal powers, practically without exerting any strength at all, we looked upon it as an amusing experience without caring to inquire whether the energy involved had been generated on this side the veil or on the other side. We could certainly not have moved such weights under ordinary circumstances, even by putting forth all our combined strength, and we could only do so, for some mysterious reason, when we had been "sitting at the table" beforehand. Ingenious Theories of Human Electricity raised to a higher power by making a Human Battery, etc. etc., were not so common then as now, and we accepted facts without trying to solve their problems.

The dear, hospitable Archdeacon would put his venerable head inside the door now and then, shake it at us half in fun, and yet a good deal in earnest, and I think he was more than doubtful whether our parlour games were quite lawful!

We were very innocent and very ignorant in those days on the subject of psychic laws; and probably this was our salvation, for I can remember no terrible or weird experience, such as one reads of nowadays when tyros take to experiments.

And yet my knowledge and experiences of later days lead me to endorse most heartily the well-known dictum of Lawrence Oliphant--namely, that when he saw people sitting down in a casual, irresponsible way to "*get messages through a table*," it reminded him of an ignorant child going into a powder magazine with a lighted match in its hand.

Staying in this same house, I can next recall a flying visit from a brother of mine, who had just spent three months, on leave from India, in America, where he had taken introductions, and had been the guest of various hospitable naval and military men, who had shown him

round the Washington Arsenal, West Point Academy, and so forth. My kind old host had begged him to take us on his way back to London; and I remember well his look of utter amazement when Morton and I had lured him to "the table" one afternoon, and he was told correctly the names of two or three of these American gentlemen.

"I *must* have mentioned them to my sister in my letters," he said, turning to the younger man. I knew this was *not* the case, but it was difficult to prove a negative.

It was a relief, therefore, when my brother suggested what he considered a "real test," where previous knowledge on my part must be excluded.

"Let them tell me the name of a bearer I had once in India--he lived with me for more than twelve years--always returning to me when I came back from English furlough, and yet at the end of that time he suddenly disappeared, without rhyme or reason, and I have neither seen nor heard of him since. I *know* my sister has never heard his name. *That* would be something like a test, but, of course, it won't come off," he added cynically.

The wearisome spelling out began.

The table rose up at R, then at A.

"Quite wrong," my brother called out in triumph. "I knew how it would be when any real test came. Fortunately, too, it is wildly wrong--neither the letter before nor the letter after the right one, so you cannot wriggle out of it that way."

"Never mind, Major Bates," said Morton Freer good-naturedly. "Let us go on all the same, and see what they mean to spell out."

Fortunately, we did so, with a most interesting result; for the right name was given after all, but spelt in the Hindoostanee and not the European fashion. The name in true Hindoostanee was Rám Dín--but Europeans spelt it Rham Deen--and so my brother himself had entirely forgotten

when the A was given that it had any connection with the man's name. When the whole word was spelt out, of course he remembered, and then his face was a study!

"Good gracious! it is right enough, and that is the real Hindoostanee spelling, too. I never thought of that when the A came!"

I think this episode knocked the bottom out of his scepticism for some years to come.

Even now this case precludes ordinary and conscious telepathy. Mr Podmore would be reduced to explaining that the Hindoostanee spelling was latent in my brother's consciousness, though his normal self repudiated it.

Another curious incident--still more difficult to explain upon the Thought Transference Theory (unless we stretch it to include a possible impact of *all* thoughts, at all times and from all quarters of the globe, upon everyone else's brain)--occurred under the same hospitable roof.

One of the Archdeacon's nieces came to stay in the house about this time. She was considerably my senior, and was very kind to me, with the thoughtful kindness an older woman can show to a sensitive young girl. This awakened in me an affection which, I am thankful to say, still exists between us. This lady was considerably under thirty years old at the time, but to my young ideas she seemed already in the sear and yellow leaf from the matrimonial point of view! One must remember how different the standard of age was more than thirty years ago!

It was also the time when marriage was looked upon not only as the most desirable, but as almost the only *possible*, career for a woman.

So when Morton and this lady and I were "sitting at the table" in the gloaming one evening, I said, with trembling eagerness: "Morton, *do* ask if Carrie will ever be married," for the case seemed to me almost desperate at the advanced age of twenty-seven or twenty-eight!

I must mention that for some occult reason (which I have entirely

forgotten) I trusted fervently that a Hungarian or Polish name might be given after the satisfactory "Yes" had been spelt out, but, alas! nothing of the kind occurred.

"The table" began with a D, and then successively E, H, A, V were given. No one ever heard of a Polish or Hungarian name of the kind, and I remember saying petulantly: "Oh, give it up, Morton. It's all nonsense! Nobody ever heard of a Mr *Dehav*."

Once more Morton rescued a really good bit of evidence by his imperturbable perseverance.

"Wait a bit! Let us see what is coming," he said.

I took no further personal interest in the experiment. Either Morton concluded the name was finished, or there was some confusion in getting the next letters, owing doubtless to my impetuous disgust. Anyway, he went on to say:

"Let us ask where the fellow lives at the present time." This was instantly answered by "*Freshwater*," and the further information given that he was a widower.

None of us knew any man, married or single, who lived at Freshwater, and the incident was relegated to the limbo of failures.

Several years later, however, my friend *did* marry a gentleman whose name (a very pretty one) began with the five despised letters, and he was a widower, and *had* been living in his own house at Freshwater at the time mentioned. She did not meet him until some years after our curious experience.

About the same time, but in the south of England, my attention was again drawn to metapsychics by an experience connected with the death of the famous Marquis of Hastings, of horse-racing repute. As a young girl I lived close to the Mote Park at Maidstone, where his sister, the present Lady Romney, was then living as Lady Constance Marsham. The Reverend David Dale Stewart and his wife (he was Vicar of

Maidstone, and I made my home with them for some years after leaving school) were friends of hers, and she sometimes came to see them in a friendly way in the morning. On one of these occasions, when Lady Constance had just returned from paying her brother a visit in a small shooting-box in the eastern counties (I think), Mrs Stewart remarked that she was afraid the change had not done Lady Constance much good, as she was looking far from well. In those days Lady Romney was an exceptionally strong and healthy young woman.

She said rather impatiently: "Well, the fact is I did a very stupid thing the other day--I never did such a thing before--I fainted dead away for the first time in my life."

Asked for the reason of this, she told us that she and her husband and Lord and Lady Hastings were dining quietly one evening together, two guests who had been expected not having arrived by the train specified.

Looking up Bradshaw, and finding no other train that could bring them until quite late at night, the other four sat down to dinner. Soup and fish had already been discussed, when a carriage was heard driving up to the door, and they naturally concluded that their guests had discovered some means of getting across country by another line. Lord Hastings said:

"Tell Colonel and Mrs ---- that we began dinner, thinking they could not arrive till much later, but that we are quite alone, and beg they will join us as soon as possible."

The servant went to the door, prepared with the message given, flung it open--but no carriage, no horses were there! Everybody had heard it driving up, nevertheless.

Remembering the old family legend that a carriage and pair is heard driving up the avenue before the head of the Hastings family dies, Lady Romney fainted dead away, very much to her own surprise and mortification; for she was, and doubtless is still, an uncommonly sensible woman, "quite above all superstitions."

The episode struck me as curious at the time; but the impression passed, and a few days later I went to pay a visit to friends of mine in Buckinghamshire. Soon after my arrival I happened to mention the story, and was much laughed at as a "superstitious little creature, to think twice of such nonsense." "Of course, everyone had been mistaken in supposing they heard wheels or horses' hoofs--nothing could be simpler!"

And yet before I left that house, three weeks later, all the newspapers were full of long obituary notices of the Marquis of Hastings. These were so interesting that my friend's husband had reached the second long column in *The Times* before any of us remembered my story, which had been treated with so much contempt. It suddenly flashed across my mind: "Owen! Remember the carriage and pair and how you laughed at me!" They were forced to confess "*it was certainly rather odd*," the usual refuge of the psychically destitute!

A shake of the kaleidoscope, and I see another incident before me of more personal interest.

At the time of the outbreak of the Afghan War, in the autumn of 1878, I was living with very old friends in Oxford. My brother of the Rám Dín incident was once more in India, and had been Military Secretary for some years at Lahore to Sir Robert Egerton, who was at that time Lieutenant-Governor of the Punjab.

When the war broke out, my brother, of course, went off to join his regiment for active service; but at the time of my experience it was impossible that he could have reached the seat of war, and I knew this well.

I was in excellent spirits about him, for he had been through many campaigns, and loved active service, as all good soldiers do. Moreover, I had just read a charming letter which Sir Robert Egerton had sent him on resigning his appointment as Military Secretary to take up more active duty to his country.

Yet it was just at this juncture--when, humanly speaking, there was no

cause for any special anxiety--that I woke up one morning with the gloomiest and most miserable forebodings about this special brother. Nothing of the kind had ever occurred to me before, though he had been through many campaigns in India, China, Abyssinia, and elsewhere.

It was an overwhelming conviction of some great and definite disaster to him, and my friends in vain tried to argue me out of such an unreasonable terror by pointing out, truly enough, that he could not possibly be within the zone of danger at that time. I could only repeat: "I *know* that something terrible has happened to him, wherever he is. It may not be death, but it is some terrible calamity."

I spent the day in tears and in absolute despair, and wrote to tell him of my conviction. Allowing for difference of time between Quetta and Oxford, my mental telegram reached me in the same hour that my brother, whilst on the march, and only thirty miles beyond Quetta, was suddenly struck down in his tent by the paralysis which kept him confined to his chair--a helpless sufferer--for twenty-eight years.

Perhaps, now that I know so much more of mental currents, I might have received a more definite message as regards the true *nature* of the calamity. It could not have been more marked, nor more definite as regards the *fact* of it.

My condition of hopeless misery obliged me to put off all engagements that day, and I did nothing but fret and lament over him, with the exception of writing the one letter mentioned, in which I told him of my strange and sad experience.

In time, of course, the first sharp impression passed, and soon a cheery letter arrived from him, written, of course, before the fatal day. My experience in Oxford occurred on the morning of 4th December 1878. It was well on in January 1879 before the corroboration arrived, in a letter written to us by a stranger. Communication was delayed not only by the war, but also by the fact that my poor brother was lying at the time deprived of both movement and speech, and could only spell out later, by the alphabet, the address of his people at home.

CHAPTER II

INVESTIGATIONS IN AMERICA, 1885-1886

An interval of seven years occurs between the events recorded in the last chapter and my first visit to America, which took place in the autumn of 1885.

During these years no abnormal experiences came to me, nor had I the smallest wish for any.

The table turnings with Morton Freer were a thing of the past, and were looked back upon by me in the light of a childish amusement rather than anything else. Quite other interests had come into my life, specially as regards literature and music; and I never gave a thought to spooks or spiritualism, nor did I really know anything about the latter subject. It is true that on one occasion a curate at Great Marlow had spoken to me about Mr S. C. Hall and his researches, and I think he must have given me an introduction to the dear old man, for I remember going to see him "with a lady friend" (he made a great point of this, somewhat to my amusement), and finding a charming old man with silver locks, a fine head, and a nice white frilly shirt.

He spoke of his dear friend "Mrs Jencken," whom he considered the only reliable medium, and showed us some sheets full of hieroglyphics, which he said were messages obtained through her influence from "his dear wife."

It was all so much Greek to me in those days, and only true sympathy with the poor old man's evident loneliness and adoration of his wife's memory prevented my making merry over the extraordinary delusions of the old gentleman, when my companion and I had left his rooms in Sussex villas.

Later, I lived during two years with Mrs Lankester and her daughters whilst looking after an invalid brother in London; and I need scarcely point out that constant intercourse with Professor Ray Lankester in his mother's house was not calculated to encourage any psychic proclivities,

even had these latter not been entirely latent with me at that time.

I heard a great deal about the "Slade exposure," both from Professor Lankester and his friend Dr Donkin, who often came to us with him. When arranging my American tour in 1885, Mrs Lankester kindly gave me an introduction to Mrs Edna Hall, an old friend of theirs, who had been living in their house during the whole period of the Slade trial. This lady--an American--lived permanently in Boston, and curiously enough (in view of the preceding facts) it was she who persuaded Miss Greenlow and me to attend our first *séance* in Boston. Mrs Edna Hall had honoured Mrs Lankester's introduction most hospitably; but she was too busy a woman to do as much for us as her kindness suggested, and she had therefore introduced us to another friend--Mrs Maria Porter--a most picturesque, clever, and characteristic figure in Boston society in the eighties.

Both these ladies accompanied us to the "Sisters Berry." Mrs Edna Hall had no sort of illusions on the subject. She said quite frankly that she only took us there because it was a feature of American life which we ought not to miss, and which would probably amuse us, if only by showing the gullibility of Human Nature.

One is always apt to read past experiences in the light of present convictions. Fortunately, I kept a diary at the time, and have a faithful record of what took place, and, which is still more valuable, of the impressions formed at the time.

The extracts connected with this *séance* in Boston, and later experiences in New York, are taken partly from my record at the time and partly from the chapter on "Spiritualism in America," published in my book entitled "A Year in the Great Republic."

Speaking of this first *séance* in Boston, I see that I have said:

"I went to the 'Sisters Berry' in a very antagonistic frame of mind, *determined beforehand that the whole thing was a swindle* (italics are recent), accompanied by friends who were even more sceptical than myself, if that were possible." I go on then to describe the usual cabinet,

and pass on to the following extract:--

An old Egyptian now appeared, and a man in the circle, who had been sitting near my friend Miss Greenlow all the evening, went up and spoke to him, and then asked "*that the lady who had been sitting near him*" might come up also, which she did; but she said she could distinguish no features, and only felt a warm, damp hand passed over hers. Miss Greenlow was next called up by the spirit of a young man who wished to embrace her, but who was finally proved to be the departed friend of the lady who sat next to her. Miss Greenlow returned to her seat, furious, declaring that it was a horrible, coarse-looking creature, unlike anyone she had ever seen in her life.

Mrs Porter made valiant attempts to investigate the figures who came forth at intervals, but was invariably waved back by the master of the ceremonies.

"Will that lady kindly sit down? This spirit is not for her. It wishes to communicate with its own friends, and she is disturbing the conditions, and forcing the spirit back into the cabinet."

There were evidently many old stagers there, who flew up like lamp-lighters on every possible occasion, with exclamations of: "Oh, Uncle Charlie, is that you?" "How do you do, Jem?" and so forth.

One old lady, in a mob cap and black gown, was introduced as a certain Sister Margaret who had taught in St Peter's School, Boston. She came to speak to a former pupil, who gave her spiritualistic experiences in such remarkably bad grammar as reflected small credit on Sister Margaret's teaching of the English language.

This girl told us how anxious she had always been to see her old teacher, who had appeared to her several times in the *séance* room, but never in her old garments--a sort of sister's dress. After wishing very fervently one night, Sister Margaret appeared dressed in mob cap and gown, saying: "Don't you see my dress? I came in it at your wish."

"Yes," answered the girl; "and I thank you for gratifying my wish.

Since which time," she added, "I have been a firm believer in spiritualism."

A young French girl, in draggly black garments and a shock of thick black hair, then came forward and rushed amongst us, trying to find someone to talk French with her. My friend Mrs Hall went up first, and then I was told to go up and speak to her. I took hold of her hands, and grasped them firmly for a moment. They seemed to be ordinary flesh and blood, but I am bound to confess that they appeared to *lengthen out* in a somewhat abnormal fashion when the pressure was removed.

Her face was very cadaverous, and she spoke in a quick, hurried way, *as if time were an object*. She said she understood a little English, but could not speak it. Her mother had been French; her father an Indian, "un brave homme."

It seemed to me that a good deal of kissing and embracing went on. One old grey-headed gentleman was constantly walking up to the cabinet and being embraced by a white figure, whose arms we could just see, thrown round his neck, in the dim light. (I note that the light here was much less than with Mrs Stoddart Gray in New York.)

The only excitement was the chance of some disturbance before we left; for Mrs Porter became more and more indignant with the "gross imposture," which culminated when at length she was called up and told that "a young man wished to speak with her." She asserted that it was "the most horrible, grinning, painted creature who hissed into her ears."

The master of the house begged her to be patient, and try to hear what the spirit wished to say, but with a very emphatic "NO, NO, NO" she resumed her seat, amidst a general titter of laughter.

At the last we were told that three little girls, whose mother sat near the cabinet, wished to materialise, but found it difficult to do so, owing to the absence of children in the audience.

The mother seemed very anxious to see them; but suddenly the gas was

turned up, and the *séance* declared over--a very abrupt finale to a piece of unmitigated humbug, I should say.

These extracts sufficiently show the spirit in which I entered upon my investigations and the result of that spirit. I think even Mr Podmore would have considered me *thoroughly sound* on that first evening. I have no doubt that the violence of Mrs Porter's antagonism, and the smiling cynicism of Mrs Hall in face of the "American experience" she had proposed for us, added to my own preconceived prejudices.

I am aware that the Berry Sisters have been "exposed," thus sharing the fate of all other public mediums. In the light of later experiences, however, I feel sure that I might have received something personally evidential on this occasion had my attitude of mind given hospitality to any possible visitors from the Unseen.

The next extracts from my diary refer to a *séance* which we attended in New York a few days after our arrival there, and some two or three weeks later than the Boston sitting already described.

Our stay in Boston had extended to three months from the original fortnight we had planned for the visit. I had taken a few very good introductions there: to Dr Oliver Wendell Holmes, Colonel Wentworth Higginson, and others of the Boston *alumni*, and as several receptions had been kindly arranged for us, and my name had appeared many times during the winter in various local papers, it would have been easy for the Sisters Berry to find out something about me and my companion, and utilise the knowledge by faking up a convenient spirit, who could have talked glibly of my literary tastes, and so forth. Nothing of the sort occurred, however, although our first *séance* only took place a week or two before we left Boston, after my three months' stay there.

This fact should certainly be "counted as righteousness" to the much abused Sisters!

It was the more curious, that our first *séance* in New York, within a few days of our arrival, and in a metropolis where at the time we were *absolute strangers,* should have been so much more successful as

regards evidential experiences.

I will again quote from my diary of 1886. The medium visited on this occasion was Mrs Cadwell, who has since died.

* * * * *

We knew nothing beforehand of the medium, who lived in a small flat in an unfashionable quarter. Some eight people only were assembled in the extremely small room. All were perfect strangers to Miss Greenlow and me, but a fancied likeness in one lady present to a picture I had seen of Mrs Beecher Stowe led me to ask if it were she, and I was told that my surmise was correct.

There was no room for a cabinet, so a curtain was hung across a tiny alcove, just the ordinary "arch" found in most rooms of the kind.

When I went behind the curtain with the female medium, before the sitting began, there was barely space for us both to turn round in. The carpet on either side the curtain was one piece. There was absolutely no room for any trap-door machinery, even could such have been worked successfully in the perfect silence in which we sat, within two feet of the alcove. The room was about the size of the small back dining-room in an ordinary London lodging--say in Oxford or Cambridge Terrace, for example.

The medium sat amongst us at first, only going behind the curtain after a few moments, when she was "under control" as it is called.

A little child of hers, who died some years ago at the age of four, is supposed to help in the materialisations, but is never seen outside the curtains. If she came out herself she would not be able to help the others to do so. I mention these things in the words in which they were told to me, offering no comment, but putting the case for the moment as spiritualists would put it. To do this, and then to give a faithful and unprejudiced account of what took place, seems to me the only fair way of treating such a subject.

I was told again and again that too much concentration of thought on the part of the audience was deterrent. This accounts for music as an invariable accompaniment of all such sittings. It seems to harmonise the circle, to break up over-concentration, and may also, unfortunately, serve to cover the doings of dishonest mediums.

It must not, however, be supposed that in this case the materialisations went on only whilst we were singing. This might point to a possible "trap-door theory," although in a city where flats abound (rooms, not human beings!) there would still be the difficulty of getting your downstairs neighbours to look kindly upon such proceedings. As a matter of fact, we were often sitting in absolute silence when fresh "spirits" appeared.

I can corroborate the assertion that too much concentration of thought upon them proves deterrent to the spirits, for on more than one occasion I heard a voice from the curtain or cabinet saying: "Do get the people's minds off us; we can do nothing whilst they are fixed upon us so intensely," as though *thought* in spirit life corresponded to some physical obstacle on the earth plane.

The first spirit who came (the daughter of an old gentleman sitting near me) intimated through him that she would like me to go up and help her to materialise the white veil which all in turn wore, and which, though perfectly transparent, is considered a necessary shield between them and the earth's influences; on the same principle, I suppose, that we put on blue spectacles to protect us from the blinding rays of the sun.

She came out from the alcove, held both her hands in front of her, turning them backward and forward that I might be satisfied that nothing was concealed in them. The soft, clinging material of her gown ended high up on the shoulders, so there were no sleeves to be reckoned with. I stood close over her, holding out my own dress, and as she rubbed her hands to and fro a sort of white lace or net came from them, like a foam, and lay upon my gown which I was holding up towards her.

I touched this material, and held it in my hands. It had substance, but

was light as gossamer, and quite unlike any stuff I ever saw in a shop.

The very softest gossamer tulle that old ladies sometimes produce as having belonged to their grandmothers is perhaps the nearest approach to what I then lifted in my hands, but even this does not accurately describe it.

When long enough she took up the veil, unfolded it, covering her head with it, and saying very graciously "Thank you" to me.

Other spirits now appeared for the other people in the room, who conversed with them in low tones.

All these had evidently materialised before and could consequently speak with comparative ease. One, called the "Angel Mother" (the mother of the medium), answered questions on the spirit life in a loud American voice, prefacing every remark, whether to man or woman, by an affectionate "Well, de-ar!" Her answers showed considerable shrewdness, but not much depth, and were often rather wide of the mark.

"Nels Seymour" (who appears to have belonged to a sort of Christy Minstrel Company over here) cracked jokes all the time with a gentleman amongst the audience in a good-natured but flippant and very unspiritual manner, and even the ladies joined in the undignified punning and "play upon words" that went on all the time.

The little child's voice came in as a relief every now and then. She spoke broken, childish English, but used the expressions of a grown-up person. She described several spirits as "chying" (trying) to come, but not being strong enough.

I was becoming drowsy, and rather tired of the performance, when my attention was once more aroused by hearing that a very beautiful female spirit, with a diamond star in her forehead, had appeared and asked for me, saying she had been a friend of mine on earth, and wished to communicate with me.

This was conveyed to me by the little child's voice, the spirit herself not having yet emerged from the curtain; but the medium's husband looked behind it, and told me of the diamond star, which he said was some "order" in spirit life.

Having no idea who the friend might be, I begged for some further particulars before going up to speak to her.

"She passed from earth life about five years ago, and in Germany," answered the medium's husband, who had conducted the conversation behind the curtain.

This was less vague, and now for the first time a suspicion of the spirit's identity crossed my mind; but I would not go up until a name had been given, and I asked for this before leaving my seat.

My travelling companion--a recent acquaintance--had never heard me mention the lady in question, who *had* died in Germany at the time specified. The little child said the spirit would give the name through her, and the process was a curious one. Instead of mentioning the whole name or each letter of it to her father, the child *described* each letter to him as you might describe the lines of the large capitals in a child's reading-book. The father guessed the letter from the child's description, and asked me if the first one were correct? It was; but I did not tell him so, merely saying I should like to have the Christian name in full before giving any opinion.

In due time the six letters (Muriel, we will call it) were correctly given, and I had then no further excuse for refusing to speak to the spirit.

I went up to the curtain, and she appeared in front of it. I have been frequently asked: "Should you have recognised her as your friend had no name been given?" With every wish to be perfectly truthful, I find it difficult to answer this question, for the following reason:--None of the "materialisations" I saw were exactly human in face. There was no idea of a mask or clever "get up," but if one could accept the theory of a body hastily put together and assumed for a time, the result is exactly what might have been expected under the circumstances.

My friend in real life was very pale, and had exquisitely chiselled features, and the ones I now looked upon were of the same *cast*. The height was also similar, and an indescribable atmosphere of refinement, purity, and quiet dignity, for which she had been remarkable; all this was present with this materialisation. More than this I cannot say, for no materialisation I have ever seen could be truthfully considered *identical* with the human original.

I did not feel frightened, but I did feel embarrassed, and naturally so, considering how unwilling and grudging my recognition of her individuality must have appeared. She seemed conscious of this, for almost immediately she mentioned her hands, holding them out for inspection, and saying:

"Don't you remember my hands? I was so proud of my hands!"

Now, as a matter of fact, my friend was noted for her beautiful hands, but she was too sensible and clever a woman to have been conceited about them, and had too much good taste ever to have made their beauty a subject of remark, even to an intimate friend.

Moreover, the hands now *en évidence*, although well shaped and with tapering fingers, were as little identical with a human hand as the face was identical with a human face.

Casting about for something to say to her, my first thought was for an only and dearly loved married sister of hers, also a friend of mine, and I mentioned the latter in a guarded way, saying: "If you are in reality my friend, have you no message for *your sister*?"

In a moment, and without the slightest hesitation, she said: "*Tell poor Jessie*," going on with a message peculiarly appropriate to the facts of the case, but of much too private a nature for publication.

Almost immediately afterwards, and *with no shadow of suggestion from me*, she added:

"*Poor Jessie! She suffered terribly when I passed away so suddenly.*"

My friend had died in a foreign country, under peculiarly sad circumstances. She was young, beautiful, and accomplished; a prominent local figure in the well-known capital where she had spent several winters. Her death was so sudden that there was not even time to put off a large afternoon "At Home" arranged for that day. Moreover, this sister, by a most merciful chance, happened to be spending a few months with her, out of England, at the time. These were all special facts, spontaneously referred to by her, but which would *not* have applied equally well to the death of any other friend, even supposing such a death to have occurred abroad.

The spirit spoke feebly and with difficulty, "not having much strength," she told me.

I asked if her father (who had died a few months previously) were with her.

"Not yet," she said gently; "but I know that he has passed over." She then kissed my hand, and faded away before my eyes, not apparently returning to the curtain (close to which I stood), but vanishing into thin air.

Some ten days later my friend and I went again to an evening *séance* at the same house, different people being present on this occasion. A stupid, "*unintelligent* sceptic" woman put us all out of harmony by making inane suggestions, always declaring that "*she would not for the world interfere with the conditions*," but doing so all the same. The "Angel Mother" came again, and rather lost her temper, I thought, with an aggravating, illogical man in the circle, who hammered away about Faraday's opinions on the spirit world without much idea of what he was talking about. "Nels Seymour" *appeared*, as well as spoke, this time. He took my hand and kissed it; but he does not leave the cabinet, as he is the "control." It was eleven years on this day since he had "passed over," so he called it his "birthday."

A very beautiful female spirit materialised and offered to sit on my lap; an offer I closed with at once.

She was some five feet eight inches in height, and a large, well-developed woman. Anticipating the possibility of her resting her feet on the ground, and so concealing her real weight, I moved my own feet from the ground the moment she sat down, which was easily done, as my chair was a high one.

She remained for several minutes in this position, resting, of necessity, her whole weight upon me, which was about equal to that of a small kitten or a lady's muff, in the days when small muffs were in fashion. There was an *appreciable* weight, but I have never nursed any baby that was not far heavier.

The veil this time was materialised in the usual way, my friend going up to watch the process.

My spirit friend appeared again, and more strongly this time. At a public *séance*, where so many are eager to communicate with their friends, it is impossible to monopolise more than a few minutes of the public time, and consequently any communications are as hurried and unsatisfactory as a conversation with an intimate friend in the public reading-room of a hotel would be.

* * * * *

I pass over another most excellent and evidential incident as a concession to family prejudice. It has already appeared in my book on America entitled "A Year in the Great Republic," and may be found there.

* * * * *

At a third materialising *séance* at the same house an excitable Italian friend of mine, who had never seen anything of the kind before, came with much the same prejudices as I had felt at the Boston *séance*, and disturbed the conditions very much by his attitude of determined antagonism; whilst his comparative ignorance of English, and my feeble Italian, made explanations, under the circumstances, rather hopeless. The whole circle was put out of harmony, and a dead weight

lay upon us all. The materialisations continued, it is true; but personally it was a great relief to me when my excitable friend left, declaring that everything he had seen was "*physiquement impossible mon ange*."

He departed so abruptly as to bring down much abuse upon his absent head for having "broken the battery" and almost "killed the medium" by his sudden disappearance from the circle.

This awful threat had so much power over the rest of the party that we sat out to the bitter end, leaving the medium at last still in her trance, with husband and son hovering over her in an anxiety which, if acted, showed first-class dramatic power.

Meanwhile I had made the acquaintance of a very beautiful and charming woman in New York, to whom I had brought a letter of introduction.

She has had a tragic and remarkable history; is a woman of great mental powers, in addition to very remarkable beauty; and is of the highest rank, being an Austrian princess, I believe, in her own right, and having spent her youth in foreign courts.

Apart from these facts, which had been told me by a mutual friend before we met, I knew nothing whatever of her family history, nor whether she had brothers or sisters, alive or dead.

I had spoken to her of my curious experiences, and she had discussed the matter with me from the standpoint of a thorough woman of the world, of strong mental power, who had seen too much of life to be dogmatic or narrow in her views, but too much also to believe in what is called the "supernatural," before every possible *natural* hypothesis had been admitted and dismissed as untenable.

Sitting in her pretty room the day before I left New York, we had talked for some two hours on various subjects connected with life and literature, and before the final "adieux" she said laughingly: "Well, have you been to any more *séances*?"

I said "No," and that we did not intend to do so, as our time was now so short. A few moments of careless talk on the subject ensued, and picking up a newspaper, I cast my eye over the usual list of mediums, clairvoyants, etc. A half-defined wish to see whether any spirit friend would come to me under totally different conditions and surroundings, and in an entirely different quarter of the city, led to my copying out one of the addresses at haphazard.

I could not prevail upon my hostess to accompany me (she is delicate, and dreads night air), but I took the slip of paper to my hotel, thinking that my friend there might care to take the cars after dinner to this distant end of the city.

My English companion proved rather indifferent and disinclined towards the expedition.

This was very natural. She was not magnetic in temperament, and had no expectation of seeing any of her own friends, although, of course, she had both seen and spoken to those who came for me.

However, a good dinner at the excellent Windsor Hotel fortified us so much after our fatigues that at the last moment we agreed to make one more attempt, no one, ourselves included, having known five minutes previously that we should leave the house.

On this occasion we were ushered into a much more imposing drawing-room, and the lady herself was evidently some degrees higher in the social scale than our first mediumistic friend.

The arrangements also were quite different. As we sat waiting for a few minutes (having arrived very punctually), Mrs Gray looked at my friend, and then described an elderly lady with grey hair who was standing over her, but, of course, invisible to our eyes. Almost immediately Mrs Gray began rubbing her knees, and complained of pain in them, adding: "The impression of dropsy is being conveyed to me. This spirit seems to have suffered from disease of that nature."

My friend--who was very self-contained and unemotional--gave no

clue to the fact that she recognised anyone by this description, but as we were returning home in the cars she said quietly: "It is curious Mrs Gray should have described that old lady with grey hair--I suppose she meant my mother. *She* had grey hair, and died of dropsy."

On my expostulating with this lady for having given the impression that she did not recognise the description at the time she said, with conscious pride: "You don't suppose I was going to let the woman know that she had described my mother?"

To give a false impression in so good a cause as determined incredulity, seems not only justifiable, but actually praiseworthy to many minds.

Later in the evening, the *séance* being in full swing, a spirit dressed in some kind of white "sister's" dress appeared at the door of the cabinet; and Mrs Stoddart Gray asked if anyone in the circle could speak German, as this spirit did not seem to understand French, Italian, or English, and she herself only recognised German by the sound.

A gentleman volunteered his assistance, but apparently without much effect, and being a German scholar, I then offered to come to the rescue. The moment I went up to the figure she seemed to gain strength, and came quite out of the cabinet, and said to me in the most refined German (any readers who have studied the language know that there is as wide a difference between the highest and lowest type of German accent as between an educated Irish "accent" and an Irish brogue):

"*Ich bin die schwester von Madame Schewitsch*," mentioning the name of the foreign friend with whom I had been spending that afternoon: "*Ich weisz das Sie Heute Nach mittag bei meiner schwester waren.*"[1]

[1] Translation: "I am the sister of Madame Schewitsch--I know that you spent this afternoon with my sister."

She had evidently a strong, almost overwhelming desire to make some communication to me for her sister, but the difficulty in doing so seemed equally strong.

It lay beyond the question of language. She spoke with sufficient strength, and I could understand perfectly her well-chosen and well-pronounced words. But some insuperable obstacle seemed to prevent her telling me what she wished to convey, and the despairing attempt to surmount this was painful in the extreme.

I assured her of my willingness to help in any way possible, and made a few suggestions, but all in vain.

"Is it that you are not happy?"

"No--no! That is not it."

It seemed to me some sort of warning which she wished to convey, and had some connection with illness, for the words *achtung* and *krankheit* (warning and illness) were repeated more than once, but no definite message came.

I then asked if she could *write* it, and she caught eagerly at the idea. So I borrowed a pencil and some paper, and placed them on a small table in the middle of the room, with a chair in front of it. She came quite close to the table (five gas burners were more than half turned on, so there was plenty of light), sat down, and took up the pencil, but almost immediately threw it down again, saying in a most unhappy and despairing voice: "*Nein! nein! Ich kann es selbst nicht schreiben!*"[2] and vanished before my very eyes as she rose from the table. Now had this been a case of fraud, and supposing that some woman had means of discovering the name of my New York friend and the fact of my having spent that very afternoon with her, what would have been easier than to write or give some commonplace message in a language of which she had already proved herself mistress?

[2] Translation: "No! no! I cannot even write it!"

The episode was so painful that I decided *not* to write to Madame Schewitsch about it. I have therefore no absolute corroboration of the fact that the lady mentioned had a sister who became a nun, or who was connected with some such establishment, and had passed over. This,

however, is much more probable than not, because in every high-born Catholic family in Austria, one member in a large family almost invariably takes the veil. I have given the real name in this case, hoping Madame Schewitsch may perchance come across my book, and supply the information needed. I may remark, finally, that three or four months later, whilst travelling in California, I heard from my excitable and sceptical Italian friend (who had given me the introduction to Madame Schewitsch) that this lady had had a long and most serious illness during my absence in the West, and that her husband and he had both feared she would never recover from it. This fear, fortunately, proved to be groundless.

To return to the sitting.

About twenty minutes after the "sister" had disappeared, a figure in white came forward very swiftly, and without a moment's hesitation pointed towards me, saying quickly: "*For you.*"

I went up at once, recognising who it was, but determined to give no sign of this fact.

The "spirit" looked at me for a moment with surprise, as one might look at any well-known friend who passed us in the street without a greeting.

As I remained silent she whispered: "Don't you know me?" I am afraid *I* gave the false impression this time, and asked her for her name.

"*Why, I am Muriel!*" came the instant answer, mentioning the name of the first friend who had appeared to me, after spelling out her name, at the previous *séances* held in another part of New York.

On this third appearance my spirit friend asked me to kiss her. I must confess that I complied with some amount of trepidation, which proved to be quite unnecessary.

There was nothing the least repulsive to the touch, although it was not exactly like kissing anyone on earth; but an indescribable atmosphere

of freshness and purity, which seemed always to surround this friend whilst living, was very apparent under these changed conditions. Another curious little point is that I had entirely forgotten my friend's love of violets (she always wore them when possible, and used violet scent) until I smelt them distinctly whilst speaking to her.

It must be remembered that until the day of the sitting, we had never dreamed of going to Mrs Gray's house, nor had we even heard her name. I picked it out of a newspaper by chance--amongst at least thirty others.

Until past seven o'clock that evening we had not decided to visit her, and the *séance* began at eight P.M., no single person in the room being present who had been at the house of the other medium some weeks previously. Under these circumstances it would be difficult to account for the fact of my friend's reappearance on the ground of collusion between the two mediums. Moreover, such collusion would not account for the appearance earlier in the evening of a spirit claiming to be the sister of Madame Schewitsch.

No one hitherto has been able to suggest any *intelligent* explanation of my personal experiences on these occasions. Conjuring tricks and trap doors are, of course, "trotted out" by the *unintelligent* sceptic, but these do not meet the difficulty of an *accurate knowledge of names and of family matters of comparatively small importance.*

As I am just now chiefly concerned with presenting incidents in my life rather than in prosing over them, I resist the temptation to go further into the question of *Materialisations* either from the historical or ethical point of view, and pass on to the subject of clairvoyance.

CHAPTER II

--continued

INVESTIGATIONS IN AMERICA, 1885-1886

In speaking of clairvoyance I shall again have recourse to my notes

taken at the time of my American visit and on the spot.

I am quite convinced that where a life has been in any way eventful or at all marked, any fairly developed clairvoyant can in some way "sense" your mental and moral atmosphere.

In some three or four personal cases, the notes taken at the time of such visits, paid several thousands of miles apart, might almost be read as descriptive of the same interview, with different witnesses.

My travelling companion, who had led a very uneventful life, seemed to puzzle them much more. There was apparently nothing to lay hold of, and only a very shadowy, indistinct picture was given in consequence.

In my own case the colours were put on freely, firmly, and without the least hesitation, and in every single instance the sketch was remarkably truthful, and yet would not have described the life of one other woman in three or four hundred.

That there is a good deal of guesswork done even under the supposed influence of "trance" is quite evident to me. I am not prepared to say that such trances were in no case genuine, but the remarks made during them were frequently of a tentative nature, and the slightest good "hit" was followed up with as much ingenuity as Sir Richard Owen displayed in putting together his skeleton from a single bone.

I was told some six or seven times that my mother (who died during my infancy) was my guardian spirit, and six times her name was given to me, with some difficulty in one or two cases, but invariably without the smallest guessing on the part of the clairvoyant or any hint from me.

One of my most successful interviews in New York was with a Mrs Parks of Philadelphia--a very pleasant, good-looking, healthy woman, quite unlike the usual cadaverous medium with whom one is more familiar.

Her terms being rather higher than those usually asked in America (where competition has made mediums a cheap luxury), I demurred at

first; upon which she said brightly: "Well, don't come if you don't feel like paying that; but I never alter my prices. But I won't take your money if I don't give you satisfaction. Some get satisfaction from one person and some from another--you will soon see if I am telling you the truth about your friends, and I won't take a penny from you if you are dissatisfied."

I left the house saying I would think it over, and Mrs Parks did not at all press me to come, and from my manner could hardly have expected to see me.

I had a most satisfactory interview with her next day.

After referring to my mother's presence, and giving her name without any hesitation, she gave me several messages with regard to character which were singularly appropriate, and finished up by saying: "Your mother does not wish you to go to mediums or mix yourself too much up with such persons. It is not necessary for you to do so; she says you have enough mediumistic power for her to be able to communicate with you directly."

I could not help saying: "Well, Mrs Parks, you are going very much against your own interests in giving me this message. I am a perfect stranger to you in this city. I have told you that I am making some little stay here, and as you have given me so much satisfaction I might have been induced to come and see you several times again before leaving."

She laughed, and answered: "That is quite true; but I am an honest woman, and I am bound to give you the message that is given to me for you, even when it goes against my interest."

Seeing her bright, pleasant home, with every trace of comfort about it, and having received personal proof that money alone was not her consideration, I could not help asking why she continued such an arduous life.

"Well," she answered, "the truth is that I do it now against my own wish. My husband has always objected to it more or less. He was afraid

it might injure my health, and for two years I gave it up entirely. But," she added, "the spirits would not leave me alone. It seemed as if I *had* to come back to it, as if I were refusing to use the powers that had been given to me for the help and comfort of my fellow-creatures. I name a higher price than others, to limit my work and to keep away those who would only come from idle curiosity." She also told me that sometimes she had to give orders beforehand that certain people should not be admitted on any pretext whatever. "I can see their spirits round them before they reach the door very often, and I would not have such people, bringing such an atmosphere into my house--no, not if they gave me a hundred dollars for each sitting."

I must mention one more incident connected with this period of my investigations, because it throws a strong light on some obscure problems.

Whilst consulting these clairvoyants, in widely different parts of America, two very near relatives of mine were almost invariably described, and the names--one male and one female--were generally given. The mediums invariably went on to say that the female spirit was further on in development than the male spirit. Now there were circumstances which made this statement, viewed from this world's standpoint, not only absolutely mistaken, but almost ludicrously so. The woman's nature had been a far more faulty one--more impetuous, less balanced, and so forth. The male spirit described had been a man of very exceptional character and spirituality, whilst on earth.

In spite of these facts the same "mistake," as I considered it, had consistently been made by every clairvoyant who described them; which, by-the-by, rules out telepathy as an explanation of these special experiences. It certainly seemed strange that after giving accurate descriptions of the two relatives referred to--names included--each clairvoyant should make exactly the same mistake upon so obvious a matter as the question involved.

Some months later, in the course of my travels, I found myself at Denver in Colorado. We stayed here, at first, one day only, to break our journey farther up into the Rocky Mountains. The previous day, when

wandering about Colorado Springs, my friend and I had come across a lady doctor by chance; and having asked some trivial question, we were invited into her pretty little house, where we chatted for half-an-hour on various subjects--including spiritualism. We gave no account of our experiences, but simply mentioned the fact that we had some interest in the investigation.

Hearing this, and that we were going on to Denver next day, this lady gave me the address of a young married friend who lived in that city, and who had during the previous two years suddenly developed strong mediumistic power, but was in no way a professional. She begged us to call if possible, and I took down the address, but said it was very doubtful if we could do so in the short time we should have at our disposal.

At the end of a long afternoon's drive to the most interesting points of view in Denver, we found ourselves close to the quarter where this young woman lived, and called at the house mentioned. The lady was not at home, and a friend who received us explained that it would be impossible for her to come down in the evening to see us, as she was delicate, and not allowed to go out at night.

As we were leaving Denver early next morning, this made a meeting impossible, so we left our cards, and a note to explain our visit. Going into the hotel office after dinner that evening, I heard a gentleman inquiring for me by name, saying he had brought his wife to see me. I explained that I was the lady he asked for, and he then said, with the stoical resignation of the typical American husband: "I did not like her to come out, but she was bound to have her own way."

The lady in question came into my bedroom upstairs after dismissing her husband, and said she "preferred a room already permeated by my influence." She then continued very simply: "I do not know whether I shall be able to help you at all, but it seems there is something I have to tell you or explain. When I read your note I felt bound to come, although my husband tried to dissuade me. It seemed to me as if the spirits came all the way with me in the cars."

She then gave me quite a good sitting, but on the ordinary lines, ending up by the description of the relatives mentioned, and by making the usual "mistake" about their relative spiritual positions.

This was all said in trance. When she returned to consciousness I said: "Now, Mrs Brown (her real name), I must tell you honestly that you have made one cardinal mistake, but I am also bound to say that five or six professional mediums have done just the same as regards the same matter." I then explained, and asked if she could account for such a persistent and obvious misconception.

"Wait a moment," she answered; "perhaps the spirits will tell me."

She looked up with a very intent expression for a minute, as though listening to some explanation which did not cover the ground of her own experience, and then said very quickly and in a monotonous voice, as though repeating a verbal message:

"It has nothing exactly to do with our earthly idea of 'goodness.' Spiritual life can only come to those prepared for it, within the limits of their capacity. The male spirit you mention was a clergyman of the Church of England. He was a very holy man, but he was in some way creed bound. He was a man of strong creed; he clung to his creed here, and cannot quite free himself from it even now, although he has advanced very much in spiritual perception. Now his wife had a very sympathetic, *apprehending* nature. She can therefore receive spiritual light more fully and freely. That is why she has risen to a higher plane. This is not a question of character so much as of *spiritual capacity*, and in this she is the more highly gifted of the two. She is on a different plane, but she is able to help her husband very much, and in time he will join her, and they will progress together."

All this was said in a quick, decided way, and without the smallest hesitation.

One would hardly have expected a young woman in the midst of the Rocky Mountains to know the exact meaning of the term "*clergyman of the Church of England*," for the word is almost unknown in America,

where they speak invariably of a *minister*. Yet the words were given with quick, firm precision, exactly as written down.

Later, in San Francisco, a clairvoyant at once referred to my friend "Muriel," and described her, but in rather vague terms. When I pointed this fact out she said a little impatiently, as though we were wasting time in quibbling: "*Oh, well, it does not matter. The spirit tells me you know perfectly well who it is. She has already appeared to you in New York.*"

I had gone to this particular medium with several young friends, who were all in a very sceptical and rather frivolous state of mind. She described "an uncle," apparently over the heads of two of my friends, and gave the further information that he was surrounded by water, and appeared to have been drowned; also that he was extremely musical.

This was declared to be perfectly untrue and without a grain of foundation, in fact.

The woman looked puzzled and a little mortified, but turned to others in the circle, with better success, let us hope!

On our return home, when the young people were telling their mother of the "awful humbug" amid shouts of laughter, the mother said quietly: "But surely you remember, my dear children, hearing of your Uncle Robert, who was drowned years ago, before any of you were born? He *was* a great musician. He wanted to give up his life to art, but he was persuaded to take up another profession."

I give this as an instance of the carelessness with which, when we are *determined* to find fraud, we may do so sometimes at the expense of truth. These young girls had doubtless heard of their uncle, but the fact had possibly escaped their memories for the moment, and probably they had no wish to recall anything which could cast a doubt on their preconceived notion that "the whole thing was a swindle!"

Before closing the chapter of my American experiences in the years 1885 and 1886, I must give one more personal detail.

When investigating various clairvoyants in the Eastern States in March and April of the year 1886, I had been told more than once that a guardian band of six spirits was forming round me, and would be later supplemented by another band of six protectors. Whether this had any bearing upon the following incident, I must leave my readers to decide.

* * * * *

About three months after this pronouncement I found myself at Victoria, Vancouver's Island. Miss Greenlow and I had gone there from San Francisco for a week or two, not being able at that time to make the further trip to Alaska. After a very stormy voyage of two or three days we reached Victoria one morning about six A.M. There was only one large double-bedded room available at the hotel, and we took this on the understanding that two separate rooms should be found for us before the evening.

As we lay on our beds for a few hours of much needed rest, quite suddenly I realised that I saw something abnormal in the air--just above and in front of my head. I mentioned this with much surprise to my companion, who at once suggested the effects of liver after a sea voyage so tempestuous as ours had been. For the first few moments I was inclined to agree with her, and said so; but very shortly my opinion was altered by the fact that what I saw first as an indistinct blur gradually assumed a definite shape, and I then found there were six little swallows in front of me, apparently connected with each other by a waving ribbon, or so it appeared to me.

Opening and shutting one's eyes did not affect the vision. There they remained, both at the moment and for several succeeding years, during which time I was constantly in the habit of seeing "*my birds*," as we used to call them. About six months after their first appearance in the pure, clear atmosphere of Victoria (Vancouver), I was driving across the Blackheath Common on a very bright, frosty day, and looking out of the open window of my carriage, I saw my six birds as usual; but for the first time, parallel with them and lower down, were six new birds of just the same size and appearance (about half-an-inch between the tips of the wings).

A few days later the new birds and the old ones had amalgamated, and twelve little swallows floated in the air before my eyes. I could not see them in the house. It needed the background of uninterrupted sky apparently to throw them into sufficient relief to be recognised. After some years, this special sign was withdrawn, and others have taken its place. For example, I have seen in the same way, during the last fourteen years, an anchor, with the chain attached to it, and caught through one end of the former, a short reaping hook. This, doubtless, has some symbolical meaning. Near the anchor I see a sacrificial altar, with flames rising up from it; then a triangle, with loops at the corners, which I was once told was the sign of Nostradamus. Then an old-fashioned mirror in a quaintly-shaped frame, and finally a long staff, with the sign of Aries at one end. I have since realised that this is very much like the "Staff of Faith" found on the top of many of the tombs in the Roman catacombs. All these latter emblems come together as a rule, with a connecting thread binding them to each other. I cannot see them at will, but when the atmosphere is at all clear they are rarely absent, when I have time to look for them. I was much amused once by an earnest Christian scientist, with whom I happened to be spending a few days on the coast of the eastern counties. She had warned me repeatedly against "phenomena" of every kind, spontaneous or induced. On a specially bright morning we were sitting together in a beautiful park, which is thrown open to strangers on special days, and, forgetting my companion's prejudices, I exclaimed involuntarily:

"I never saw my signs more clearly than just now!--there must be something very pure about the atmosphere."

This was too much for my friend, who bent forward eagerly, saying:--"*Do let me try if I cannot see them too!*"

Well, she "tried" for the greater part of two hours, but absolutely in vain, and then got up, and suggested going home to luncheon. She added naïvely: "I *thought* they must have something wrong about them, and I am quite sure of it now, *or I should have seen them*."

But it had taken her two hours of failure to be absolutely convinced that they came straight from the devil!

One sign--also birds--appeared to me on one occasion only. We had returned to Denver, where Miss Greenlow and I were to separate after a year's constant travel together. She was going back to San Francisco to take steamer for the Sandwich Islands, and thence on to Australia; whilst I was returning to England for family reasons.

I had arranged to dine with the hospitable Dean of Denver the evening of the day of her departure, and I had not realised how much less lonely one would have felt had my journey East corresponded more closely with her journey West, especially as she was obliged to leave the hotel about nine o'clock in the morning.

Waking early, and lying in bed, feeling very melancholy at the idea of being left behind and alone in the very centre of America, I looked up, and, to my delight, saw a new sign.

Not my little birds this time, but two big, plump father and mother birds, with a short string attached, not horizontally as before, but perpendicularly. At the end of this little string was a tiny bird, even smaller than the swallows, being evidently guided by the two big birds, and quite safe in their charge.

My room communicated with that of my companion, whose door was open, and I told her of this new "sign in the heavens," adding that I hoped it had come to stay. Fortunately, I found a pencil, and made a rough sketch at the time, or I might have been tempted to imagine that I had never seen it at all, for the trio never appeared again, though I have longed to see them, and have certainly required the consolation quite as much, many times, since that far-away summer morning in Denver, Colorado.

* * * * *

On reaching home after this long American trip, I found a budget of letters awaiting me--amongst them a little registered box containing a kind birthday present from the brother who has been mentioned in the Introduction to this book. Was it another case of mental affinity which had induced him unconsciously to choose a gold brooch with two

swallows in gold and pearls? Not an uncommon design; but *the birds were exactly the same size as those I was in the habit of seeing just at that time*.

I never told him how extraordinarily *à propos* his present had proved, but I have always looked upon that brooch as a mascot, and have certainly worn it every day since it came into my possession.

CHAPTER III

AUSTRALIA AND NEW ZEALAND

Shortly after the Jubilee of 1887 had taken place, I sailed for Australia and New Zealand.

My first psychic experience in the Colonies took place in Melbourne, some months after my landing in Tasmania.

The wife of one of the "prominent citizens" in Melbourne had been specially invited to meet me at an afternoon reception in the house of friends to whom I had carried letters of introduction, as she was said to be so deeply interested in everything psychic, and would greatly enjoy hearing my American experiences. Fortunately, the lady arrived late, and we had already enjoyed some interesting conversation before she came. A wetter "wet blanket" it has never been my fortune to encounter. She was a very handsome woman, and therefore good to look at, but in the *rôle* of sympathetic audience she was a miserable failure. She sat with a cold, glassy eye fixed upon me, whilst I endeavoured to continue the conversation which had been interrupted by her arrival.

She might just as well have *said* as have looked the words: "Now go on making a fool of yourself!--that is just what I have come to see."

The position was hopeless. So I began to talk about the weather, which is disagreeable enough from sirocco in the hot spring months (it was the end of October) to be useful.

Presently the daughter of the house came up to me, and said:

"Do, please, go on telling us your interesting experiences, Miss Bates; we can talk about other things at any time, and we asked Mrs Burroughes on purpose to meet you."

The lady in question had joined another group by this time, so I was able to whisper in reply: "I am so very sorry, but I cannot possibly talk of these things before your friend--she paralyses me absolutely from any psychic point of view. She is very handsome, and I like looking at her, but I cannot talk to her except about the weather."

"How very odd!" was the unexpected reply. "That is just what Lizzie Maynard says. And I did very much want Lizzie to hear about America too, but she has gone off to the other end of the room, saying she knows you won't be able to talk whilst Mrs Burroughes is here."

This was interesting, for I had not noticed the young girl mentioned, who had not been introduced to me. So when my young hostess asked "if she might bring Lizzie to see me at my hotel next day," I gladly acquiesced, in spite of feeling very far from well at the moment.

This feeling of *malaise* increased in the night, and was, in fact, the precursor of a short but sharp attack of a form of typhoid which was running through the hotel at the time. Being in bed next afternoon about four o'clock, I was dismayed to hear that Miss Maynard had arrived to see me, and, moreover, had arrived *alone*. I had never spoken to the girl nor even consciously set eyes on her before, but I knew she must have come at least three miles from the suburb where she lived, and would probably refuse to have a cup of tea downstairs during my absence. There was nothing for it, therefore, but to make an effort, order tea to be brought for her to my room, and send a message hoping she would not mind seeing me in my bedroom.

She came up--a modest, charming-looking girl of about twenty. I explained the circumstances, and apologised for being unable to join in the tea-party, but felt rather desperate when I realised that even the effort of taking any share in the conversation was beyond me.

Suddenly a brilliant idea passed through my throbbing head. The day

before, in planning the visit, which Miss Boyle had been unable to carry out herself, she had mentioned that her friend Lizzie Maynard was a very good automatic writer, and this seemed a solution of the difficulty.

So when my little friend had finished her tea, but was still looking tired from the long walk, I said to her: "I am so sorry to be so stupid to-day, Miss Maynard. I cannot talk, but I can listen; or do you think possibly you could get a little writing for me? Miss Boyle told me you wrote automatically sometimes?"

"I will try, certainly," was the ready response. "I never know, of course, what may come, and as this is our first meeting, it may be a little more difficult, but I should like to try."

She found paper and pencil, and sat by my bedside, holding the pencil very loosely between the second and third fingers, instead of between the thumb and first two fingers in the usual way.

She continued talking to me during the whole time, and not being well versed in automatic writing then, I could not believe that any writing could really be going on in this very casual sort of way.

"Is any writing really coming?" I questioned at last.

"Oh yes; but I can't make out the last long word," she said, turning the paper round, so that she could see it, for the first time. "Kindly give me that word again," she remarked casually, and continued her conversation with me.

Finally the three or four sheets of rather large but not always very distinct caligraphy were submitted to me, and I saw that "Miscellaneous" had been the long word at the beginning which Lizzie had asked to have repeated.

The whole message was intensely interesting to me, for it began: "*I who on earth was known as George Eliot.*"

Now I had more than once seen, but had never spoken to, George Eliot in earth life, and although admiring her genius, as all who read her books are bound to do, there seemed no very obvious reason why she should come to me. Moreover, Lizzie Maynard, a charming but not highly educated girl (as I discovered later), seemed to know little about the famous author beyond her name. Another, and infinitely inferior, lady writer had been discussed with bated breath the day before in Lizzie's presence. Her books--just then in the zenith of their popularity--had newly penetrated to the Colonies, and were being talked of there as though Minerva herself, helmet and all complete, had suddenly arrived in Melbourne. I had personally been greatly interested by one of this lady's earlier books, and had a much less definite opinion of the author then, than I have at the present moment.

Threshing my brains for any sort of tie with George Eliot, I remembered having often stayed at Oxford as a young woman, when Jowett of Balliol was entertaining her and Mr Lewes, in his own home.

Of course, there was no question in those far-away days of my being asked to meet such a brilliant star; but it amused me often to hear the dull and uninteresting people of some standing in the University, whom Jowett had *not* favoured with an invitation, declaring that nothing would have induced them to accept it!

This was, however, but a feeble link, even when added to the righteous indignation one had so often experienced on hearing similar remarks made, about a woman too far above her critics both in genius and morals, for them to be able to catch the faintest glimpse of her personality.

Apparently it only now lay with me to cease asking *why*, and accept the goods provided by the gods, making the most of such an opportunity. On these occasions so many possible questions tumble over each other in the brain that it is difficult to select any one to start with.

At length I asked the following question:--

"What did George Eliot think of the author who had been so much

discussed and so highly applauded on the previous afternoon?"

Very quickly came the answer: "*I have no sympathy there--a mere puppet.*"

Certainly this was not thought reading; for my own opinion then was very indefinite, and Lizzie's views, as it turned out, were as enthusiastic as those of most people in the Colony. It was not until several years later that I realised that an extraordinarily *apt* criticism had been made; for a puppet is made to dance by other entities.

I was longing to ask another question, but had some natural hesitation in doing so before such a young girl. Moreover, I feared the answer must almost of necessity be coloured by the traditions of the latter, and therefore would be of no great value either way. But taking my courage "in both hands," I put the question:

"Please ask George Eliot if she *now* thinks that she was justified in the position she took up with regard to George Lewes?"

The answer came in a flash: "CERTAINLY. *We are one here, as we were on earth.*"

Anything less likely to emanate from the brain of an orthodox young girl can hardly be conceived!

Amongst other details, George Eliot said finally that she had come to know my mother in spirit life, where she was called STELLA. Now my mother's name in earth life was Ellen, which has the same root for its origin. Of course, Miss Maynard did not then know whether my mother were alive or dead, and nothing naturally concerning her Christian name.

The last statement made by George Eliot on this occasion was that "*before another year had rolled by, a great gift would come to me, and I must be very careful to use without abusing it.*" I was too tired at the moment to ask whether "another year rolling by" meant a whole year from 28th October 1887 (the date of the message), or the end of the

current year--namely, 31st December 1887.

When the message had come to an end, Miss Maynard gathered up the scattered sheets, and promising to copy them out for me, took her departure, and left me to muse--so far as a racking brain would allow--on the curious and interesting result of her visit. No cup of tea to thirsty wayfarer was ever surely so grandly rewarded!

My next adventure had a distant connection with these Australian experiences.

I had come out to join the friend (Miss Greenlow) who had been my companion in America, and who had thence sailed for Sydney when I returned for a year to England. She had been anxious for me to rejoin her in Australia, and from thence visit Japan and China; but my arrival having been delayed by literary matters, this lady had finally lost patience, and, without my knowledge, had gone on to New Zealand, and thence, as it turned out, to Samoa. When I heard of the New Zealand episode there was nothing for it but to follow her there, on a will-o'-the-wisp expedition, as it turned out, but, fortunately, I was unaware of this at the time. I say fortunately, because had I known that she had already left Australia for Samoa, I should certainly have returned to England, in despair of tracing her any further, and thereby one of my most interesting experiences would have been lost.

The illness in Melbourne, already referred to, detained me for over a fortnight, so it was necessary to transfer my New Zealand ticket from one boat to another. So the illness also must have been one of the factors that was involved in the adventure, as I have called it. For the delay led to my meeting--in a friend's house--Mr Arthur Kitchener (a younger brother of Lord Kitchener), who was introduced to me on the special ground that we were to be fellow-travellers to New Zealand a day or two later. As a matter of fact, Mr Kitchener was on his way from England to New Zealand, where he was superintending a sheep-run for his father in those days. He had come out by P. & O., and transhipped at Melbourne after two or three days' delay there.

Several other passengers from the *Massilia* were also going on to New

Zealand, and naturally they felt like old friends after the five or six weeks already spent together. They thought *I* wanted to be alone, and I thought *they* wanted to be alone, and so I kept severely to the upper deck, feeling often lonely, and they all remained on the lower deck, wishing I would come down and talk to them sometimes. In spite of these misconceptions on either side, Mr Kitchener and I became sufficiently friendly for him to give me a very kind and hospitable invitation to spend the last few days of the year at his "station," about nine miles from Dunback, in the Dunedin district. I think I must have told him of my disappointment in missing my companion in Sydney, after travelling so many thousand miles to join her, and doubtless he felt some interest in this Stanley and Livingstone sort of chase, with two women taking the principal characters!

Anyway, the invitation was given and accepted, and he kindly promised to ask one or two people to meet me in his house.

All this came to pass some weeks later, on my return from the New Zealand lakes, and just before an expedition to the "Sounds," generally known as the "Sounds Trip."

This is a pleasure trip, organised for early January, which is, of course, midsummer there. It lasts for ten days, and gives one the opportunity of seeing to the best advantage these glorious inlets of the sea.

My week at the sheep station was to precede this, as I have explained; in fact, as the steamer sailed late in the afternoon, it was possible to go on board without stopping for the night at Dunedin, whence we were to sail. But at the last moment a slight contretemps took place. Owing to some delay the steamer would not be able to leave till Monday, instead of the Saturday morning as arranged, and our kind host insisted on extending his hospitality for the two extra days.

Now each day there had been some talk about having an impromptu *séance*, and each day I had successfully evaded the arrangement. I have a great dislike to sitting in casual circles with strangers, and it seemed to me that no good purpose would be served by doing so. It is impossible on these occasions to convince anyone else that you are not

pushing or "muscle moving," or generally playing tricks, and it has always seemed to me that the time wasted over mutual recriminations on these points, or the silly jokes that appear inevitable, when two or three human beings at a table get together in a private house; might be much more profitably spent.

Table turning as a parlour game is about as stupid and aimless an amusement as I know. I represented all this to Mr Kitchener, but in vain. He had attended some psychic meetings in Dunback or Dunedin, and evidently wished me to reconsider the matter. Also it happened to be the last day of the year, when people are always more inclined to be obliging, I suppose; anyway that Saturday night, 31st December 1887, found me sitting down to a table in the little drawing-room of that far-away sheep station.

As some reward for any virtue there may have been in yielding my point, I remembered suddenly that George Eliot's message on 28th October--two months previously--had been rather vague, and that it might be interesting, if the chance came, to find out whether "*before another year has rolled away*" meant a year from 28th October, or the year of which so few hours still remained to us.

After the usual inanities--"*I am sure you are pushing.*" "No; *you* are! *I saw your fingers pressing heavily.*" "*Why, how extraordinary! that is exactly what I thought about you*," etc. etc., it was intimated that a spirit was there giving the name of George Eliot, so I put my question at once.

"I did not mean another year from October last--I referred to this year," was the answer.

"Shall I be able to write automatically?" was my next query.

"No; leave that alone--it would be very dangerous for you at present."

"Shall I be able to hear? Shall I become clair-audient?"

"No," came for the second time.

My next question naturally was: "Then shall I be able to *see* very soon?"

"Yes; for you will become clairvoyant for the first time. Remember my warning to use but not abuse the gift."

Now I must explain that all this time a good deal of the usual kind of joking had been going on. Moreover, I felt intuitively that Mr Kitchener thought I was deceiving myself into the idea that human muscles could not account for the movements, and, in fact, the very worst possible conditions for getting anything of value were present.

So much so that I did not for one moment suppose that it was really George Eliot, or that she would countenance that particular sort of buffoonery, and the incident made no impression upon me at all. I had already taken my hands off the table, when someone--Mr Kitchener, I think--banged it down four times, and then triumphantly observed: "*Yes, of course, you will see somebody during the night, or rather at four o'clock in the morning, you see!*" The whole thing was the kind of fiasco I had expected, "degenerating into a romp," as poor Corney Grain used to remark about the "Lancers" and the stern old lady in the suburban villa.

The bathos of table turning had surely been reached when it came to banging the leg of the table down four times, and calmly announcing four o'clock as the time for my first vision!

But the remarkable point is that I *did* have my first vision that night, though it had come and gone long before four A.M.

It is necessary to remember that the sun rises about three-thirty A.M. during the end of December or first week in January out there, so it would have been fairly light before four A.M.; whereas when I woke out of my first sleep that night, it was pitch dark.

My room was the usual whitewashed apartment to be found in the ordinary colonial "station," with a wooden bed standing about two or three feet from the wall, and parallel with the only window in the room;

which faced the door (at the foot of my bed), and was fitted with a very dark green blind, on account of the hot summer sunshine.

But it was now pitch dark in the room. I woke facing the window, but turned on my side, as one generally does on such occasions, and this brought me face to face with the wall. To my infinite amazement there stood between the wall and my bed, a diaphanous figure of a woman, quite life size or rather more, with one arm held out in a protecting fashion towards me, and some drapery about the head. The features were, moreover, quite distinct, and, as I afterwards realised, the counterpart of George Eliot's curious and Savonarola-like countenance. But at the moment, oddly enough, I only thought of two things--first, how extraordinary that what had appeared to me such a silly waste of time overnight should have had any element of reality about it! Then swiftly came the second idea: "And how in the world does it happen that I don't feel a bit frightened?"

I lay there absolutely content and peaceful, with a feeling of blissful satisfaction which I have never exactly realised either before or since that one occasion.

"*Everything is all right--nothing can really ever go wrong--nothing at least that matters at all. All the real things are all right. I can never doubt the truth of these things after this experience. It was promised, and the promise has been redeemed.*" These were the thoughts that passed idly through my brain as I lay--fully awake--and looked up at the comforting woman's figure. For it seemed more--much more--than a mere vision. I have spoken of the figure as diaphanous because it was not as solid as an ordinary human being, but, on the other hand, I could not see the wall through it: it was too solid for that. Then I remembered a story told in *The Athenæum*--of all papers--and written by a Dr Jephson, of his experience whilst paying a visit to Lord Offord, and making notes--late at night--in the library of the house for some literary work on hand. He had finished his notes, put away the book of reference, looked at his watch, found the hands marking two A.M. (so far as I remember), and had just said to himself: "Well, I shall be in bed by two-thirty after all," when, turning round, he found a large leather

chair close to his own, tenanted by a Spanish priest in some ancient dress!

Thinking it might be an hallucination, he deliberately turned round--*away* from the priest--rubbed his eyes, and then slowly looked back again. Still the priest was there, and Dr Jephson then realised for the first time that, although not *consciously frightened* or alarmed in any way, he was quite unable to *speak* to the intruder. So he quietly chose a pencil, sat down, and calmly took his portrait. The priest politely remained until the sketch was completed, and then vanished.

This story, read some years previously, flashed through my brain, and I thought: "*I* will try turning round, and then seeing if she is still there." I turned deliberately, facing the window, and then realised that it was pitch dark in my room--not the faintest glimmer of light came through the heavily shrouded window. "*Then it can't be four o'clock*," was my triumphant comment.

It would have been too disappointing had my distinguished visitor condoned the unblushing banging down four times of the table leg, by choosing that hour for her arrival in my room! But then again, how could I *see* her, since the room was quite dark? It was only necessary to turn round once more to the wall to realise that I *did* see her in fact, although I ought not to have done so in theory! I saw her as distinctly as I ever saw a marble statue in the Vatican Gallery by the light of noon. Although I had recalled the Jephson story so circumstantially, it never struck me that it might be interesting to attempt any conversation, and see whether I also were tongue-tied. I did not *want* to speak--there seemed no special reason for speaking. It was quite enough to lie there with this blissful feeling of protection and love folding me round like a cloud with golden lining. And as this consciousness held me in its loving grasp, to my infinite sorrow the kind, protecting figure disappeared, gently and very slowly, sinking into the ground on the spot where I had first seen her; and once more all was dark in the room.

I lay, too happy and peaceful for movement or even speculation for some ten minutes, and then it struck me that I had better light the candle by my side, and find out what o'clock it might be.

Now I have a rather accurate idea of time, and can generally tell within a minute or two how long any special work may have taken me. Looking at my watch, I saw it was just two-twenty-five A.M., so I settled in my own mind that I must have seen the figure at two-fifteen A.M., or possibly at two-ten A.M., for I think the experience lasted nearly five minutes altogether. Anyway, I felt sure that ten minutes, as nearly as possible, had elapsed between the sinking of the figure out of sight and my lighting the match in order to consult my watch. It may have been nine minutes, or possibly eleven, but I feel confident the time mentioned would be within these limits.

Therefore next morning, when our host appeared, and I was chaffed about "the vision," I said boldly: "You think it all nonsense, and I confess I did not believe anything that came last night when so much joking was going on, but I was mistaken. I *did* see, for the first time in my life, anything abnormal." And I repeated my experience, just as I have now written it down.

Incredulous looks greeted me, and then Mr Kitchener said quietly:

"Oh yes, you saw something at four A.M. I am not at all surprised to hear that."

"Not at four A.M.," I answered, "but at two-fifteen A.M. I made a special note of the time. I was asleep again long before four A.M., and never slept better in my life."

He looked puzzled, and then suggested that my watch must have gone wrong; but we compared notes, and our watches were registering exactly the same hour within a minute or two.

I found out later that, having learnt something of the Thought Transference Theory at the Dunedin Circle or Metaphysical Club which he had attended, Mr Kitchener had attempted to *make me see* a vision at four A.M., but as he confessed he had been fast asleep *when* I *did* see (*an hour and three quarters before his efforts started*), it would take a very ingenious person to prove that the latter had anything to do with the occurrence.

A deeply interesting corroboration reached me, however, a few weeks later, by which time I had visited the "Sounds," and many other places of interest, and had arrived safely at Auckland, in the North Island.

On the morning of my vision, I must not forget to mention, that I had spoken of it to Mr Kitchener's faithful Irish housekeeper, whose nationality I knew would prevent her thinking me a mere lunatic. By this time scepticism had the upper hand, and I was beginning to try to explain away everything in the true Podmorian spirit.

Could Mr Kitchener or any other person present have had to do with the matter? In this case my blissful feelings would naturally be merely the result of imagination, and easily disposed of on this ground. So I questioned the little housekeeper when she brought my hot water as to whether it could have been possible for Mr Kitchener or anyone else in the house to have access to a clean sheet or tablecloth, and to have masqueraded in the garden outside my room. She indignantly denied the possibility. "The linen is all locked up by me; besides, no one would have been so wicked. It might have frightened you out of your senses, ma'am! Do you suppose the master would have done such a thing?"

No; I did not really accuse anyone of such a cruel and stupid joke. Moreover, it was a little difficult, even for Podmorian ingenuity, to explain how man or woman, masquerading in a white sheet in the garden outside, could convey the fairly solid figure of a faked "George Eliot," who stood well out between the wall and my bed; and this through a thick green blind and curtains, when garden and room alike were shrouded in *absolute* darkness!

Foiled in all my attempts to find a "sensible solution" to the mystery, I determined to write and ask Lizzie Maynard of Melbourne if *she* could throw any light upon matters, my decision in taking this step being strengthened by the curious coincidence which I had just discovered--*i.e.* that Mr Kitchener's housekeeper had lived with the Maynards when they had had a house in Dunedin, which was later burnt down, as so often happens in the Colonies. "Jane" had lost sight of the Maynard family for years, and was much excited by my

promising to write and tell them of my meeting with her.

Of course, I mentioned my strange experience and all the details connected with it--*except* the exact hour of the occurrence. It was by a pure oversight (as I supposed) that this fact was omitted. I have had reason since to believe that I was unconsciously impressed to leave out this special detail, in order that I might receive far better evidence than would have been possible under other circumstances. Had I mentioned the hour of the vision, the imagination of my young friends in Melbourne might have been at work as regards the hour of *their* experience, which was as follows:--

Several weeks after leaving Dunback I reached Auckland, and received amongst other letters one from Lizzie Maynard in answer to mine. Mr Kitchener had also written, saying what nice girls my friends the Maynards must be, and how kindly they had written to his excellent little housekeeper, sending her welcome gifts, and saying that her place had never been filled in their hearts, and so forth. Lizzie's letter to me began also about the excellences of "Jane," and the curious coincidence through which she had been once more put in touch with her; then she went on to say:

"It is indeed very remarkable about your experience, dear Miss Bates, but I think you will consider it much more remarkable when I tell you what *we* were doing that night. I was spending the week-end with our mutual friends Captain and Mrs Boyle" (in whose house she and I had encountered Mrs Burroughes), "and Lily Boyle and I were sleeping in the same room, as the house was full.

"On the evening of 31st December there was a little dance arranged, to 'dance the old year out and the new year in,' and at midnight we dispersed, the visitors going home, and those in the house retiring to bed. Lily and I were too much excited to get into bed at once, so I suggested that we should try to compose a letter to Miss Pearl" (this being the lady whose writings they greatly admired. I had allowed them to use my name as an introduction, should they wish to communicate with her at any time).

Lizzie went on to say how nervous they were about writing the letter, fearing that so popular an author might not take any notice of the badly expressed letter of two young colonial girls. However, she did her best, and Lily Boyle did *her* best, and the result was a hopeless failure! "Then," continued Lizzie, "a happy thought struck me--George Eliot had used my hand to convey her message to you last October; might we not, remembering this, appeal to her to help us in our difficulty? So we gave up trying to write the letter ourselves, took down planchette from its shelf, and started again. In a few moments an excellent letter was written, giving your name as an introduction, with all the little points you had specially begged us to remember in connection with Miss Pearl's probable prejudices. It was so splendidly written, and so quickly, that you can imagine our delight! We could not bear to give up planchette even after both our names had been signed, and I said pleadingly: '*Oh, don't go away! Do stop and tell us something more*.'

"In large letters, as you see" (Lizzie enclosed the script), "was written very decidedly:

"NO, I CANNOT STAY WITH YOU NOW--I HAVE PROMISED TO GO AND SEE STELLA'S DAUGHTER.

"I remembered, dear Miss Bates, that G. Eliot had said your mother's name in spirit life was *Stella*, so, of course, we knew that she meant us to understand that she was going to see *you*.

"Unfortunately, you did not mention the hour of her visit, but we took the time when enclosed message was written--very accurately--in order to tell you about it, and the hour was just twelve-thirty A.M. Do write and tell us that was the time when she appeared to you--we feel sure it must have been--but are longing to have our idea confirmed, etc. etc."

Now my young friends had evidently entirely forgotten the difference in time between Dunedin and Melbourne, and I must confess to my own amazement when I found that it was considerably over the sixty minutes, which I should have vaguely supposed it to be.

In fact, I was rather disappointed to think there was so wide a margin

between the two occurrences, until I casually asked a gentleman, who was staying in my hotel, if he could tell me the difference in time between the two cities.

"Not exactly, I'm afraid, but it is considerably over an hour. Ah, there is a good atlas! I can easily calculate it for you." He remained silent for a moment, and then raising his head, said: "As nearly an hour and three quarters as possible." This was pretty good evidence of the practically simultaneous experience of my friends in Melbourne at twelve-thirty A.M., with my own at two-fifteen A.M. in the neighbourhood of Dunedin.

When I first became acquainted with Mr Myers, shortly after my return from Australia and New Zealand, I told him this story. He was greatly interested, but pointed out that it was useless from the evidential point of view unless I would take the trouble to write one or two letters to the Colonies.

So I wrote to Mr Kitchener for confirmation of the fact that I was staying in his house on the night of 31st December 1887, and had told him of my experience next morning, exactly as here related. Then I had to get Miss Lizzie Maynard's testimony with regard to her letter to me, and finally, I think, the testimony of Lily Boyle and her father that Miss Maynard was their guest in Melbourne on the occasion of the New Year's Eve dance. These letters are presumably still amongst the archives of the Society of Psychical Research, and the story was printed by them in their Proceedings some years ago.

I may add a last evidential touch by saying that when I met Miss Pearl for the first time after my travels, she referred to the letter she had received--under favour of my introduction--and quite spontaneously remarked upon its excellence, adding:

"I could scarcely believe that two young Australian girls, as they described themselves to me, could have written such an admirable letter."

I did not disclose the real source of the composition, as the popular

author thinks that she has no belief in spiritualism.

CHAPTER IV

HONG KONG, ALASKA, AND NEW YORK

The spring months of 1888 found me at Brisbane, *en route* for China, after spending a pleasant month with old friends on a well-known station belonging to the late Sir Arthur Hodgson, named Eton Vale, and situated on the beautiful and healthy Darling Downs of Queensland.

Before returning to Sydney from New Zealand, my female "Dr Livingstone" had reappeared upon the scene in the most unexpected manner. Our "historical meeting" took place in an Auckland hotel, where she suddenly turned up one day, driven back from Samoa by the intense heat. So after some gentle recriminations, she "having supposed the delay on my part might mean an entire change of plan," and I having supposed--from her letters--that Sydney was such a Paradise that she could hardly be dragged from it even by a flaming sword, we agreed to cry "quits," and continue our travels together. So Miss Greenlow spent the month of March in Sydney, whilst I paid my visit to Queensland, and we met once more at Brisbane to take steamer for Thursday Island, Cape Darwin, and eventually Hong Kong. Only one small matter of psychic interest occurred during this voyage.

I have mentioned in a previous chapter the little "swallows," which I first saw in San Francisco in the year 1886. I had been accustomed to seeing them ever since that date, and had been frequently commiserated for incipient eye trouble in consequence, by more than one sceptical friend.

On the very day we went on board the Hong Kong steamer at Brisbane, a new sign appeared: a single bird, holding in its beak a ring with half hoop of five stones, presumably diamonds. I told my friend about this, but neither she nor I could imagine any significance in it. At that time we had not even met any of our fellow-passengers to speak to, for we were all taken up with settling into our cabins and trying to make ourselves as comfortable as circumstances would permit.

For a whole week the same little bird and the same ring were persistently held up before me. Then an inkling of the possible meaning broke upon me suddenly. Within a fortnight of our sailing this suspicion was confirmed, and the little bird's warning or suggestion amply justified. But "that is another story!" Curiously enough, the new "sign in the heavens" was withdrawn as soon as I had grasped its meaning.

I must hasten over our delightful stay in Japan, because amongst much of extreme interest from artistic, social, and various other points of view, nothing occurred which has any special bearing on my present subject.

Leaving Japan eventually by sailing from Yokohama to Vancouver (Washington territory), the old threads were once more put into my hands.

We made the acquaintance on board the old P. & O. *Abyssinia* of the late Captain MacArthur, a kindly and genial naval man. He was an Australian by birth, but belonged to our English navy, and was just returning home on his promotion as commander.

He became rather interested in my "queer ideas," and ended by suggesting some experiments with "the table," so he persuaded the ship's carpenter to put together a small rough wooden table. The sittings were held, generally after dinner, in either my cabin or that of my "stable companion" Miss Greenlow. So far as I remember, we three were the only sitters, and I am bound to confess the sittings were sometimes very monotonous, even viewed from the indulgent perspective of a sea voyage. In fact, I can now recall only one incident of any real value.

The dear old nurse, spoken of in my opening chapter, had now been for three or four years on the other side of the veil, but had never given me the slightest sign of her presence. But she came several times during this voyage, and always with the same object--namely, to entreat, and finally *implore me*, to give up a projected tour in Alaska.

Miss Greenlow and I had been prevented from undertaking this, two years earlier, when visiting Victoria (Vancouver), and she was very keen to go there from Washington territory on this occasion. I was *not* keen for the expedition, but had made no strong objection to it, and it was understood that we should go together.

This was the tour which my old nurse now pleaded so anxiously should be given up, so far as *I* was concerned.

"*It will ruin your health, my darling*," she said more than once. "*Don't go there; take my advice*." And on one occasion, just before landing, she added: "*You will find letters awaiting you which will enable you to make other plans*."

This proved true--in a certain way. The first letter opened in the budget which fell to my share, told me of the sudden death of our family solicitor, which would have been a good excuse for a hasty return to England had any such pretext been necessary.

But this was not the case, for my companion, although quite determined to go to Alaska herself, was not in the least inclined to over-persuade me to accompany her. She was a very independent woman, quite accustomed to travelling alone, and I knew that neither her enjoyment nor her convenience would be affected by my decision one way or the other. I had no wish to go myself, and, moreover, thought it quite probable that my dear old nurse's warnings might be amply justified. But there were other grave considerations to be taken into account, and I still feel that I adopted the right, although not the pleasanter course, when I allowed my fellow-passengers to depart East, joking me on my want of faith in the warnings from the spirits, and accompanied my friend, very unwillingly, to Alaska.

My nurse's earnest entreaties were only too fully justified on the physical plane, to say nothing of the miserable discomfort of the trip (which in those days had to be made in an overcrowded cargo boat.) I took a chill in those Arctic regions, which later developed into the longest and most serious illness of my life. It took months to make even a partial recovery, and the effects will remain during my life. Yet I have

never regretted my decision.

This little episode seems to throw some light upon the way such warnings should be treated. To give no heed to them on the one hand, or to follow them blindly, *in spite of every other consideration*, on the other; these seem to me the Scylla and Charybdis of our lives. It shows that we *must* judge for ourselves; we cannot shift the burden of responsibility on any other shoulders. How could we gain the real education of life were it otherwise?

Had I turned my back on Alaska I should have gained enormously, physically speaking, and yet failed in a moral test. But my dear old nurse, who considered only--probably *saw* only--the physical evils to be avoided, was entirely in the right, *from her standpoint*. The faithful soul was doing her best to shield her nursling from danger.

A severe illness was entailed by my Alaska experiences. "Livingstone and Stanley" were once more separated. In other words, Miss Greenlow was obliged to return to England alone, leaving me to be nursed through a long and painful illness by kind friends and connections in Toronto. One of my doctors--the brother of my hostess--kindly made time to take me and my nurse to New York, in order that he might put me under the special care of the ship's doctor, and also be able to certify, as required, that I was in a fit condition to undertake the voyage.

It was during the day or two spent in New York before sailing, that I induced this gentleman to accompany me one evening to a *séance* held by Mrs Stoddart Gray, who has been previously mentioned in this narrative.

Dr Theodore Covernton had all the ordinary doctor's prejudices against anything unseen or unknown. He had read my book on America, and considered the chapter on "Spiritualism" a lamentable lapse "from the good sense shown in the rest of the book!" I represented to him that for a physician to deny all possibilities of Hypnotism or Mesmerism, Thought Transmission, etc., meant losing some very valuable aids in his profession, and would probably soon mean being left pretty badly

behind in the race.

Knowing of no specially good hypnotist in New York, and as there was no time to find one out, I boldly suggested that he should plunge into still deeper depths of "folly," and accompany me to the house of Mrs Stoddart Gray.

The usual performances went on, but whether owing to Dr Covernton's attitude of mind or other causes, nothing of any special interest to him or to me occurred.

One incident impressed him, I think; certainly he could suggest no possible explanation of it, for it happened in a very fair amount of light and close to our feet. A gentleman and lady were sitting in the circle who had brought with them their little boy, a child of seven years old. I had asked the lady if she considered it wise to bring so young a child into such a *milieu*, several hours after an English child would have been put to bed, and her answer was cheery and characteristic:

"Well, I guess we shouldn't have much peace at home if we didn't bring Charlie along with us to see his Granny. We took him once, and since then he always insists upon coming. He loves talking to his Granny, and he is not a bit afraid of her."

At this moment a small frail woman stepped out from the cabinet, and came right up towards us, motioning to the little grandson that she wished him to go into the cabinet with her. This he did without a moment's hesitation, and the curtain fell, and concealed them both from view. The interview lasted for some minutes, and when the little boy reappeared, he was holding his Granny by the hand, and was evidently on the best of terms with her. I do not expect my readers to believe me, but this is exactly what happened next:

The child had brought some toys--a little train and some building blocks--"to get Granny to play with him as usual," and the fragile old lady knelt down on the floor, and played with him just as any ordinary Granny might have done, only with far more agility.

In the very midst of their brick building and train starting, a terrible catastrophe occurred, which spoilt the rest of the evening for the poor child. Granny had evidently forgotten that her time was limited, by conditions of which we are still profoundly ignorant.

Quite suddenly, and without a word of warning, she disappeared, not into the cabinet at her back, but right through the carpet under our feet, and well within a yard of the said feet, and this with two or three gas-jets burning over our heads!

There was no mistake about it. Dr Covernton and I were sitting next to the father and mother, whilst the child and his grandmother played at our feet. One moment she was there; the next she had disappeared like a flash into a mere cloud of mist, and even this was quickly withdrawn, apparently through the floor. No trap-door theory could account for this, because the *woman* had disappeared, and only the wisp of ethereal garments remained, before the latter were also dissipated. We must, moreover, note the difficulty of working a trap door immediately under the feet of a sceptical young physician, who at once investigated the carpet, hoping in vain to find in it some solution of the mystery!

I have already mentioned that the whole incident took place, in light sufficiently good to read a book without straining the eyes.

The poor little boy was terribly upset, and sobbed bitterly. His parents said they had brought him many times before, and such a *fiasco* had never before taken place. Mrs Stoddart Gray was very indignant about it.

"Too bad! She ought to have *known* she was staying too long, and risking a fright for the child. If she had only gone back into the cabinet he would not have been frightened. But she stayed too long and had not enough strength to get back."

The child was too thoroughly frightened and upset to admit of any consolation, and the parents were obliged to take him away, still sobbing, and asking *why* Granny had gone away like that and given him such a fright.

A year later, in London, I took Dr Covernton--by appointment--to see Dr Carl Hansen, who was then giving hypnotic treatment, and also doing some work in demonstrations for the Society for Psychical Research. Dr Hansen tried in vain to put either Dr Theodore Covernton or myself under the influence, so was obliged to have recourse to his wife. Naturally this was considered a "*most suspicious circumstance*" by my companion; but I noticed that he was very much interested in his conversation with her--from the medical point of view--and he was sufficiently honest to admit that he could not explain what happened in his presence, upon any normal hypothesis.

CHAPTER V

INDIA, 1890-1891

In the month of November 1890 I started with a young friend for my first visit to India.

My companion was still at the age when social India was naturally more interesting to her than either the historical or mystical aspects of the country. And, for myself, I went there in those days rather to see the glorious buildings of a magnificent Past, than with any view of wresting occult secrets from the Fakirs and Yogis of the Present.

It was well perhaps that one's ambitions were so limited by the Possible, for I am very much inclined to think that Mystic India is and must remain a sealed book for the English.

We must always remember the natural prejudices of a conquered race towards the conqueror. In addition to this, the Hindoostanees consider (and who shall say without ample cause?) that Englishmen are hopelessly "*borné*" and sunk in materialism, incapable of exercising an imagination which they don't possess; with a top dressing of conventional orthodoxy, so far as their own special religion is concerned, but with nothing but ridicule or thinly veiled contempt for the religious channels through which other races may be taking their spiritual food. We have given them only too much reason for these conclusions.

As a consequence of this state of things, Englishmen and women are looked upon as "quite impossible" from the Indian point of view, and a devout and educated Hindoo would no more think of discussing his transcendental ideas with such people than we should think of discussing delicate questions of Art--in its various branches--with the first village yokel we happened to meet in the road. I was confirmed in these ideas by noticing the difference in the welcome accorded to a charming young Swedish lady, whom we met at Benares on her wedding tour. She had brought excellent native introductions from her own country, where certain Rajahs and Maharajahs had been entertained by her King, and thanks to these, and, as she said, "*to the fact of my not being English*," she had access to many interesting places, and took part in interesting functions, from which the rest of us were debarred.

I am hoping to pay a third visit to India some day, with the special object in view of occult investigation. It remains to be seen whether, by any fortunate accident, I may then be more successful in encountering anything more interesting than the ordinary clever conjurers, who sometimes pose as Fakirs, and may be found by the tourist on every hotel veranda in India.

Meanwhile I am limited by the title of my book to personal incidents, as to which I find one or two notes in my Indian diary.

Making the usual tour, but including Lahore--where my brother had lived at Government House for several years as Military Secretary to Sir Robert Egerton (who was in *his* day), Lieutenant-Governor of the Punjab--we came in due course to Delhi.

Our first day there was devoted to tracing Mutiny relics of all kinds, and about four P.M. in the afternoon we drove out to the famous Ridge to see the Mutiny Memorial. This, as most people nowadays know, is a red standstone tower, with staircase of rough stone inside, and small windows pierced through at varying intervals. It stands upon an extensive marble flooring, which is inscribed with the names of the various regiments--officers and men--who took part in the renowned siege, and died for their country in consequence.

As we drove towards the Memorial, the whole place seemed to be in a flutter of excitement. Hundreds of coolies were flocking round, and we both remarked how much more interested they appeared to be in these monuments of past events than the corresponding class of English labourers would have been. But on arrival we found there was no question of intelligent historical interest. The fact was that a poor coolie--who had just climbed up the Memorial Tower by the inner staircase--had fallen out of one of the windows described, and was lying on the marble floor below, at the far side from us, crushed and dying. We were told that an Englishman had, fortunately, been present, and had driven off at once for a doctor. So nothing could be done for the poor man until the latter arrived.

Meanwhile our native servant--Bobajee--had, of course, rushed off to see what was to be seen of the tragedy, and, rather to my horror, my girl friend seemed about to follow his example! It was terrible to think of the poor man lying there in his death agony; but he was already surrounded by natives, and no real help could be given without fear of doing more harm than good before the doctor was brought to the spot. Therefore merely to go and look on, without being able to succour, seemed to me an added horror to the tragedy, and I turned round rather sharply on my young friend, and expostulated with her. As a matter of fact, she did *not* go; but I am obliged to mention the incident as accounting for a certain momentary excitement and annoyance on my part, which proved to be factors in the story about to be related.

Allowing for difference of time between Delhi and London, a very old friend of mine, Lady Wincote (who was then living in London, where I was in the habit of visiting her constantly when in town), was lying in bed, resting after a disturbed night, at the very hour of our visit to the Mutiny Memorial.

It was about noon in England; she was fully awake, and had been reading. Looking at her watch she realised it was time to make a move if she meant to come down for luncheon. Suddenly the door opened, and *I* walked into her bedroom, and right round the bed, until I stood between her and the window, which was to her left as she lay in bed.

I was dressed in ordinary outdoor attire, and seemed much excited and annoyed about something. I was talking continuously, as it seemed to her; but she could not make out any connected sentences, and "wondered what had upset me" so much. She spoke to me, asking what had happened; but I took no notice of her questions, standing with my face to the window and my back to her for a few moments. Then I turned round, and deliberately retraced my steps, past the ottoman, skirting round the bed, and was just disappearing through the door, when she made a final effort to attract my attention, asking a very practical question:

"Emmie! Do tell me before you go, what number you are staying at in Oxford Terrace" (the part of town where I always stayed at that time). Lady Wincote said: "You made no answer at all, but whisked out of the door in a great hurry, and then for the first time I remembered *that you were in India*. It had all seemed so natural, as you had often been in my bedroom, that I only thought at the moment that you must have returned unexpectedly to London from the country. My one anxiety was to know which number on the Terrace would find you, in case you had changed your address there."

Now all this was, fortunately, written out to me by my friend on the very day that it happened--*i.e.* 8th January 1891--and *crossed my letter to her telling her of the incident*. My letter was written a day or two later I think; but I was keeping a strict diary at the time, and under date of 8th January have the record of the event, corresponding with the date of Lady Wincote's letter to me.[3]

[3] Both my diary and Lady Wincote's letter were shown to Mr Myers on my return to England, also my letter which crossed the one from Lady Wincote to me. He was greatly interested in the account.

Probably in any case I should have written to tell this friend of the incident, on account of a conversation I had with Bobajee when he returned from his ghastly entertainment. I had looked inside the Memorial, and had seen that the stone steps were crumbling away and looked very unsafe, so when he came back and said: "*Something bad inside there, Lady Sahib*," I concluded naturally that he was referring to

the state of the staircase, and attributing the poor coolie's fall to some such cause.

But he denied this strenuously: "*No! no! Lady Sahib--some bad debil inside there. He threw coolie over!*" Then he went on to tell us that on one special night in the year no native man, woman, or child in the whole city could be induced to pass the Mutiny Memorial at midnight. The few daring souls who *had* passed there, had found the tower all lighted up inside, and the Sepoys and the British soldiers had come back, and were fighting their battles over again! The man spoke in simple good faith, and assured me that all Delhi people knew this to be a fact, and gave the place a wide berth on that anniversary.

The idea of the "bad debil" throwing the poor coolie down from the top of the tower, followed by this curious legend, interested me as a bit of folk-lore, but my companion was drastic in her remarks. "Silly nonsense, Bobajee!" was her reception of the story; and this made me feel intensely sorry for the moment, that Lady Wincote, who would have been as much interested as myself, should not have been present. Did this moment of intense desire for her, project itself into the appearance she saw in her room? Who can say? Certainly it was a curious coincidence that she should see me in an annoyed and excited state just when I was feeling annoyed and excited--so many thousand miles away.

Delhi seems to have been specially favourable to psychic experiences, for I find another one recorded on the very day succeeding the last event.

My friend, having some slight ailment, I had driven out alone with our native servant, and we made a long tour, returning about six P.M. past Ludlow Castle, of famous Mutiny memory, and still--in the year 1891--a Government bungalow.

The present Czar of Russia was travelling through India at the time as Czarewitch, with his cousin, Prince George of Greece, and they were expected to arrive in Delhi that same evening. The Royal party and suite were to be lodged at Ludlow Castle, and were expected within an

hour.

Bobajee jumped off the box of my carriage, and urged me to "go look, see!"

"No, Bobajee! Drive on--can't go look see--they no let me in."

"Yes, yes, Lady Sahib," he said eagerly--"everything ready--all gone away--nobody in there yet."

With our English notions this seems inconceivable, but it proved to be absolutely true. I went in, expecting to be turned back ignominiously before I had crossed the hall, but there was positively no one there! The place was like a City of the Dead. Yet within an hour, a banquet arranged for about seventy people was to take place! I made the best of my opportunity, ranged through the numerous bedrooms--with hanging Japanese blinds shutting them off and each one inscribed with the card of the special Russian or Greek general who formed part of the suite. At length I strolled into the dining-room--a long, narrow room--arranged for the coming festivity (at least sixty to seventy covers were laid), the flowers arranged on the tablecloth in the pretty, artistic Indian fashion, all the beautiful glass and silver placed in readiness.

Nothing was wanting but the presence of the guests for whom all this preparation had been made.

The short Indian twilight was already upon us as I stood there for a moment, contrasting the dead and almost eerie silence, with the lights and laughter that would so quickly replace it.

A fireplace was close to me as I stood at the far end of the room, looking down the whole length of the table. Glancing up, I realised that the only picture in the room was hung over this fireplace. The picture in question had no artistic value--the painting was flat and poor; even the subject did not strike me for the first moment as anything very remarkable. It was the portrait of a man in the prime of life--about thirty-five, I should have supposed--with the long whiskers and rather prim pose of a portrait made by an evidently poor artist, probably thirty

or forty years previous to my visit.

But as I looked again, a curious sensation came over me. In spite of the painter's failure to convey anything more like a living man than a dead pressed rose is like a living rose, there was something in the eyes of the portrait that held me, something that rose triumphant above the artist's limitations. At the same moment I was conscious of a Presence behind my back; of *somebody who was looking at the picture with me*; of somebody who was saying to me (not with the outer, but an inner voice): "*That is a picture of me, but I am not there--I am here, close to you; behind your shoulder--I am looking at it with you.*"

The impression was so strong that it seemed almost as if a hand were pressing on my shoulder. I turned round involuntarily, but no one was there. Then I looked at the picture again, and always with the same weird sensation that the man whom the picture represented had been strong enough to make me feel his actual presence in the room, although I could see nothing. There was no name on the picture of either subject or artist, no possible clue to identity, and looked at as a picture alone, there was nothing in the flat, conventional presentment of the features to account for my experience. This made it the more remarkable. I could scarcely tear myself away from the almost overwhelming sense of the presence of some strong and strangely magnetic personality, but the fast fading twilight warned me not to risk an ignominious retreat. So I went hurriedly through the large and handsome drawing-room, which was filled with portraits, chiefly of deceased governors and generals, many of them admirably painted, and a striking contrast to the one poor and commonplace picture already seen.

The absolute incongruity between the impression received and the object which roused it, led me to make inquiries, in spite of my friend's jokes over my powers of imagination.

"Anyway, I am going to clear this up," I said with determination; and in a few days my perseverance was rewarded, and my impression amply justified, by finding that I had been looking at the portrait--feeble and poor as it was--of *Brigadier-General Nicholson*.

None of my readers need to be told that if any dead man could impress himself upon the living, this would be the man capable of such a feat.

Even to this day there is a small religious sect in India called the *Nicholasain*, who have handed down the memory of this "god rather than man," who had to dismount from his horse occasionally, to thrash his would-be worshippers, and put a stop to their inconvenient adoration!

Nicholson's brilliant achievements in the Mutiny; his absolute control over men of the most diverse character; the devotion with which he inspired his soldiers, and his own glorious death in the very moment of victory--all these are matters of history.

I feel glad and grateful to have known, even for a few passing moments, what that influence had been; and when I found out Brigadier-General Nicholson's grave at Delhi, after my Ludlow Castle experience, I left my flowers on the grave of an honoured acquaintance, rather than of a man known to me only through historical records.

One more incident, or rather coincidence, and I must close my Indian chapter.

This also is connected with the Mutiny and with Delhi, but the special coincidence, to which I refer, took place at Agra, when my friend and I were staying at the hotel there in the early spring of 1891.

One of my oldest and most valued friends is Lieutenant-Colonel Alfred S. Jones, V.C., formerly of the 9th Lancers, and one of our Mutiny heroes. As everything connected with that historical tragedy seems to have perennial interest for every Englishman--no matter what his creed or politics--I make no excuse for furnishing some details connected with my friend's career. His record from Hart's Army List is as follows:--

"Lieutenant-Colonel Jones was present at the battle of Budlekee Serai, and at Delhi throughout the siege operations, including the assault and capture of the city, having been D.A.Q.M.G. from 8th August to 23rd

September 1857. Served with the 9th Lancers in Greathead's pursuing column, and was present in the actions of Bolimshuhur and Alighur and battle of Agra--where he was dangerously wounded, having received a musket-shot wound and twenty-two sabre cuts. He was mentioned in the despatches of Sir Hope Grant on three different occasions, and has received the Victoria Cross for taking a nine-pounder gun, with the assistance of some men from his squadron, in the action of Budlekee Serai (medal with clasp and Brevet of Major)."

Although, as a child, I had heard of the bravery and the terrible wounds of one who was to become later in life one of my greatest friends, the actual details of the Agra catastrophe were hazy in my memory. Two things, however, had remained firmly imbedded in my mind--first, that a brother officer had told me that he was standing close by Colonel Jones when, as a young officer, the latter attended the Levée to receive his Victoria Cross, and that the Queen was so much agitated by his appearance that she could hardly pin it on. Also, that this brother officer heard her whisper to her husband: "My God, Albert! look at that poor boy! He has been cut to pieces!"

The other childish memory is that the Taj had been turned into a hospital at the time of the Mutiny, and that my friend, amongst others, had been nursed there. This latter proved to have been a mistake on the part of my informants. It was the Moti Musjid (the Pearl Mosque) which was turned to this account, and in which my friend was nursed back to life, to the surprise of all who knew the extent of his disaster.

It is specially important for people blessed, or cursed, with psychic gifts "to give no occasion to the enemy" by exaggeration or inexact memory of details. So, with the wholesome dread of a well-read reviewer before my eyes, I determined to go to the fountain-head, and ask Colonel Jones himself to supply me with the true incidents which make the Agra episode a moving picture before our eyes. He has kindly consented to do this, and I give the narrative in his own words:--

After the fall of Delhi, a column, under General Greathead, was sent down to Lucknow, and as three squadrons of the 9th Lancers were told off to go, I resigned my staff appointment, and went with my troop.

After two fights--Bolimshuhur and Alighur--we were hurried off to Agra, sixty-six miles in thirty-six hours. But on arrival we found that the Agra people had recovered from their fright and Greathead was fool enough to believe their story that the enemy was twelve miles away, and therefore took up ground for our camp, just by the graveyard and parade-ground, which you will remember. There was a high crop of sugar-cane, concealing everything beyond the parade-ground, and after most of the officers of the whole force had gone off to Agra Fort to breakfast with friends, cannon-shot began to fall amongst us; and everyone had time to fall in, as the horses had not been unsaddled.

My squadron, consisting of French's and my troops, was told off as an escort to Blunt's Battery, F.A., which formed the left of the line, consisting of our other two squadrons, more F. Artillery, 8th and 75th Regiments, etc., all moving to the front through high crops.

Then we saw the enemy--700 or 800 yards off--and Blunt unlimbered his guns, and began to fire, when we soon saw a body of cavalry moving off across our front, to turn our left flank, and Blunt said we must go back to defend our camp. So he limbered up, and we all (*i.e.* our squadron and Blunt's guns) began to straggle back through the high crops. But Blunt said he must leave one troop with two of his guns, and French's troop was stopped for the purpose. Instead of staying with it, he felt so sure we should have a chance at the cavalry we had seen (Mutineers) that he came on with me, and together we formed up my troop on the parade-ground, close to Blunt's guns, which we saw already unlimbered.

A squadron of Irregular (mutinied) cavalry was coming in our direction over the parade-ground, with a blue squadron of (mutinied) regular cavalry in support, both trotting; so, of course, we went for the Red (head of the echellon they formed).

Then I saw French shot, and the hind quarters of his grey horse pass round the left flank of my little troop; then I gave the word GALLOP, and the Red squadron, to my surprise, *halted*.

Observing its leader taking aim at me with his carbine, I inclined a little

to my left, in order to stick him, never dreaming that I should be hit before I could do so, and I was almost within reach before he fired, and his bullet went through my bridle arm, so I had to take my reins on my sword hand and jam my horse into the ranks, just behind the squadron leader who had shot me.

Now to clear up your mystery about my being left to my fate (I had specially asked Colonel Jones how he happened to be left alone amongst the Sepoys, whose numbers were registered by his sabre cuts in so ghastly a fashion), I was not left to my fate; on the contrary, the man on the left of my troop, who alone could see, put his lance through the squadron leader, and stayed about--outside the ring--trying to get to me to the last, and got the V.C. on my report to that effect.

My troop, occupying, in double rank, about twenty yards, went straight on after the twenty yards or so front of the enemy's probable front of perhaps fifty yards. So there were plenty of Sowars left to mob round me and to keep off the man who tried to save me. Of course, my men were quite right in pursuing the broken force as they did, right off the field.

This account has the immense advantage of being taken verbatim from Colonel Jones' letter just received by me. It has the *disadvantage* that such a letter, from a brave man, would naturally possess--*i.e.* that of minimising his share in the episode to the point of making it difficult for the lay mind to realise where the heroism came in--which heroism is a vital point in my "coincidence." Fortunately, I have the best authority for saying that the "Blunt" mentioned in this record always maintained that Colonel Alfred Jones had "saved his guns." It appears that at the time of the unexpected attack from the enemy, Colonel Jones and two or three friends (who had not gone to the fort) were breakfasting under the shade of the cemetery wall when the alarm was given. My friend, wishing to rest his charger after the long forced march from Agra, had taken a spare troop horse, saddled with a *hunting saddle*.

When the round shot began to fall, there was no time to get his charger. There was nothing for it but to put on sword and pistol and ride straight

in to the enemy's ranks. No wonder the poor people shut up in Agra were enthusiastic over this "charge of cavalry in their shirt sleeves," as they called it.

In 1891 I was staying in Agra, at the hotel, with my friend of the Delhi incident. A certain Major Pulford, who had come to Agra to race some ponies, divided us at the *table d'hôte*. He and I had been neighbours for two or three days, when he asked me carelessly one evening what *I* had been doing that afternoon, as my friend confessed to having taken a "day off."

Now I had spent the afternoon at the Taj, and had made many inquiries about the tradition that this building had once been turned into a hospital. No one knew anything about it. One old Hindoo, evidently thinking I wished him to say "*Yes*," remembered hearing that this *had* been the case "*about eighty years ago*." This last artistic touch of accuracy was fatal to his *bonâ fides*, and I turned away in disgust.

So I told Major Pulford my story, and we laughed over the well-known fact that a Hindoo of that class always tries to find out what you wish him to say, and *then says it!*

Major Pulford asked why I was so keen on the subject.

"Because a very old friend of mine was badly wounded at Agra during the Mutiny, and from a child I have had the impression that he was nursed in the Taj."

"No," he answered. "I am sure the Taj was never used as a hospital, but I think the Pearl Mosque may have been. This would account for the mistake, probably."

Now the point in this incident is the fact that I *had not mentioned my friend's name to Major Pulford*.

Had the name been a more distinctive one, I might have mentioned it, although realising that Major Pulford was too young a man to have known anything about the Mutiny at first hand.

We talked casually on the subject for a few minutes, and then he said: "Of course, I was a baby at the time, but I have read and heard any amount about it, naturally. *My* boyish hero was a fellow named Jones of the 9th Lancers, who was so awfully plucky in their celebrated charge, when surprised by the enemy on the Agra parade-ground. I know nothing about the fellow except what I have read. I believe he is alive still, but they say he was almost cut to pieces then."

"*That is the friend whom I thought had been nursed in the Taj*," was my astonished answer.

Major Pulford's delight was unbounded to have come by so strange a coincidence even thus near to the hero of his youth. For myself, I recognised that I had sat next to the only man, probably then in India, who could have given me the accurate and precise details of the whole affair!

"I know every inch of the ground, and just where it all happened," he said eagerly. "Do let me drive you and your friend over there to-morrow in my buggy, and I will point out every detail."

He did so next day, leaving me with the most vivid impression of the scene of my friend's gallant fight for life, against such overwhelming odds.

That he should still be alive and active--nearly fifty years later--seems little short of a miracle!

CHAPTER VI

SWEDEN AND RUSSIA, 1892

Travelling in Sweden in the spring of 1892, I carried with me from England an introduction to the Swedish Consul at Gottenburg. One of the sisters of this gentleman was married to an Englishman--a Mr Romilly--and he and his wife chanced to come over for a visit during my stay.

Speaking of psychic matters one day, Mr Romilly told me the story of his first cousin (a well-known woman of title) and her Egyptian necklace. A present had been made to her (I think on her marriage) of a very beautiful Egyptian necklace with stones of the exquisite blue shade so well known by travellers in Egypt.

These special stones, alas! must evidently have been genuine, and rifled from some old tomb, for the owner of the necklace appeared one night by the lady's bedside, and warned her that she would have no peace so long as she persisted in wearing his property.

So the lady very wisely locked up the necklace in her dressing-case, and fondly trusted the Egyptian ghost would be satisfied.

Not a bit of it! In a short time he appeared again, and told her that she would be haunted by his unwelcome presence so long as the necklace *remained in her possession*. She then drove off with it, and deposited it with her lawyer, who locked it up in a tin case, doubtless with a secret smile at his noble client's superstitions. But Nemesis lay in wait for him, and the last thing Mr Romilly had heard upon the subject was that the lawyer himself was made so exceedingly uncomfortable by the attentions of the Egyptian gentleman that he was obliged to have necklace and tin case buried together in his back garden! To have forced a lawyer into such extreme measures was certainly a "score" for the ghost!

A few months later, I met the heroine of the story at a friend's house at tea, and speaking of her relation, who had married a Swedish wife, and whom I had met in Gottenburg, I alluded discreetly to the story of the blue necklace.

My companion at once endorsed it *in toto*, and did not seem at all annoyed by the fact that her cousin had mentioned it to me. I remember that Mrs Romilly "laid the cards" for me, with astonishing success, and told me she had learnt the mystic lore from an old Finnish nurse, who had been brought over from Finland by her own Swedish grandfather when quite a young girl, and had lived in the family until her death. She assured me that the Finns were specially gifted in all kinds of gipsy

lore.

From Stockholm we paid a visit to Russia, and in St Petersburg I had my first personal experience since leaving home.

We had engaged, as courier during our stay in the city, a German who had lived there for forty years, named Küntze, I think.

We were staying at the Hotel de France, and this man told me one day that a celebrated French *modiste* had rooms in our hotel, having come there to show her beautiful Parisian costumes, and to take orders as usual from the Russian Royal Family and Ladies of the Court. He also mentioned the Frenchwoman's recent misfortune in hearing--since her arrival in Russia--that her trusted manager in Paris had disappeared suddenly, carrying away with him 100,000 francs.

Two nights later I had gone to bed as usual about ten-thirty P.M., and must have slept for nearly four hours, when I awoke feeling the heat very oppressive. It was almost the end of June at the time. Getting out of bed to open my window still farther, I gazed down upon the courtyard which it overlooked, noting the absolute stillness of the house and the hot, oppressive air outside.

Suddenly this stillness was rent by the most horrible and appalling shrieks! Peal after peal rang out. I have never heard anything so ghastly nor so blood-curdling either before or since. For a moment it seemed that one *must* be dreaming. What horrors, to justify such awful shrieks, could be taking place at this quiet hour and in this quiet, respectable hotel?

Nothing less than murder suggested itself to me, and I quickly crossed the room, and turned the key in the lock. My next thought was for my companion--the Miss Greenlow of American days. She was sleeping next door to me, with an intervening door between us.

I hammered loudly upon this, and finally opened it. I knew she always locked her outer door, but feared she might go into the passage, not realising the danger in the moment of waking, and might fall into the

murderer's hands. So I called out: "Wake up--wake up, Miss Greenlow!--*but don't open your door*. Someone is being murdered out there."

I had heard every other door in the passage opening, and the scared inmates rushing to and fro, so there was no question of feeling bound to give the alarm.

Miss Greenlow, being an extremely lymphatic person, was still sleeping the sleep of the just. I gave her a good shake at last, finding knocks and calls of no avail; but she only turned over sleepily, murmuring: "Oh, it's all right! I don't suppose there is anything much the matter--do go to bed again!"

So I returned to my own room, and as the horrible screams had now ceased, I opened my door very gently, and looked down the dimly lighted passage. My room was a corner one, exactly at the head of the wide staircase; to the left-hand side, for anyone mounting the stairs. Exactly opposite my door, with a wide passage between, was the room which had been pointed out to me as belonging to the famous French *modiste*.

Miss Greenlow was evidently the only person in the hotel who had slept through the horrors of that night, for small groups were gathered together at various points along the corridor, and at every door some scared man or woman was looking out, anxious, like myself, to solve the dreadful mystery.

At that moment my eyes lighted on my special German waiter talking in a hushed whisper to a musjig--in the usual red coat. So I beckoned to him, and very reluctantly he came to my door.

Being asked in German what was the meaning of the shrieks we had heard, he said at once that a lady had been taken ill suddenly.

The man was a bad liar, and a child would have seen that he was repeating a made-up story. But nothing more could be got out of him, so I dismissed him impatiently, saying: "What is the good of telling me

such nonsense? I shall find out for myself to-morrow."

Once more I shut and locked the door, and lay for an hour or two thinking over the ghastly disturbance, and wondering who could have been the hapless victim. It was now about five A.M., and full dawn. As so often happens, even after the most sleepless night, I dozed off then, and slept for more than an hour, and during my sleep I dreamed--and this was my dream. It must first be noted that the wide staircase I have described as passing close to my room was thence continued upward to the next floor. In my dream or vision I saw distinctly a woman in a white nightgown, with dark hair streaming down her back, rushing up this second flight of stairs in the most distraught and reckless fashion. In one hand she held a knife, and was trying to stab herself with it, as a musjig--in crimson coat--rushed after her, and endeavoured to wrench it out of her hand. Two or three other people ran up the stairs behind her, but only this peasant seemed to have the courage or presence of mind to grapple with her. In a few moments, as it seemed to me, the vision, so startling and clear cut, faded away, and I sank into a dreamless sleep, I suppose, for it was past six A.M. when I woke finally.

When the German waiter appeared with my breakfast I said rather curtly to him: "You need not have troubled to make up that foolish story last night; I know what happened--*I have seen it*."

He looked very incredulous, so I went on: "The lady was trying to kill herself, and rushed up to the next floor with a knife in her hand. I saw the musjig run after her and force it from her."

The man was absolutely speechless. He said not one syllable, either of corroboration or denial, but left the room as quickly as possible, looking scared, and certainly left the impression upon my mind that my vision represented what had actually taken place an hour or two previously.

To my great surprise, however, our respectable and dependable courier, Küntze, gave quite a different version of the affair.

He came as usual to my room to take his orders for the day--Miss Greenlow being present--and at once referred to the terrible tragedy.

"Ah, poor lady! you remember my telling you about her the other day, and how her manager had run away with all that money? Now *this* frightful misfortune has happened to her, and no one knows if she will survive it. She is still alive, however, and is to be taken to the hospital at one P.M."

"But what has happened, Küntze?" I said impatiently, rather irritated, if the truth must be told, by his mysterious allusions and Miss Greenlow's assumption of profound indifference. Of course, no self-respecting person, having calmly slept through such a tragedy, could be otherwise than indifferent next morning! Küntze's story was far more artistic than that of the waiter, and was skilfully interwoven with shreds of truth, as I discovered later.

He said that "the poor lady" was in the habit of making herself a cup of tea in the middle of the night when wakeful; also that she wore wide, hanging muslin sleeves with her night attire. She had risen as usual from a sleepless bed to make tea with her little Etna. Unfortunately, she had set fire to a sleeve, which at once burned up, and in a few moments she was enveloped in flames, owing to the flimsy material she wore. Then the shrieks began which had so thrilled our nerves. A Russian gentleman, sleeping near her, was awakened by the noise, and knowing that she was a rich woman, and had brought many valuables with her, he concluded she was being murdered; so he rushed to the rescue with a revolver, found the burning woman, and he and the musjig at length succeeded in putting out the flames.

The story was well told, and perfectly credible. Miss Greenlow could not resist pointing out how entirely it annihilated my vision. No suicide!--no knife!--no rush up the staircase!--nothing, in fact, that might not have been, and, of course, *must have been* a mere freak of imagination during my troubled sleep. In the face of Küntze's quiet and detailed statement I could only agree with her, and so the matter rested for some months. The poor woman meanwhile remained in the hospital, and her son and daughter were telegraphed for from Paris. We found

them at the hotel on our return there, three weeks later, from Moscow. There was then some slight hope of ultimate recovery, but within six or seven weeks from the "accident" the unfortunate woman died from shock and exhaustion.

From Russia we returned to Stockholm and Christiania, where Miss Greenlow took the steamer for Hull, and I went up into the Dovre Feld Mountains to join a Swedish friend, already mentioned in my chapter on India.

I told her my story of the poor French *modiste* and her sad and painful accident, also about my curiously vivid and yet inaccurate vision, and we discussed the latter in quite an S.P.R. spirit! We were then in a very remote part of the Dovre Feld, where foreign papers were practically inaccessible.

I had left my friend in Norway, and returned to England a week or two before receiving a very interesting letter from her.

In it she said: "I have just got hold of some French papers, and I see that poor woman you told me about, has just died in Petersburg, and the real story has now come out.

"It seems that it *was* suicide after all, so your vision was quite true!

"She had received large sums in advance for commissions from some of the Russian nobility, and had either spent or speculated with them. That was why she had to invent the story of an embezzling manager, to cover her own shortcomings. But the truth was leaking out in spite of her endeavours, and she made up her mind to commit suicide rather than face the horrors of a Russian prison. The paper goes on to say that she chose a most terrible death, little realising what the torture would be. It seems that she waited till the middle of the night you described, and then covered her whole body with oil, and set fire to it! This accounts, of course, for the horrible shrieks you heard. In her awful agony she seized a knife--that she had either secreted or found in her room--rushed out into the passage in a blaze, and when the musjig tried to stop her, she ran from him, and attempted to stab herself as she made

her way up the stairs. All this you seem to have seen accurately; also the fact that the musjig pursued her and succeeded in wrenching the knife from her hands before she had injured herself with it. The paper mentions that a Russian gentleman had gone to the rescue when he heard the shrieks, but this was before she had got hold of the knife, and it was the musjig alone who saved her, in the end, from immediate death."

During this Russian visit we had gone down to Moscow from Petersburg, and here again a curious adventure befell me.

It was, as I have said, in the height of the summer, and one was thankful to have a large, handsome room, with three windows looking over the square, and the famous Kremlin Palace in the distance. My room was divided into two unequal parts, separated from each other by a door which was, during the hot season, thrown wide open and *fastened back securely*. Between this door and the one opening into the outer corridor the washing apparatus stood, and also a wardrobe of white painted deal, with a very poor lock to it, as I discovered later.

On retiring to rest the first night, I locked the outer door, undressed in this ante-room, and finally hung up my gown in the wardrobe I have mentioned. Then, after looking out of the windows on the fast diminishing crowd below in the square, I went to bed, feeling quite cheerful, and looking forward to a long night's rest after a journey which had been hot and tiring.

As so often happens, one was probably over-tired, and sleep was not to be wooed by any of the usual methods. In vain I counted sheep getting over a hedge, added a hundred up backward and forward, tried deep breathing, and other little "parlour games." It was absolutely useless. Twelve o'clock struck, then the half hour, and I gathered from the stillness below that the good Moscow citizens had retired to their respective homes. This seemed an added insult! Then one o'clock struck, and after that I lay for a seeming eternity, before two strokes from the clock outside indicated the half hour. Scarcely had the reverberation ceased when I heard cautious sounds in the corridor, which gave me a good fright, and made me regret the silence I had

found so irksome. The outer door of my room was quietly being opened, creaking on its hinges in the most ordinary and commonplace way, but evidently opening under a very wary hand. "Then I could not have locked it after all!" And yet I felt so convinced that I had done so! Certainly I had *intended* to do so on my first night in a strange hotel! The best I could hope was that some other new arrival had mistaken his room, and was returning late, and consequently trying to be as quiet as possible. This flashed through my mind, and brought a moment's comfort. I expected to see a man's head round the open door at the foot of my bed, and to hear a hurried apology and still more hurried retreat. I say a *man's* head, for the footsteps, though so quiet and cautious, were without doubt a man's footsteps. But several moments passed in horrible suspense. The outer door had creaked on its hinges and opened without a shadow of doubt. *Where was the man?*

The door had not closed again, so far as I could hear. From my bed I could not command a view of the smaller portion of the room, where, presumably, he must be hidden. There was nothing but the wash-hand stand and the wardrobe there. What could he be doing or *waiting for*? My comforting supposition of a mistake in the number of his room, made by an innocent guest, could not be stretched wide enough to account for the long pause. Perhaps it was some robber lurking about the passages! He had tried my door gently, and found it open. I had heard the door creak on its hinges in spite of all his care. Now he was doubtless waiting to make sure that this noise had not awakened me before beginning his operations!

This was the only reasonable supposition, and I lay in absolute terror for some minutes, fearing to stir or almost to breathe at such close quarters, and quite incapable of rising and putting an end to my terrible suspense. I longed to hear the next "quarter" strike, but nothing relieved the dead silence in my room and in the streets outside. At long last the *quarter to two* struck, and something in the friendly tones of the massive clock relieved the tension and gave me courage--the courage of desperation--to strike a match and light my candle before starting on a tour of discovery. The middle door was fastened back, as I had found it when taking possession of the room. In any case, that was not the

door which had been opened--the sound came from the *outer* door. I *must* find out if anyone were hiding in the little dressing-room; and in any case, I must lock the outer door, which I had felt so certain I had locked on coming up to my room. I passed through the open *inner door* with fear and trembling. To my relief, the small apartment was apparently empty. The wardrobe stood partly open, but nothing more terrible than my own gown was inside it. Then I made my way to the outer door, which gave on to the corridor, determined to make sure of locking it firmly *this* time. After all, it must have been a wandering guest, who had discovered his mistake at once, and retreated noiselessly!

I have seldom been more absolutely dumfounded than when I turned the handle of that door, preparatory to locking it, and found *that it was securely locked already*, just as I had supposed! How could the hinges have creaked then, and whose cautious footsteps had I heard?

Once more my eyes fell upon the wardrobe, with its cheap varnish and lock. I had certainly not locked *this* overnight. Could it have creaked itself farther open? It did not for the moment strike me that the noise came from another quarter, and that the footsteps were still to be explained. I was only too thankful to find the barest apology of an explanation. So I locked the wardrobe as carefully as possible, noticing that the lock was not one of the first quality, and once more retired to bed, and put out my candle, greatly relieved.

Scarcely ten minutes had passed (as I afterwards ascertained) when the whole scene was enacted once more! The same cautious tread, the same sound of the *outer door* creaking slowly on its hinges--there was nothing in the least uncanny about it *per se*. It was just the normal noise that any late comer would make who was thoughtful enough not to disturb a sleeping house.

But my impatience got the better of my fears this time. I was not going to be decoyed out of bed a second time on a wild-goose chase. "It must have been that wardrobe door after all! As to the footsteps, I don't know and I don't care! The cheap lock must have given way, and I shall find the wardrobe door has swung open, I am sure."

With this comforting assurance I turned round, and in a few minutes fell into a deep sleep, after the varied excitements of the night.

Next morning I stepped gaily into the smaller division of the room to begin my toilet, and triumphantly turned round to convince myself of the truth of my theory about the wardrobe door. To my infinite astonishment and perplexity *the wardrobe was securely locked*, just as I had left it in the middle of the night.

I have never had any explanation of this mystery; but I changed my fine big room for a much less desirable one that morning, and made some excuse about wishing for a quieter room at the back of the house.

The next evening, sitting in my new abode with my travelling companion, she showed far more interest in my adventure than in the Petersburg tragedy and subsequent vision of mine.

So much so that I invited her to take a pencil and see if she could get any sort of explanation of the mystery; for although not at all *intuitive*, she knew something of what is called automatic writing.

I give her narrative, not as being in the slightest degree evidential, but for its intrinsic interest, and because I am personally convinced that she had not sufficient imagination to have made it up on the spur of the moment.

Miss Greenlow's "message" was to the following effect:--

About fifty years previously, a Russian gentleman (an officer, I *think*, but am not certain of this) and his mistress had occupied this large front room. The man had spent all day at a rifle competition, combined with some sort of merry-making, and had returned home very late--at one-thirty A.M., in fact--very much the worse for drink. He had opened the door very carefully, trusting he should find the lady asleep; but, unfortunately, she was not only wide awake, but extremely annoyed by his late return and the state in which he had come back to her. A desperate quarrel had ensued, and getting frightened by his violence, she seized his rifle, giving him a blow on the head with the butt end of

it, hoping to stun him, but with no idea of murder in her mind. Whether she gave a more severe blow, in her nervousness, than she had intended, or whether the rifle fell on some specially vital spot, was not explained in the writing. Anyway, the blow proved fatal--to her extreme regret and remorse.

Under these circumstances one would have supposed that it would be more reasonable for the lady to haunt the room, and not the gentleman; but I "tell the tale as 'twas told to us."

It is, however, remarkable that in most of these stories it is the victim who appears--determined to enact the scene of his or her death--and not the murderer.

I think we were also told, by-the-by, that I had slept in the room on the anniversary of the occurrence.

It was obviously impossible to get any corroboration of such a story. Two small points in it, however, were proved to be true.

The Moscow hotels, as a rule, were comparatively modern at the time of our visit, and therefore the "fifty years ago" seemed highly improbable. We learned, however, through a few discreet questions later, that this particular hotel *had* been in existence so far back as fifty years, and also that rifle competitions had taken place on certain occasions in those far-off days.

For the rest I claim nothing. I have truthfully recounted my experience without a word of exaggeration, and have never been able to account for it normally.

The explanation given to us is, of course, just worth the paper it was written upon from any *evidential* point of view.

CHAPTER VI

--continued

SWEDEN AND RUSSIA, 1892

Taking my experiences chronologically, I must now carry my readers back to England, where the autumn of this year found me in London.

I had been asked to recommend a house for paying guests, well situated, in the West End of London, and newly started by a lady who had been left a widow with very slender provision. Several kind women had interested themselves in the case, and had wisely suggested thinking out a means of livelihood in the future rather than merely supplying present wants.

It would be difficult to imagine a person *less* suited for the sort of employment chosen; but that is "another story."

I never care to recommend anything or anybody of which or of whom I have no personal knowledge; at the same time, I was anxious to help my kindly acquaintance in her philanthropy, and as I had arranged to spend some weeks in London that autumn--to be near an invalid brother--it struck me that I might stay at the house so strongly recommended, instead of taking private rooms as usual.

So I journeyed to Sussex Gardens, found a charming house, newly furnished and decorated, and as clean as the proverbial "new pin," and, moreover, a very good-looking mistress of the house, still a youngish woman of five or six and thirty.

She spoke most warmly of the kindness she had received from the lady who had given me her address, showed me some pleasant rooms, and the arrangement was quickly completed.

I chose a small sitting-room in addition to my bedroom, although, as a matter of fact, this was scarcely necessary, as I was the first guest received. Only one deaf old lady appeared upon the scene during the six weeks I spent there.

I had not been forty-eight hours in the house before I discovered that my hostess was a convinced and very remarkable psychic. Naturally

she was delighted to find someone to whom she could speak of her various experiences without being laughed at or put down as a lunatic. At the same time I am bound to confess that Mrs Peters, although extremely interesting, was also rather agitating, and certainly much too erratic to make an entirely satisfactory *Chatelaine*. She was given to reading "Aurora Leigh," instead of ordering dinner, and had to be sent for occasionally to sit at the head of the table, with a volume of *Browning* or *Tennyson* firmly clutched in her reluctant hand. Even when duly "found and delivered," curious things happened during the meals--especially at dinner in the evening, when she often put down knife and fork and directed my attention to the far end of the handsome dining-room, where she was wont to see the ghost of her late husband.

"Look, dear Miss Bates! Surely you *must* see him--dear Henry, I mean. There he stands, beard and all, just between the sofa and the wall. I can see him as clearly as I see you!"

I am bound to say I never *did* see "dear Henry"; but the fine tabby cat certainly saw something in that corner, for it would rush most frantically to the sofa, jump on to one end, and sit staring at Henry (presumably), with its tail stuck out and its fur rising up, glaring into the corner with a look of combined fear and fascination.

My little sitting-room was invaded at all hours by my too interesting landlady, who would suddenly remember some thrilling experience, which she wished to share with me. At length I took to my bed for three days, not in the least ill, but simply for a much-needed rest in the midst of all these excitements.

A day or two after emerging from this haven of peace, I received a visit from a young lady, whose parents were well known to me in Yorkshire, and who had recently become engaged to a very rich man, many years her senior; in fact, considerably older than her own father, who had lately passed away. The daughters of this family were all devoted to their father, and most of the visit was occupied in giving me details of his last illness, and in my sympathising with her upon his loss. It was, in fact, far more a visit of condolence than of congratulation upon her future prospects of happiness. As to the latter, I found it difficult to be

quite truthful and yet conventionally ecstatic.

To marry a man nearly old enough to be your grandfather struck me as risky, to say the least of it, even with all the emollients which riches and position undoubtedly add to domestic life.

The young woman in question did not at all resent my frankness on the subject, but assured me that her greatest consolation in thinking of her late father was the fact that she was about to make a marriage which he had always wished, and of which he had emphatically given his approval on his death-bed. "I told him I had decided upon it, just before he died, and he was so relieved and happy about it," she said simply as she turned to leave the room. Having mentioned that a younger sister was also in town, I sent a message to the latter, asking her to take early dinner with me on the following Sunday, which happened to be my only spare day just then.

On the evening of this visit from the coming bride, I had accepted an invitation to a large musical party in the house of the lady who had begged me to interest myself in Mrs Peters. It was within a stone's-throw of Sussex Gardens, and I came down to dinner at seven-thirty P.M., intending to dress later, and go round there about nine P.M.

For an hour or so before dinner I had been conscious of a growing despondency, to which I could attribute no cause, and this increased so much during the meal that Mrs Peters noticed it at last, and asked me if I were feeling unwell.

"No--not unwell--but I am absolutely miserable, and cannot imagine why."

"Then you have not had bad news?" was the next remark. "I feared you must have had, seeing you so silent and not able to eat anything."

In answer to this I said that I had not even the excuse of hearing of other people's misfortunes, for a young lady had been calling upon me that afternoon, who was about to make what the world calls a very

successful marriage. I did not, however, mention her name, as Mrs Peters knew none of my friends.

Dinner over, I felt still so unaccountably wretched that I determined to give up the evening party, and write my excuses. Mrs Peters did her best to combat this decision, fearing that her kind benefactress might be disappointed, and also urging that the evening's enjoyment would cheer me up. But finding me inexorable, she then said: "Well, if you have quite determined not to go, shall I come into your sitting-room and see if we can get any explanation of your curious feeling of depression?"

I closed with this suggestion, knowing Mrs Peters to be a really remarkable sensitive.

So we sat in the dark for a few minutes; and then I heard a soft *frou-frou* on Mrs Peters' silk gown, and knew she was tracing out words with her hand in a fashion of her own.

"It is a spirit that young lady brought with her," she announced at length. "The spirit has remained here with *you*, and is worried about this marriage you spoke of. She wants you to try and break it off. She seems to have been nearly related to the lady, or perhaps a godmother; anyway, she takes great interest in her."

"Will she give a name?" I asked.

"ELIZA is all I get," Mrs Peters replied.

It then occurred to me that my young friend's name *was* Eliza, and that she had been so named after a great-aunt, to the best of my recollection; but as she was invariably called Elsa, by friends and relations alike, it was only by chance that I remembered hearing her teased about her far less romantic baptismal name.

I asked if no surname could be given, thinking at the moment that it would be Waverly--the family name; but my thought was evidently not transferred to Mrs Peters, who said she could not get the name accurately, but that it was certainly *not* Waverly. I found later that the

Great-Aunt Eliza had a name entirely different from that of her descendants.

Nothing further happened on this occasion, except that I sent a message to "Great-Aunt Eliza" to say that nothing would induce me to take the responsibility of trying to break off any marriage, either by the advice of people in this sphere or in any other sphere. In this case I should have had neither the authority nor the influence to make any such unwise attempt.

Sunday came round in due course, and brought the bride's younger sister, then a girl of twenty-four or twenty-five. We discussed the usual midday Sunday dinner of roast beef and Yorkshire pudding, Mrs Peters sitting at the head of the table, I on her right hand, and Carrie Waverly next to me.

Suddenly realising that my remarks to the latter were receiving very scant attention, I looked up, and found the girl's black eyes fixed in a basilisk stare upon our unfortunate hostess, whose own eyes were cast down, but who appeared uneasy and troubled by the determined gaze of my guest. At length the poor woman threw down her knife and fork, rose hastily from the dining-table, and made her way eagerly to the sofa at the other end of the room, where she lay down at full length, murmuring: "*I can't stand it any longer!*"

Carrie Waverly was at length induced to come away to my sitting-room and leave the poor woman in peace, which she did, asserting her complete innocence, and assuring me she "*only wanted to see if she could make Mrs Peters look up at her!*"

I explained to her that "sensitives" may be as much upset by this sort of thing as another person would be by a blow on the back. She looked incredulous, and then said cheerfully: "Well, if it is as bad as that, don't you think you ought to go and see how she is?"

"Two for yourself and your own curiosity and one for her!" I thought; but I took the hint, and found Mrs Peters still prostrate on the sofa, but full of apologies for her sudden collapse:

"You must have thought me so very rude," etc., etc.

I reassured her on this point, and expressed regret that my visitor should have upset her so much by looking so fixedly at her.

"It was not her fault," said Mrs Peters eagerly. "*It was the man standing over her*. He had his hands upon her shoulders, and was trying so hard to influence her, and she was resisting it all the time, and the whole conflict of their wills was thrown upon *me*, and I could not stand it at last--that was why I left the table," she gasped out.

"Could you describe the man at all?"

"Quite clearly," she said. "I shall never forget his face--I saw him so distinctly." She then proceeded to describe in detail the very clear-cut features and bushy eyebrows of Carrie Waverly's father, giving also his colouring, which was very distinctive. I suggested trying to find out what he wanted to say to his daughter, but this distressed Mrs Peters so much that I was sorry to have made the suggestion.

"No! no! dear Miss Bates!--don't ask me to do that--dear Henry never likes my taking messages from strangers--I have promised him that I would never do it without his permission. It upsets me so much, and I feel so weak already."

So I came away, promising to look in later and see if I could do anything for her.

Carrie was naturally greatly interested by the accurate description given of her father, and was very impatient for me to pay Mrs Peters a second visit.

I went in presently, and found the latter standing up, and in a state of great excitement. She had, in fact, been on the point of coming to us when I entered.

"Dear Henry told me to take that message after all," were the words with which she greeted me. "There was some misunderstanding

between the father and this daughter, and he wants her to know that it is all right now." (This seemed to me most improbable, as the devoted daughters and father were always on terms of the greatest harmony and mutual understanding. *Yet it proved to be quite true.*)

Mrs Peters continued: "He is very much upset about this marriage. He tells me he was so anxious for it when on this side, but now he sees all the difficulties and possible dangers. But he says it is too late to reconsider the step now; only he is so very anxious to secure the interests of his daughter before she marries. He wishes to know whether her settlement is signed. *It is not one of which he would have approved.* And he says there are two houses, and one ought to be settled upon her--you *must* ask about it, dear Miss Bates. He is most decided and so dreadfully upset about it all, because he says it was he who urged the marriage upon her."

I spent the following fifteen or twenty minutes as a sort of messenger-boy between Mrs Peters in the dining-room and Carrie Waverly in my sitting-room. Needless to say, *I* knew nothing at all about the settlements or how many houses the prospective bridegroom might possess, and having no sort of curiosity about the financial affairs of my neighbours, it was not at all pleasant to be employed in this way.

Mrs Peters, on the contrary, seemed to know everything connected with the estate and the marriage settlement, *except the fact that the latter had not yet been signed,* although reluctantly "passed" by both the lady's trustees. Wherefore this special limitation in the father's knowledge it is impossible to say. He certainly showed no limitation in his knowledge of the bridegroom's character and disposition, and gave the most elaborate and detailed instructions as to how his daughter should behave towards her husband, and where she might, with advantage, cultivate tact and patience.

My advice to Miss Waverly was to say nothing on the subject to her sister, but she wisely, as it turned out, determined to take the responsibility of telling her *everything*. She telegraphed to me next day, asking if she might come and see Mrs Peters and bring the bride with

her.

This was done, and they arrived, with several photographs, large and small, of the father, and also of the bridegroom, for identification. Carrie, in fact, tried--a little unfairly perhaps--to make Mrs Peters identify the wrong person by forcing into notice a large photograph of the *bridegroom* (some years senior to the father), and saying carelessly: "*There, Mrs Peters--that is the face you saw yesterday of my father, is it not?*" But Mrs Peters would have none of it. She looked staggered for a moment, then caught sight of the second picture, and turned to it with relief: "*This* is the face I saw, whether it is your father or not," she answered, with decision.

The bride begged for a private interview with Mrs Peters, which lasted for a considerable time. Of course, I knew nothing of this interview, nor should I feel at liberty to speak of it if I did know. I may, however, be permitted to say that I have the bride's own assurance that the accurate knowledge then given her of her future husband's characteristics physical and mental, and the best way of dealing with them, "made all the difference in her married life."

During that interview Mrs Peters also told her the number of years she would be married; and the prophecy was accurately fulfilled, which is the more remarkable, because, as a rule, it seems impossible to predicate time, even when events can be foreseen.

I am happy to add that the marriage turned out a complete success, and that a marriage settlement was made more in accordance with the father's wishes, although neither trustees nor principal in the transaction, had any idea that the actual arrangements were in any way due to the strongly expressed wishes of a discarnate spirit.

If this book should ever fall into their hands, and they should trace the story in spite of the thick veil I have thrown over all the circumstances, I can only trust that, in gratitude for the results, they may become reconciled with the channel through which these were made possible.

People may say: "What a terrible idea that a father or a husband should

trouble himself about such sordid details as money, houses, etc."

But this is an extremely foolish remark, although it may appear very spiritual on the surface. It is surely the most natural thing in the world that a near relation--if permitted--should endeavour to secure comfort and happiness for a dearly loved wife or daughter; especially when, as in the above case, he felt mainly responsible for a state of affairs which might have turned out so disastrously, save for his loving care and foresight, exercised as these were from the other side of the veil.

At anyrate it disposes once for all of the weary old "*Cui Bono*" argument, which is so futile, and yet so constantly and triumphantly quoted by stupid people, who seem to took upon it as a patent extinguisher for any psychic gifts or experiences.

It is mainly in order to meet this senseless observation that I have included this story in my reminiscences.

Most of us are debarred from answering the "*Cui Bono*" bray, by the fact that our most helpful experiences are generally of a too intimate and often sacred nature to be given to a scoffing world.

But this instance has the advantage of dealing entirely with material matters, and thus being on a level with the ordinary intelligence.

Nobody can say in this case *no good was done*. It only remains to be deeply shocked by the undignified, "nay, almost blasphemous," intervention in mundane affairs of a spirit "who should certainly have had some more worthy occupation."

It is another case of the old man and the donkey. If discarnate spirits *don't* trouble about the personal affairs of those on earth, the "*Cui Bono*" argument is hurled at them. If they *do*, they are called blasphemous and irreverent!

The mention of the Waverly family reminds me of an incident which took place when I was staying in their house in the country, a year or two earlier than the time of which I am writing. I have reserved it

purposely as a sequel to this last story, which is in its proper chronological setting.

In the year 1889 I was spending a pleasant fortnight with the Waverlys in Yorkshire, at the very time when a dear old friend of mine (Mrs Tennant) was dying in London. I had seen her only a week or two before, but had no knowledge of her illness, as we were not in constant correspondence, although there was a deep and strong affection between us.

I did not even hear of her death, in fact, till a few weeks after it took place, having missed the announcement in the papers. When Mrs Tennant's sister, Mrs Lane, wrote me the details, I had left Yorkshire, and was staying with cousins in Worcestershire. Thinking over the dates mentioned in describing the illness, I realised with a shock of pained surprise that the final state of unconsciousness must have set in the very evening when I was enjoying myself in Yorkshire, at a large dinner-party given by my host and hostess.

It seemed terrible to think that my dear and much loved friend should have been lying unconscious upon her death-bed, and that no word or sign should have come to me.

Then suddenly I remembered a curious little incident connected with that dinner-party.

I had been admiring a pretty little slate-coloured kitten belonging to the house, which was calmly sitting upon the grand piano after dinner, when the ladies were alone in the drawing-room. After the gentlemen joined us, I was deep in conversation with my host (a remarkably interesting and intelligent man), when I noticed a small *black* kitten run past my dress. Probably I should have remarked upon it had we been less occupied in talking, for I am extremely fond of cats and animals in general. I did glance up, as a matter of fact, and satisfied myself that it was not the little slate-coloured kitty, which sat in still triumph on the piano. Besides, this kitten was *black*, not slate. I thought no more of it until the guests had left and Mrs Waverly and I were going upstairs to bed. She and I were very affinitive, but neither she nor her family had

any special interest in psychology.

On this occasion, however, she said rather mysteriously: "*I think something will happen to-night to you.*" A good many jokes had been made about the probably uncanny atmosphere of my room, and the various spooks who were doubtless sharing it with me, so I laughed, thinking this was only the usual family joke. But Mrs Waverly was quite in earnest. At first she would give no reason for her remark, "fearing I should tell her daughters," and that she would be laughed at in consequence.

Reassured on this point, she said to me quite seriously:

"Whilst you were talking to my husband this evening I saw a black kitten run straight across your dress--just opposite to me."

"*Well, of course, I saw the kitten!*" I answered, to her surprise; "but there is nothing very remarkable about a black kitten in the house."

"*But we have no black kitten* in the house, or anywhere on the premises. Where did it go to? You never saw it again? No; it was not an ordinary kitten, and I did not suppose till this moment that anyone had seen it but myself."

It was a fact that no one but Mrs Waverly and I had seen any kitten but the slate-coloured one already mentioned.

Thinking over this in the light of the sad news of my dear old friend's death, and noting the correspondence in time between her loss of consciousness and the appearance of the mysterious black kitten--seen only by Mrs Waverly and myself--it was impossible not to ask in the depths of my heart whether, perchance, the spirit of my faithful friend had been trying to send me some symbol of her approaching death.

It may be objected that black cats are generally connected with good luck. Well, I think my dear "London mother," as she called herself sometimes, would have explained this apparent contradiction very simply. She had lived through much sorrow, and was often oppressed

by sore doubts of the Cosmic Love. I never knew any woman with such strong and passionate human sympathy, and to such fine spirits, the world, under present conditions, must always offer terrible problems. Her sympathies were sometimes too keen for that robust faith which can *always* say: "God's in His heaven! All's right with the world!" Yet her last words were: "*I am so tired, and God will understand; and I am so glad to go.*"

To finish my chapter on a merrier note, I will mention an amusing episode connected with the evening of the black kitten's appearance.

Amongst the guests invited to that dinner-party was a clergyman-squire, a man of some means who had taken orders. A "squarson" is the "portmanteau name" for such a gentleman in Yorkshire, I believe; one who combines squire and parson.

This particular specimen of the genus was both a vegetarian and a celibate. The latter fact had been made clear to me by the many regrets expressed in the neighbourhood that he had remained a bachelor owing to religious scruples. The vegetarianism was equally certain, for I had heard orders given for special dishes to be prepared for this guest; and sitting next to him at the dinner-table, I knew that he had not touched either meat or game, although it was not a fast day.

After dinner, when the gentlemen had joined us in the drawing-room, the conversation turned upon psychic matters and my experiences in America of a few years before. This extreme High Churchman denounced all these, "lock, stock, and barrel."

He believed that everything might have happened as described, but was equally certain that the devil alone could have had a hand in "such goings on"! Perhaps it will be wise to explain that he did not make use of this latter expression!

My host, instead of coming to the rescue, which he might have done, as one of "the Cloth"; looked much amused when I fielded most of my adversary's theological balls.

At length, being unaccustomed to such irreverent handling, my enemy lost his temper, and, as usual on such occasions, he tried to "take my wicket" by quoting texts against me!

"Well, all I can say is that everything you have told us is in direct opposition to Holy Writ. In fact, *we are specially warned in the Scriptures that in the latter days seducing spirits shall arise*."

At this fatal moment, when the Theological Closure was descending upon my unhappy head, a really brilliant thought occurred to me.

Was it a seducing spirit or a friendly intelligence who reminded me that my opponent had only quoted half the text--*the half that suited him*?

I pointed this fact out meekly.

He looked puzzled, and probably had honestly forgotten what he did not wish to remember.

"Finish the text? What do you mean?" he said irritably.

So I finished it for him:

"In the latter days seducing spirits shall arise, *forbidding to marry and commanding to abstain from meats*."

He had pressed me very hard and rather unfairly. Still, the counsel of perfection would have been to refrain from the comment that, if *I* were a celibate and vegetarian, it was not the text I should have chosen with which to clinch an argument!

AN INTERLUDE

I have headed this chapter an *Interlude*, for the following reason:--

It is the only one in this book which does not record a personal experience.

The opportunity came to me at Florence, two years ago, of hearing one of the best old-fashioned Christmas ghost stories I ever came across; also a ghost story which has two rather unique advantages. First, it has never been published before; secondly, the percipient was the matron of a boys' school (a well-known one), and wrote out her experiences *within twelve hours of their occurrence*.

Now, the matron of a large boys' school must, of necessity, be an exceptionally practical woman, and her daily experiences can scarcely tend to encourage undue Romance or Imagination.

When I add that this story was given to me, and a copy of the original letter placed in my hands, by a sister of two of the schoolboys who were under the matron's supervision, I shall have cleared the way for my ghost to appear upon the scene.

I must add, however, that I met this sister, a young widow, in Florence, two years ago. She then told me this story, finding that I was intimately acquainted both with the county and the small county town where it happened.

The matron had gone there for the prosaic purpose of taking the baths for her rheumatism.

The adventure took place in the early morning of 14th April 1875, and was recorded, within a few hours, in a long letter written by the percipient to a favourite cousin.

My friend, Mrs Barker's brothers being at school at the time, begged to be allowed to read this letter and take a copy of it. The copy was made by their sister--then a young girl--and I have it in my hands at the present moment of writing.

It is, of course, necessary to change the name of the county and town, as the old family mansion, let in lodgings in 1875, has since then been sold and turned into a boarding-house.

Mrs Barker's mother made an expedition to this town, a few years ago,

to verify the facts, and went over the house, which has been considerably altered and reconstructed inside since 1875.

The small park mentioned in the story is now built over entirely, as the town has increased in popularity, owing to its baths, and the family portraits here mentioned have been removed since the house was sold.

I will now quote *verbatim* from the matron's letter, *written on the morning of her experiences*.

"The Priory, Grantwich. "14th April 1875. "MY DEAR EDIE,--When you asked me once for a ghost story, I daresay you as little expected, as I did, how soon I should have to reveal to you an experience which will doubtless give you, as it has me, much ground for thought and speculation about those mysterious laws which rule the spirit world.

"How true it is that Thought and Feeling annihilate Time and Space! Since last night, I seem to have lived through half a lifetime, such an effect have its events had upon my inner life. But before I begin to relate the strange circumstances I have to tell you, I must describe to you more particularly this house in which they happened.

"I think I told you that 'The Priory'--where I am now lodging--is an old mansion, belonging to the Carbury family. For some years past, it has been let to the present occupiers who make the rent by letting lodgings. Some ancient pieces of furniture remain, and a great many portraits, none of the earliest date, but a handsome and respectable collection--soldiers, bishops, and judges, in their uniforms, robes, and wigs, and ladies with powdered hair, hoops, and trains.

"Of these portraits, *two have engaged my attention, especially, from the first moment of seeing them*, but I am not going to speak of them yet; my first object is to give you an idea of the house, or rather that part of it with which my story is connected.

"I think I have told you that the grand staircase goes up from the inner hall, and that round the staircase runs a gallery; in this gallery and in the hall below, are hung most of the portraits.

"On the first turn and landing of the staircase, there is a door opening into a trellised walk which leads into the garden. On a level with this door is a large window which looks on to sweeps of soft turf, shaded by fine trees.

"Standing often to look from this window, as I passed up and down the staircase, one tree has always riveted my attention. It is a large old plane-tree, standing by itself, and having a strange, melancholy, decayed look about it. I noticed--why, I cannot imagine--that on one side of it the ground was bare and black, though everywhere else the grass was green and fresh. I mention this, because it had struck me *before* the strange events occurred which I am going to tell you.

"You must now go with me to the top of the staircase. Just at the top, on your right hand, hangs one of the portraits I mentioned. It is a life-sized painting of Captain Richard Carbury, who landed, on the 19th September 1738, in the Colony of Georgia, with General Oglethorpe's regiment.

"Opposite to this, on the other side of the gallery, is the portrait of a lady, with black, resolute brows and full, voluptuous mouth and chin. She has a high colour, an exquisite hand and arm, and an Amazonian bearing.

"Passing from the gallery, you enter a long passage, leading to other passages and staircases, with which we have nothing to do.

"I only want you now to become acquainted with my own rooms. As you enter the passage from the gallery, two doors open, one on either hand. To the right is my sitting-room, a square, cheerful room, looking on the street; to the left is my bedroom, which will require a more particular description.

"It is a large, low room. As you enter from the passage, the window, which looks into the garden, is opposite to you. In the middle of the wall to your right hand stands the bed, and opposite to that, the fireplace, and, as you will see, if you have taken in my description, just at the back of the portrait of the lady with the black eyebrows, is

another door. Opposite to this last is yet another, which caught my attention when I first entered the room from a peculiarity about it. The upper part of this door is of glass, rendered opaque by being washed or lined with some red substance.

"As soon as I was alone in the room I tried to open this door, but it was firmly fastened. I don't know why I should have felt disquieted by this circumstance, but certainly I did feel annoyed. I thought at first that it probably opened into a dressing-room. There must have been a strong light behind it, for a red light always fell on that side of the room through the coloured glass, and I could see that red light in the morning, before any light penetrated the window-blind.

"I think I have now told you all that is necessary for understanding my experience.

"I must ask you to remember that yesterday was the thirteenth of April. I went to bed about eleven o'clock, and soon fell asleep. I could not, however, have slept long before I woke with an unusual feeling that something strange was going to happen.

"I awoke, not as one does in the morning, with a drowsy resolve not to go to sleep again because it is time to get up, but as one awakes when a journey or some similar event is imminent, for which one's faculties have to be clear, and one's body active and alert. I was rather wondering at and enjoying the unusual clearness and energy of thought of which I felt capable, when the clock in the hall began striking, and, almost at the same moment, the clock of the old Church of St Andrew began striking also.

"I knew that both were striking twelve, though I did not count the blows, but just as the last stroke of the church clock died away, another sound caught my ear.

"The door by the fireplace gave a loud crack and then opened, as if with some difficulty.

"The *red door* at the same time rattled, as if someone were trying

vainly to open it. The room had previously been dark, but I now plainly saw a tall figure come through the doorway and stand near the foot of the bed. There was a dull, yellowish light round the figure, which illumined it, leaving the rest of the room in darkness; but this yellow light, I perceived, became red at one point of the figure's left side, and shone down on the floor with a red glow, like that which came through the opposite door.

"The apparition stood quite silent whilst I looked at it. *The features and figure were familiar to me* for they were those of Captain Richard Carbury, in the portrait, who had gone out to Georgia with the regiment of His Excellency, General Oglethorpe!

"As soon as I was sure of this, I said: 'You are Captain Richard Carbury?'

"The apparition nodded.

"'Why do you come to me?' I said. 'Cannot you speak?'

"He seemed to have some difficulty in doing so, but after two or three efforts, such as one makes to move a rusty hinge, he parted his lips, and said: 'Yes! I am Richard Carbury, and I am come to make you a witness.'

"'A witness of what?' I said. 'Can I be of use to you? You come from the spirit world. Is it then permitted to mortals to have personal intercourse with spirits?'

"He held up his hand as if to silence me.

"'Listen to me,' he said. 'You are not frightened of me?'

"'No,' I replied; nor did I feel the slightest awe or fear. I felt stimulated, a kind of electricity ran through my veins--I longed earnestly to learn something of the mysterious realm from which he came, but I had no vulgar or superstitious fear.

"'Nor need you have any dread,' he returned. 'I have no wish nor power to hurt you, but you must listen to my story. Once in fifty years I am allowed to leave my grave and revisit the scene of my tragical death, and this must always be on the 14th of April, which is the anniversary of the event.[4] I am also permitted to recount my story if I find anyone sleeping in this room who is willing to listen to me. Are you willing?'

[4] There is evidently some mistake here in the figures given by the ghost or received by the matron. If his death took place in 1741 (three years after landing in Georgia), his first spirit return was due in 1791, the second, 1841, and the third, not till 1891. It appears to have been anticipated by sixteen years, if the dates given are correct. A friend suggests that "once *in* fifty years" does not necessitate exact *intervals* of fifty years.

"I replied that I should gladly hear what he had to tell, but would he allow me to ask him one question?

"He inclined his head in assent, and I said I had always thought that the spirits of the dead, if they were allowed to appear on earth, came with shadowy and skeleton forms. Why did he appear with flesh like a living man?

"'Ah!' he said, 'that is owing to the peculiarity of my grave. I am buried in salt.'

"' Have you anything more to ask?' said my visitor.

"'Nothing more at present,' I replied. 'I am ready now to hear your story.'

"'I will make it as short as possible and not detain you long. You have noticed my portrait in the gallery?'

"'Yes.'

"'And that of the lady opposite, my cousin, Lucretia Carbury?'

"'Certainly.' (Here the red door was violently shaken).

"'She cannot open it,' said Captain Carbury, 'it is sealed.'

"'When I went out to Georgia,' he resumed, 'in 1738, I was engaged to be married to her; we had been betrothed by our parents in our childhood, and family reasons made it almost a necessity that we should be united, but as we grew up neither of us was very anxious to fulfil the engagement, and, to tell the truth, I was glad of the summons to join my regiment. However, after three years in that distant colony, I came home, having made up my mind I would marry Lucretia and settle down on the family property--which could only be enjoyed by that means--for we were the only representatives of the family, and the property was so left by our fathers that only by marrying could we enter into possession. *Either by marrying or by the death of one of us; when the whole of the property would go to the other.* I knew that Lucretia was at the old house at Grantwich, and I came straight to her.

"'I had written to say when she might expect me, and she received me with apparent kindness and agreed to all my propositions about our marriage. I arrived late at night, and she let me into the house herself and got food for me. We supped together, and she pledged me in a cup, which I now know was drugged to make me sleep heavily.

"'I then retired to my room--this room, this bed, on which you now lie!

"'What I am now going to tell you has been made clear to me since; at the time I was conscious of nothing. As soon as I got into bed, I fell asleep, and whilst I thus slept Lucretia came through that door (pointing to the red door opposite), and stabbed me to the heart. I will show you the instrument with which she did it, if you like.'

"'Pray do,' I said, and he unbuttoned his scarlet uniform coat and drew from his left side a slender dagger or stiletto.

"I looked at it with great interest and asked if I might take it in my hand.

"'Certainly, if you wish it,' he said, 'but I do not advise you to touch it. It is rusty now from the salt, but I assure you it was bright and keen when she drove it into my heart. The stroke was so cleverly aimed that I died instantly. Lucretia then made a signal, which was answered by the entrance of a man, and between them they carried my body through the door by which I entered to-night.'

"He paused, and I thought he looked more ghastly. 'Is anything the matter?' I asked.

"'I am thinking,' he answered, 'that I can show you the rest, if you will follow me, but I must tell you that when we leave this room and enter the gallery, it is possible the murderess will follow us. Shall you be afraid?'

"'Not in the least,' I said, 'I will follow you with pleasure, but you must allow me to put something on, as I am suffering from rheumatism, and am afraid of the cold and damp.'

"'By all means,' said Captain Carbury. 'I will wait for you in the gallery.'

"I then got up and put on my dressing-gown and slippers. Whilst I was doing so, I heard a rustling in the passage as of a woman passing slowly along. I found Captain Carbury, and followed him along the gallery without looking round, but when we reached the end of the gallery and turned to go down the first flight of stairs, I saw the lady with the black brows--whom I now knew to be Lucretia Carbury, the murderess--standing in the doorway, between the gallery and the passage.

"'I do not think she can come any farther,' said my guide, and he opened the door leading from the staircase into the garden.

"'I am showing you just where they brought me,' said he.

"'Who was the man?' I asked.

"'I never knew his name, but she married him afterwards.'

"He then moved across the lawn *to the bare spot under the plane-tree*. Here he stopped, and, pointing downwards, showed me on the bare ground an exact outline of the dagger which he had drawn from his side.

"'Here they dug my grave and here they buried me; a salt spring washes over me.'

"At this moment the great clock of St Andrew struck ONE.

"'All that you have told me is very sad and strange,' I said, 'but now, will you allow me to ask you why you have appeared to me? Is there anything you want done on earth that I can do? Is there any restitution to be made, or justice to be administered? Anything that you require, I am ready to do, if you will grant me one favour when you return to the spirit realm.'

"I had been speaking with my eyes fixed on the ground, but now, happening to raise them, I was surprised to see that my companion appeared to be sinking into the ground.

"'My time is up,' he said. '*Remember!*'--and, as his head disappeared, his words came in a hollow, sepulchral voice from beneath *that spot of black earth*--'remember you are my witness!'

"I was left standing alone under the plane-tree, with the thought, that in returning to my room, I might probably meet the restless spirit of Lucretia Carbury.

"Nothing of the kind, however, occurred. I passed through the doors that had opened at the touch of Captain Carbury, and I noticed that they closed behind me without any effort on my part. I regained my bed, and almost immediately fell asleep. All had passed so naturally, and as a matter of course, that only when I woke this morning, and thought over the events of the night, did I realise that I had passed through such an experience as is given to few human beings.

"You see, dear Edie, that my narrative has taken so long to write that I have no time to speak of other things, even if I could bring my mind to think of anything else, which, I confess, I should have great difficulty in doing.--Ever your very affectionate, "M. PORTER."

Copied *verbatim* from Miss Porter's letter, written on the morning of 14th April 1875.

* * * * *

So ends the story, with apologies to the S.P.R.!

I claim nothing for it beyond the following *facts*:

The Priory still exists at Grantwich, and is known to have been the family mansion of the Carbury family.

Miss Porter was undoubtedly matron of the school where my friend's brothers were educated. She was a woman of unblemished character and truthfulness, and would certainly not have *invented* this long and detailed account of her personal experiences within a few hours of their occurrence.

My friend most certainly copied this letter, which her brothers had obtained leave to read, from their school matron--Miss Porter herself.

Lastly, my friend, Mrs Barker's mother (who is still alive), verified the existence of the Priory (as I have called it) in the town of Grantwich, and it *had* been turned into a boarding-house at the time of her visit, having been previously let in lodgings. Also she found that Captain Richard Carbury was *supposed to have died in Georgia in the year 1741*, as is inferred in the story.

As the murderess and her accomplice alone seem to have been aware of his return on that fateful night, this would be the natural opinion of the world.

As an old associate of the S.P.R., and quite conversant with their

methods, two criticisms of the story at once suggest themselves, in addition to the confusion of dates, which might perhaps be excused, owing to the abnormal nature of the interview described. But the obvious Podmorian remark would be that the whole adventure was a dream on the part of Miss Porter, induced by her interest in the two family portraits she had seen, and the curious sensations she had experienced in looking at a specially gloomy tree in the park.

This would certainly cover the ground, but it proves, perhaps, rather too much.

It requires very robust "Faith in Unfaith" to suppose that a sensible, practical woman, suffering from rheumatism, should carry her dream to the verge of following her dream man into the garden and grounds of the house. It may be urged that *she dreamt all this also*, but "that way madness lies." We must be able to formulate that certain acts of ours took place during full consciousness, or daily life would become impossible and moral responsibility would cease.

Miss Porter might have been in a dream all through the night--granted.

But in these cases it is the "morning that brings counsel." We are all aware of the extraordinary lifelike dreams which, with the return of normal memory, we recognise as dream visions, no matter how vivid and credible they may have appeared to us in the night.

But with Miss Porter this normal process was reversed. She went to sleep quite calmly, and first realised, upon waking in the morning, how thoroughly *abnormal* her experiences had been.

I pass on to the next criticism, which a little "editing" on my part could have averted:

"Is it credible that a woman, only just recovering from the surprise and marvel of such an experience, should write about it, within a few hours, to a favourite cousin, as if she were preparing a story for *The Family Herald*?"

I confess that this was my own feeling when the record was placed in my hands.

We must, however, remember--first, that the percipient was obviously a lady of great courage, or she would not have followed her ghost into the garden; secondly, that she was a keen observer and very accurate in details. Probably, many generations of schoolboys, passing through her hands, may have quickened her perceptions in both these ways.

As for the stilted style, that presents little difficulty, when one remembers that people of a certain rank in life never use a short word when a long one will answer the purpose!

I claim nothing for the story, beyond the points already mentioned. These are matters of *fact*.

Each one must interpret it according to his own views and prejudices.

It is quite enough for me to be responsible for the truth and accuracy of *my own* experiences, to which we will now return.

* * * * *

Note.--Since writing the above I have consulted the "Century Encyclopædia," and find there:

"Oglethorpe--James Edward, born in London, December 21st, 1696, died at Cranham Hall, Essex, England, 1785. An English General and Philanthropist. He projected the Colony of Georgia for insolvent debtors, and persecuted Protestants; conducted the expedition for its settlement, 1733, and returned to England, 1743."

The apparent discrepancy between the date 1733 given in the Encyclopædia, and the 1738 of Captain Carbury's ghostly narrative, may be due to one of two causes:

The young girl copying Miss Porter's letter may have mistaken a three for an eight rather easily.

Again, Captain Carbury did not state that he landed *with* General Oglethorpe, 19th September 1738, but with General Oglethorpe's regiment. This latter may have been a reinforcement sent out to the General after his first landing in the Colony.

CHAPTER VII

LADY CAITHNESS AND AVENUE WAGRAM

Having spent the winter months of 1894 (from January to April) in Egypt, I was returning thence in the latter month with my friend Mrs Judge of Windsor. Our route was *via* Paris, and I had arranged to spend a week there in the same hotel as the young Swedish lady whom I first met in India, and who has been referred to more than once in this record.

She told me she had made the acquaintance that winter of the famous "Countess of Caithness and Duchesse de Pomar," and thinking it would interest me to meet this lady, she had asked for permission to introduce me to her.

As it turned out, Madame Brügel was unable to accompany me to the house, having several engagements for the afternoon, but she promised to "put in an appearance" later. So Mrs Judge and I drove off to the well-known mansion in the Avenue de Wagram, and were received very cordially by Lady Caithness.

I had once tried to read a very abstruse and mystic book by this lady, and had heard her spoken of as a more or less hopeless lunatic, "who imagined herself Mary Queen of Scots," and so forth.

Otherwise I went without prejudice, and being accustomed to judge for myself in such matters, came to the conclusion that Lady Caithness was an extremely shrewd woman, with her head remarkably "well screwed on," as the saying is. As regards her claims to be Mary Queen of Scots, I never heard these from her own lips, although I saw her daily for a week, and we had many interesting talks.

She certainly *did* claim to be in very close relations with the ill-fated Queen of Scotland, but I do not know what views she may have held privately as to varied manifestations of the one spirit. I have heard Lord Monkswell propound an interesting theory, with Archdeacon Wilberforce in the chair, to the effect that as one short earth life gave small scope for spiritual experience and development, he thought it quite possible that the same spirit might have several bodily manifestations simultaneously, and that the judge and the criminal might conceivably be one and the same individual in two personalities!

It is possible that Lady Caithness may have had some such view, not theoretically (as was the case with Lord Monkswell), but as a matter of conviction, and apart from the limits of Time and Space involved in the conception of the latter.

I can only say that I never heard her speak of Mary Queen of Scots except as an entity, quite distinct from herself. But that she carried the "Marie" *culte* to great extremes is an undoubted fact. The hall and rooms on the ground floor of the Avenue Wagram House were arranged and furnished in close imitation of Holyrood Palace. I counted over fifty miniatures and other pictures of the Scottish Queen in the Countess's beautiful bedroom alone, and later on shall have to speak more definitely of one life size and exquisitely painted portrait of the Queen.

But to return to this first reception.

I must confess that a somewhat inconveniently keen sense of humour found only too much nourishment on this occasion.

The Countess was magnificently dressed, as was usual with her, in priceless lace, falling over head and shoulders, and a beautiful tiara of various coloured jewels arranged over the lace. This was eccentric perhaps, considering the occasion, but not laughable. Lady Caithness, in addition to geniality, had enough quiet dignity to carry off the lace and jewels with success. I was chiefly amused by the attitude of adoring humility and flattering appreciation shown by the numerous ladies already assembled when we arrived. Only one man was present,

and he was a priest. Later I learned to appreciate the friendliness of the Abbé Petit and to admire his intellectual courage and manliness.

For the moment, seeing him surrounded by these female worshippers, hanging upon his lips as he discoursed to us about new readings of old truths, one was irresistibly reminded of certain scenes in Molière's "*Femmes Savantes*."

A lively little American lady (married to an Italian count) plied him with numerous questions in fluent French, spoken with an atrocious accent. Finally, she wished to hear the Abbé's views upon *Melchisedech!* In the midst of other questions and answers, the kindly little man managed to turn round to her with a cheery "*Ah, Madame la Comtesse! pour le Melchisedech--nous reviendrons tout de suite à Melchisedech!*" All the affairs of the religious universe were being wound up at a similar pace and in like fashion, and this final word of cheerful assurance would have proved absolutely disastrous to me had I not been sitting close to my friend and able to whisper to her: "*Please dig your nails into my wrist--hard.*" Any bodily pain was preferable to the hysterical laughter which had been so long suppressed and seemed now imminent.

But there was worse to come!

An Englishwoman, the very type of the characteristic British spinster, turned round, and addressed M. l'Abbé in laboured and extremely British French (I must leave the accent to be imagined and supplied by my reader):

"Mais, Monsieur l'Abbé! c'est le Protestantisme que vous nous enseignez la."

He turned round upon her in his wrath:

"Mais, Madame--ou MADEMOISELLE." (No print can convey the utter scorn and contempt of this last word.)

The rest of the sentence was lost to us in the loud laugh of the genial,

good-tempered woman: "*Moi*, Mademoiselle! J'ai été mariée vingt ans et j'ai six enfants!"

The whole scene was too funny for words, and, with the exception of this good lady, all present took themselves as seriously as a University don!

It was a real relief when the solemnity of the reception broke up and we were ushered into the adjoining dining-room for an excellent tea. Here I came upon my Swedish friend, who had only just arrived, and "missed all the fun." She told me there was to be a *séance* held in the house next day, and that she had been asking the Countess if I might not be present. "*It might amuse you, Kat!*" was her irreverent way of putting it. "*Unfortunately, there seems to be some difficulty about it.*"

At this moment Lady Caithness came up, and cordially expressed her regrets that she could not accede to Madame Brügel's suggestion.

"Had you been staying until next week, Miss Bates, I would gladly have arranged for it, but to-morrow is a very special occasion. As a matter of fact, I have promised M. Petit that no one shall be present except himself and me, and the two female mediums, of course. On Wednesday we are to have a crowded meeting here--all the well-known people in Paris will come--and M. l'Abbé will read his paper explaining that he can no longer blind his eyes to the new light breaking upon the world through scientific discovery, etc., but that he remains a loyal son of the Church, if the Church will allow him to do so. It is, of course, a very trying and anxious ordeal; for many priests will be present, also a cardinal and one or more of our bishops. So the *séance* to-morrow will be specially devoted to receiving last instructions for the paper he is about to read, and some words, we trust, of encouragement and hope."

Of course, I hastened to assure Lady Caithness of my full comprehension of her point, and added that I was only sorry she should have been asked to alter her arrangements on my account.

"But you will join us on Wednesday at the meeting, I trust? It will be held at three P.M., in a large room on the ground floor, which is

arranged for such gatherings. I shall expect you then, so we will not say good-bye."

This was heaping coals of fire on my head; for so observant a woman as Lady Caithness must have noticed my difficulty in keeping a grave face earlier in the afternoon!

Now comes a curious point. As we left the house Madame Brügel in expressing disappointment about the next evening, added: "And yet somehow I think you will go after all."

"Yes," I said involuntarily. "I believe I *shall* go, but I cannot think how it will come about; nothing could be more decided than what we have just heard, and I cannot possibly put off my journey to England the end of this week."

I think we were both a little disappointed when no letter arrived by the morning's post. "Local letters often come by second post," urged my friend, who was very keen upon her presentiment.

A long morning at the Louvre prevented my reaching home till one P.M., when the *déjeuner à la fourchette* was half way through its course. No letter on my plate! So Madame Brügel and I agreed that the wish must have been father to the thought with both of us, and put the matter out of our heads once for all.

At two-thirty P.M., however, a *dépêche* letter arrived for me.

Lady Caithness wrote to *beg that I would make a point of being with her that evening by nine p.m.* "You will think this very inconsistent with what I told you yesterday," she wrote, "but I said only what was the exact truth, as matters then stood. It is the Queen herself who has communicated with me this morning, and *insists* upon your being present this evening. The Abbé and I can only bow to this decision. I need not tell you how pleased I shall be personally to greet you this evening."

I was again shown into the spacious bedroom of the Countess, where

she "received" in general, quite after the manner of the French kings in the days of the old monarchy.

Her bed was quite a State bed too, with its beautiful silk furnishings and heavy velvet hangings. On the wall behind this, was a very valuable fresco painting, representing Jacob's ladder, with the angels ascending and descending, executed by a famous modern artist.

We soon descended to the ground floor, and passing through the large lecture-room, of which Lady Caithness had spoken, and which had sufficient gilt and cane chairs to seat a large audience; we stepped down some marble stairs into a small but exquisitely appointed room. It was a sort of chapel, in fact, built "by the Queen's instructions," and used for all purposes and occasions of direct communication with her. A general impression remains with me of rare woods and exquisite marbles, and the walls were hung with framed tapestries representing various scenes in the Queen's life.

To me the most striking and beautiful thing in the room was a full-length, life-sized portrait of Mary herself, so arranged that a hidden lamp threw its soft light on the features; whilst the hanging velvet curtains of deep crimson on either side concealed the frame of the picture, and conveyed the illusion that a living woman was standing there ready to receive her guests.

I have never seen anything more perfect than the way in which this impression was conveyed, without a jarring note of sensational effect.

The two French women mediums were already in the room, and I am bound to say they did not attract me pleasantly nor impress me very favourably. They were mother and daughter, and "Harpy" was written large over either countenance. Doubtless they were very good mediums, in spite of this fact. They *must* have been so, unless one supposes that Lady Caithness and the Abbé Petit were themselves abnormally strong sensitives; in which case one would have thought this extraneous help would have been unnecessary.

We sat down at a fairly large wooden table, polished, but without

covering of any kind, and having only one solid support to it, coming from the centre, passing down as a single wooden pillar, and spreading out in the usual fashion at the bottom. I had noted this on first entering the room.

The two women sat together on my right-hand side. On my left was the Abbé, and the Countess sat exactly opposite to me, with a printed alphabet pasted on to a card, and a long pencil as pointer.

This made up the party. At a side table, placed some distance away, sat a pleasant young French lady, who was writing automatically all the time; a secretary to the Countess, I believe. This young lady had no possible connection with the table.

The *séance* began with a few words of prayer from the Abbé for light and guidance.

The process was as follows:--First, the Countess and then I took the printed alphabet, and pointed silently and at a fair pace to the letters, going on from one to the other without pause. At the letter needed the table did not rise, but gave a sound more like a bang than a rap. I have never heard anything *quite* so loud and definite in my long investigation. The sound seemed to come from *within the wood*, as in ordinary "raps," when these are genuine, but it was far louder and more rapid and decided than the usual *séance* rap. There was no hesitation, no gathering up of force. Any amount of vitality was evidently present, and the intelligence, from whatever source, was unerring. The Countess and I were the only two persons who held the alphabet and pointed, and when *she* held it the mediums could not have seen the letters from their position at the table with regard to hers. Yet the letters were banged out (I can use no other expression) with absolute accuracy, and at a pace which, quick to start with, became more and more rapid as we wearied of the monotonous task and handed the alphabet to each other in turn.

When the name of GOD or of OUR LORD came, only the first letter was indicated, and then the table swayed slowly to and fro in a very reverent and characteristic way for a few seconds; after which we began the alphabet again for the next word.

When these loud bangs came I could trace the reverberation in the wood, and it seemed to me practically impossible that the Harpies could be producing them by any unlawful methods, whilst sitting in full light and with immovable faces, the daughter writing down the letters as quickly as these were indicated.

One did not feel quite comfortable about making investigations in a private house without being invited to do so.

Again, if the women were tricking, and I caught them at it, there was always the chance of a disagreeable scene with people of their class.

On the other hand, it was losing a great opportunity, to refrain, as a mere matter of courtesy. Also I comforted myself by thinking that if anyone needed to feel ashamed it would be the ones who cheated, and not the detective.

So I pushed my chair a little nearer to the table, and the next time the Countess took the alphabet from me and the bangs were in full swing, I put my foot cautiously but very effectually *entirely round the one leg of the table, moving it also up and down freely*. Not a vestige of another foot, nor even of the flimsiest particle of dress or other obstruction! I could positively and distinctly hear the reverberation of the loud bangs on the wood, *between me and the centre of the table*, whilst my own leg and foot were firmly embracing the single wooden pillar upon which the latter stood. So the Harpies were justified, so far as this one phenomenon was concerned. The letters written down so rapidly by the daughter on large sheets of paper presented an apparently hopeless jumble, but when the sitting was over at the last, the Abbé and I were able to make out the words and sentences without great difficulty (he being accustomed to the task), and we then found a long, coherent, and at anyrate perfectly sensible, message addressed to him, and referring to the points of his coming discourse. This had to be proved upon its own merits, and without prejudice, arising from the fact that St Paul's name was given as the author. It was quite as helpful as some of the Apostle's letters, with the advantage of being up to date as regarded the question in hand. After all, the Abbé was about to embark upon an enterprise requiring much courage and great tact, in the forlorn hope

that the walls of narrow Orthodoxy and Priestcraft might fall down before the trumpets of advancing Knowledge and Light.

It may or may not have been St Paul who stood by the Abbé with words of encouragement that night; but I, for one, find no difficulty in thinking it conceivable that the great Apostle should take a keen interest in the evolution of the planet upon which he once lived.

The charming young lady delivered up her script also. It was interesting and well written, but the only paragraph which remains in my memory was an excellent analysis of the initial difference between Christianity and Theosophy.

The Abbé kindly copied it out for me next day, but I must quote from memory.

"Christianity is a stretching down of the Divinity to Man.

"Theosophy is the attempt of Man, by his own efforts, to reach the Divine."

This seems to me both terse and true.

We had sat from nine P.M. till one A.M., and I think we were all relieved when an adjournment for supper was suggested by Lady Caithness.

Her son, the Duc de Pomar, joined us for *this* part of the evening, and was introduced to me. My enjoyment of the excellent fare, after so many hours of exhaustion, was only tempered by an unfortunate and violent quarrel between the mother and daughter mediums, on the score of the age of the latter! The mother declared her daughter was forty-five; the daughter said: "Not a day over thirty-five," and intimated that she surely might be supposed to know her own age! The mother, however, murmured provokingly: "*Moi, je sais mieux que ça*"; and so the wrangle went on, until I made a diversion by taking leave of my hostess and promising to be present at the lecture the "following afternoon," which, by the way, had become "this afternoon" by the time

I left the Hotel Wagram.

When I entered the house once more, it was to be shown into the large lecture-room previously described, which was already three parts full, and very shortly entirely so.

Lady Caithness had kindly reserved a front seat for me, so I could see and hear without difficulty. On the raised platform stood my friend the Abbé looking very grave and rather nervous. A cardinal, two bishops, and some half-dozen priests were seated close to him, and very shortly the lecture, which was, I think, extempore, began.

The Abbé was so manifestly in dead earnest and without any suspicion of *pose*, that one could not fail to be deeply impressed by the scene. It needed all the help of a sincere purpose and a brave heart, to stand up amongst those of his own cloth, and, in face of a partially indifferent and partially unfriendly audience, to declare boldly "the faith that was in him"--a faith that burned all the more brightly and warmly from the fact that it was being purged of the superstitions which must always become the accretions of every form of religion; the clinging refuse of weed and shell, which from time to time must be scraped off the bottom of the grand old ship if it is to convey us safely from port to harbour.

The Cardinal sat twirling his big seal ring, with a look of cynical amusement on his face, or so it seemed to me.

As the Abbé proceeded to mention the advances made in science and the necessity for a restatement of old truths, which should bring them into line with other truths of the nineteenth century, proving the essential unity of *all truth*, and breaking down the fallacy that the vital part of religion and the vital part of science have anything to fear from one another, the Cardinal's face was a study to me.

"Yes, of course, we know all that, you and I, but what is the use of making this fuss about it? We belong to a system, and this system has worked very well for centuries past, and will work very well for centuries to come if fools don't attempt to upset the coach by

restatements and readjustments, as they are called. The people *don't want restatements*; they want a dead certainty, and that is just what we give them."

All this I seemed to read in his clever, cynical countenance, in direct opposition to the thrilling sentences of the Abbé Petit as he leant forward and said, with uplifted finger and prophetic intensity:

"*La lumière est venue, mes frères--et si vous ne la suivez pas--vous serez laissés seuls dans vos églises.*"

It is impossible to exaggerate the affectionate solemnity of this appeal to his brother priests. The tragic note was relieved later by an amused smile which rippled round the audience. This puzzled me until a kind French lady sitting next to me explained that the audience were amused by the "*très chers frères*" (dearly beloved brethren), with which the Abbé addressed them in this rather unorthodox lecture. It was evidently looked upon as a curious bit of "professional survival."

On the following day (Thursday) I was invited to lunch with Lady Caithness at two P.M., and being a punctual person, I arrived at that hour. The powdered footman announced that his mistress had not yet emerged from her bedroom, and showed me up into the dining-room adjoining, where I awaited her. In a few minutes I was joined here by the Abbé, who politely expressed his sorrow that he had not known of my arrival earlier.

As we sat chatting together, he told me a curious experience of his of the previous night, which will certainly "cause the enemy" to smile, if not "to blaspheme."

He said (of course, in French): "I was sitting last night in my room, which looks over the back of the house, and where I can hear no sounds from the Avenue, and I was talking to 'La Reine.' Suddenly '*Elle m'a frappé sur l'épaule*,' and then said she must leave me at once, in order to meet the Duchesse, who had just returned home. At that moment twelve o'clock struck from a neighbouring church, and I looked at my watch, and found it was indeed midnight. When Madame la Duchesse

comes in, I am most anxious to find out whether she and the Duc were returning home at that hour. You will be my witness, madame, that I have told you of this occurrence before seeing the Duchesse."

I assured him that I would gladly testify to this; and in a few moments the Duc de Pomar arrived, and almost immediately after him, Lady Caithness emerged from her bedroom on the other side of the dining-room.

We sat down to luncheon, and I was much amused by the form of the Abbé's question later in the meal.

"*Madame la Duchesse! puis je vous demander sans indiscrétion, a quelle heure vous êtes revenue hier au soir?*"

Lady Caithness looked a little surprised, but answered readily enough: "Well, it must have been past midnight; I did not notice very specially."

"Not past midnight, mother," corrected the Duc de Pomar; "I heard a clock strike twelve just as we were driving through the Porte Cochère."

"*Bien, Madame, qu'est-ce-que je vous ai dit?*" demanded the Abbé, turning to me in triumph. He then repeated his story, and I was able to certify that he had already mentioned it to me on my arrival.

The following day I took my leave of Lady Caithness, with a happy remembrance of her and her great kindness and hospitality to me during this pleasant week. She made me promise to let her know whenever I might happen to be passing through Paris. I wrote to her the next year, when about to make a short stay in Paris, on returning from Algeria, and received an answer from the Riviera. She had been wintering there, and had been packed and ready for the return to Paris, when an obstinate chill had upset all plans. She begged me to go to the Avenue Wagram when I arrived and find out the latest news of her, as the doctors might give leave for the journey at any moment.

Ten days later I *did* go to her house and interview the lady secretary (not the one I had seen), who was very grudging in her answers, and

gave me the impression that she was accustomed to deal with persons who had some "axe to grind" by claiming acquaintance with the Countess.

I did not happen to have the letter in my pocket which authorised my visit, and should probably not have produced it in any case. So I turned away rather shortly, leaving my card, saying: "I must trouble you to forward this at once to Lady Caithness."

The moment the secretary saw my name, her manner entirely changed, and became as servile as it had been "cavalier."

"Miss Bates, I see? Oh, certainly, I shall communicate at once with her ladyship. I had no idea it was Miss Bates. Pray excuse me, so many come and ask for the Duchesse, and we have to be so very particular. But, of course, *you* must be the lady the Duchesse is so very fond of. She has mentioned you often, and warned us to receive you with every courtesy."

And that is my last recollection of the kindly woman, who died a few months later. No, not absolutely my last recollection: visiting Scotland in 1896, I made a point of going to Holyrood Chapel for the express purpose of finding her grave.

The plain stone slab and simple inscription seemed at first a curious contrast to the gorgeous magnificence of her home and dress and surroundings. Yet I am inclined to think that they represented a side of her character which was quite as real as the other.

In like manner, no one who knew of her only as a "wild visionary" could have realised the shrewd, practical woman of business and of common-sense who shared the personality of Countess of Caithness and Duchesse de Pomar.

I remember that Mr Frederic Myers made the same remark to me after a visit he paid to her, just after my return to England, for the purpose of arranging matters with regard to her generous bequest to the Society for Psychical Research.

CHAPTER VIII

FROM OXFORD TO WIMBLEDON

From Paris to England is not a long cry, and my next reminiscence is connected with the University of Oxford.

I was spending a few days there with a friend in the spring of 1896, and went with her one afternoon to an Oxford tea-party, with its usual sprinkling of women, married and unmarried; a few dons captured as a question of friendship, and more than a few undergraduates.

Amongst the latter I chanced to hear the name of a very well-known bishop, whom I had first met and known rather intimately when I was a young girl, and he a young married curate. I had also known his wife (a few years my senior) very intimately in those far-off days, so my curiosity was aroused to know if the young man in this Oxford drawing-room should chance to be a son of this bishop, whom we will call the Bishop of Granchester. I found that my surmise was correct; the young man was introduced to me, and we were soon deep in an interesting conversation about his parents, especially his mother, who had died when he was barely three years old. He knew little or nothing about her. His father had married again, and his paternal grandmother (still alive in 1896) had never cared for his mother--from feelings of jealousy probably--so there was no one to speak to the boy about her, and he was naturally delighted to hear all my girlish recollections of her.

"Do come and have tea with me to-morrow afternoon, or any day that suits you," he said eagerly. "I have one or two old photographs taken of my mother when she was young, and I should like so much to know which of them you consider the best."

Of course, I agreed to go, Mr Blake-Mason promising to ask a "chum" to entertain my hostess whilst he and I discussed the photographs and the old days before he was born.

Returning home from his rooms that February evening, I was conscious

once more of an unaccountable depression, and also a certain amount of nervous irritability, which other sensitives will understand, and which often precedes some psychic happening. Just after we had finished dinner, it struck me suddenly, and *for the first time*, that my discomfort might be connected with my afternoon visit. This young man's mother might be wishing to impress me in some way! I found that this was the fact, but felt unequal to going further into the matter that night.

I promised to listen to anything she might wish to say next morning, and having given this promise, all unpleasant and disturbing influences disappeared, and I had a good night's rest. Next morning, after breakfast, my hostess said very practically:

"Now do get this matter off your mind at once, or you will be worried about it all day. I am going to order dinner, and shall then be in the drawing-room, so you can have this room entirely to yourself."

I sat down, and a very beautiful message was given to me by the friend of my girlhood.

She was evidently very much perturbed and very anxious about something connected with her youngest son, whom I had met for the first time two days previously, and about whose affairs, I need scarcely say, I was in a state of profound ignorance. The little mother was anxious not to "give him away," nor betray confidences, and so her words were very guarded. There was evidently nothing in the least dishonourable or in any way *unworthy* of her son in question. I gathered, rather, that he might be contemplating some step which she, from her wider outlook, considered undesirable and inexpedient; possibly even disastrous in the future.

It was no business of mine, and I make it a point of honour not to "try to guess" more than I am told, and to forget what I *am* told as soon as possible, where the affairs of other people are involved.

This is, fortunately, easy for me as a rule, but in this case one sentence remains even now ringing in my ears, and if the son ever comes across

this record I hope he will forgive my reproducing his mother's last beautiful words to me:

"*Tell my darling boy that life is so solemn and true love so sacred a thing. Tell him to be very, very sure, lest he lose the substance in pursuing the shadow.*"

The first sentence is given verbatim. In the second my memory may be producing the sense without the exact wording, but I have no doubt at all that my words practically convey what the mother wished me to "tell her boy."

This message gave me a hard problem to solve: "What should I do with it?"

On the one hand, my having agreed to take the message, tacitly bound me to let him have it.

On the other hand, there were various questions to consider. In the first place, Mr Blake-Mason might probably, and very naturally, resent my writing to him on the subject, especially as I had no reason to suppose he had any knowledge of psychic matters.

Secondly, he might suppose (quite untruly) that I had heard some private affairs of his discussed, and had taken upon myself to convey a personal warning, under cover of his dead mother's wishes.

This was perhaps exaggerating a possibility, which, nevertheless, could not be ignored.

Thirdly, he might consider me a harmless lunatic, conveying a message which had no slightest foundation in truth.

Fourthly, it might, on the other hand, give him the impression that his mother must have some access to his most private affairs; in which case he might become intensely interested in psychic matters, to the exclusion of more mundane affairs--always a danger with young people--not to mention other possibilities of psychic disaster for

inexperienced investigators.

I went over all these chances *con*, to put against the one *pro* of his mother's loving anxiety, and my sense of responsibility to her.

Finally, I decided that there was no choice left for me but to send the message, and trust the consequences to a Higher Wisdom.

I did this, adding a few words of explanation, and also of warning, in case he should recognise my absolute *bonâ fides* and his mother's personality, and become too much absorbed by these psychic possibilities. Unfortunately, I added, in his own interests, *that it was not necessary to acknowledge the letter*.

"It would doubtless reach him, and I had nothing more to do with the matter."

I left Oxford next day, and have never seen the young man since; nor have I ever heard from him. I concluded that he was annoyed, or that the message was quite wide of the mark. I never doubted his mother's presence with me, but I might have failed to reproduce her words to her son with sufficient accuracy for recognition.

Anyway, I put the matter out of my head as one of those trying episodes to which all sensitives are exposed at times, when they think more of conscience than personal convenience.

Three or four years passed before the corroboration of that message came to me, in a rather curious manner.

A cousin of mine, having been badly wounded in the West African War, was sent to a London hospital to have the bullet, which had puzzled all the local surgeons, located and extracted.

He was at the hospital for several weeks during the London season of 1899, I think. During these weeks I, in common with many other friends and relations, was in the habit of paying him occasional visits. I had gone to say good-bye to him on leaving town, when "by chance"

(as we call it) he mentioned, for the *first* time, the name of his ward sister, adding how charming and kind and capable she had proved. "By the way, she is a daughter of the Bishop of Granchester," he added. "You know everybody, Cousin Emmie! perhaps you know *her*," he said, smiling.

"No; I don't know her, Bertie! but I knew her mother and father very well many years ago."

Nothing would satisfy him but that I should ask to see her when I left the hospital, and as he seemed really anxious on the point I promised to do so, though inwardly averse from disturbing a busy woman.

I asked the hall porter for her, but said I had no special business, and would not ask to see her unless she happened to be quite free. In a few moments he returned, and showed me into a pretty sitting-room on the ground floor, saying that the sister would be with me shortly. The door opened again to admit a bright, pleasant-looking young woman of seven or eight and twenty, who gave me a most cordial greeting when she heard my name, saying: "Oh yes, Frank told me all about meeting you at Oxford."

I did not feel very keen about talking of "Frank" just then; but we sat down, and had a long half hour's chat on much the same lines as my conversation with her brother three years before.

I had said good-bye, and she had accompanied me across the hall to the fine stone steps leading from the hospital--she had, in fact, turned towards her own apartments--when I felt I *must* ask her one more question, so I also turned, and hurried back to her.

"Did your brother Frank ever tell you of a letter he received from me in Oxford?" I asked.

"Oh yes," she answered, without a touch of embarrassment.

Then I continued: "I never heard from him about it. I told him he need not write at the time, but I have been afraid he was hurt or annoyed, and

thought it an impertinence on my part perhaps."

"Did Frank never write?" she asked, with genuine astonishment. "I know he intended to do so. Certainly he was not annoyed in any way. Far from it. He was intensely interested, and *I have the best of reasons for knowing that that message from our mother made a very great difference in his life*."

I thanked her for these words, without asking anything further. As I have said, it was no affair of mine, from first to last; but the verification, after such a lapse of time, was doubly satisfactory to me.

Again I ask: How about the "*Cui Bono*" argument?

* * * * *

Another shake of the kaleidoscope, and I find myself at Wimbledon, staying with a friend--now, alas! passed away--who had then a pretty house not far from the Common, and with whom I often spent a few days when in London.

On this occasion she had asked some friends to meet me at tea, amongst them Mrs Alfred Wedgwood, to whom I had introduced her some years previously, and my friends "V. C. Desertis" and his wife.

A Miss Farquhar, whom I knew very slightly, was sharing a sofa with me, she sitting at one end and I at the other, leaving a vacant space between us. Mrs Wedgwood was talking to Mr Desertis at the moment, but suddenly looked across the room at our sofa, and began describing very graphically an old man of benevolent aspect sitting between Miss Farquhar and myself, leaning on a stick, and wearing a soft felt hat.

"He has long hair, almost down to his coat collar, and he looks such a dear, kind old man!" Mrs Wedgwood said; then turning round, she added: "Surely some of you must recognise him! he is so very clear and distinct in his whole personality."

Mrs Desertis whispered something to her husband, who asked at once if

the old gentleman's hair was very white.

"Yes; quite white," said Mrs Wedgwood hopefully.

"And curly and long?"

"Yes; curly and quite long, reaching to his collar," continued Mrs Wedgwood, still more confidently.

But our hopes were dashed when Mr Desertis turned round drily to his wife: "Then it cannot possibly be my father, as you suggested. His hair was white, but *quite short*."

It was a cruel blow! But Mrs Wedgwood still affirmed that she had never seen anyone more distinctly, whether we recognised him or not.

I may here mention that I had been sleeping very badly in this house for some nights past, and regretted this the more, because I was shortly going to stay with a friend at Windsor for my first "Fourth of June," and wished to be specially bright and well for the coming festivities.

These bad nights were later proved to have some connection with the benevolent old gentleman just described!

Now I will continue the sequence of events.

Mrs Wedgwood's clairvoyant description had been forgotten by us all, as I supposed, long before the afternoon came to an end. It had passed unrecognised, and other interesting matters arose in conversation.

The following day Miss Farquhar wrote a line to my hostess, asking if she might come to tea towards the end of the week, as she had something very interesting to tell us. She came, of course, and thus unfolded her budget:

"None of you seemed very much impressed about that old gentleman Mrs Wedgwood described here the other day, but her words were so graphic that I felt sure she was really seeing him at the moment, so I determined to try and find out something about him.

"I went to an old lady I know, one of the oldest inhabitants, and asked her if she knew anything of your predecessors in this house. She told me an elderly couple had lived here, a husband and wife, that the husband had died, and that although the wife lived away from Wimbledon now, she could not bear to part with the house which her husband had been so fond of; so let it. In fact, my old friend seemed to think she must be your present landlady."

This was said to my hostess, and proved to be quite true. The house had been let through an agent, and as the present owner lived in a distant county, nothing was known of her personally by my friend.

Then Miss Farquhar continued: "Hearing that the old man was so devoted to the house rather suggested a reason for Mrs Wedgwood seeing him here, so I asked my old lady if she had known this gentleman, and if so, would she describe him. She did this, *almost word for word as Mrs Wedgwood had seen him*. Also, she added, that he was a good deal of an invalid, often sat indoors, with a hat on for fear of draughts, and carried a stick, upon which he constantly leant for support."

This was very satisfactory, and we applauded Miss Farquhar's detective instincts, and promised to let Mrs Wedgwood know about the matter.

The latter took it all very quietly, only remarking that she felt sure someone ought to be able to find out about the old man.

A sudden thought struck me that my disturbed nights and uncomfortable feelings, in a very cheerful and pretty bedroom, might possibly be connected with the same old man. Without saying a word about this, I asked Mrs Wedgwood to come up into my room before she returned to London, and then I told her that I could not sleep, and had not had a peaceful night since I arrived. Could she find out what was the cause?

Mrs Wedgwood looked round for a moment, and then said in the most casual way: "Not the smallest doubt of the cause. It is that old man, of course. He is earth-bound, I expect, and haunting the house. You had

better take a message from him if you want to get rid of him. I would help you if I could, but I shall be late for my train if I don't start at once."

Next morning I took the poor old gentleman's message, which began with an apology and regrets for disturbing me, but went on pathetically:

"You must forgive me, I was so very anxious to send a message to my wife, and I saw that you were a sensitive and could take it from me--I did not realise that it might cause you so much discomfort. That lady called me earth-bound, but if I am, it is only through my deep love for my dear wife, and I am permitted to watch over her. I was drawn here by my old affection for this house, and also by your presence here, knowing you could help me."

He then gave the message, of which I can only remember that it was most touching in its expressions of deep affection and watchful care for his widow.

As we did not know this lady's present address, and could not procure it without raising inconvenient questions, my hostess and I settled that she should lock up the message, in the hope that some day we might be able to forward it.

A year later I had a most unpleasant experience of being made to feel seriously ill when I came down for a night from town, and as another clairvoyant assured me that this resulted from the message remaining undelivered and the poor old man's frantic endeavours to reach his wife's consciousness, I told my Wimbledon friend that something *must* be done. Either she must procure the lady's address "*coûte que coûte*," or I could not come down again to Wimbledon until this step had been taken.

Under pressure of this determination of mine the address was procured, and this led to a rather unpleasant experience.

I wrote a very courteous letter to the lady, enclosing the message, and explaining that I was quite debarred from visiting my Wimbledon

friend until it was delivered, that I hoped, therefore, she would excuse my sending it, after more than a year's consideration of the question. I further intimated that although she might consider me a lunatic for my pains, I trusted there could be nothing to vex or hurt her in so touching an evidence of her husband's constant care and love, however little faith she might be disposed to place in the source from which the message was supposed to emanate.

The answer came as a shower bath on my unfortunate head.

The old lady (?) was furious. She had never heard of such wicked nonsense! "*Her dear husband was quite the gentleman, both in clothes and appearance, and he was not old--not a day over sixty-eight--when he died*," etc. etc.

It would have been amusing if it had not been rather pitiful to think of the poor "young" man of sixty-eight trying so hard to reach such a termagant!

Later, I heard that the military man, through whom the old lady's address had been given to my Wimbledon hostess, had asked the husband of the latter if I were a lunatic, by any chance!

And this is how some of us welcome our friends from the other side of the veil! The marvel to me is that Love can still be stronger than Death, in face of such ingratitude and stupidity!

I have already mentioned my extreme sensitiveness to the atmosphere (psychic) of rooms, especially rooms where one sleeps. I find another instance of this in my notes.

I was paying a first visit to a friend in the south of England, and a very bright, cheerful room had been allotted to me there.

From the first night I felt a strong influence of a man in the room. Kindly note that I do not say the influence of a *strong* man; on the contrary, the character appeared to me that of an essentially weak man--weak rather than wicked--sensual as well as

sensuous--self-indulgent, and greatly wanting in grit and will power.

My hostess had two sons, one whom I knew, and the other, living abroad, whom I had never met. The influence I felt was certainly not that of the son I knew, who was both manly and strong-willed, a fine soldier, and "hard as nails," as men would say.

I feared it might be the other son, however, and took an early opportunity of asking to see a photograph of the latter. My mind was quite set at rest. It was certainly not this man's influence that I had felt so strongly in my room.

Asking my hostess, *who* had chiefly occupied the room, she said at once: "Both my sons have slept there at different times," adding, "I am sure you have some of your queer ideas about the room--what is the matter with it?"

I told her; "Now that I am quite convinced that neither of your sons is implicated, I will describe to you the character of a man whom I feel sure must have slept in that room and has left a strong psychic influence behind him."

I then mentioned the characteristics already given, and one or two more which have escaped my memory.

My sceptical friend looked a little surprised. She said nothing at the moment, but crossed the room to a cabinet, whence she took a photograph of a man which I had never seen, and placed it in my hands.

"I am bound to confess," she added, "that you have exactly described the character of my brother-in-law, who certainly has occupied the room more than once."

The sequel to this little incident is rather significant.

A year or two later, this lady and I, having both succumbed to influenza and bronchitis, were sent off to the same place abroad to recuperate.

Her attack had ended sooner than mine, so that I joined her there, and one of the first pieces of news she gave me was of the death of this brother-in-law, adding: "Poor fellow! He died from a very painful disease, and suffered terribly. He had grave faults, but, as you said, they came from weakness rather than wickedness. At anyrate, he was humble-minded, for he wrote a touching letter to me when I lost a very dear relation lately, wondering why such a valuable life should have been taken and such a 'useless log' as himself be left alive."

This poor man had only just passed over when I joined my friend, and I felt that he was in a very bewildered and sad state of mind. I could realise his presence so clearly, partly, no doubt, from having sensed his character so strongly, that the obvious thing seemed to be to try and help him on his new plane of life.

To the superficial mind it appears very absurd, and equally irreverent, to suppose that a faulty creature on this side the veil can help a faulty creature on the *other* side. Personally, I have never had any difficulty in realising the power of prayer for those who have passed beyond our mortal sight.

Surely we are one large family, whether here or there? The best way to make children love each other is to persuade them to *help* each other. Is it strange that the same rule should apply to the universe that applies to the tiny portion of it that we know?

Anyway, I am quite sure in this case that my prayers did help and comfort this poor man in his dark experience.

In a few weeks the position seemed to be altogether lightened. He thanked me for my sympathy and companionship, and I have never heard of him since.

The caviller will say at once: "Could not someone else have done the work equally well--either a near relation in the other sphere or a ministering angel?"

The answer is: "Certainly they could have done it equally well,

probably far better."

But the point is that it happened to be the bit of work put into *my* hands, and at least I did my best. What more can any of us say?

Again I ask: How about the "*Cui Bono*" argument?

CHAPTER IX

HAUNTINGS BY THE LIVING AND THE DEAD

1896

In this same year (1896) I remember another curious incident.

I was staying in London during the season, and some girl friends were very anxious that I should meet a lady whom they knew intimately and wished me to know also. As so often happens under these circumstances, we were not in the least degree interested in each other; but that has nothing to do with my story.

The girls had asked various other friends, but this special lady was the *raison d'être* of the tea-party, and they begged me to come in good time, because Mrs Halifax had several other engagements, and could not pay them a long visit.

So I dressed hurriedly in order to keep the appointment, and went to the house feeling rather bored by the whole arrangement, little dreaming that it would be the occasion of such an interesting personal experience. The lady turned out to be exceedingly prosperous and extremely uninteresting, from my point of view. Probably she would have given her ideas of me in much the same way! I realised that she had brought a son and a daughter with her, but did *not* know that another young man (whose *face* I have never seen) was also a son of hers. I talked to the mother for the conventional quarter of an hour, and then turned with relief to the other son whom she had mentioned, and with whom I found several old friends in common.

Meanwhile the room was filling up with guests; amongst these late comers I noticed the entrance of a man whose face did not impress me at all favourably. He looked dissipated and conceited. I did not speak to this man, but my strong impression about him is a factor in the story.

When the lady, *par excellence*, of the entertainment rose to leave the room, followed by her son and daughter, I noticed that a second young man was also in her train; but I had not seen him previously, for the very good reason that he had been sitting behind my back all the afternoon.

I did not see his face even now. My attention had been diverted from the Halifax party as they rose to take leave, and I only noticed the *back* of the second young man as they left the room, and was told later that this was another son of Mrs Halifax, no other comment upon him being made.

In those days I was able to do more work on the psychic plane than at present, and often tried to help sad or wandering spirits by praying for them when made conscious of their presence near me.

When I woke in the night--after this tea-party--therefore, and felt a presence near me, it did not at first alarm me in any way.

When fully awake, however, I quickly realised that this was no poor, sad, bewildered spirit, but a very malignant and revengeful one. I *did not recognise the sex at the moment.* In fact, my consciousness was entirely engrossed by realising that this was a question of my prayers being needed by no spirit more urgently than by my own.

Something very malignant was in the room--something or someone far too actively and insistently wrathful and malignant to listen to any prayers or entreaties.

This conviction grew so strong upon me that I lighted my candle, and getting out of bed, prayed for protection against the evil thing that was present in my room.

I think I must have remained at least ten minutes on my knees, and I can remember distinctly the feeling of alarm and hopelessness that came over me when I realised how strong were the Powers of Darkness and how little my prayers *seemed* to avail me.

Shortly, however, faith returned, and with it the confidence of victory. I returned to my bed quite calm and strong, and fell asleep knowing that the malignant presence was no longer there to worry and torment me.

I have always found it as easy to communicate with incarnate spirits at a distance as with discarnate ones, so on awaking in the morning, and remembering my disagreeable experience, I asked a friend, "still in the body," what was the meaning of it.

I had made up my mind that if it were in any way connected with the visitors of the previous afternoon, it must be with the dissipated-looking young man, for whom I had conceived an instinctive aversion.

To my infinite surprise *his* name was not given, but that of the younger Halifax son. "It was Henry Halifax. It is a spirit which was haunting him and came to you afterwards."

Now, as I had not even seen this young man, as already explained, I could not bear to think of any false and fanciful accusation being made against him; so remonstrated with my friend.

"Do be careful in giving me the name. Are you quite sure you mean Henry Halifax? Are you not thinking of Mr Loseby?" (Mentioning the name that had been given me of the other gentleman.)

"No; I mean Henry Halifax."

"But I did not even *see* him," I urged.

"*No; but you were sitting with your back to him all afternoon. Don't you know the back is more psychically sensitive than any other part of the body?*"

Nothing was said about the malignant spirit beyond the fact that it was someone "haunting" Henry Halifax.

The matter, once explained, I put it out of my head, having no special curiosity as to the reason of the haunting, and supposing it might have been some male acquaintance of his.

That morning I went down to my Wimbledon friend for a night. I arrived in time for luncheon on Saturday morning, and after a pleasant walk on the Common in the afternoon my friend suggested our coming home by a certain florist's shop, as she wished to buy some plants for her drawing-room.

I had already met this florist's wife, a very "spooky" person, who had been introduced by us to Mr Myers and the Society for Psychical Research. She was a handsome, fresh-coloured, practical woman, with nothing of the weird and pallid "ghost seer" about her comely face. But she had had some wonderful experiences, and her children also; and these had been already imparted to Mr Frederic Myers.

When the business part of our interview was concluded Mrs Levret turned to me, and said: "Well, ma'am, I *am* glad to see you again in these parts. Have you had any curious experiences since I saw you last?"

Now Mrs Levret had so many curious experiences of her own, as to which she was wont to be very voluble, that I had never before known her express curiosity about those of anybody else.

This just flashed through my mind as I answered her:

"No; nothing particular, Mrs Levret. By-the-by, I had a rather disagreeable experience last night, but it has been explained." And in a few words I mentioned what has been already described at length.

From my words she must have gathered that I supposed the haunting spirit to be that of a *man*, and that I did not attach much importance to it any way.

As we left the shop my charming hostess, who was equally beloved by those in her own class and those out of it, turned round, and said pleasantly: "We must hurry home now, Mrs Levret, but do come up to-morrow and see Miss Bates. She does not leave me till the evening, and I know you will enjoy having a talk with her."

Mrs Levret promised to come, and appeared next morning, having first ascertained that the sceptical husband of my hostess would not be upon the premises. "He does laugh at me so, ma'am," she said apologetically. So she was brought straight up to my bedroom next day, and we had an interesting talk over her own strange adventures.

Suddenly she looked up, and said: "*À propos des bottes.*"

"How about that young man, ma'am? What are you going to do about him?"

"What young man?" I said, honestly puzzled. "And what can I do about any young man?"

The Halifax incident had so completely faded from my mind that I could not for the moment imagine what she meant.

"The young man you told me about yesterday afternoon, ma'am," Mrs Levret answered stoutly.

"But I can't do anything about him. What *should* I do?"

Then she took up her parable in these words:

"Well, ma'am, I have been thinking a deal about that young man since yesterday. It seemed to take a sort of hold upon me. It seems given to me, ma'am, *that it is a young woman who is haunting him--a young woman who is not in his own rank in life--someone whom he wronged*."

I was amazed by these words, and still more by the keen interest Mrs Levret showed in the subject.

"But what can *I* do in the matter, even if it be as you say?" was my next

question.

"Well, ma'am, they give me to understand that the young man must be made to confess. He will never have any peace until he does. It seems to me *you* might get him to confess."

Now there could be no question of confession on the outer plane, as the young man was a perfect stranger to me, and there was small chance of our ever meeting again.

But I was aware that Mrs Levret was not speaking of the outer plane, so I agreed to take pencil and paper, and see if I could bring the spirit of Henry Halifax to me, and having done so, whether I could induce him to tell me the truth.

He came, but for a long time would say neither YES nor NO. "*What business is it of yours?*" was the constant reply to my questions. And I am bound to say it appeared a very pertinent one, from the ordinary point of view.

Clearly it *was* no business of mine; but Mrs Levret was so much in earnest, and had impressed me so strongly with what "*had been given to her*," that I felt I must persevere, in the young fellow's own interests.

So I explained that I had no wish to pry into his private affairs from any mere unworthy curiosity, but that having myself felt the malignant presence that was said to be haunting him, and being told that only confession would remove it, I hoped he would consider the matter seriously before obstinately closing the door of opportunity now open to him. "Who could foretell when he might have another chance?"

A long pause succeeded these words. I felt that the angry, irritable mood was passing over, and when my hand was next influenced to write, the words that came were not the usual curt "*None of your business*," but an apology for his rude reception of my efforts to help him, and a full confession, which entirely bore out Mrs Levret's impressions.

He told me that it was only too true that he had betrayed a young woman in a different rank of life from his own. She had died in child-birth *the preceding midsummer*, and had died cursing him for his perfidy. Ever since (it was now late in June) he had been haunted by her presence, seeing nothing, but always conscious of a malignant spirit tempting him to his own destruction. The mental agony was so great that he told me he did not think he could endure it much longer, and had almost decided to put an end to his life (little realising, poor fellow, that bad as this life might be, the next phase would be far worse for him).

After trying to soothe and comfort him, without in any way minimising the weight of his sin or attempting to lessen his remorse for it, it struck me that it would be well to try and have a little talk with his poor young victim. So saying good-bye, and promising to remember him in future, I asked mentally for *her* spirit to come, and then tried to influence her in the direction of forgiveness. It was a hard struggle, and no wonder.

The poor young woman had trusted him, had been deceived, and finally launched into another sphere without any preparation for it. What wonder that she haunted the man who had wronged her so terribly, through pure selfishness, and that any love she had ever borne him had long since turned to deadly hate!

It needed both time and patience to rouse even mere passive feelings towards him. I spoke of his deep remorse and misery. At first she only answered that she was very glad to hear it, because it showed she had succeeded in making her presence felt.

By degrees, however, a more womanly view of the subject seemed to come to her. After all, he was the father of her child; the poor little baby that had mercifully followed its mother into the Great Unseen. She had loved him once, by her own showing. I made the most of this point, and very slowly, very grudgingly, she gave me the promise I asked for--*i.e.* that she would at least cease this revengeful haunting, even if she could not yet feel more kindly towards the one who had injured her so deeply.

Having extracted this promise I felt that no more could be done for the time being, and Mrs Levret, who had been sitting in unwonted silence during both interviews, then took her leave.

I have given this case and its treatment very much *in extenso*, not only because it may be helpful to others dealing with erring and revengeful spirits, but because on my return to London *every important point in this true narrative was amply corroborated*.

It took some time and a good deal of tact before the case was complete.

First, I learned that Henry Halifax was by no means a *persona grata* in the house where I first met him, and that my young friends there had only been allowed to ask him under some protest, and because the rest of his family were to be present.

Asked *why* this should be the case, their answers were naturally vague: they only knew he was not very welcome.

Of course, I did not pursue the matter with these young people. They told me, however, that he was very much changed of late, and seemed so often moody, unhappy, and discontented.

"I am sure *we* should be happy enough if we had such a luxurious home and all that money," said one of them naïvely.

Now I happened to know rather intimately at that time another friend of the Halifax family; a woman considerably older than the young girls mentioned, and as she had some little knowledge of psychic possibilities I determined to lay the whole story before her, trusting to her honour to keep it to herself, and not to allow any prejudice against Henry Halifax to arise in her mind should she know nothing of the circumstances.

She had known the family from her childhood, and I knew, therefore, would not be influenced by the word of an outsider under these circumstances. But I discovered that the confession of Henry Halifax, the spirit, was no illusion on my part, but *the absolute truth*.

Young, handsome, rich, with all the world before him (he was only twenty-four at the time), this lady had been greatly puzzled by his intense depression of the last few months, and told me that he was constantly speaking of suicide. It was supposed to be a purely physical condition by his parents and others. She, however, knew an intimate man friend of his. By one of those not uncommon mistakes, whereby each one supposes the other to be in the confidence of a mutual acquaintance, she had discovered that the real trouble was mental rather than physical, and that the death of the young woman of lower social position, in child-birth, "*last midsummer*" was an actual fact!

Needless to say how great was her astonishment to find that the whole story had been made known to me through such a curious train of circumstances--first, my experience of the malignant spirit; secondly, my happening to go to Wimbledon next day and mention the circumstances to the wife of the florist there; thirdly, *her* strong and, as it proved, quite accurate impressions upon the subject; and fourthly, my two interviews:--first, with the betrayer, and then with the betrayed on the psychic plane.

Some few months later I was asked by the lady just mentioned if I should object to meeting Henry Halifax at dinner next evening.

"Not at all," was my answer. In fact, I felt it might be part of some psychic plan that I should do so. Evidently this was not the case, for at the last moment a telegram came to his hostess to say he was unexpectedly prevented from returning to town.

So we have never met at all! But I trust the confession may have been as efficacious as Mrs Levret was told that it would be. Anyway, I can testify that the gentleman in question is now happily married, and, therefore, presumably no longer haunted by the revengeful spirit, who has long since, let us trust, found happiness and peace in a higher world than this.

* * * * *

Speaking of haunting by the so-called dead reminds me of haunting by

the so-called living.

In this same year (1896) I was staying in Cambridge for the first time in my life.

Oxford I have known since girlhood, but this was my first visit to the Sister University; needless to say, however, that I have met many men who have graduated there. Not knowing the town of Cambridge myself, I had never made it a subject of discussion, and ten years ago I was not even aware that such a street as Trumpington Street existed, difficult as it may be for Cambridge people to credit this statement.

In any case, most emphatically, I did *not* know that a very old friend of mine, who became later in life a judge, had ever lived in this street.

Having been a sailor in youth, he had gone up to Cambridge comparatively late; this was shortly before my acquaintance with him began.

Not knowing Cambridge at all, the question of where he lived there had never entered into our conversations together. Probably I took it for granted that he was living in his college (Peterhouse). The strong feeling of friendship between us had become a warmer sentiment on his side, and this led later, and inevitably, to a thorough break in our pleasant relations with each other.

Long years passed, during which I neither saw nor heard of my friend.

I knew that he had married, and had had a somewhat successful career as a barrister in London, and that was all I knew about him.

After staying for a week or two with friends in the neighbourhood of Cambridge in 1896, I had taken rooms for a month *in* Cambridge, inviting one of these friends to stay with me as my guest.

We came upon these special rooms in a curious way. Having worked through a list of those suggested to us by a friend, none of which quite suited, I heard, by the merest chance, that possibly I might find what I

wanted in Trumpington Street, at the house of a very respectable Cambridge tradesman. We went there, but only to find that the rooms vacant could not be ready for me at the time specified, as some old customers were coming to them for three or four days.

"But I want them for a *month*," I expostulated.

The landlady was firm; she could not disappoint these people after promising to take them in.

In spite of my disappointment, I admired her so much for this strict sense of honour that I determined to look at the rooms in case of requiring any at a future date.

We went upstairs. The rooms were exactly what I required, and very clean and well furnished, so it ended by my agreeing to take them for a week later, although at a considerable inconvenience.

It was in this casual way that I entered the house about the middle of May 1896. My friend was not able to join me until the morning after my arrival, so I spent the first evening alone, and retired to bed rather early. I slept well enough during the earlier part of the night, but awoke about two A.M., having had a tiresome, worrying dream about the very man I have mentioned, who had certainly not been in my thoughts for many months, or possibly years.

Even when fully awake, his influence was still in the room with me, and falling asleep again, there he was once more in my dream, twitting me with my want of appreciation of him in the past, and suggesting what a much more successful career I might have had through marrying him. This sort of thing went on for the rest of the night. Either I woke up with a disagreeable start, still feeling the man's influence in the room, or sank into a troubled sleep, to be once more at the mercy of his reproaches!

When morning came I was only too thankful to get up, and when my friend arrived on her bicycle about noon, and asked me how I had slept in the strange house, I was forced to confess that my night had been

much troubled by dreams about an old friend, of whom she had never heard, by-the-by.

"Oh, well, we all dream about old friends sometimes," she said, "but I'm afraid in this case your dreams were not pleasant; you look tired out! Anyway, it is a mercy that it was not F----'s!"

And so with a joke the matter dropped.

But the following night the trouble was renewed. Even then I did not in any way connect it with the room in which I was sleeping, and I said nothing next day to my friend on the subject.

But the *third* night matters had gone beyond a joke. The influence was stronger than ever, the gibes and reproaches more accentuated, and, in addition to these, there was on my side the exasperation engendered by three sleepless nights.

Instead of feeling depressed--as on the two previous occasions--the "worm turned" at last!

I spoke out loud in my vexation, as though the man himself were there listening to me.

"Well," I said, "I have no unkindly feeling towards *you* of any kind. If you have nothing better to do than to come worrying me and keeping me awake in this way, it just shows how wise I was *not* to marry you! You have nothing to do with my life now. And YOU CAN GO."

"Standing up" in this way to the ghost of the living had a most excellent effect, upon my mind at anyrate. I felt intensely relieved, and soon fell into a long and dreamless sleep.

This last experience first suggested the idea that this old friend *must have some special connection with that house*. In the morning I confessed to my friend that my second night had been as disturbed as the first, and the last the worst of all, adding: "That man is simply haunting the place. I am determined to try and find out if he ever

lodged here."

This was by no means easy, as it turned out. His College career was already buried in the snows of some twenty-five years. Moreover, when I questioned the young daughter of our landlady as to how long her parents had lived in the house, she said at once: "Just seventeen years, ma'am. Father and mother came here the year I was born."

This did not help me much. I asked who had rented the house previously. Referring this question to her mother, she told me it had been taken from some people who had left Cambridge, and "*Mother thought they were both dead now*."

This was a second *cul-de-sac* for me!

But I was determined to go on with my investigations, simply grounded upon the strong conviction that such repeated experiences *must* have some foundation in fact.

The girl saw I looked disappointed. "Did you want to know about anyone who lived here long ago?" she ventured timidly.

"Yes; I wanted to find out whether an old friend of mine ever lodged here; he belonged to Peterhouse," was my answer.

"Ah, then, I am sure he would not have lodged here," said the girl confidently. "None of the Peterhouse gentlemen come here. It is always the Pembroke men who come to this house."

It seemed fated that I should hear no more about my living ghost.

A few days later, however, the luck turned.

I was told quite casually that Mr Pound, the well-known Cambridge chemist, had occupied our house years before, and I determined to verify this some day. As Mr Pound combined the post office with his drugs, one often went into the shop, but hitherto I had only seen his assistants.

Going in one day with my friend for some stamps, Mr Pound himself handed them to me.

Here was my chance! I must confess that I hesitated to ask such an apparently absurd question on such slender grounds. In any case, was it likely that he would remember the names of all the undergraduates in the University who might have lodged with him twenty or thirty years before? I whispered to my friend: "Shall I ask him?" but she did not hear, so even this small encouragement was denied me. I was actually turning to leave the shop, when resolution at length took the reins, and I found myself asking:

"Is it true, Mr Pound, that you lived many years ago at No. -- Trumpington Street?"

"Quite true," was the ready answer. "I went there in the year fifty-five." (I quote this from memory, but it was in the fifties certainly.)

"I wanted to ask a question about a gentleman who may have lodged with you a good deal later than that--about seventy, I should think." And I mentioned the name of my friend.

Mr Pound's brow cleared at once, and he looked up with a beaming smile. "Mr Forbes," he said--"why, of course, I remember him well. He lodged with me over eighteen months." Then turning to his assistant, he told him to go into the parlour and bring out the large photograph album. There was my friend, sure enough, with his big dog--the very photograph I had of him, given me in the early days of our acquaintance.

Mr Pound was full of reminiscences. My friend had evidently been a prime favourite with him, and it was some minutes before I could squeeze in my crucial question. It seemed almost impossible to expect him to remember the exact rooms occupied by Mr Forbes, considering there were two or three "sets" of rooms in the house, in addition to several bedrooms which were let separately.

But even here Mr Pound's memory proved invaluable. "Which room he

slept in? Why, of course, I remember distinctly. He had the large front sitting-room and the bedroom at the back of it; over our living-room in those days."

So I was living in Mr Forbes' sitting-room, and sleeping in the bedroom, he had occupied for more than eighteen months.

My Cambridgeshire friend was, fortunately, present as a witness that no word of mine had indicated this fact before Mr Pound corroborated my intuitive impression. She said afterwards, laughingly, that Mr Myers would certainly think I had got up a special ghost story for him the moment I set foot in Cambridge.

However this may be, both he and Professor Sidgwick were greatly interested in it, for, as they explained, there were fifty accounts of haunting by the dead to one such example of haunting by the living.

Of course, such a case presents innumerable difficulties; still the salient fact remains, that after a lapse of nearly thirty years I traced the rooms occupied by an old friend, in a city I had never before entered, and that this knowledge did not come to me by chance, but *as the result of a series of investigations, started by me solely on account of the experiences that came to me in a house and in a room of which I had absolutely no previous knowledge*. Those interested in these subjects will naturally ask: "*Do you suppose that the spirit of Mr Forbes came to you at the moment of your remarks to him and his to you? If so, was he conscious of any such experience?*"

I can answer this last question decidedly, and in the negative; for four years later, circumstances brought me once more within the orbit of Mr Forbes' life. He was then living in the north of England, and he and his wife and I have discussed the question more than once.

We can only suppose that the impression of his presence did in some way cling to the surroundings; that my sleeping there, even in complete ignorance of his tenancy, enabled me, as a "sensitive," to pick up this special influence from many others presumably present; and that the memories of the past galvanised the impression into some sort of

temporary astral existence. The entity to whom I seemed to be speaking was doubtless *not* the Judge Forbes of later life, but some distorted image of his earlier days of disappointed and often reproachful affection.

When Mr Myers suggested that I should get Mr Pound to sign a paper mentioning that he had told me that Mr Forbes had occupied these special rooms twenty-seven years previously, the latter did so readily, only remarking that he had naturally concluded that I *knew* my friend had lodged with him.

"Pound will 'smell a rat' if I go," said Mr Myers.

So I went myself, and thus the story was made evidentially complete.

CHAPTER X

FURTHER EXPERIENCES IN AMERICA

My second visit to America was paid in the year of the Diamond Jubilee, 1897.

After wintering in the West Indies, I went on to America in the spring, chiefly with the view of meeting Mrs Piper for the first time, and securing a few sittings with her if possible.[5]

[5] The portion of this chapter referring to "Mrs Piper and her Controls" is published by kind permission of Mr Ralph Shirley, editor of *The Occult Review*, in which my article under this heading appeared in March 1906.

I was writing some articles for *Borderland* at the time, and Mr Stead was specially anxious for me to take this opportunity of "sampling" the famous American sensitive.

This proved no easy task. My visit to Boston, unfortunately, occurred at the very time when an organised attempt was being made by the American branch of the Society for Psychical Research to get into some

sort of evidential communication with the late Mr Stainton Moses through his "controls" *Imperator*, *Rector*, etc.

In vain I wrote to Dr Hodgson (to whom I carried letters of introduction) telling him of my chief reason for visiting America a second time. Even the plea that I had known Mr Stainton Moses in earth life, and that we had several intimate friends in common, was of no avail.

Dr Hodgson expressed regrets, but assured me that *no* sittings could be allowed under existing circumstances, and that it was impossible to make any exception to this rule.

We seemed to have arrived at a *cul-de-sac*, when a bright idea struck me.

Why not ask the UNSEEN themselves for a decision in the matter?

I wrote again, therefore, to Dr Hodgson, suggesting this idea, and mentioning that I should arrive in Boston on a certain date, and could be found at the Hotel Bellevue in that city.

The next day but one after my arrival, and quite early in the morning, Dr Hodgson came to call upon me.

It was my first sight of that genial and delightful personality. At the very moment of shaking hands, he said cheerily, and with a look of half-rueful amusement at his own discomfiture:

"Well, you've got to come! They insist upon it, so there is nothing more to be said."

My preconceived ideas of a critical, elderly, and white-haired professor, taking himself very seriously, were dissipated on the spot; and this was the beginning of a sincere and loyal friendship between us which lasted for nine years on this sphere, and will last, I trust and believe, through whatever forms of existence may succeed to this one.

We made arrangements at once for my joining Dr Hodgson next

morning at Arlington Heights, where my first sitting with Mrs Piper took place, and where I met for the first time this refined and interesting-looking woman.

I was told that with the advent of the Imperator and Stainton Moses' controls, the character of Mrs Piper's mediumship had undergone a complete change. The former communications through the voice ceased, and gave place to automatic writing, except at the moment of return to the physical body, when a chance sentence or two might be uttered during the transition period, but that these were not always intelligible to the listener.

Mrs Piper's arm and hand became curiously "dead" and limp when unconsciousness set in; the blood departed, leaving it as white and helpless as that of a corpse. By degrees this dead look disappeared. The blood flowed once more through the veins, and as I noticed this change, the hand moved gropingly towards the pencil held out by Dr Hodgson, and finally grasped it. The latter's long practice and infinite patience were invaluable in making out the often rather illegible script. The hospitality he gave to all attempts at definite communications, however vague and shadowy at first; the infinite patience with which he repeated again and again a question not fully comprehended--all this, combined with intelligent criticism, alert, dispassionate judgment and balance of mind, made an investigator of psychic phenomena very rarely to be met in a world where most of us evince in a marked degree "*les défauts de nos qualités*."

To combine sympathy, patience, and receptivity with cool and critical judgment is well-nigh impossible for ordinary men and women.

Dr Richard Hodgson certainly solved the problem to a very remarkable extent.

The first thing that struck me in the two sittings I had with Mrs Piper, was the hopeless breakdown of the Thought Transference Theory, as accounting for the automatic writing.

The ostensible reason for my presence at Arlington Heights was the

idea entertained by the "controls" that, having known Mr Stainton Moses in earth life, I might be able to facilitate his communications. I hope this may have been the case, but if so, it was certainly not due to any power of Thought Transference I may have possessed.

Again and again I asked for names of friends we had known in common, but nearly always in vain. Even when, in despair of getting these normally, I concentrated my mind consciously on some short and easy name, the latter was not given.

Yet next day some of these names would appear spontaneously on the script, when my mind was entirely occupied by other subjects.

References were made to Mr Moses' lack of appreciation for music, and he asked whether our mutual friend Mrs Stratton still played LISZT. He also referred to his visiting the Strattons, and finding them playing duets together, in London.

On my return to town Mrs Stratton fully endorsed the fact that Mr Moses disliked music (this was unknown to me), but she denied emphatically that she and her husband ever played duets in his presence. Mr Stratton, however, corrected this impression, and reminded her of several occasions when Mr Moses had come to them from University College, found them at the piano, and being on very intimate terms, had begged they would finish the passage or movement; and on one or two occasions this had been done.

These slight but evidential incidents, forgotten by Mrs Stratton herself, and unknown to me, were conveyed quite correctly in the automatic script through Mrs Piper--three thousand miles across the Atlantic--and nearly six years after the death of Mr Stainton Moses.

The most convincing test upon these occasions, however, was the reference to a Mrs Lane--the lady to whom Mr Moses had been engaged when he passed away.

Very few of his friends knew of this engagement, even in England. Dr Hodgson, who had never met Stainton Moses in earth life, had

naturally not heard of it. It was only by chance that I knew anything of the matter, and this merely through once meeting the lady at Mrs Stratton's house some time after Mr Moses had died. On that occasion Mrs Lane had a young daughter with her; I knew nothing of any other members of the family.

During my second visit to Mrs Piper I mentioned meeting this lady--already a dim memory with me--and the "control" at once asked if I had met a *sister* also.

I answered "No," remarking that a young daughter had been with her.

The writing at once continued in these words:

"Well, now I am giving you this as a test: she *has* a sister, and one who has been the cause of the deepest sorrow of her life. You will find this is true when you go back to England."

These words were amply justified.

On applying to Mrs Stratton for information, she denied the possibility of there being any truth in the test. She said: "I have come to know Mrs Lane very intimately since you met her here. I don't believe she has any sister; anyway, I am *quite* sure she would have told me if a sister had caused her such sorrow as you mention."

I persevered, however, in getting at the truth of the matter by writing to Mrs Lane herself (an almost entire stranger), and asking if she cared to hear the references to herself in the Piper records; if so, would she come and lunch with me?

She came, and when I reached the passage about the sister, expecting that she would endorse Mrs Stratton's denial, I noticed, to my great surprise, that her eyes filled suddenly with tears, and that she was literally unable to speak through emotion.

The tears ran down her cheeks, when at length she said in a broken voice: "*That* is the most convincing test he could have given me! No! I

have never mentioned that sister, even to Mrs Stratton, kind and good as she has been" (by this time I had spoken of Mrs Stratton's denial of the sister's existence). "I could not speak of her to *anyone*. She was the cause of the greatest sorrow in my life; *but no one upon earth knew this except Mr Stainton Moses*. I was engaged to him at the time, and he was the natural person to turn to in my deep tribulation. No one else ever heard of the circumstances."

At this second sitting of mine Mr Stainton Moses spoke also of a valuable watch he had possessed, and expressed some regret that it had not been given to Mrs Lane at the time of his death.

I knew nothing at all about any watch of his, but on appealing to one of his executors, an old friend of mine, found there was such a watch, which had been a presentation one, and was of considerable value. Upon the death of Mr Moses it had been given (quite with the approval of Mrs Lane) to the son of a very old and esteemed friend.

This executor also told me, as a curious coincidence, that when I was staying with the excitable sensitive in Sussex Gardens, mentioned in a previous chapter, and he and his wife had come to tea with me one afternoon (to be introduced to this remarkable lady), she had given him a similar message about the same watch, purporting to come from Stainton Moses.

I remember perfectly well having asked Mr and Mrs Harrington to come to tea with me one afternoon to meet my eccentric landlady, and I also remember his having a long talk with her whilst his wife and I were immersed in our own conversation. But I heard no details of this talk. He had merely said how much interested he had been in meeting Mrs Peters, and that she evidently had some mediumistic power.

It was certainly curious that the watch should have been mentioned, first in Sussex Gardens, London, and six years later in Arlington Heights, Boston, and that on each occasion the same wish with regard to it should have been expressed!

During this Arlington Heights sitting (the second one), Mr Moses also

referred to an MS., of which I knew nothing at the time. This allusion also was verified by his other executor, the late Mr Alaric Watts, upon my return to England.

* * * * *

During this visit to America I also came across a Mr Knapton Thompson, a hard-headed Yorkshire man, who had invented a new kind of smokeless combustion stove, which must have been a good one, for our shrewd American cousins were employing him to put up these stoves in several public buildings, including the Smithsonian Institute in Washington.

Mr Thompson combined psychic proclivities with his smokeless invention, and had become greatly interested in the New York medium, Mrs Stoddart Gray, who has been already mentioned in connection with my own investigations, twelve years previous to my present visit. He had written to tell Mr Stead of his experiences, which included several in which the Julia of "Julia's Letters" had purported to be present.

Mr Stead had turned this gentleman over to me by giving me an introduction, accompanied by the request that "I should see the man and report what I thought about him and his wonderful experiences."

So I asked Mr Thompson to call upon me, and arranged to be present with him next day (Saturday) at Mrs Stoddart Gray's circle.

I found that he had taken up his abode with the medium and her son during his short stays in New York, with the openly expressed intention of finding out if there were any trickery behind the scenes. He had, however, convinced himself of her *bonâ fides*, and was deeply interested in the interviews he was able to obtain by means of these mediums, with a daughter he had lost some years previously. He was much pleased to find that I knew Mrs Gray already and could also testify to some very remarkable phenomena occurring to me at her house.

So I met him there next afternoon, with every expectation of a good sitting. These hopes, however, were entirely destroyed owing to the presence of a noisy, vulgar man, whom they called the "Whisky King." He made the most inane remarks, cracked stupid jokes, antagonised every respectable person in the room, I should suppose; and as all this took place without a word of protest from the lady of the house, one can only conclude that she considered it worth her while to endure his vulgarities.

Certainly the afternoon was spoilt for the rest of us, and I remarked upon this to a very pleasant, smart-looking young American lady when the sitting was over and we had retired to the reception-room to find wraps and galoshes, etc.

"Oh yes; wasn't he just exasperating?" she said, with ready sympathy.

She looked much too young and smart and good-looking for the ordinary type of "investigator," and I could not refrain from asking how she had come into this *galère*.

She explained her position readily, and it was very interesting to me.

She was a young married lady, and had first been brought to the house, six months before, by a cousin of hers who was staying with them in New York, and thought the experience might be amusing.

"We just came in for a joke," she said; "but something happened which interested me so much that I have come again several times, and until to-day have always had an interesting time."

Then she told me about her first sitting.

I had noticed upon her ungloved hand a very beautiful *scarabæus*, set in fine gold, and evidently by an artist in the craft. "Yes, it is a Tiffany setting," she observed, seeing my eyes drawn to it. She took off the ring, and gave it into my hands.

"That ring is really the cause of my being here to-day," she continued.

"The scarabæus was given to me some years ago by Professor----" (she gave the name of a well-known American Egyptologist). "He made a great pet of me when I was a child, and I begged it from him. When I was going to be married last year he insisted upon having it set for me by Tiffany as a wedding present, and he then told me there was no doubt at all about its being a genuine *antique*. He had come across it many years before by a curious chance when travelling in Egypt, and had been assured that it was a genuine *Cleopatra* relic. 'I can't answer for that,' he said, laughing, 'but it is certainly many centuries old. I have no doubt it is genuine so far as age goes.' Well, the night my cousin and I came here together I did not take off my gloves until *after* we had gone in to the *séance* room, so no one could have seen my ring--and you know Mrs Gray's sittings always begin in the dark? I took my gloves off when I found we had to sit in a circle holding hands, and one of the first materialisations was announced to be that of Cleopatra." (*I* had seen "Cleopatra" more than once in 1886, in the same house--E. K. B.) "She rushed across the room in the complete darkness, seized my right hand, amongst all the hands in a circle of twenty people or more, almost tore this special ring from my finger, and said in a tone of indescribable grief and longing: '*Mine! Mine!* Ah, *Chem!* CHEM!'"

This was sufficiently startling, even apart from the mention of *Chem*, as the ancient name for Egypt, in a *milieu* of this kind!

The ring was faithfully restored later in the evening; and the young lady who owned it had been sufficiently impressed by the circumstances to confide them to her kind professor, and also to pay more than one visit to Mrs Stoddart Gray since the episode had occurred, which was just six months before our meeting there.

During this second visit to America I made the acquaintance, and, I trust I may say, gained the friendship, of Miss Lilian Whiting, so well known by many thousands of grateful readers. We saw a great deal of each other in Boston, and during one of my long chats with her in her pretty sitting-room at the Brunswick Hotel, she told me of the visit of Lady Henry Somerset and Miss Frances Willard to that city, some years before our conversation. Miss Whiting also mentioned a friend

who had accompanied these two ladies, and who had been taken ill, and had died very suddenly in the hospital at Boston.

"I never met the lady," said Miss Whiting, "but Miss Willard and Lady Henry told me they had been obliged to leave their friend behind owing to an attack of influenza, and asked me to call upon her someday. I went a day or two later, carrying some fruit and newspapers with me. The matron, whom I knew well, said her patient was doing splendidly, and was likely to be leaving in a few days, but that as I was a stranger, it would perhaps be better for me not to come in and see her that afternoon. So I left my little gifts, and was shocked next day to hear of her sudden and quite unexpected death. By-the-by, I believe she was Stead's 'Julia'--I am not sure about this, but somebody told me so lately."

Miss Whiting then mentioned the lady's name, which I withhold, as Mr Stead still makes use of it as a test when strangers profess to be in communication with "Julia."

The day following the *séance* just described as taking place in New York, Mr Knapton Thompson called at my hotel to ask me to accompany him to Mrs Stoddart Gray, as he had arranged to have a short "*writing séance*" that afternoon.

The son was the agent as usual. On this occasion he had an alphabet mounted on card, and pointed to the letters in turn, whilst his mother wrote them down as indicated. Thinking I would verify Miss Whiting's story if possible, my first question was:

"Can Stead's Julia give me her surname?"

"Julia O." was spelt out, and then the O was given again.

"They often do that," said Mrs Gray casually--"begin the name over again, I mean."

So it passed at that. The rest of the letters corroborated the surname mentioned by Miss Whiting.

Then I asked: "In what country did you pass away--Europe or America, or elsewhere?"

"*America*" was spelt out at once.

"In what city?"

"*Boston.*"

"Was it in a private house, a hospital, a hotel, or *where* did you die?"

"In a hospital" was again spelt out.

"How long ago?"

"*Five years*" was the answer.

I may note here that Miss Whiting had *not* mentioned the number of years, only having said "A few years ago" when speaking of the event. *Five years* proved to be true. My last question was:

"What was your age when you passed over?"

"*Twenty-three*" was the answer.

This last, I felt sure, must be wrong. Miss Whiting had not mentioned any age, but it seemed to me unlikely that so young a woman should have been travelling round the country with two temperance lecturers.

When these answers were being given, Mrs Gray's son, the medium, asked if he might put one hand on my wrist to come into magnetic conditions with me.

I agreed to this, but said I should turn my eyes away from the alphabet, lest my muscles should give him any unconscious indications.

When I sent these answers to Mr Stead on returning to England, I wrote down Julia O. (ignoring the repetition of the O); and in connection with the other answers, told him, of course, of my previous conversation

with Miss Whiting, which reduced the whole episode to one of possible Thought Transference.

In answering me he said: "I am glad Julia was able to give her name, even if it were Thought Transference; but, as a matter of fact, it is not her whole name which you received--she always signed her letters to me '*Julia O. O.*...'" This makes rather a good bit of evidence, seeing that the second O *had* been given, but discarded by Mrs Gray and myself as a repetition of the first letter of the *surname!*

To resume my experiences with Mr Knapton Thompson.

In the evening of this writing incident Mrs Gray had another public *séance*, at which I was again present, Mr Thompson sitting on one side of me.

After some "materialisations," for other members of the circle had appeared, Mrs Gray announced that Stead's "Julia" was present in the cabinet, and wished to speak to me.

I went up at once, and the form came out and stood in very fair light from the gas-burners. She seized my hands with every appearance of delight and eagerness, and her grasp was strong and tense. It is my peculiarity always to notice hands very accurately. They always seem to me to indicate character very closely; and apart from this, I am attracted by people who have well-shaped hands (not necessarily *small* ones), and find it very difficult to ignore clumsy or ugly fingers, which, unfortunately, never escape my notice.

Now the medium's hands were broad, short, and flabby, as I had had plenty of opportunities of noting in the afternoon when he held my wrist. The hands which grasped mine now were, on the contrary, well made, small, and rather narrow, the true type of the American female hand.

Mr Thompson had come up also to greet "Julia," and I whispered to him:

"Do ask Julia if there was not a mistake about her age this afternoon."

"No; you ask the question yourself, Miss Bates," he answered.

So I said rather eagerly: "Julia, do tell us, please, if there was not a mistake this afternoon in your age--the answer was twenty-three. Is that correct?"

A very emphatic shake of the head signifying "No" was the reply to this last question, but no sounds proceeded from the lips.

Disappointed by this, I asked; "Can you not speak to us?"

She made a little gesture of rather helpless dissent; and Mrs Gray, who stood by, explained that probably all her strength had gone to building up the materialised body sufficiently to make it visible to us. Julia bowed her head in assent to this, and then, still speechless, retired once more behind the curtains.

I did not mention this appearance of Julia when writing to Mr Stead on my return--I was so anxiously hoping that she might have tried to impress the fact of having appeared to me, upon his consciousness, as a test; but he said nothing about it in his first letters. So I let the matter alone for a time, determining to tell him some day, but much disappointed by the usual failure in getting corroborative evidence.

A week later, however, at the end of a long letter on other subjects, I put this short P. S. in a casual way to him:

"Did Julia ever tell you that she had appeared to me in New York?"

In answering my letter he replied--also in a P. S.:

"By-the-by, to answer your last query--yes. Julia told me weeks ago that she had appeared to you in New York, *but that she could not give you her age on that occasion, because she was not accustomed to speaking through the embodiment*."

Now in sending the list of questions and answers to Mr Stead I had

merely marked against the answer as to her age, "*twenty-three*," that doubtless it was an error, *but I had never hinted to him that I had asked her to correct the error in New York, or that she had been unable to speak on that occasion*.

This again was a good bit of independent evidence.

I will now give a description of Mr Knapton Thompson's interview with his daughter, on the same evening that Julia appeared to me. I have already said that the magnet which drew Mr Thompson to these *séances* was the opportunity given to him of meeting and talking to a daughter who had passed away some years previously.

On this special evening the daughter materialised as usual, and came out from the cabinet. As Mr Thompson was sitting next to me at the time, I could distinctly hear Mrs Gray whisper to him:

"Would you not like to take your daughter into the other room, Mr Thompson? It is rather crowded here to-night. You would be quieter in there."

Mr Thompson got up at once, and greeted the materialised form, and they disappeared through the folding doors to the reception-room. Other matters of interest were occurring, and I had quite forgotten the absence of Mr Thompson in the dimly lighted room (in those days the light was always dim *at first*), until I found he was again occupying the seat next to my own. I had not noticed his return, and asked him at once 'what he had done with his daughter.' A good half hour must have elapsed between his disappearance and return. He said, quite simply and as a matter of course: "Oh, she did not care to come back into this crowded room. We had half-an-hour's chat, and then she de-materialised in the other room, and I returned alone."

I can only repeat that Mr Knapton Thompson was a shrewd, practical Yorkshireman, and a very successful man of business, as was proved by the orders he received in America for the stoves he had invented.

He was certainly under the impression that he could be trusted to

recognise his own daughter when allowed the privilege of half-an-hour's conversation with her, *tête-à-tête* in a private room.

I cannot end this chapter without saying something about Keely of Philadelphia and his intuitional genius.

I had hoped to have the opportunity of meeting this wonderful man during my last stay in Philadelphia, U.S.A. (March 1897), but was disappointed in this expectation. Therefore, on the outer plane, my connection with Keely never went beyond a single interview with his wife; but this is a record of personal intuitions as well as of personal events, and I know no one with regard to whom my intuitions--absolutely lacking in any physical ground of proof, or even mental ground of comprehension--have been stronger or more obstinate.

At the time of my first visit to America, so far back as 1885, I had not the faintest conception of Keely's work, or what he claimed to have discovered or to be on the track of discovering. I never heard his name mentioned without being told at the same time that he was either a silly madman or a conscious impostor, and as I came with an entirely unprejudiced mind (for I had never heard of Keely before landing in America), it would have been natural to accept this universal opinion.

Yet something stronger than reason was always silently contradicting these assertions, when made in my presence. Friends and acquaintances alike in those days laughed at Keely's claims, and denounced his boasted discovery as pure imposture.

"'Tisn't! 'Tisn't! 'Tisn't!" that persistent little voice kept whispering in my ear all the time, like a naughty, obstinate child who contradicts from sheer ignorance--or was it a spiritual intuition? Time alone can answer that question; anyway, I kept my ideas to myself, for they had no foundation in fact at the time of which I speak.

In 1897 the position for me was altered. A sensible and dependable friend of mine--a well-known banker in Philadelphia--described to me his experiences and those of other prominent citizens during a

demonstration of Mr Keely's powers; and the old insistent voice that spoke to my ignorance before, spoke now to some glimmering understanding of the claim put forth. This claim--even then jeered at by the world at large--had to wait shivering in the cold another nine years, before Mr Frederic Soddy clothed it in respectable scientific garb by speaking publicly of the possibilities in the future connected with atomic disintegration and consequent liberation of energy.

But the yelping curs of Calumny that pursued Keely during his lifetime are still upon the dead man's tracks.

"*His* methods were fraud and imposture, anyway"; "His wires were tubes containing compressed air," and so forth. The M.F.H. of this pack of hounds was the son of a lady whose name will always be honourably mentioned with that of Keely as one of his most generous supporters.

The initial misfortune in the whole matter was the forming and starting of the Keely Motor Company to utilise the discovery, which should first have been placed under the protection of Science.

Ignorant and impatient shareholders thought only of their own material advantages and dividends. They were Keely's first enemies, with their sensational and premature advertisements of results and "*200 horse-power engines ready to patent, etc.*," whilst the poor man was still struggling with his tremendous problem--*i.e. to control* the force that he had discovered.

He attempted this first by confining it, but it blew everything to atoms, and his own fingers off into the bargain!

Occultists--including Madame Blavatsky--always declared this latent atomic energy was a *fact*, but that Keely would never be allowed to demonstrate it, for the world was not yet prepared for such a tremendous dynamic force to be let loose upon it, and that the most serious abuses and disasters would follow, if once he succeeded in bringing his discovery into practical working order.

They said it would be one of two things: either Keely's experiments in

this direction would continue to fail in the crucial point necessary, *or* that if he succeeded it would be his own death warrant, lest any mischief should accrue from his making his methods public.

In view of these pronouncements, the succeeding events in Keely's career are interesting.

The Times (U.S.A.) of 6th March 1898 contained the following announcement, under Keely's own signature:--

After twenty-five years' labour I have solved the problem of harnessing the ether (which elsewhere he says is only the *medium* of the force he discovered) and adapting it to commercial uses. I have finished experimenting.--My work is now completed. (Signed) JOHN W. KEELY.

On 18th November of this same year he died.

Within two months, his generous friend and patron, Mrs Blomfield Moore, followed him to another sphere. Keely's final discovery of the means of "harnessing the ether," as he calls it, was through holding it *in rotation* instead of in confinement.

I am allowed to quote an extract from a private letter with regard to this statement.

"This instrument ruptures the luminous envelopes of the hydrogen corpuscles, liberating the mysterious substance, which is put into such high rotation that it forms its own wall of confinement at 420,000 revolutions per second, as calculated. Independent of this rotation in the tube, where it is projected, it could be no more held in suspension than a ray of sunshine could be held in a darkened room."

I have been given to understand that a faithful account of everything that has occurred in connection with Keely's discovery has been compiled, and will be published "*when the time comes for the truth to be made known*."

It is, of course, possible that this disclosure may be anticipated by the arrival of another "crank and impostor" of the Keely type. Let us trust he may arise from *within* and not from without, scientific circles, and thus avoid his martyrdom!

Meanwhile it may be interesting to quote from a published letter of Lascelles-Scott, the Government physicist from Forest Gate, who visited Keely's workshop in the interests of Science, and who was allowed to cut and bring away with him pieces of the wire Keely was using. (Said to be *tubes* by the wiseacres!)

The following is the essential portion of Mr Lascelles-Scott's letter. I only omit courteous expressions of gratitude to the editor and "to the institutions and individuals alike" of the "beautiful city of Philadelphia" where he was able to carry out his investigations.

Letter from Mr Lascelles-Scott to the Editor of *The Public Ledger*, Philadelphia.

The only corrections of sufficient importance, to the general sense of my observations at the Franklin Institute last Wednesday night, to call for notice in your otherwise admirable report, are the following:--

Although my observations were only put forward as "preliminary," inasmuch as I have not yet *completed* the outlined programme I had in view, no words actually used by me justified the expression that "*I had formed no very definite opinions*."

On the contrary, I stated more than once the very *definite opinion that Mr Keely has demonstrated to me, in a way which is absolutely unquestionable, the existence of a force hitherto unknown*. (The italics are mine.--E. K. B.)

The conditions under which the experiments were carried out (as I distinctly stated) *were such as to preclude the possibility of the results obtained being due to any ordinary source of power, evident or concealed*.

Moreover, I satisfied myself that the rotation of the "vibrodyne" was neither due to, nor accompanied by, any traces of electricity or magnetism. So far my opinion is and was expressed as being of the most definite kind possible.

... I stated, and the statement was greeted by the audience with great and prolonged applause, that, after a little adjustment of the "Sympathetic Transmitter," it was found that by the sounding of one of the small English tuning forks I had brought with me from the other side of the Atlantic, upon the said "Transmitter," I could myself start the vibrodyne, and cause it to revolve rapidly, without Mr Keely's intervention, and I exhibited to the meeting, the fork actually used by me.--Thanking you in anticipation, etc., I am, sir, yours obediently, W. LASCELLES-SCOTT.

One would have supposed that this testimony, in addition to that of other scientists and practical electricians, would have sufficed to disintegrate Atomic Stupidity and Calumny, and liberate the forces of Humility and Sane Investigation.

But prejudiced Ignorance dies hard!

* * * * *

To end my chapter on a pleasanter note than this, I will quote from a private letter which I have been privileged to read, the beautiful words in which Keely describes his own achievements.

I have no power that is not communicated to me in the same way that this machine receives its power: through celestial radiation from the Soul of Matter, the Mind force of the Creator, whose instrument I am. I know who is leading me and making all things work together for good.

CHAPTER XI

A HAUNTED CASTLE IN IRELAND

In the year 1898 I was spending a few days in Castle Rush, which has

been described by Mr W. T. Stead as the most haunted castle in Ireland. It is one of the few old Irish castles still inhabited, and is naturally haunted by the ghosts of the past in every meaning of the word.

At the time of my stay I was recovering from a severe illness, and, in fact, was sent off to bed immediately upon arrival by my kind hostess, who, with true hospitality, thought more of her guest's comfort than the conventionalities of life, and would not hear of my lingering, even to make acquaintance with my host, on the dark autumnal evening of my arrival.

This had taken place after driving many miles and waiting for a dreary long time in the little inn of a small Irish township. My doctor would not hear of any railway travelling just then, so the whole forty miles from my last stopping-place had to be negotiated between the carriages of my past and present hospitable hosts.

As a matter of fact, I believe I slept in one of the haunted rooms, but it looked cheerful enough when I entered from the gloom and darkness outside; and a dainty little dinner sent up by my kind friends below, and eaten when snugly tucked in between the sheets and resting on soft downy pillows, was enough to drive all thoughts of ghostly visitors from my head.

I am thankful to say that I neither heard nor saw anything during my short visit, and should not even have known that my room had had any evil reputation but for the visit of an eccentric and clever old lady, who had been specially asked to the castle to meet me.

After luncheon we adjourned to my bedroom, at her suggestion, and she said casually:

"Ah, you have this room, I see. It was terribly haunted once, but I held a sort of little service here some time ago, and cleared them all out."

I must explain that this good lady took a very optimistic view of her own capacities and powers in general, and spoke--from the psychic point of view--with the honest pride that a flesh and blood charwoman

might display on going over premises that she had thoroughly scrubbed and "cleaned out"!

One morning after breakfast, my hostess, Mrs Kent, called to me to come quickly and see a curious sight. It was a pouring wet day--one of those days when the heavens open and the rain descends in buckets! I could see nothing more remarkable than the damp, autumnal leaves, the bare trees swaying in the wind-washed spaces, and the pouring, ceaseless rain.

"Don't you see that girl over there?"

I looked again, and did see a girl just emerging from a clump of beeches, and carrying a small trunk upon her head.

"What an extraordinary day to choose for travelling," I said drily.

"Ah, that is Irish superstition!" rejoined my hostess. "That is my last kitchen-maid you see--she is walking seven miles, with that trunk on her head, sooner than wait a few hours, when I could have sent her to the station."

"Is she mad?" was my natural comment.

"Oh no! only desperately frightened. She has not been here a week yet, and she is much too terrified to be coherent. All I can make out is that nothing on earth would induce her to spend another night at Rush. I could have sent her over to Marley easily to-morrow morning at eight o'clock, but she would not hear of it. And whether she has really seen anything, or only been frightened by the stories of the other servants, I don't know. Anyway, she has certainly the courage of her opinions, and is prepared to suffer for them! I would rather meet half-a-dozen ghosts than carry that trunk on my head seven miles in this pouring rain." Then turning round carelessly, she remarked: "I suppose *you* have not seen or heard anything, Miss Bates, since you came? I hope not, for I am sure you are not strong enough for mundane visitors yet, let alone the other kind."

We were passing through the handsome circular hall at the time, and I said eagerly: "Oh no! Thank goodness, I've seen and heard nothing. I don't think I should be allowed to see anything whilst I am so weak and poorly."

Almost at the moment of saying these words something impelled me to place my hand upon a particular spot in the great stone wall by my side. "But there is something *here* I don't like," I said, tapping it--"something uncanny--but I don't know what it is."

Mrs Kent made no remark; and I thought no more of the circumstance until the following year, when I was told by Mr Stead that Mrs Kent was over in England, and had been lunching with him and asking for me.

"She was giving me a most graphic account of the way you 'spotted' those skeletons at Rush Castle," he said.

I was completely puzzled by this remark. I had never spotted a single skeleton to my knowledge, either at Rush or elsewhere, and I told him so; but he persisted in saying that Mrs Kent had told him a very different story, and that most certainly she had mentioned me as the percipient.

"She must have mixed me up with somebody else," was my final comment. "No doubt many people have queer experiences there, and she might naturally make such a mistake."

"Well, I gave her your address, and she is writing to ask you to have tea with her at the club, so you and she can fight it out there," he said; and the conversation drifted into other channels.

Next afternoon I met Mrs Kent at her club, and before leaving, fortunately remembered the curious mistake about the skeletons I had "spotted."

"But you *did* 'spot' them," she said, laughing. "Don't you remember my asking you if you had noticed anything curious, or heard or seen

anything, during your visit? At first you said 'Thank goodness, no!' But immediately afterwards you put your hand on a particular part of the circular hall, and said: 'There is something uncanny just here--something I don't like.'"

"Yes; I remember all that. But what of it? You never told me anything about skeletons."

"Of course not--you were not in a condition of health to discuss such eerie questions just then. All the same, you had located the exact spot where only a week before your visit, my husband's agent told him that two skeletons had been found bricked up!"

She then explained that the agent had been on the estate for many years, even before the death of the late owner of Rush--her father-in-law. Having some business with her husband the week before my arrival, this agent had casually mentioned that he and the former owner had found these skeletons in the very spot indicated by me, about forty years previously, and, strange to relate, had bricked them up again instead of burying them. This last fact may account in part at least for the spooky reputation of Castle Rush.

All good psychics know that nothing disturbs a spirit so much as any informality about his funeral arrangements!

To return to my visit to Castle Rush.

Some years previously I had met, on an Orient steamer sailing from Ceylon to Naples, a brother of the owner of Rush. He was a sailor, and as hard-headed and practical a man as it has ever been my lot to meet. It was in no way through meeting him that my visit to Rush came about, but owing to my acquaintance with Mrs Kent and *her* family.

I had been greatly taken by the genial common-sense of this Captain Kent, and was much grieved to hear of his death when I stayed with his sister-in-law. It had occurred shortly before my visit, and under sad circumstances.

On the surface he was certainly more lacking in sentiment than anyone I ever met, but must have been capable of very deep affection. When I met him he had only been married for a few months. His wife died within two years of their marriage, and going for a short holiday to Castle Rush soon afterwards, he said to his sister-in-law:

"*I shall not live a year after her, I know!*" He was the last kind of man to make such a speech, as both Mrs Kent and I observed when she mentioned it to me.

"But he was quite right, all the same," she added. "*He died just three days within the year from the time of his wife's death.*" Yet he was an exceptionally strong, sturdy, and wiry man at the time of his great sorrow.

From Castle Rush I was going to the south of Ireland to visit relations at Cork.

On the morning of my departure I was down in the drawing-room, rather wondering *why* I had been brought to this old Irish castle. No special object seemed to have been achieved by my visit. I did not even know then that I had discovered two skeletons! In those days I found so often some train of circumstances--a borrowed book, a stranger coming across my path, some unexpected visit paid, which were later found to have been factors in a special experience--that I was rather surprised to realise that I was leaving the "most haunted castle in Ireland" and that nothing had happened.

But in the very moment of saying this to myself a curiously insistent impression came to me quite suddenly, and "out of the blue."

The impression was that the brother of my host, Captain Kent, was wishing very urgently to communicate something through me. I did not feel equal to taking any message at the time--I have already explained that I was only just recovering from a severe illness. Lunch and a long drive to the station and a weary railway journey lay before me, so I determined to do nothing until I was safely established with my cousins near Cork.

After a long, cold, and wet journey I arrived in pouring rain, my train being more than a hour late. The kind General who came to meet me was still patiently standing on the platform, but one of the two "cars" he had engaged for me and my baggage had taken itself off! As the rain was descending in water-spouts, I need scarcely say it was the "covered car" which had driven away!

This meant a thorough wetting for my cousin and me. How all the luggage (including a large bicycle, and two people, in addition to the driver) was ever piled up on that small "outside Irish car" I have never been able to understand. Suffice it to say the miracle was performed, and we drove up a hill at an angle of about forty-five degrees into the bargain!

Clearly these were not ideal conditions for receiving automatic messages!

I was put to bed at once with hot bottles and hot soup, and soon forgot my past troubles in a long refreshing sleep.

I was still in the invalid stage of "breakfast in bed," and when this had been cleared away, the remembrance of Captain Kent flashed into my mind, and I found pencil and papers at once, in order to redeem my promise.

The message was rather a curious one, and its opening sentence evidently referred to the eccentric old lady whom I have mentioned as being asked to meet me at luncheon at Castle Rush.

So far as I can remember them, the words (very characteristic of Captain Kent's genial but rather brusque style) ran as follows:--

After speaking of the alleged hauntings at Castle Rush as having only too much foundation in fact, he went on: "It's all rubbish, that old woman saying she had cleared them all away! Nothing of the kind. There are plenty of malicious spirits about still, *and now that an heir is coming to Rush they are keener than ever to try and work some mischief*. No use saying anything to Tom (his brother). He will only

laugh, and say it is all skittles. But tell my little sister-in-law to PRAY--PRAY--PRAY. That is all they need and all she needs either."

Now this was not exactly the message one cared to send to a rather recent acquaintance. To begin with, the reference to Mrs Kent's valued friend in the opening sentence was scarcely polite! Then again, the prophecy of an heir to Rush was one that I regretted should have been made, as it would probably only lead to disappointment. Mrs Kent's first child had been a little son, from whose loss she had never recovered. When I was staying at the castle, two nice little girls, old enough to come down to early dinner, at our luncheon hour, comprised the family. Another child was certainly expected to arrive about Christmas-time (my visit was paid in September), but Mrs Kent herself was fully convinced that this would be *another girl*, as she said rather sadly. It seemed a pity to disturb her mind by raising false hopes.

But, as usual, I felt bound to send the message, with the customary explanations and apologies.

Mrs Kent was greatly interested by it and by the "PRAY--PRAY--PRAY," which, as she explained to me, had a very special meaning for her. It had only struck me as an exceedingly *unlikely* message for the Captain Kent I had known, to send to anyone.

I am glad to be able to record that the Christmas gift did arrive in the shape of a baby boy, "*heir to Rush*," who is still alive and flourishing, thank God! I hear that he calls himself "the master," with a true Irish brogue, and lords it over his elder sisters in the regular chieftain style!

To this year belongs another strong impression of psychic atmosphere, left in a room which I occupied in the south of England.

It was a most comfortable room, with nothing in the least ghostly about it. Merely I had an unpleasant feeling that controversies and discussions had taken place in the room, and that a want of harmony hung about it in consequence.

On mentioning this rather tentatively to the master of the house--a very

orthodox clergyman--I was told: "Oh dear, no! Nothing of the kind--you are certainly mistaken!"

But when an opportunity arose I changed my room, and felt very much more comfortable in consequence of doing so.

Several times I had noticed on the hall table, letters which had come by post addressed to another clergyman, whose name I had not heard, and who was certainly not staying in the house. Remarking upon this casually to a nice young governess one day, she said at once that the gentleman in question had spent several months with Mr and Mrs Dale in the Vicarage, but that he had died a few weeks before my arrival. "He slept in the room you had when you first came, by-the-by. I was so glad when you changed your room."

"He was a clergyman, I see," was my next remark; and I looked at the envelope which had led to this explanation.

"Yes; he was in orders, but he had become a complete agnostic for some years. During the last few weeks of his life--when he had to keep his bed--Mr Dale was always going up there, and having long arguments and discussions with him; but I don't suppose it did much good: it only worried him very much. He was too ill to listen to long arguments then, and wanted just kind, soothing words, I should have thought."

As the girl retreated to the school-room I naturally pondered over this fresh testimony to the truth of psychic atmosphere. No sensitive can question the *fact*, but at present we know little or nothing of the laws which condition the fact.

My friend Mr W. T. Stead kindly allows me to mention another incident connected with personal experiences of mine in the year 1898.

In the opening month of that year he lost a much-valued friend, who had worked for him loyally, both in his office and also with regard to some of his philanthropic schemes.

This lady in a fit of delirium, incident upon a severe attack of illness, threw herself out of a window in her flat. A fortnight before this sad occurrence, she had seen another resident in the same set of flats throw herself out of the window, and Mr Stead has always feared that this acted as a suggestion upon her mind in delirium, and led her to do the same thing. Her own account of the cause of her action differs somewhat from this impression, as will be seen later.

Mr Stead was naturally greatly affected by Mrs Morris' sudden death and the circumstances attending it, and having some of her hair cut off after her death, he sent portions of it to at least twelve well-known clairvoyants, hoping to receive some satisfactory solution of the mystery, and also, possibly, a sign decided upon between him and this lady. They were both interested in psychic matters, and had agreed to believe in no communications from the other side purporting to come from one or other of them, unless this preliminary sign were given.

Mrs Besant--an intimate friend of Mr Stead--was one of the oracles consulted, and was very confident of being able to find out all details, including the mystic sign.

But both she and Mr Leadbeater were as absolutely unsuccessful as less gifted mortals proved to be.

In spite of exceptional opportunities for coming in touch with the most noted psychics, in spite of the valuable clue given by hair cut after death, the test seemed quite hopeless, since twelve of the best clairvoyants had been consulted, and all had failed in turn.

A few weeks after hearing about this from Mr Stead, I was invited by an old friend in London to meet at her house, at luncheon, Miss Rowan Vincent, a non-professional sensitive, well known to many of my readers.

I had never seen this lady before, and had little speech with her during the meal.

She was talking very earnestly to a military man--the son-in-law of our

hostess--whilst the latter and I were having an interesting conversation to ourselves.

General Maxwell, having a train to catch, did not accompany us to the drawing-room.

On arrival there Miss Rowan Vincent said to me very kindly: "Can I do anything for *you* now, Miss Bates? Shall I try if I can see anything for you?"

Something induced me, quite against my will, to say: "Do you ever get messages by writing, Miss Vincent?"

"No; I have never done so, but I can try," she answered rather eagerly.

How I bewailed my stupidity in making such a suggestion! I had diverted her mind from her own special gift, which was that of seeing a person's psychic surroundings, and had switched her on to an entirely novel and untried experiment. I had not even the excuse of being specially interested in automatic writing, which was so easily obtained at home; whereas I was greatly interested in seeing whether any of my "other side" friends could make themselves perceptible through this sensitive.

However, the mischief was done past remedy. The suggestion had taken firm root in Miss Rowan Vincent's mind, and she was not to be diverted from it. So I resigned myself patiently to the results of my own foolish remark, whilst she took pencil and paper and sat down expectantly.

Soon she looked up, the writing having already begun.

"Do you know any William? There seems to be some message from a William, as far as I can make out."

Having had a favourite cousin of that name, I told her it might be quite correct, and I should be glad to receive any message that came.

A few moments passed, and then Miss Vincent said, in a puzzled tone:

"It is not *from* William--the message is *to* some William--I cannot understand it at all." She pushed the paper rather impatiently towards me. Written upon it clearly but faintly were these words:

DEAR WILLIAM,--I want to explain to you how I came to fall out of that window--it was not my fault really--someone came up behind and pushed me out. ETHEL.

The signature was rather indistinct, but quite unmistakable to *me*; but then I knew the Christian name of Mr Stead's friend, and realised at once that she was taking this opportunity of sending a message to him.

I asked Miss Vincent what name was written at the bottom of the paper. "It looks like Ethel," she said, "but it is not very clear. I will ask the spirit to write it again." A very bold and unmistakable signature was at once given.

I concealed my excitement, and said quietly to Miss Vincent:

"I think I know from whom the message comes and for whom it is intended, but to make quite sure it would be very satisfactory if the spirit could give through you a sign agreed upon by the sender and the recipient and unknown to everyone else."

"Well, I will try," said Miss Vincent at once. She had scarcely touched the pencil when it began describing a circle. "There is no doubt about my having to make a circle," she said, laughing. "Oh, now I am to put a cross into it," she added.

Within a few seconds both these were given, and to *our* great delight--as well as to his--the sign was recognised by Mr Stead as being the one agreed upon, and which had hopelessly puzzled all the other mediums.

CHAPTER XII

1900-1901

I must now note a curious episode connected with my friend Judge Forbes, whose astral influence I had traced clinging to the rooms he once occupied in Cambridge.

As before mentioned, he had married, and I had lost sight of him and his whole family for many years. But we had several mutual friends, through whom I had heard of the birth of his only son and only child, and later of the boy being sent to Eton, and eventually entering the army.

This was very shortly before the breaking out of the South African War, and the young fellow was one of many who were drafted from India, after a few months' service there, to help to defend their Queen's possessions and their countrymen's lives and property in South Africa.

Later, young Forbes was shut up in Ladysmith, and one cold, dismal day in January (6th January 1900) I was lying very ill in bed with a severe bronchial attack in the house of my eldest brother in Hampshire, when the latter came home one evening from the Winchester Club and told us of the celebrated *sortie* and the death of three young English officers. The name of Forbes of the Royal Rifles figured amongst these, and I felt convinced that it must be the only child of my old friend.

Without hesitation I prepared to write a few short lines of sympathy with the heart-broken father. In vain my sister-in-law protested against my concluding at once that it must be the judge's son, since other members of the family of the same name were known to be in the army. I had not a moment's doubt that this was the boy already mentioned, and even a silence of over twenty years seemed to present no difficulty in expressing one's deep sympathy, in the face of such a sorrow.

The real drawback lay in my weak state of health and physical inability to write more than a few lines. But in these I expressed a hope that *in time* my poor friend might come to realise that his boy was "as much alive and as near to him as ever--perhaps nearer."

It will indicate how entirely all relations between us had been broken off for many years, when I say that I did not even know the judge's private address, and was forced to send my letter to his court. In a day or two I received a very touching and grateful answer, pathetic not only in its grief, but even more in his frankly avowed inability to derive any consolation from the thoughts that my short note had suggested. Resignation to the inscrutable will of God was the keynote of the letter. In some far-distant future he might be permitted once more to see his beloved son, but meanwhile all was gloom and misery.

The episode was over. I had expressed my sincere sympathy with an overwhelming sorrow, I had received a most kind and appreciative answer--no more could be done in the matter.

This was *my* conclusion, but evidently not the conclusion of young Talbot Forbes. I had never seen this boy in my life, nor his mother; but I suppose my old friendship with his father, and my deep sympathy with the latter, enabled the son to approach me soon after he had passed into the next sphere.

Anyway, he made me conscious of his presence by my bedside during the greater part of the night following my receipt of his father's letter.

Owing to my severe illness I was sleeping very little, and once or twice in the night an attendant came in to make up my fire and keep the temperature of the room even, so that I had ample opportunity for realising the presence of my hitherto unknown visitor.

Those who know what "hearing with the inner ear" means will realise the method through which the following conversation took place, so far as I can now recall it:--

TALBOT.--"*Yes, it is Talbot Forbes. I want to speak to you. Please listen to me! I want to tell you, you must do more for them than this--you have to help them about me.*"

E. K. B.--"Who do you mean by '*them*'?"

TALBOT.--"*My parents, of course. Don't you understand what I am saying? You have to do more for them--you must make them know I am close to them.*"

Now I could only suppose that he wished me to write again to his father, and explain more fully my own ideas on the subject of our departed friends. As this would have involved a wearisome and almost certainly *useless* discussion on a topic which I had reason to know was very distasteful to the boy's father, I said rather shortly, and I am afraid with some of the petulance of an invalid:

"Oh, do be quiet, and leave me alone! I have done all I can, and there is no more to be said about it. I am very sorry for you, but I really can't help you in this. I don't know your mother or what her views about it may be; and as for your father--well, I am not going to worry and torment him about ideas that he dislikes and disapproves of, and just now, too, when he is so miserable! No, I won't do it, not even if you come and worry me about it every night."

I was feeling ill and weary, and longing for sleep, and hoped this would be a quietus to my young friend. Not a bit of it! His next remark was:

"*What does it matter what* YOU *think or what you mean to do or not to do? You have to help them, not to think about your own feelings.*"

This was frank at anyrate, but not altogether convincing. Soon afterwards, tired out with the discussion, I really did fall asleep, and only woke a short time before my breakfast and daily budget of letters arrived. Amongst these letters was one in an unknown handwriting, which proved to be from *Mrs* Forbes, saying she had seen my letter to her husband, and begging that I would tell her the grounds I had for my assurance that those we love are close to us after the great change we call death.

Evidently the boy knew that this letter was coming to me, and was trying to prepare me to answer it in such a way as should help him to convince his mother of his continued existence in her immediate presence.

As this case is one well known to the Society for Psychical Research (the lady I have called Mrs Forbes appearing on their records both as Mrs Scott and under the pseudonym I have borrowed from them), it is unnecessary to go into further details. Suffice it to say that my nocturnal visitor was successful in his aim.

I answered his mother's letter as he wished. This led to a long correspondence between us, and to my making her acquaintance shortly afterwards and renewing my old friendship with her husband.

Mrs Forbes had several sittings with Mrs Thompson and other mediums, became convinced of her son's presence with her, and very soon was independent of outside assistance in communicating with him. The judge also declared himself "unable to resist the evidence," but I don't think he ever quite honestly *rejoiced* in his convictions. It is hard to eradicate prejudices and traditions after fifty years of age, and the *human* element in his son's bright and happy messages always seemed to worry and perplex him a little.

He knows all about it now! Much as I deplore the earthly disappearance of such an old and faithful friend of my youth, I can sincerely rejoice in thinking of him as once more united with his son, in ways that will no longer appear to him unnatural or undesirable.

During the judge's lifetime, and after the son's death, I often stayed with him and his wife in their northern home. Mrs Forbes used frequently to say: "It was *Talbot* who brought us all three together, we must remember!"

PEKIN STORY

It was during my first visit to Judge and Mrs Forbes, in the north of England, that another curious experience came to me.

This happened on the 4th of July 1900, for I remember saying to Mrs Forbes next morning: "I shall remember the date from its being American Independence Day."

It was the year of the Boxer rebellion in China, when the Pekin Embassy was in a state of siege, and by July almost all hope that any Europeans would be saved from their dire peril had faded away.

The Memorial Service, arranged by a too eager dignitary of the Church to take place in St Paul's, had certainly been adjourned at the last moment; but as days and weeks passed, and the little garrison was still unrelieved, very little hope was entertained. In fact, by July most people hoped and believed that their troubles must be already over, through the merciful interposition of death.

A connection of mine, whom I had known well when she was a child, but had not seen for many years, was shut up with her husband, children, and sister in the Pekin Embassy at the time. Thousands were lamenting her sad fate, and I naturally amongst them; but I wish to make clear that, owing to the years that had elapsed since I had seen this special member of the family, it was not in any sense a very personal sorrow, nor was I then--nor am I now--aware of any special tie of affinity between this lady and myself.

I had gone to bed about eleven o'clock on the night of 4th July 1900, and had been in bed about half-an-hour, without any attempt at going to sleep, when suddenly I felt extremely alert in mind, very much as Miss Porter described herself in the Captain Carbury episode. Almost immediately upon this feeling of mental alertness came the conviction that Mabel M'Leod (as I will call her) was in the room, close to me, and that she was in some dire and urgent need of help--instantaneous help, I mean. I could neither see nor hear on this occasion--I only *knew* these facts through some power of intuition, all the more remarkable because, having made up my mind that all was over at the Embassy, I had not been thinking of her or of her fellow-sufferers for some days past.

My thoughts were fully engaged at the time with the grief of my host and hostess.

With the knowledge of Mabel's presence came also the conviction that she was *still alive*--in the physical body--and that it was no excarnate spirit that was appealing to me for help.

The impression was so vivid that I called out instinctively: "What is it, Mabel? What can I do for you?" There was no response, either by outward or inner voice, only the insistent appeal for help, and knowledge of some imminent danger at hand for her. I am trying to explain that something more than the usual hourly peril in which they must be living, *if on this side the veil,* was implied by the impression I received. *It was some acute and additional danger which threatened her at the moment.* Feeling it was useless to waste time trying to find out by writing or other means what the exact nature of this danger might be, I jumped out of bed as quickly as possible, saying: "Never mind trying to make me understand--I will pray for you, whatever it is!" So I knelt down, and prayed most earnestly that this poor woman, whose spirit had appealed for help at some dread crisis, might be comforted, and delivered from any dangers threatening her at the time.

I had been very comfortably tucked up in bed, looking forward to the pleasant drowsiness which promises sleep, and I am quite sure I should not have put myself to all this inconvenience without a very strong motive.

When I felt the poor, tormented spirit was calmed and soothed by the atmosphere of prayer, I returned to my bed, and eventually fell asleep.

Next morning I told Mrs Forbes of my experience, making the remark quoted about the date.

The following week she and I were together at one of the meetings of the Society for Psychical Research, at the close of which, in shaking hands with Mr Frederic Myers, I begged him to make a note of my experience and the date.

"Ah, Miss Bates!" he said, taking out a small note-book, "I will make a note of it, but I fear there is not the remotest chance of any of them having been alive ten days ago."

"Then my experience goes for nothing," I answered. "It was a living woman, not an excarnate one, who came to my bedside on the 4th July."

Later, when the Embassy was relieved, and this lady (who had presented such a "stiff upper lip" to Fortune) was once more safe at home for a much-needed rest, I found that she had gone through a special time of accentuated suffering just when I felt her presence in my room. Her husband was down with dysentery, and she had not enough food either for him or for her poor little children, and the strain was almost too great, even for that brave soul.

Of course, she had been quite unconscious of any appeal to me.

But she has Scottish as well as Irish blood in her veins, and this heredity may have enabled her subconscious self to sense my locality and to realise my power and will to help her in her desperate need.

Truly it was a case of "vain is the help of man," or woman either! But we know too little of spiritual laws to be able to deny off-hand the efficacy of *any* earnest prayer.

I saw Mr Myers make a note of the circumstance, but, unfortunately, this cannot be found amongst his papers. I asked Mrs Myers about it, and she remembered distinctly her husband having mentioned the case to her when he returned home after that meeting, but when I last saw her, she had hunted amongst his papers in vain for the note which he made at the time.

* * * * *

Early in January 1901, the day after Lord Robert's triumphant procession through London, I went to spend some weeks at an "open-air cure" in Devonshire, high up in the hills, and in a bleak part of the county. Several severe illnesses had left me so supersensitive to colds and draughts that it seemed a vital necessity to take some such drastic step, even at this inclement time of the year, unless I were prepared to sink into a state of chronic invalidism, and become a burden to myself and my neighbours for the rest of my natural life.

An old friend was "second in command" in this special establishment, which she had asked me to recommend, and a bright thought struck me

that I might do my friend a good turn, and myself also, by spending a few weeks in the house.

I did not bargain, however, for the deep snow which fell on the very day after my arrival, nor for the howling west winds, which continued to blow during the whole of my stay.

In these parts, the west wind corresponds with our eastern variety, and is quite as cold and disagreeable.

Nor were the surroundings inside of a very cheerful nature. All the other patients (six or seven) were quite young girls, and all more or less consumptive. Several of them were very attractive, which made it seem all the more sad. Without exception, all were, or had been, engaged to be married, as the coping-stone to this tragedy of their lives! In several cases the engagements had been broken off, sometimes by mutual consent, on the score of health. In a few exceptions, where love had proved stronger than prudence and common-sense, it was equally melancholy to realise that the future could hold nothing but disappointment on the one side, and a hopeless regret on the other.

Under these circumstances it was perhaps only to be expected that my first impressions of the establishment should not be entirely *couleur de rose*. Yet the house itself was pleasant enough, and the view from the drawing-room windows was simply magnificent, including sea as well as moor.

Curtainless windows, with sashes thrown wide open, and chilly linoleum to replace warm carpets, were rather a trial to the uninitiated, early in January, with deep snow on the ground and fires none too plentiful. In addition to these drawbacks I had another personal one. Coming in the middle of the winter, it was naturally Hobson's choice as regarded the bedrooms. All the best and warmest aspects had been appropriated in the autumn, and an ugly little room, with cold, west outlook and depressing, mustard-coloured distempered walls, fell to my lot.

Yet even these facts did not sufficiently account for the extremely

depressing effect of that room upon me.

"Has anyone died here lately?" was my first and natural query in a house of this kind.

I had heard the girls casually mention two gentlemen patients who had been in the house the previous year--one of these had gone into rooms in a neighbouring town with his nurse. I did not hear what had become of the other one, and had not sufficient curiosity to ask the question.

My friend reassured me by saying she was sure no one had died recently in *my* room. She had only lately come to the house herself, as I knew; having been matron for some years of a small hospital in the country.

"The second poor gentleman, who was a patient here, did die in the house, I believe, but that was months ago," she said, "and I understand that he had Laura Pearce's room," mentioning one of the girls, who had a specially cheerful apartment. It seemed quite natural that a sick man, confined to his bed, should occupy a large and sunny room, so I thought no more of the matter. Still, I was always conscious of an unpleasant and sad atmosphere in my own room, and took occasion one day to ask the lady at the head of the establishment whether she knew anything of the predecessors in the house.

It struck me that the psychic atmosphere in my room might be connected with some of *them*.

Miss Hunter replied laughingly: "I can't tell you anything about them, for the very good reason that they don't exist. *I* am the first tenant of this house. It was only built two years ago, and remained vacant for the first twelve months."

Then I told her very cautiously of my feeling about my room, and that I had supposed it might have to do with someone who had slept there before she took the house.

Two or three of the young girls were in the room at the time, and it

struck me that one of them--the one who was there for her second winter--looked a little surprised and interested; but the matron passed off the subject with a few bantering words, and again I had no suspicion of the truth.

Six weeks passed, and my last night in the house had arrived. My nurse friend was in the habit of giving me massage twice a day, before getting up in the morning and the last thing at night. She left me on this occasion about ten-thirty P.M., expressing a hope that I should soon sleep, and have a good night before my long journey next day.

"Not much doubt of that," I murmured. "Why, I'm half asleep already!" And I turned round, tired and yet soothed by the massage, and soon fell into a deep and dreamless sleep.

Several hours must have passed, when I woke up, trembling and terror-struck, after passing through an experience which seems as vivid to me to-day as on that February night or early morning. My heart was beating, my limbs trembling, beads of perspiration covered my face, as I discovered later.

No wonder! I had been through an experience from which few, I imagine, return to tell the tale. For I had passed through every detail of dying, and dying a very hard and difficult death.

Body and soul were being literally *torn apart*, in spite of the desperate effort to cling together, and my spirit seemed to be launched into unknown depths of darkness and possible horror. It was the feeling that *I did not know where I was going nor what awaited me* that seemed so terrible--this and the horrible fight for mastery between my poor body and soul and some unknown force that was inexorably set upon dividing them.

This, so far as I can express it, exactly describes the experience I had just gone through, and from which I had awakened in such abject terror.

As the beating of my heart subsided, and I could think more calmly, I

remembered with startling distinctness that in the very worst of the struggle I had been vainly endeavouring to say that text in the twenty-third Psalm which begins:

"Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil; for Thou art with me: *Thy rod and Thy staff, they comfort me.*" I could say the first part of it quite easily, but some fiendish enemy seemed bent upon preventing my saying the last sentence, and in my terrible dream, rescue and safety depended upon my getting to the end of the text. I tried again and again, always to be driven back in despair before the crucial words were uttered. At last, with a desperate effort, I seemed to shake off the incubus which was weighing me down, and I finished the words triumphantly, and so loud that I had positively wakened myself up *by shouting them out.* With returning memory I knew this had happened, and hearing a door open and shut on the half landing below my room, I thought for the moment that someone must have heard me, and must be coming to see what was the matter. I looked at my watch--just two-thirty A.M. No one appeared; and to my relief I remembered that this was just the hour when either Miss Hunter or my friend went round to the invalids, giving them milk or bovril, in the night.

I had no inclination to seek out either of these ladies. The horror was past, and no one could undo what I had endured; so I lay quiet, and in course of time managed to go to sleep again, not waking until the servant came into my room to light the fire at seven-thirty A.M.

It happened to be a certain *Minnie* on this occasion, a very respectable young woman, who had accompanied Miss Hunter when she gave up the matronship of a well-known hospital, and who had therefore been with her since this establishment had been started.

My night's experience convinced me so absolutely that, in spite of all that had been said, the gentleman patient *had* died in this room, and that I had just gone through his death agonies, that instead of asking any question about it, I said very quietly to Minnie, as she was on her knees lighting my fire: "The poor gentleman who died here last summer *died in this room, I find.*"

"Yes, ma'am," she said quietly, not knowing, as it turned out, that any mystery had been made about the fact.

My personal friend was guiltless of any deceit, for she had been told the story about Laura Pearce's room, but the young girls confessed when I went down to breakfast that they had been specially warned not to let me know the true facts.

Miss Hunter did not appear at breakfast, as she was suffering from a chill, so I went to her bedroom to say good-bye before going up to London.

Feeling naturally annoyed and rather shaken by my night's experience, I said to her rather drily:

"You need not have taken the trouble to deceive me about my room, Miss Hunter, nor to warn the girls to do the same. I know that gentleman died there, for I have just gone through his experiences." And then I told her about my terrible night.

Although forced to admit the facts, Miss Hunter fought every inch of the ground, so far as the *painful* experiences were concerned.

"Such an excellent man! so interested in everything--a *clergyman*, my dear Miss Bates, and so *good!* How could there be anything painful connected with his death?" etc. etc.

I suggested that, as Christians, we had the most overwhelming proof that holiness of life does not always preclude even mental suffering at death; but she would not hear of this argument, and doubtless considered it blasphemous.

By dint of questioning, however, I made two discoveries--first, that the death was quite unexpected. The man had only been a fortnight in the house, and when I expressed surprise that he should have been moved there so late in a fatal illness, she said unguardedly:

"*Oh, but he was very slightly ill when he came--it was more a*

preventive measure. None of us had any idea that he was a dying man, the symptoms developed so suddenly."

I also elicited another fact--*i.e.* that this delightfully interesting personality "so intellectual--so full of interest in everything" (to quote Miss Hunter's words), had died at the age of forty, in the very prime of life. No wonder, under the circumstances of so short an illness, in the very zenith of life and enjoyment, that body and soul should have been loath to separate, and thus free the imprisoned spirit! But Miss Hunter was adamant, and would admit nothing.

Just before leaving her, it struck me that I had not yet told her about the text, so I repeated that episode, and then, for the first time, a startled look came into her eyes. She was taken by surprise, and said hastily: "That *is* extraordinary! I was with him when he died in the night, and he kept on asking for that text. That is not so remarkable, many might have asked for that text, but I stopped once or twice after the first sentence, and he kept on urging me: "*Say it to the end, Miss Hunter! Say it to the end!*"

Later the good lady even consented to write out the evidential points in this story, which I sent at once to my friend Dr Richard Hodgson.

Immediately upon my return to London on this occasion, I was attacked quite suddenly by a very acute form of rheumatism, which laid me on my back--perfectly helpless--for several days.

When the doctor arrived, his first question was: "Have you had any special shock lately? This particular form of rheumatism does not generally come on with so little warning *unless there has been a previous shock.*"

I was about to deny this, thinking he referred to unexpected news, but with the memory of my Devonshire experience so keen and clear, I felt bound to tell him that I had certainly had a shock to my nerves twenty-four hours previously.

Soon after this sudden and sharp attack of illness I found myself in

Portugal for the first time in my life.

I had gone there with an English friend--Mrs Frampton--in order to be near connections who had lived in the country for many years.

A cousin and I spent a delightful afternoon in that Cintra paradise of *Monserrat*, with General and Mrs Sartorius, who were living there at the time of my visit to Portugal. I have heard that even this charming house could tell strange tales if only walls could speak. It is easy to imagine that any spirits--carnate or discarnate--might deem it a privilege to haunt so exquisite a spot. Personally, I can only testify to the hospitality of our kind host and hostess and the excellence of the spirit of "Robur," which refreshed our weary bodies, and made the walk back to the Cintra Hotel, through the lovely woodland paths, a "thing of beauty and a joy for ever."

To return to Lisbon. My friend Mrs Frampton had never been present at any sort of psychic phenomena, so we planned a little sitting for her during one of these Lisbon evenings.

She and I descended in solemn state to the fine library of our host, on the ground floor, whilst his wife and sister elected to remain in the drawing-room upstairs. A sister-in-law also begged to be excused from accompanying us, and spent the whole time occupied by our *séance*, in playing Moody and Sankey hymns, doubtless hoping thereby to exorcise the evil spirits whom we should presumably evoke.

Unfortunately, she did not play loud enough to divert the attention of the Portuguese cook, who promptly gave warning next day, saying she could not stand these "devilish practices"! We had failed to realise that the very wall, close to which our small table was placed, divided the kitchen from the large ground-floor library, so the poor woman doubtless sat with her ear well jammed up against this partition, and considered every rap of the table leg on the floor, a distinct footstep of the devil!

Nothing more terrible happened to *us* that evening than being forced to look up our English history once more, in "Hume" and "Green's Short

History of the English People," both of which volumes were close at hand. For the whole *séance* might have been an "easy lesson in English history," with John, Duke of Northumberland, Lady Jane Grey, the Earl of Leicester, and the famous Elizabeth as its exponents. All these purported to be with us that evening, and I am bound to say that all dates and details mentioned, which our middle-aged memories could not verify at the moment, were in every case corroborated by reference to the library books later.

It was just before leaving England for Portugal that I first met a lady (with whom I have since become more intimate), under rather exceptional circumstances--these latter were unknown to me at the time.

My brother, Colonel C. E. Bates, was living at this time (1901) in rooms in Cambridge Terrace, and the drawing-room floor was occupied by a Miss Isabel Smith, who was then only a name to us both. His landlady had given him to understand that this lady had connections in India, and was the niece of a General Propert, still on the active list, and an old friend of my brother's in Indian days.

The last Sunday before starting for Lisbon I called in as usual to spend the afternoon in Cambridge Terrace, and found that the "drawing-room lady" had just been paying him a visit, and had left him most enthusiastic.

This visit surprised me, because my brother, being a very great invalid, had an inveterate dislike to meeting strangers, with whom he generally found it difficult to carry on any lengthy conversation. But this visitor had evidently been an exception. My brother expressed some regret that I should have missed seeing her, so to please him I suggested sending his valet upstairs with his compliments, and asking if I might pay the lady a short visit, should she be disengaged.

She came downstairs kindly, a second time, and we had a pleasant chat, whilst my brother and an old Indian brother officer carried on their conversation.

I left England a few days later, and scarcely expected to see or hear any more of Miss Isabel Smith. Fate, however, ordained otherwise. Some weeks elapsed, and then I received a letter from my brother, mentioning the curious circumstances that, he had just heard, had led to his making the acquaintance of this pleasant neighbour. "It is too long a story to write," he concluded, "but I will tell you all about it next time we meet."

He did so, and as his account exactly tallies with the one Miss Isabel Smith (now Mrs Finch) has kindly written out for me for insertion in this volume, I will quote the latter from her own words. I must premise that Miss Smith turned out to be naturally clairvoyant and clair-audient, rather to the disgust of my brother, who considered himself superior to these "superstitions." Her narrative is interesting not only in itself, but because it is an object lesson in the curious "hits and misses" in psychic investigation. In this case a spirit confessed to an impersonation; but it was an impersonation of the brother of a man whom my brother had really known in India--a fact entirely apart from any possible knowledge on the part of Miss Smith, who had never met my brother at the time of her adventure. I will now give Miss Smith's narrative.

"When at Grindelwald in the winter 1900-1901 an excarnate entity came and spoke to me. He seemed much interested in the South African campaign; told me he had been a soldier, first in the Rifle Brigade, then in the Indian army. When I asked his name he said he was Henry Arthur Chomley (the name of a celebrated ambassador was the one given), that he was a brother of Sir Frederic Chomley, and had been in the Rifle Brigade and in India, *and had passed over two or three years before*.

When, shortly afterwards, I returned to Cambridge Terrace, he realised the changed surroundings, and asked where I was. On learning I was in rooms he asked whether there was anyone else in the house, and on my telling him there was a paralysed military man downstairs named Bates, he exclaimed 'What! Charlie Bates? I knew him very well in India--do ask him if he remembers me!'

I said I did not know the gentleman, but would certainly ask him if an

opportunity should occur.

A few days after this, a message was brought up to me from Colonel Bates, asking for my uncle, General Propert's, address in Burmah. This gave me the opening. I wrote giving the required information, and suggested that I might come and have a talk with him.

In my next conversation with 'Colonel Chomley' I told him all this, and he again said: '*Mind you ask him about me!*' I answered: '*How can I, when I don't know what Colonel Bates' ideas are on these subjects? He might look on me as a dangerous lunatic!*'

Colonel Chomley remarked: '*I think you will find that he is interested in psychic matters.*'

I discovered that this was true, for on my first visit I saw a copy of the S.P.R. Proceedings lying on the table.

I found him interested, but unable to get beyond the 'subliminal consciousness' theory.

A few days later I asked Colonel Bates if he had ever met a Colonel Henry Arthur Chomley in India. He thought for a moment, then said:

'Chomley? Why, of course I knew a Chomley, but I don't know his Christian name. He was Brigade Major at Meean Meer, and I took over the brigade from him, and bought his horses, etc. Where did *you* know him?'

I then told him of the spirit who had given me the name of Henry Arthur Chomley, who said he had known him in India, and had over and over again begged to be remembered to him.

The day following this conversation Colonel Bates sent me up his Army List, open, and marked at the name of Colonel *Walter* Chomley, and a note explaining that it was not Henry Arthur, but *Walter Chomley* whom he had known at Meean Meer.

I then asked 'Henry Arthur' if his name was Walter or Henry Arthur.

He said: '*Henry Arthur. Surely I ought to know my own name!*'

Colonel Bates told the story to you the next time you (*i.e.* E. K. Bates) came to see him, and I remember we discussed it together when we met again.

Shortly afterwards you wrote to tell me that you had looked up a *Debrett* for 1895, and had there found *Colonel Henry Arthur Chomley, a brother of Sir Frederic Chomley, of the Rifle Brigade, etc.*, so that Henry Arthur Chomley was evidently alive in that year, and *had* been in the Rifle Brigade.

I was much pleased to get this corroborative evidence, though the mistake in initials must have been Colonel Bates' error, and apologised to Colonel Henry Arthur Chomley in the Unseen.

A few weeks later, however, you wrote again, and told me that you had been staying with a friend, who drove you over to call upon Colonel and Mrs Henry Arthur Chomley, that he was a brother of Sir Frederic Chomley, and was certainly *alive*, although not *at home*, at the time of your visit!

This information startled me, and my guide, at my request, went to look up the *soi-disant* Colonel to find out what it all meant.

The latter then confessed to having taken a friend's name, said a sudden impulse came over him when I first asked his name, and having told one lie, he felt bound to go on deceiving me, but that he had known both Colonel Bates and Colonel Henry Arthur Chomley in India, and that his own real name was Anstruther!"

This was Miss Smith's narrative.

Now out of this curious jumble of true and false, two points remain clear:

My brother *had* known a Chomley in India, and had succeeded him as Brigade Major at Meean Meer. This Chomley *was* a brother of Sir Frederic Chomley, the well-known diplomatist, but his name was Walter, not Henry Arthur. Yet Sir Frederic *had* a brother named Henry Arthur, and the impersonating Anstruther had borrowed the wrong brother's name when trying to pose as the friend of Colonel Charles Bates. To make confusion worse confounded, *Walter Chomley* was alive, as well as *Henry Arthur*, at the time of Miss Mabel Smith's experiences, for I have seen his death within the last eight months!

The second point is that, personally, my brother and I had reason to be grateful to the deceiving Anstruther. He was certainly the means of introducing a pleasant acquaintance to my brother and to me.

Miss Mabel Smith's experience at Grindelwald reminds me of one of my own in the same place during the following year.

I had gone there with a cousin, who was eager for skating and tobogganing, in January 1902, on my way to Rome. After a pleasant week at a charmingly quiet and comfortable hotel--the *Alpenrühe* I think was the name--my cousin wished, for purposes of policy, to change over to a more famous, but noisy and overcrowded one.

So on the evening of 3rd February we found ourselves in this immense caravanserai, having exchanged our large, comfortable, steam-heated rooms for small, oblong apartments, each provided with three doors as well as the window, and a wood fire to be fed from small "five-franc baskets," and always going out at that!

There was deep snow on the ground and a heavy fog of snow falling when we made our change, so that one was not in the most brilliant spirits; and being suddenly thrust into the midst of a big, heterogeneous company of strangers is never exhilarating.

Our bedrooms, though small and not specially comfortable, were perfectly commonplace, the very last *milieu* with which one would have associated any interesting experience. The window of my room faced the door into the passage, my bed lay between the two; right and

left of it were two other doors, each communicating with other occupied rooms.

Therefore I thought little the first night of noises and moving of furniture, taking for granted that these must be occurring either right or left of me, and that the clearness of the atmosphere accounted for my odd impression that a table and chair--between my bed and the window--were being moved.

The following night (4th February), however, this fact was indisputable. I had heard both my neighbours retire to bed by ten P.M., as so many do who have been skating and tobogganing all day long. I had sat up reading for half-an-hour beyond this, and went to bed at eleven P.M., by which time there was perfect silence in the hotel, as no special entertainment was going on.

Very shortly, this movement of the furniture began again, unmistakably in my room this time. Curiously enough, it did not frighten me at all nor suggest burglars (a far greater terror to me than ghosts!). I cannot at this distance of time remember *why* the idea of Mr Myers should have come to me in connection with these noises; but I am quite certain that I *did* think of him at the time, and fully expected his name to be given, when I asked if anyone wished to speak to me and were trying to attract my attention by moving the furniture about.

It was greatly to my surprise, therefore, that the name of *Gifford* was given. I may here note that this was the real name given to me. He said he was a judge, one who had lived fifty or sixty years previously, that he had once unintentionally condemned an innocent man to be hanged, and he was evidently still greatly perturbed about this, and begged for my prayers.

All this put Mr Myers entirely out of my head--*unfortunately*, as events proved.

I had some further talk with Judge Gifford, but do not remember it in detail.

Next morning I told my cousin of my experience, and on the evening of the following day mentioned it in the presence of some neighbours at *table d'hôte* who had introduced psychic subjects to us.

This gentleman and his wife were both impressed, and yet incredulous, and when my cousin laughingly declared that "Gifford had come to *her* the second night, but that she told him she was too tired out to listen to him," we all three supposed that she was turning the whole subject into ridicule. This would have been quite characteristic of her, although I have always thought she had some mediumistic faculty, and was one of the many people whom I should advise to leave these matters alone. I was the more convinced that she was merely "chaffing" on this occasion, because when I warned our acquaintances of her powers of exaggeration in "making fun" of things, she said nothing.

But when we had returned to our rooms that night she remarked quite quietly: "But he *did* come, Emmie! When you said that at *table d'hôte* about my exaggerating things, I let it pass, because very often it is true. But what I said this evening was *absolutely correct*, though perhaps it is as well those people should not believe it. Someone *did* come to my bedside last night, and said: 'I am Gifford--will you listen to me?' And I said: 'No; not to-night. I am too tired,' just as I told you."

I think poor Gifford came again more than once to me; but I had done all I could for him, and explained this, adding that he must now leave me alone, which he did.

Later my cousin returned to Paris, and I went on to Rome, where I received a letter from Dr Richard Hodgson enclosing some Piper script.

F. W. H. Myers communicating, said that he had come to me on the evening of 4th February, that I seemed to recognise him, and that he thought he had "got his message through to me," and hoped that I should write to Dr Hodgson to that effect.

In answering Dr Hodgson's letter I denied the Myers' episode *in toto*, so far as *my* consciousness was concerned. In fact, the Gifford incident put all else so entirely out of my mind that I fear I did not even mention to

Dr Hodgson that my *first* thought that night had been connected with Mr Myers.

Anyway, the next letter from Boston enclosed an account of a sitting, where Mr Myers came and apologised for having misled Dr Hodgson about my recognition of him.

His words were almost literally as follows:--

"I am extremely sorry, my dear Hodgson, about that affair with Miss Bates. I should not have thought of mentioning it to you had I not felt convinced that she recognised me. *Her astral body was quite aware of my presence*, and I quite thought she had realised it on the physical plane" (the italics are mine).

It would seem that the Myers' message was in the very act of transmission from my astral to my normal consciousness when this man Gifford must have come, switching off the telephone for Mr Myers, and getting on to it himself. Probably his great distress of mind would have made him the stronger force of the two for the time being.

There must always be many disappointments of this kind in our research. There is always something which so nearly succeeds and then just fails at last. This *must* be the case where conditions are so fine and subtle and so easily disturbed, and where our own ignorance of many necessary factors is so profound. This makes it none the less disheartening at times!

Later I made an attempt with my friend Baroness Rosenkrantz of Rome to get a message through the other way--*i.e.* from Mr Myers and myself to Dr Hodgson, *via* Mrs Piper.

The Baroness and I had a little "sitting" alone, wrote one or two short messages with a couple of extracts from Mr Myers' own writings, sealed up the envelope carefully, and I forwarded it to Dr Hodgson.

But the test failed. Two years later Dr Hodgson spoke of the letter as being still intact.

CHAPTER XIII

A SECOND VISIT TO INDIA, 1903

My second visit to India took place in the early months of 1903, and I approached it this time from Burmah. Fielding Hall's "Soul of a People" had thrown its magic spell over me, and Miss Greenlow and I were both anxious also to see the far-famed Shwé Dagon Temple.

I came to the conclusion from what I saw, and still more from what I heard, that Mr Fielding Hall must have appealed sometimes to his imagination for his facts, and allowed an exquisite poetical fancy to cast its glamour even over these. But the beautiful Golden Temple of Rangoon defies all powers of exaggeration. We went there again and again, and wandered amongst its endless small temples, representing various forms of worship, including even a Chinese joss-house, which is stamped upon my memory through a disaster, which I have always connected with this special temple; rank superstition though it be.

We had spent several weeks upon the Irrawaddy River; had wandered through beautiful, dusty Mandalay; had explored Bhamo and marvelled over the exquisite visions of fairy-like beauty, painted anew for us morning and evening, on this most glorious river; and had finally returned to Rangoon for a few days' rest before starting for Calcutta.

It was an exquisite evening, just before our departure, when we went, towards sunset, to say farewell to the Shwé Dagon. At that hour it is to be seen at its best, for the level rays of the Eastern sun, light up the golden cupola into startling and fairy-like magnificence.

Having watched this glorious spectacle for some minutes, the air grew chilly, compared with the intense heat of the day, and darkness was coming on apace as we turned to retrace our steps.

A few days before, we had noticed a Chinese joss-house, standing in one corner of the huge elevated platform upon which the Shwé Dagon rests. In the maze of buildings, and owing to the swiftly falling darkness, we could not at once locate this temple; and most

unfortunately for *me*, with the stupid persistence which such a failure sometimes brings, both Miss Greenlow and I were determined to find it out before leaving the Golden Temple. At last a joyous exclamation warned me that my friend had been successful in her quest.

The first time I had seen this joss-house I had run up the steps heedlessly, but felt such an unpleasant influence on entering it that I came away at once, and only regret not having been equally prudent a second time.

Miss Greenlow was gazing at some grotesque carvings in one corner of the temple, still dimly visible, and called out to me to come and look at them also. Very reluctantly I joined her, and stood for a few minutes waiting, till she was ready to leave.

There was something so gloomy, so uncanny, and depressing--I must even say *malignant*--in the building at this twilight hour, that I could stand the influence no longer, and as Miss Greenlow seemed inclined to linger, I hurried down the stone steps, saying: "*I can't stay in that place! I will wait for you at the top of the marble stairs.*"

Now these steps, broken and dirty, and lined by small booths selling every imaginable toy and bit of tinsel, including small models of the various temples, led by steep flights up and down from the huge platform of ground I have mentioned. Some small link-boys were crowding round as Miss Greenlow rejoined me, clamouring to be allowed to light us down the steps--a very necessary precaution, for the darkness was quickly replacing the exquisite sunset colouring.

I am, as a rule, rather a remarkably sure-footed person, and the lanterns of the boys threw ample light upon the steps, yet the first moment of my descent I was considerably surprised to find myself at the bottom of the first whole flight of hard marble steps! I had no recollection of a slip even--one moment I was standing, carefully prepared to descend; the next I was lying on my back at the bottom of a long flight of steps, with the link-boys gaping in astonishment. They could not have been more astonished than I was! The very swiftness of the fall was probably my salvation; otherwise I think my spine *must* have been injured. As it

was, I was very much hurt, however; the pain was intense for a time, and the muscles of my back were so swollen that they stood up in ridges as big as a good-sized finger, for some time after the escapade. In fact, it was quite six weeks before all local trouble was over, and many more weeks before I had recovered from the unexpected shock.

I have had several falls in my life, but never one other where there was absolutely *no* preliminary warning or sense of slipping, however swift.

The experience was exactly that of being suddenly *hurled down* the steps by some outside force. I can only add that I deeply deplored my unguarded words to Miss Greenlow, when I told her I was sure there was some malignant spirit in the joss-house.

Perhaps he wished politely to demonstrate the correctness of my remark.

The short voyage from Rangoon to Calcutta was made pleasant by the kindness of a European friend in Rangoon, who came "to see us off," and asked if he should introduce to me a little Burmese lady, very rich and very *dévote*, who was on board with us, going to Calcutta to pay a visit to her husband, who lived in that city.

"She is one of our principal native residents," my Rangoon friend explained to me before introducing her. "She is also intensely interested in her Buddhist religion, and I think this may interest you, from what you have told me of your investigations."

So the little lady was duly presented, and thinking to open our conversation pleasantly, I remarked that Mr Rowell had told me that she was much interested in religious questions, and that although not a theosophist myself, I numbered several of them amongst my friends.

But I found myself quite on the wrong tack. She screwed up her little mouth, as if tasting some nasty medicine, and then said in excellent colloquial English:

"Oh, they are no good at all. They have muddled everything up, and got

it all wrong. That is why we are beginning to write tracts and send out missionaries. The great Buddha made no propaganda; neither did we for many, many centuries. We believe that people must grow into this knowledge; but now when you Western people come and take little bits of our system, and piece them together all wrong--well, then, we are forced to show you what is the truth! It is like a puzzle map, and all you theosophists are trying to fit the pieces in, wrong side upward." And she finished with a merry and apologetic laugh, remembering, no doubt, that I had spoken of having friends amongst these "stupid muddlers"!

She gave me quite a number of the "tracts" of which she had spoken, setting forth the true Buddhism, and mostly printed in Mandalay, and I made a point of passing these on to some of the friends I had mentioned to her.

I can only trust they were appreciated, and efficacious in reducing the confusion resulting from trying to adapt Eastern mysticism to Western consumption!

Our conversation became still more interesting when I discovered that a mysterious fellow-passenger of ours on board the *Devonshire*, sailing from Marseilles to Rangoon, had taken this voyage at the expense of the Burmese lady, and, I am sorry to say, had occasioned her a great and quite inexcusable disappointment.

This man, whom I will call Dr Gröne, was a professor at a celebrated university in the south of Europe, and was certainly a scholar--if not a gentleman!

He had studied the Buddhist writings very deeply, and his name had been conveyed to this Burmese lady as that of one eager to throw off all ties of kinship, and retire--like the great Buddha himself--from the world, and find repose and enlightenment in a Burmese monastery. The only thing lacking in carrying out this excellent resolve was--as usual--*money*.

The native lady, delighted to hear of so learned a gentleman, and one holding such an honourable position in Europe, being converted to the

tenets of her religion, and thus wishing to give the best example of their influence upon him, agreed joyfully to forward the funds for his journey and to make arrangements for his stay in Rangoon before proceeding to Mandalay, where he was to be received as a Buddhist priest after a certain course of initiation.

We had all remarked Dr Gröne on board--partly because he was so thin and tall, and walked the deck so persistently in fine weather or foul; partly because he owned an exceptionally fine and long beard, which parted and waved in the breeze as he passed to and fro in his lonely perambulations. I never saw him speak to anyone on board except my own table companion, Dr Gall, the Secretary of the Church Missionary Society, and a very interesting and intelligent man. This latter was also a distinguished Arabic scholar, and had lent me some striking monographs he had written on the Mohammedan faith, striking both by the scholarship and breadth of view and tolerance, which one does not generally associate with the Society that he represented.

I had seen him more than once in the company of Dr Gröne, and when we reached Colombo, and read in the papers handed to us on broad that our ship contained the famous European professor who was journeying to Mandalay to become a Buddhist priest, after a touching farewell with wife and children, Dr Gall expressed both astonishment and incredulity.

"He never said a word about it to me," was his remark. "I know he has studied the Buddhist religion very deeply, and he is anxious to get access to some MSS., which he hopes to find in Burmah; but that is not the same thing as becoming a priest. I expect the papers have exaggerated the facts."

As a matter of fact, Dr Gröne certainly gave a lecture on Buddhism in Colombo on the day of our arrival, for one of our fellow-passengers had the curiosity to be present, but he, also, told me nothing had been said about the lecturer becoming a priest.

The matter did not specially interest me; but on arrival at Rangoon, the only decent (?) hotel was crowded, and most of us had to put up with a

very inferior class of accommodation.

A few hours of this establishment sufficed for most of the passengers, who promptly went up country or on the river; but Miss Greenlow and I were obliged to spend three or four days in Rangoon, and Dr Gröne was at first our only companion.

So, of course, we spoke to each other in self-defence. He talked of his home life and university work, and casually mentioned the death of his wife, *five years previously,* and the children who were awaiting him at home.

This certainly tallied more with Dr Gall's ideas than the sensational Colombo newspaper account of his wife and children, to whom, like the great Buddha, he had bidden an eternal farewell! Naturally one did not touch upon this delicate subject, but I asked him how long he expected to remain in Rangoon. To my surprise, he said at once that his stay was quite uncertain--he might even be returning by the *Devonshire,* which was to sail within a week of her arrival.

It seemed a long and expensive journey to take for so short a stay; but doubtless he had business reasons, and the matter dropped from my mind.

When we returned, three or four weeks later, he was no longer in Rangoon apparently, and I did not expect to come upon his tracks again.

The Burmese lady explained the Gröne mystery with some bitterness, and no wonder!

Having come out free, upon the understanding with her, already mentioned, she had taken a room for him at the hotel, and had busied herself in buying blankets and a carpet and other small luxuries, to break the Mandalay monastery to him as gently as possible.

When three days passed and he made no sign of moving on, she quietly intimated that it might be as well to begin the new life without delay,

and said she had written to her brother, himself a priest in the monastery, to meet Dr Gröne at Mandalay and present him to the authorities at the monastery.

This must probably have been about the time that I asked him innocently how long he would be staying in Rangoon.

His plan had doubtless been to go to Mandalay in a dilettante sort of fashion, and to live in the monastery for a time, with the hope of getting access to some valuable and little known MSS.; but it did not suit his plans at all to be met at once by the brother of his benefactress, and kept under the eye of this priest, who knew exactly the circumstances under which he had been enabled to take the long journey from Marseilles.

Being evidently a prudent man, he determined to seize the first opportunity for retreat from an impossible situation. How he raised enough money for the return voyage is not known. My Burmese acquaintance thought he must have applied to one of the Consulates, and that his university position would doubtless ensure his raising a loan.

Anyway, he shipped himself surreptitiously once more on board the *Devonshire*, and arranged that the letter, containing the usual excuse of a "sudden telegram from Marseilles announcing the unexpected death of a near relation," should not be handed to his benefactress until the anchor was safely weighed.

It was not a pleasant story, and treachery is no less perfidious for having an intellectual motive. I felt glad that Dr Gröne was not a fellow-countryman.

Having disburdened herself on this one point of righteous indignation, our little Burmese lady became as bright and cheery as a child, wearing her collection of pretty native dresses, which could all have been packed easily into a fair-sized doll's trunk, with singular grace and charm. When the tender arrived to disembark us in Calcutta, her husband came with it, and was speedily introduced.

We had tea with them a few days later in their handsome Calcutta flat, and this gave me the opportunity for a long and interesting talk with the husband, who proved to be a most intelligent and open-minded man.

He spoke of Fielding Hall's delightful book with appreciation tinged by kindly amusement.

"He has been many years in the country, but he still judges us as a foreigner."

When I suggested that the judgment was at least very flattering to the Burmese, this Burmese gentleman laughed, and said:

"Flattering? Yes--but not always quite true. One must see from *inside*, not from outside, to be quite true in one's judgments; and no foreigner can see from outside. It is a question of race and heredity, not of having spent twenty or thirty years, or even a lifetime, in a foreign land."

I suggested that those who saw from *inside* only, might also lack some essential factor in forming an accurate judgment.

He agreed heartily to this, adding: "Yes, indeed. The ideal critic must have lived neither too near nor too far--mentally as well as physically; also he must have intuition. Now Mr Fielding Hall is an artist as well as a poet, but in judging my country he lets his intuition run riot sometimes, as well as his imagination."

After reporting this conversation, it is unnecessary to add that my Burmese friend spoke English rather better than I did myself.

We then talked about the position of woman in Burmah, and how much this had been extolled and held up as a object lesson to the rest of the world.

If the position of woman is the true test of a nation's civilisation, as has been so often affirmed, then certainly Burmah must be in the van of the nations! Yet this is scarcely borne out by facts.

I put this point as politely as I could, and my mind was at once set at ease by the purely impersonal way in which he met my remark.

"Of course, we are not in the van of the nations, and yet it is quite true that our women have an exceptional position--quite a good enough one for an election cry for the Woman's Suffrage! Ah, yes! I have been in England," he added, with a merry twinkle in his little black eyes. "But you must realise that the unique position of woman with us is somewhat accidental. It is not the result of philosophical or moral conviction on the part of our men; it has been the natural outcome of circumstances, and a question of expediency rather than of ethics. So it was not really a 'test paper' for us at all! Our frequent wars in the past have taken the men out of their homes, and the women, at such times, were left alone to cope with not only the domestic, but the agricultural problems. All business of this kind passed through their hands, and in time they developed the qualities of industry, good judgment and power of taking responsibility, necessary for success in such a life. Then when the husbands came back and found everything going on so well and without trouble to themselves, they were only too glad to fall in with the existing state of things. We Burmese are lazy fellows after all. We can rise to a big call, but if our women will look after our business for us, we are quite content to smoke our pipes in peace and look on--and, of course, the one who makes the wheels go round is the one who really drives the coach. Believe me, there is more of expediency than nobility in the attitude of our men towards our women, and more of laziness than either, perhaps! But Fielding Hall would call this blasphemy, I am afraid!"

And so, with a joking word, our interesting talk came to an end, leaving me with a sincere hope that I might some day meet again both the intelligent husband and the charming wife.

I found the air at Simla quite marvellous for psychic possibilities, and this was certainly a great surprise to me; nor was it only a question of altitude and a dry atmosphere. Missouri and the Dhera Doon are celebrated for the purity of air and climate generally, but the influences there were quite different.

Even Peshawar, with its glorious crown of snow-capped mountains, brought no special psychic atmosphere to me; nor the Khyber Pass, where I had thoroughly expected to be haunted by the horrors of the past; nothing of the kind occurred. The beauty of the day when we visited this historic pass was only to be matched by its own extreme natural beauty; but no haunting memories hung round it for me.

Perhaps a night passed in those rocky defiles might have brought some weird experience, but no European would be allowed to woo adventure in this way, even with the laudable desire for advance in psychological phenomena! But I stayed there quite long enough to prove--for the hundredth time--that *an attitude of expectation* acts with me as a deterrent rather than encouragement, where the Unseen is in question.

I had heard so much of Simla Society and Simla Scandals, and so little of Simla Beauty and Loveliness!--in Nature, I mean--not Human Nature.

It is true we were there at the most exquisite time in the year, when the air was still fresh and keen, when the last snows and the first blooms of rhododendrons were greeting each other, when the long stretches of valley, brown and purple and emerald green, lay like soft velvet in the immense distances towards the horizon line.

As I looked at all this, day after day, it seemed to me that Simla, without its crowds of social butterflies, male and female, and the dust and the flies, and even the heat that they bring with them, was one of the most exquisitely beautiful spots that the Great Creator ever "thought out" in His mind. Nowhere have I seen such a *velvety* effect of rolling hill and soft mountain-side; such gorgeous atmospheric visions; such a carnival of beauty and colour.

We must have seen Simla at the most ideal time in the year, or people must become *blasé* and blinded to its intoxicating beauty, thanks to tennis tournaments and Government House receptions and the whole stupid Social mill.

Not even the beauties of Kashmir have dimmed the memory of Simla

for me; but I would not go there again, and in the season, for anything that could be offered to me.

All beauty is sacred, and I guard jealously my sacred memory of the place, known to so many merely as a byword for folly and flirtation.

Some strange and curious experiences came to me there, both in automatic writing and other ways; but these are of too private a nature for publication.

And so, with the beauty of Simla and the romance of Kashmir as jewels in my memory, I must end my second visit to India.

It is said that pleasant as well as painful experiences are apt to run in *threes*. I trust this may be the case. If so, it will mean that once again I shall tread upon Indian soil.

CHAPTER XIV

A FAMILY PORTRAIT AND PSYCHIC PHOTOGRAPHY

In the very heart of Warwickshire there is a beautiful old "half timber" hall, approached by a noble avenue of elms. The hall has come down from father to son, in the direct line, for nearly six hundred years, as the dates upon the front of the house testify.

The present Squire is not only an old friend of my early youth, but is connected through marriage, and he and his wife and I have always been on very friendly terms. He is the usual type of fox-hunting squire and county magistrate, did good service during the South African War by raising a corps of Yeomanry from the estate, and going out with them to fight his country's battles, and, needless to say, he received a hearty ovation from his wife and his county when he returned to them in safety. He is devoted to his beautiful house and estate, and is the last man to entertain fancies or superstitions in connection with either.

It is necessary to give these few words of explanation before relating an "incident in my life" for which I have always found it difficult to

account, except on the supposition that some germ of psychic sensitiveness may exist, even under a hunting squire's "pink coat and top-boots."

I have known Greba Hall since I was a child, and all its quaint old family portraits, especially those in the fine oak-panelled hall, with the old-fashioned open fireplace and "dogs" of the fifteenth century. But there were so many of these pictures massed together that I have never distinguished one from the other, with the exception of the few immediate ancestors of my friend.

Some years ago I was staying with a lady who lived about three miles from Greba, and we had driven over there to have tea with the Squire's wife, whom I will call Mrs Lyon. The friend I have mentioned had become interested in psychic matters since my acquaintance with her, and I had discovered that she possessed some psychometric capacity.

In the interests of non-psychic readers, I may explain that psychometry is the science of learning to receive impressions and intuitions from the atmosphere surrounding any material object--a letter, a ring, a piece of pebble or shell, and so forth. We seem capable of impressing all material objects with our personality, and naturally this is especially the case in letters written and signed by us.

The lady with whom I was then staying--Mrs Fitz Herbert--had tried receiving impressions from letters several times, at my suggestion, and always with more or less success. We had been speaking of this with Mrs Lyon, who was always very sympathetic, and she suggested giving one of her own letters to Mrs Fitz Herbert to be "psychometrised."

The latter was sitting facing a door which led from the hall to an inner room, and over this door hung the half-length portrait of an old gentleman, whom I had never specially remarked before, as the picture was hung rather high, and there was nothing very characteristic about the face.

Mrs Fitz Herbert glanced at the portrait once or twice as she held the letter, and began her remarks upon the writer; but I had no reason to

suppose that the glance was other than casual and accidental.

She gave, however, a very remarkably accurate description (as it turned out) of Mrs Lyon's unknown friend, both as to his character and the special and rather unique conditions of his life.

I was feeling naturally gratified that my "pupil" should have acquitted herself so well, when she suddenly uttered a little expression of pain and complained of severe headache.

I knew that she suffered from these headaches at times, and was therefore not surprised by her asking leave to ring for the pony carriage at once, and we were soon on our way home.

Mrs Fitz Herbert was driving the pony, and as we turned out of the long elm avenue she murmured in a tone of relief:

"How thankful I am to have got away from that old man! I knew he was telling me what to say about that letter, but afterwards he wanted to give me some message himself, and I could not understand it, and that is what made my head so bad." Then she explained, seeing my bewilderment, that she was referring to the old gentleman whose portrait hung over the door I have mentioned.

I suggested that we had better try to find out what the old man wanted to say, and we arranged to do so that evening after dinner; but as Mr Fitz Herbert (who had a very charming tenor voice) elected to come in and sing to us, the old gentleman's communication had to be postponed until the morning.

Mrs Fitz Herbert and I sat down in the drawing-room the next day, armed with pencils and paper, so soon as her domestic duties were over. She was most anxious that *I* should take the message, but this seemed to me absurd, considering that I had received no sort of impression about the picture and could not even recall the face. So she took up the pencil very unwillingly, and after some difficulty the name of *Richard Lyon* was given, with the information that he had owned Greba, and had passed over to the next sphere about one hundred and thirty years

previously. But when it came to trying to find out what he wanted to say, she professed herself quite unable to grasp it, and passed the pencil determinedly over to me.

Much to my surprise (for I had seemed to have no link with the old man at all), he was able to write through my hand with great ease.

He explained to me that he had been much devoted to the property, had lived only to improve it in every possible way, and that through his concentration of interest on this one subject his life had been a very limited one, and that now he could not get away from the remembrance of his earth life and his beloved Greba.

"I suppose he is trying to explain that he is earth-bound," suggested Mrs Fitz Herbert.

"Yes; that is just the truth," was the eager response through my hand, "and it is so sad to think that my own descendants are the ones to keep me imprisoned in this way. I am told that I could progress, as they call it here, and be much happier if I could only forget Greba, even for a time. And it worries me to see things done so differently and not to be able to do anything myself for the old place. There is no happiness for me here. Do ask them to set me free," he continued rather pathetically.

"But they don't *want* to hold you down," I answered. "Tell me how they do it and what you wish them to do."

The old man then explained the position very carefully and sensibly. He admitted that his own deep love for his old property and surroundings and his failure in life to develop any other very deep affection, was chiefly in fault, but he added, that his portrait being hung there, in the hall of his descendants, was also very unfortunate for him.

"It drags me down--I don't know why--but I am sure I could get away more easily if they would not keep that picture in the old hall."

A few more practical questions elicited the following instructions:--He said the picture might remain in the *county*, so long as it was not in any

house owned by a *Lyon* (there were several members of the family in Warwickshire); or it might be sent to London or elsewhere, and kept by members of the Lyon family, so long as they were not in the direct descent, and *did not live in his old county*.

We drove over to Greba that afternoon, and took the "message" with us, knowing there was no fear of encountering the gibes of my fox-hunting friend at three P.M. on any week day in the hunting season.

Mrs Lyon was extremely interested; she not only endorsed the *Richard Lyon* and his dates, but told us that he had done an immense deal for the property, as her husband had often impressed upon her, and that at his death, about one hundred and thirty years before, he had lain in state for three days in the very hall where we had taken our tea, and where his picture now hung. This was great encouragement, so we put our heads together, wondering *how* the poor old man's entreaty might be complied with.

Mrs Lyon remembered that several of the old portraits were shortly to be sent to a picture dealer in the neighbouring town (some ten miles away) to be cleaned, but this special picture was not in need of restoration, unfortunately.

"Still, I could put it with the others, and let it go to Warwick, and then tell the man not to do anything with it--but what would Edward say? Can you *imagine* his allowing the picture to be taken down upon this evidence?"

From an acquaintance with "Edward" extending over large tracts of years, I was forced to admit that even my robust imagination could not reach so far. "*Skittles!*" or "*Confounded cheek!*" would be his mildest reply to such a request, even from the friend of his youth! I did not care to think how much further his indignation might carry him!

But I felt so strongly that something outside myself had inspired the message, with its accurate instructions, that at last I prevailed upon Mrs Lyon to promise she would mention the matter to her husband, and thus leave the responsibility of refusal with *him*.

She did so, and the refusal was all my fancy had painted--and more!

Several months passed, and the following spring I was once more in the neighbourhood, staying with my own relations this time, who were related also to the Squire and his wife.

The first piece of news I received at dinner the night of my arrival was that the Greba Hall picture *had been sent in to Warwick!*

I could hardly believe my ears. My relatives could tell me nothing beyond the fact, and advised my paying an early visit to Greba Hall during the absence of the master.

I did this, and Mrs Lyon told me all she knew about the matter, which was not very much.

"After you were here last," she said, "I spoke to Edward as I promised, and, of course, he laughed the whole thing to scorn, and was very rude about our tomfoolery."

"Yes, I know all about that," I answered hastily. "But what happened *afterwards*--after I left Warwickshire, I mean?"

"That was the queerest part of it all," she resumed. "A few days after you had gone away he stood under the picture one evening, coming in from hunting and waiting for tea in the hall, and said as he looked up at old Richard Lyon:

"'Do you suppose I should allow *your* picture to be taken down--*you* who did so much for my property? Of course not!'"

"This happened once or twice, at intervals. Then he *said* nothing, but I used to notice that he always looked up at the picture whenever he came into the hall or stood by the fireplace. At last, about three months ago, he turned round suddenly, and said:

"'When are you going to send those pictures to be cleaned?' Now you know I had been keeping the other pictures back, with a dim hope that

Edward might relent. But I saw it was quite useless, so I told him they were going next day. To my intense surprise he said rather abruptly: 'Then send this picture with them, and don't ask me any questions.'"

His wife took the hint, and waited for no second bidding. Off went the picture to the Warwick shop, and there it remained for nearly six months.

When it came back eventually, the Squire was very triumphant on the subject, but I was equally triumphant in pointing out that nothing could alter the fact that the picture *had* been sent away, in spite of his earlier denunciations of our folly.

Also I suggested that a good deal can happen in six months on either side of the veil, and that no doubt poor old Richard Lyon had had ample opportunity to "get free," as he called it, thanks to the unaccountable action of his descendant!

I have reserved this story for my last chapter for two reasons. It happened within the last few years, but I cannot remember the exact date, and dare not inquire from my irascible hunting friend; and also it did not specially link on to any of the previous incidents described.

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I must now pass on to the autumn months of 1905, which found me in Eastbourne, where I have various kind friends.

I had been going through a time of great anxiety, owing to family reasons, and went down to Eastbourne with every prospect of finding rest and peace there. I arrived on the 11th of November, and the first few days amply justified my hopes.

Then a feeling of the most intense depression came over me, quite unexpected and unaccountable. My family anxieties and responsibilities were happily over. I had been able to make a wise, and, as it turned out, most admirable choice, in finding a fresh attendant for an invalid brother, and there was nothing now to be done but to rest on

my oars and be thankful that a most trying time--requiring infinite patience and tact--was over.

When this unaccountable depression came on so suddenly, I put it down to reaction, and expected it to pass away with returning strength, after the heavy strain. But it *increased* as the weeks passed on into December, and did not lift until about eight A.M. on the morning of 22nd December.

Then I had one of the most vivid experiences of my life. As suddenly as they had enveloped me some weeks before, so did the heavy clouds now roll off, leaving me with a sense of freedom and exaltation such as I have seldom experienced. This sense of freedom and joy and happiness was so marked that I mentioned it at once to an intimate friend, who came to see me that day after breakfast. I said to her: "I can only describe it as if one had suddenly been let out of prison or taken from a dark, dismal room into one with glorious sunshine streaming through the windows, where the very sense of being alive is sufficient joy; in fact, I never felt so thoroughly alive before. And the curious thing is that there is no apparent reason for this--nothing is changed--I have not even had any specially pleasant letters. Life is just the same on the outer; but on the *inner?* Well, I cannot describe it!"

"But can't you account for it at all?" asked my friend, who had been with me through all the depressing influences of the former weeks and was astounded, as well as delighted, by the inexplicable change in my spirits.

"Well, it is the day after the shortest day," I said, laughing. "But it has never had such an extraordinary effect upon me before."

All day long this exuberant feeling of delight and happiness remained. I had no specially spiritual or religious experience in connection with it, but rather the happy feeling of confidence that a child might have, who, after wandering about in unknown lanes and thorny paths, suddenly found himself transported, with no effort of his own, to the dear, familiar house and loving home faces.

Five days later, in a private letter, I read the first allusion to the death of Dr Richard Hodgson. It came to me in a letter from Mrs Forbes, not as a fact, but as an uncorroborated report, which would probably be found incorrect.

"*There is nothing about it in The Times this morning, so I don't suppose it is true.*" These were her exact words. I don't think I ever really doubted the truth of it, although it came as a bolt out of the blue.

Only a few days previously, a letter from an intimate friend of Dr Hodgson in America (he had brought us together) mentioned her having seen him lately and thinking he was really much depressed over his work and other matters, "*though, doubtless, if I taxed him with this he would say it was quite untrue; but I feel quite convinced that it is true*."

These words had not at the time given me any clue to my own curious depression, but when the first *rumour* of his death reached me, I felt convinced that it was true, and that I must have taken on his joyful conditions when he first found himself on the other side of the veil. I can only surmise, therefore, that the weeks of my depression *may* have corresponded with feelings alluded to by his intimate friend; although less intuitive, if not less valued associates, may have noticed nothing but his usual cheery and genial spirits.

A telegram sent to Mr Stead showed me clearly that my inquiry had been *his* first intimation of anything wrong. Then, in despair of getting accurate information, I wrote to Sir Oliver Lodge, who kindly responded at once, confirming my worst fears. He was good enough to send me later the particulars of the event, supplied by Professor William James.

It was a bitter blow for *us*, but for *him* how joyous an awakening!

I am grateful for having had, through personal experience, even a dim reflection of that wonderful New Life, so overwhelming and so exuberant, that its rays could reach to the hearts of some of those who had been honoured by his friendship.

On comparing notes I found that, allowing for difference of time, forty-eight hours must have elapsed between his physical departure and my experience of his awakening to new conditions.

There may be various ways of accounting for this. The spirit may not have been wholly freed at once from its physical envelope, but may have remained possibly, in some condition of unconsciousness, after the strangely sudden severance of the tie that binds body and soul together.

Note.--Since the above was written, I have received an explanation of the lapse of time between the passing of Doctor Hodgson, 20th December, and my experience of 22nd December 1905.

On 6th February 1907 I had the privilege of a sitting with Miss MacCreadie, who not only gave an accurate description of Doctor Hodgson's personal appearance, and of his sudden call hence, but added that this spirit wished to explain to me that he had not been able to get entirely away from the body for quite two days after physical death, and that meanwhile he must have been in a state of trance. Miss MacCreadie did not know the name of the spirit whom she described so accurately, and whose message was thus conveyed to me.--E. K. B.

Some time after Dr Hodgson left us, a friend in London wrote to me that she had either just read or heard that he had made some communication, to the effect that "*he was not very happy, as he had regarded his work only from the intellectual point of view*."

This seemed to me a most unlikely sort of message to come from such a man.

In such cases there is nothing like going to the fountain-head for information, and this came to me in the following words, which are, I think, characteristic and certainly sensible:--

"My work *was* intellectual--how could I regard it from any other point of view? That has nothing to do with the spiritual side of things. My spiritual life was very latent, it is true; but it was sincere, so far as it

went, and in this more favourable atmosphere, the buds are unfolding, and I am learning more and more of the love and wisdom which I always dimly saw and appreciated. It is the attitude of mind which is all-important, and my attitude, though critical, was never obstructive, as you know."

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I should like to say a few words now on the subject of superstitions. We are *all* superstitious in various ways and upon different points--I may laugh at *your* superstition because it does not happen to appeal to me, but you may be quite sure you could find out my "Achilles Heel" if we lived together long enough.

The only difference between people is, that some are honest about their superstitions and others--are not!

I met a lady not long ago at a foreign *table d'hôte* who started our acquaintance by remarking that she was thankful to say she had not a single superstition. Before we had spent ten days under the same roof I discovered that she believed in portents and lucky stones and the "whole bag of tricks," and possessed the power of seeing people in their astral bodies.

This is to introduce my own strongest superstition, which is a horror of seeing the new moon for the first time through glass. *Breaking* glass is almost as disastrous in my experience, even if the article itself only costs a few pence.

Now I do not for one moment suggest that either one or other is the *cause* of my subsequent misfortunes. No one surely can be childish enough to suppose such a thing; yet I have known sensible people labour this point in order to show me the folly of my ways--and thoughts.

Again, I am quite aware that some people may break as much glass or china as the proverbial bull, and see the moon through the former medium every month of their lives, and not be a penny the worse for

it--beyond the amount of their breakages. I only maintain that for *me* these two things are invariably the precursors of misfortune.

When people say to me: "How can a sensible woman like yourself be so foolish as to think such things?" I can only truthfully answer that I should be very much *more* foolish if so many years of my life had passed without my noticing the sequence of events.

But to *explain* the phenomena is quite another matter.

It seems to me quite reasonable that, allowing the possibility of influences coming to us from the other side, some sign--no matter how trivial--might be impressed upon us as a gentle warning to be prepared for disasters, more or less severe.

Another curious thing is this: I have never found that avoiding seeing the moon through glass *in any artificial way* prevents disaster. I used to let kind friends, indulgent to my "folly," lead me blindfold up to the window, carefully thrown open for my benefit. I can remember a most elaborate scene of precaution once, in an American railway carriage between Philadelphia and Boston, when a charming American lady, about to lecture on Woman's Suffrage, and grateful to me for some points I had given her with regard to the woman's question in New Zealand, insisted upon having a heavy window pulled up by a negro attendant, when she found out my little weakness.

It was all of no avail. Left alone, I should most certainly have seen the moon through glass on that occasion, and I felt, even at the moment, that I had not really altered anything by falling in with the kind American lady's suggestion.

In September 1906 I was going through a course of baths at Buxton, and on a certain Sunday (2nd September) I saw the moon through glass in my bedroom window in the most unmistakable way. There was no friendly cloud, no other twinkling light to throw the smallest shadow of doubt upon the fact. There was much good-humoured laughter over my "superstition" in the house; but I knew *some* trouble was on its way, little dreaming that it was one which would alter my whole life.

On the Wednesday morning (5th September) I received the first intimation of what proved to be the last illness of a brother who has been mentioned in these pages already, and who had been an invalid for nearly thirty years. A point to be noticed is that on the Sunday, when the sign came to me, he was in his usual health, and even on Monday went out for a long drive. The first attack of angina pectoris only came on in the middle of the night of Monday-Tuesday, 3rd to 4th September.

Later, when the disease had become acute, and I was in the south of England, living in hourly suspense, and receiving telegrams and letters several times a day, another curious incident occurred which has a bearing upon our subject.

As my readers are probably aware, in this sad and painful illness the only proof of unselfish affection which one can give, may be to keep away from the patient, when you know that all is being done for him that skill and devotion can suggest. The smallest agitation is almost certain to bring on a fresh attack of the terrible pain, and so long as there is *any* hope of a rally, or, in fact, any consciousness that can possibly result in increased suffering, *everyone* should be kept away from the patient except those who are in actual and necessary attendance.

This naturally entails great mental distress and suffering upon those who are living from hour to hour, in a state of tension and suspense.

After more than a fortnight of alternate hopes and fears, the position became almost unendurable, and I was making all preparations for a visit to the patient, or at least to the house where he lay (against my better judgment), when letters and a telegram arrived imploring me not to come, as a short visit from another relative had proved most disastrous in bringing on another attack of the terrible pain; from which he never really rallied.

Under these distressing circumstances, there could be but one course open to me.

I was staying with my kind friends Admiral and Mrs Usborne Moore at this sad time, and can never feel sufficiently grateful for their goodness to me and sympathy with my distress.

The Admiral, as many of us know, is a most persevering student of psychic science, and I think it was by his suggestion, or at anyrate with his approval, that I determined to pay a visit to a lady of whom he had spoken to me--Mrs Arnold, a daughter-in-law of Sir Edwin Arnold--who is a gifted clairvoyant.

I went alone to the house, that she might not be able to connect me with my host and hostess; and the interview was a remarkable one.

There were many evidential points given, which, for family reasons, it is impossible to publish. She gave me the crystal ball to hold for a good five minutes, in order that it might become impregnated by my influence; and then she took it from me, and began making a series of statements, without pausing for a moment or attempting to "fish," to use a technical term.

These statements included my own life and studies and chief interests, and the number and sex of my immediate family; also the attitude of the various members towards myself, and in each case the special statement was absolutely correct.

Her first words were: "You are in great anxiety, I see. It is about the illness of an elderly man. *Two* people with whom you are in very intimate relations are ill, I see, but I will tell you now of the one you wish to hear about especially."

She went on to describe not only my brother's surroundings and illness at the time, but also his permanent state of paralysis, adding that he was now in the country, for she saw green trees all round him and waving grass. As my brother's life for many years had been spent entirely between London and the seaside, this was a good bit of evidence. As a matter of fact, he was spending a few weeks in a country cottage for the first time in his life.

The single point where she failed was as to the *time* of his passing away. She saw at once that the illness was one from which he could not permanently recover, and gave the approximate time very tentatively. "We cannot see times exactly--they come only in symbols. For instance, I see now falling leaves; it looks like an autumn scene, and so I infer that means later on--perhaps October or November."

This, as I have said, was the only mistake in the whole interview. My brother passed to the Higher Life on 24th September.

When I saw his valet in town later, I asked him about the trees, and he explained that owing to the great heat, the leaves were all over the ground, and gave an autumnal look to everything.

Most of us noticed the same appearance in London and elsewhere, even quite early in September 1906.

The *second* friend lying dangerously ill was a puzzle to me at the time; but within five days of my brother's transition, I heard of the death of Judge Forbes, who was one of my most intimate friends, as Mrs Arnold had truly observed. His illness was a very short one; but on comparing notes with members of his family I found that he had taken to his bed three days *before* my visit to Mrs Arnold, and was already very seriously ill, although I had no knowledge of the fact for more than a week after my interview with her.

Before closing these personal records I must say a few words on the much vexed question of psychic photographs.

As my friend Admiral Usborne Moore observes in a letter received from him as I write these words: "We are dealing with a great mystery here." He is himself one of those who by persevering effort is helping us to solve the mystery.

It is certainly the branch of psychic science which promises the best results from an evidential point of view, but it must be a case of "each man his own photographer."

There is always a tendency in human nature to be over-credulous as to our own achievements, and over-sceptical as to those of our neighbours.

So for many years probably, we shall only accept our "very own" psychic photographs as quite genuine; but when a sufficient number of people are convinced by their personal experiences in this line of research, there will be some hope that the subject will go through the usual stages--(1) Impossible and absurd; (2) Possible, but very improbable; (3) Possible, and not even abnormal; (4) Finally, normal, and "*Just what we knew all about from the first!*"

Meanwhile some of us have been experimenting, with professional assistance, and in these cases the question is not "Can such photographs be faked?" We all know nowadays that faking photographs is the easiest of all possible frauds. I have spent many a half hour doing the faking myself, with an amateur photographer, by sitting for so many seconds in a chair and then vacating it in favour of some other "spook"!

No, the whole question at present must be determined by our recognition or non-recognition of the photographs produced.

If Mr Boursnell or any other photographer can produce (*as he has done*) my old nurse, who died twenty-three years ago, and was never photographed in her life, then we must find some other suggestion than that of "common or garden faking" as a solution of the mystery. There she sits, as in life, with a little knitted shawl round her shoulders and the head of a tiny child upon her lap. The eyes are closed, and give a dead look to the face, yet the features are to me quite unmistakable, and no one knew the dear old woman so well as I did.

Again, I have in my little picture gallery, an old and very well-known Oxford professor, in whose house I stayed many times.

Quite unexpectedly he appeared on one of Mr Boursnell's plates last summer, and although this special photograph is fainter than the one just described, the likeness can only be denied by someone more anxious to be sceptical than truthful. I compared the photograph with

an engraving of the professor in much earlier life--which is to be found in the Life published since he passed away--with an artist friend (who had not known him). We went over the features one by one, and my friend said she noticed only one small difference, the exact length of the upper lip, and this, she considered, would be amply accounted for by the lapse of time between the two pictures and the slight lengthening of the upper lip owing to loss of teeth. The professor passed away as an old man; the picture engraved in the Life represents him as he was at least twenty years before his death.

But the most interesting point to me in this photograph, is the appearance on his lap of a much loved dog, a rather large fox terrier named "Bob." I had not noticed Bob until a daughter of the professor pointed him out to me, and now I cannot understand having missed him at first.

Bob was not only the most important person in the Oxford household, but he was good enough to be very fond of me, so it seems to me quite natural that he should have come with his master to pay me a visit.

I remember arriving at the house one dark winter's evening after an absence of over two years, and Bob's welcome to me was so ecstatic that he nearly knocked me down in a vain attempt to get his paws round my neck.

I heard the professor, who was always rather jealous of Bob's affections, say in a whisper to his wife: "Most touching thing I ever saw, that dog's welcome when Miss Bates arrived!"

Dear Bob! I am so glad he can still come and see me, with his dearly loved master.

Another shuffle of the photographs brings to the top a sweet girlish face and figure, "sixteen summers or something less."

She appeared first upon a plate in the summer of 1905, but so indistinctly as to the *face* that I could not recognise it.

A few months ago the same figure appeared again, but quite clearly this time, and involuntarily, as I looked at it, I exclaimed: "*Why, of course, it is Lily Blake!*"

Now it is nearly thirty years since I met this charming child; during my first visit to Egypt. She and her father (a well-known physician) and her aunt, were spending a six weeks' holiday in Cairo, and I saw more of her than would otherwise have been the case, because she was the playmate of another young girl--the child of friends of mine at Shepheard's Hotel.

Lily was a sweet-looking, delicate girl, with soft, sleepy blue eyes, and was always dressed in a simple, artistic fashion. A few months after our return to England I saw in the papers the death of this pretty child; for she was little more at the time. I wrote a letter of condolence and sympathy, which was at once answered by the aunt in very kind fashion; and since then I have seen nothing to remind me of Lily until this last year has brought her once more within my ken. I am only too thankful to realise that any influence so pure and beautiful as hers, may be around me sometimes in my daily life.

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And now let me say, in the words of our great novelist:

"Come, children, let us shut up the box and the puppets, for our play is played out!"

Only I trust in this case we have managed to rise a little above the usual atmosphere of Vanity Fair.

Surely the aim of all psychic research should be to give us a *scientific*, as we have already, thank God, a spiritual, foundation for the "Hope that is in us."

Spirit photographs and spirit materialisations and abnormal visions or abnormal sounds amount to very little, if we look upon them as an end in themselves, and not as the symbols and the earnest of those greater

things which "Eye hath not seen nor ear heard, neither hath it entered into the heart of *man* to conceive."

I remember, years ago, in the course of a deeply interesting conversation with Phillipps Brooks, the late Bishop of Massachusetts, that I asked him what he thought about modern theosophy, which was just then becoming a *culte* in his native town of Boston. There was a great deal of talk at the time about the new philosophy and the wonderful phenomena said to accompany its propaganda. Sir Edwin Arnold had written his "Light of Asia," and Oliver Wendell Holmes had welcomed it with wondering awe, as something approaching a new revelation. And smaller people were talking about the historical Blavatsky tea-cups, and hidden heirlooms found in Indian gardens, and some of us were wondering how soon we should learn to fly, and what would come next.

The bishop's answer to my question was so genial, so characteristic, and showed such divine common-sense!

"It is not a question of *flying*," he said. "I should like to fly as much as anybody; and a queer sort of bird I should appear!" (He was well over six feet, and broad in proportion.)

"If you suddenly found you could fly," he continued, "it would be *absorbing* on Monday morning, *intensely interesting* on Tuesday, *interesting* on Wednesday, and *quite pleasant* on Thursday, but by the end of the week it would be getting normal, and you would want to discover some other new power. No, believe me, the real question is not *flying*, but WHERE you would fly, and WHAT YOU WOULD DO WHEN YOU GOT THERE."

This sums up the case in a nut shell, and seems to me only another way of saying: "Don't forget the spiritual significance beneath the scientific symbol."

And I would add: "Let us all join hands in the interesting and absorbing work of trying to make our symbols as scientific as we can, by finding out the laws which govern them, as well as all other things, in this

universe of Love and Law. Probably we are here to learn, above all things else, that Love and Law are ONE."

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Many people have had far more remarkable experiences than mine. For various good reasons I have carefully abstained from any attempt to cultivate, or in any way increase, the sensitiveness which is natural to me.

I can only assure my readers that my record has been absolutely accurate. In many cases it would have been very easy to write up the stories into some far more dramatic form; but by doing so the whole aim and object of my book would have been destroyed.

I wanted to trace the thread of what we at present consider abnormal, through the whole skein of a single life, hoping thereby to encourage others to do the same.

It is only by putting these things down, if not for publication, then in some diary or commonplace book, that we can realise how far our normal life is, even now and here, interpenetrated by another plane of existence.

And so farewell to all kind readers who have followed me to the end of my personal record of curious events--curious chiefly by reason of our present imperfect knowledge.

APPENDIX

I

Much has been said of the folly and triviality of all messages coming, or purporting to come, from the Unseen. I think here, as elsewhere, like clings to like, and we get very much what we deserve; or rather, to put it in a more philosophical and Emersonian way, we receive *what belongs to us*.

Emerson tells us in one of his most illuminating passages, that everything which belongs to our spiritual estate is coming to us as quickly as it can travel. All the winds of heaven, all the waves of earth, are bringing it to us, and neither angel nor devil can prevent our taking what is ours or rejecting what is *not* ours.

This is a universal law, and applies to automatic writing as to everything else. Emphatically we get what belongs to our spiritual estate.

Therefore any casual and general remarks as to the foolishness of all automatic writing, must of necessity be made by those who are ignorant of this spiritual law, or whose experience of such messages is very limited.

I intend to give a few which I have myself received, in the form of an Appendix to my book. With one exception, they all come from a very dear friend, who passed into the other sphere little more than a year ago under peculiarly happy circumstances. I do not wish to give his name, although it would add considerably to the interest of the narrative. I shall therefore call him Mr Harry Denton. The messages will be given exactly in the form in which they were received, and without any editing. We never discussed theological ideas from any standpoint of *creed*; but I imagine that my friend, when here, would have looked upon Jesus Christ as one of the many inspired teachers of the world, and that his views were cosmic rather than religious--*in any narrow sense*--and certainly *religious*, in the broad sense of the term, rather than *theological*.

The first conversation (for this is a better description of my friend's communications than the word *message*) refers to my own attitude, as compared with that of a lady friend of mine, regarding Jesus of Nazareth.

H. D.--I see a great stream of light round you, Kate, and it seems to have come with your truer conception of Jesus Christ. It is all right for your friend to say she prefers to put the matter aside and leave it alone. That is just the best thing she can do; in fact, the *only* thing she can do

at present.

The seed is still underground, and the moment of emergence has not come. To try and force it above ground just now, would be fatal. It would also be immature and uncalled for. The old husks of man-made creeds must drop off gradually, leaving the bud they protected intact, not be torn off by an impatient hand.

So far her instinct seems to me a true one. But the case is widely different for *you*. The husks *have* fallen off, as a matter of fact, and the discomfort and sense of something wrong arose from your knowing that you were only striving desperately to clutch on to them, when the fine, strong bud was there, able and ready to take its proper share of sunshine and rain, and even to bear the cold winds of misrepresentation and misunderstanding if need be.

"QUIT YOU LIKE MEN, BE STRONG." That is *your* lesson-book, and you will never feel happy or content until you are learning it.

Surely you must feel how much you have gained since you faced your own facts?

E. K. B.--Yes, Harry, I do; but I don't quite understand *your* position. Are you at the same point of view?

H. D.--No; not yet. It is all rather foreign to my previous notions. I thought of Jesus of Nazareth as a great teacher--one of *the* great teachers of the world--but I had still to learn His unique position as regards our chain of worlds.

They tell me here that He was the *first* to attain to the full stature of the *Divine Man* as he existed in the thought of the Absolute.

Spiritual evolution is the process, apparently the only process, whereby a Son of God in this sense can appear. And æons of time have been necessary to produce this fine Flower of Humanity. Your own band are helping me to understand this. *Having attained, being the anointed One,* it is given to Him to bring the whole race after Him.

This is quite a different conception from my former one, and the one held by most of those whom in old days we called Unitarians.

You have had to *unlearn*, or rather to drop, some of the husks of old tradition which have been guarding the truth for you, whereas I have still *to come up to the truth*; but the point reached will be the same, whether the approach to it is from north or south--do you see?

In Christ Jesus, they tell me, we are *all* new creatures, as a matter of fact; because, consciously or unconsciously, we are working together with Him to realise and manifest ourselves, as made after the Image of God.

He is the example and the pledge for us. St Paul saw this, of course, and your present position illuminates his teaching for me enormously. So I have much to thank you for, Kate. It is easier to learn from those we know and trust, than from strangers.

And, moreover, when we can learn from the loved ones on earth *as well as through the loved ones here*, it makes the links in the golden chain complete, and helps us to realise the unity and solidarity of our common existence, *in the Father--with the Son*. H. D.

II

Another morning I had told H. D. that I had been reading an article in *The Nineteenth Century--and After*, I think, entitled "An Agnostic's Progress," and asked if he had sensed it through me at all.

H. D.--Yes. We will begin with that this morning. I am very glad you read it, for it is curiously like my own experiences in the same line.

Since coming over here, and thereby coming into such direct touch with you, I have been able to grasp the key to much that puzzled me on the other side.

As my views became more spiritualised I saw there *must* be more truth

in the Christian religion than outsiders supposed, and yet I knew it could not be absolutely true *in the form in which it has been handed down*.

That was for me unthinkable, because I saw it would be a sudden and catastrophic incursion upon a cosmos of Law and Order.

It would mean God working in the highest departments of His Creation, as He is never seen to work in the lower ones. And my faith in Him prevented my entertaining such an idea! Schemes and plans of salvation belong to the comparative childhood of the race, not to the full-grown spiritual man. They are still in the fairy-tale stage, holding a truth, but acting only as the husk of the truth.

The unity of the race; the necessity for self-sacrifice in realising that unity: that by giving our life for our brothers we save our *Life*, which is that unity in which the brethren are included--all this I could accept in Christ's teaching or the teaching of the Apostles; but the rest: the detail, the carefully arranged *scheme* of the Atonement, etc., as dogmatic doctrines--all these seemed to me so obviously the desperate attempts of man at a certain stage of development to fit in spiritual facts with the most probable theories; and to say that men who wrote of these things were inspired, and *therefore infallible*, was absurd.

Even in my short life, I had seen the world pass through several stages of belief and assimilate them in turn.

As a child, I was told that God was angry with people for sinning and breaking His commandments, and so Jesus Christ offered to come and die on the cross to appease His just wrath.

That seemed a great puzzle to me, because, although it might account for what happened *before* Christ came and *until* He came, I could not understand why God *should go on letting people come into the world* who would break His laws, and make Him still more angry for centuries and centuries. That seemed to me, as a child, so unnecessary.

Later I was told it was not God's anger but His sense of justice that had

to be appeased and satisfied, which was a distinct step in advance.

A little later, however, I read that this was not the hidden truth of the doctrine. The religious world (the thoughtful section of it) now arrived at the idea that it was not God who needed to be satisfied or appeased in any of His attributes, but MAN, and that GOD--in the person of his Son--came into the world to reconcile the world to Him, and not Himself to the world.

This was a complete *bouleversement* of the whole situation, though it came so gradually that few appreciated that fact.

The last suggestion appeared to me by far the most luminous. In human life it is invariably the *lower* nature that needs to be reconciled and conciliated; whilst the higher nature, in proportion to its development, is forgiving and tolerant and wide-minded, and does not prate about its own high sense of justice requiring to be appeased. The best type of *man* punishes a wrong-doer in order that he may learn to do better and leave off tormenting and wronging his fellow-creatures; not to appease any instinct in his own breast, for that would be egotism, no matter how we might try to disguise the fact.

Now if it would be a blot upon the best conceivable *man* to be egotistical, *a fortiori* must it be upon God.

To conceive otherwise is to make God in the likeness of the lower and not the higher humanity. I thought all that out very clearly.

Still this crux remained for me, that to be suddenly, at any arbitrary moment in the world's history, obliged, as it were, to send an absolutely divine part of Himself into the world, was the way a *man* would act faced by an unforeseen catastrophe, but not the way in which God has acted throughout the rest of our history.

A succession of teachers, enlightening the world by degrees, and culminating in the ANOINTED Son of God--the Flower of Humanity--*this* is entirely in line with the processes of Nature and the laws of God, so far as we know them.

All progress has its culminating point.

Æons have passed to produce the most exquisite crystals, the highest forms of vegetation, of animals, of men. Then came the slow processes of civilising and educating men; the dim instincts of fear and propitiation, merging, by slow degrees, in the first conceptions of Love, as something apart from desire, and so forth.

Was I to be expected to shut my eyes to all these known facts, and bolt down the theories contained in one Book, written by human authors, no matter how admirable?

I felt it was impossible.

Then I remembered with relief that these very dogmas, as a matter of fact, were in so fluent a state, that my own bare fifty years of living had seen at least four different high-water marks!

Here again therefore, under my very eyes, was the universal law of progress working, the moment it *could* work, by being released from the swaddling-clothes of the Roman Catholic Church, which, so far as it is orthodox, is fossilised.

I saw also that the whole body of dissent had moved on, taking up its pegs and planting them a little further on each time; till a City temple, with its widening theology, was an established fact.

Progress everywhere--slow, but sure--and the pace getting quicker, even in my short span! Still, the *uniqueness* of Jesus of Nazareth and His influence over the nineteen centuries was a puzzle.

Buddha's influence has lasted longer, Mahomet's almost as long (the two cancel any way), but I have always recognised an *advance* in the teaching of Jesus Christ. He brought a fresh element, in the personal note of the Sonship with GOD.

I was at this point when I came over here. Now through your mind I have been able to see, and, oddly enough, to quicken in your soul, the

seed already planted there.

They tell me the illumination came to you years ago, at Oberammergau--no, not when you were there for the Passion Play--four years earlier.

You took it in with your head then, not with your heart. Old traditions were too strong, I suppose, and you had not made up the last little bit of your mind, to be true to the convictions that had come to you through your prayers for light.

And so you have gone on, see-sawing to and fro, not really believing the old orthodox ideas, but not courageously sweeping them away for yourself. So although the key was in your hands, you have not used it until now. You have given me the key, and I have been allowed, as *my* New Year's gift, to fit it in the door.

This is how Jesus Christ has stood so long at the door of *your* heart and knocked. He could only enter through the one door--namely, *that one opened in the highest point of your spiritual realisation*. I see now that He comes in at that door in each soul, and, as spiritual evolution unfolds in each heart, so is the special position of that door shifted; but the fact of His presence is the vital one! It was not possible for Him to do otherwise than hide His face, as it were, whilst you were barring His only door of access--*i.e. your true point of realisation.*

It all seems so clear to me now. And this is how He comes to so many in different guises.

He is the Perfected Manifestation of GOD, as the Divine Man--the Flower of Humanity.

But He can come into the heart in the narrowest creed, so long as the holder of that creed is at *his true point of growth* and not trying to stifle God's gift of ever-advancing truth by cowardly want of trust, or fear of being worse off in the end, by being absolutely honest to himself and his own convictions in the present.

It has been a long message, and you have taken much of it awkwardly, but on the whole it represents what I wanted to say. H. D.

III

H. D.--I feel now that you want to know what I meant by telling Miss R. it was the *likeness* to the old world which puzzled me here.

You see, we have all imbibed traditional ideas with our mother's milk, however much our intellects may have modified them. Instinct is stronger than intellect, because it is more elemental.

The first thing that struck me was that truths which are latent on earth are made manifest here.

(Here comes an interpolation.)

You can take my words so easily that we must guard against wasting time in mere verbosity. I must teach you to condense more. We must strike some sort of balance between my brevity and your amplification. At present it is as well to get the instrument into proper working order before worrying too much over these details.

(He then resumed.)

It is as if you turned the old earth garment inside out, and saw the very fabric of it, which the earth looms have hitherto concealed by the warp and woof of the manufactured article.

For instance, you are told on earth that you are making your own future conditions by right or wrong thinking. *Here* you see the absolute, *material* results of right and wrong thinking, just as if you were looking at two different patterns, woven by two different workers. I said material results, because matter here is just as real as it was on earth, and just as illusory, in one sense, in both spheres. Your matter is unreal to us. Our matter is unreal to you. The truth is, both are shadows cast by an antecedent reality on the Screens of the Universe.

The screens are the school-houses through which humanity learns its lessons.

Don't be worried! There is no real difficulty in using your hand; it is only trying to compromise between your redundancy and my brevity.

Earth is like a gallery of sculpture. (Note by E. K. B.--This simile had flashed through my brain, and H. D. at once said: "Yes, that is very good; you started it, and I pick it up and apply it.") All the figures and groups are perfected and complete in their marble or bronze or terra-cotta, as the case may be.

Some groups or figures are noble, others mediocre, others again may be sensual and degrading, but they have one quality in common--for good or bad, they are *ready made*.

Now go into the sculptor's studio, having studied well in the great sculpture galleries of the world. You go to the studio, we will suppose, as a pupil. He puts a lump of clay into your hands, and for the first time you are invited to model your own statues and figures, to embody your own ideas in this clay, which corresponds to thought stuff *here*. You are even made to understand that your houses will only be worthily furnished by the work of your own hands. *Here* it is the work of your own hearts, of your loving or unloving thoughts.

So the first lesson we learn over here is that THOUGHT is not only Creative Power, as you are often told on earth, but it is also the very stuff out of which the creation must be moulded. It is, in very truth, the clay of the modeller.

Shakespeare said truly enough "We are such stuff as dreams are made of," but he was referring to our embodied selves.

The difference between the two worlds seems to me, so far as I have arrived, as the difference between the pupil in the sculpture gallery and in the experimental studio. The chief part of the earth modelling is ready made--made by the racial thought stuff and the racial manipulation of it.

Here, for the first time, we must turn to and take a hand in the work ourselves. It would not be possible to give such individual power in any lower sphere than this, for it would be misused, and would lead to terrible tragedies.

You see some slight hints of this in what is called Black Magic--the wilful and intentional throwing of evil conditions on other people, making hard and cruel images of them in the mind, and so forth. But all that is as child's play to what would happen if the absolute clay were put into their hands, as it is here.

It is the difference between thinking out an ugly picture; and painting it and hanging it up in a gallery; for we have objectivity here as with you. Naturally what comes into objective existence has more power than what remains latent. The latter can only influence exceptionally sensitive souls, and that to a comparatively small extent, whereas the former, here as with you, has a much farther range of influence.

So this sort of gunpowder is not given to us until we are old enough to know better than to burn our fingers with it, in trying to make fireworks!

At the same time, as all stages of evolution overlap, it is inevitable that some hint of these possibilities should be already in your world. Woe be to those who misuse them!

You have taken enough for this morning. H. D.

IV

The friend I have called Mr Harry Denton, during his psychic researches, came, as many others have done, very strongly under the influence of "Imperator," the chief of the Stainton Moses controls.

I knew that this was the case, especially during the last three or four years of my friend's life, and I always rather resented the fact, for the limitations of Imperator have always appealed to me so strongly, as to

dim, perhaps unduly, his undoubted claims to appreciation.

I have read many of the private Stainton Moses' records (thanks to my friendship with the executor, with whom these journals were left), and in all those referring to Imperator's communications, there was to my mind the same note of cock-sureness and mental tyranny.

There was too much of finality and self-assertion, too much of "*Thus saith the Lord*," about Imperator's remarks for my rebellious soul. I could never be strongly impressed by any personality, however admirable, that so palpably exacted allegiance and unquestioning obedience. These must be the unconscious tribute to the Genius of Holiness, as to any other sort of genius; never an enforced levy upon us.

So at least it seems to me. Certainly I would not escape one sort of priestcraft to set up another in its place, whether the niche be filled by Mrs Besant or Mrs Eddy or Mr Sinnett, or any other fallible fellow-creature. Not even Imperator can strike me as infallible; and his own evident belief in that direction does not affect the question.

It seemed to me rather to be deplored that Mr Denton, with his wide outlook and cosmic conceptions, should fall so strongly under any special influence, even that of the admirable Imperator!

So I was curious to know what his views were upon this subject from the other side of the veil. I will now leave him to speak for himself.

H. D.--You want me to tell you just my position about the Imperator group before and since I passed to this side? That is easily done. Remember, the teaching I got through Imperator was practically the first *spiritual* teaching I ever had--the first I mean, of course, that I could assimilate, because it appealed to my reason, as well as to my sense of the fitness of things--and therefore I can never feel sufficiently grateful to him and his group; and I see that they can teach many who would not be amenable to a more distinctly spiritual appeal.

Imperator is a great force in his way; a sort of plough that goes over the

hard, caked-up earth and throws it open to the sunshine and rain and all Nature's beautiful influences, to all the possibility of Divine influences on the corresponding sphere.

But the limitation of Imperator I see clearly now, as you always appear to have done.

He is, as you say, too final and too dogmatic. This is at once his weakness and his strength: his weakness, because it limits his own spiritual receptivity; his strength, because it focusses his power in dealing with materialistic minds.

A more spiritually true perspective in his communications would rule out half the souls to whom his appeal is made.

Stainton Moses has also progressed beyond the Imperator influence, and this is why the communications between them had become so clogged and so liable to error.

S. M. could not switch on to the old wires, as in the days when his horizon was bounded by them. This accounts, I see, for much of the misconception and apparent inconsistency of the remarks made through Mrs Piper, but it was very disheartening for the investigator as time went on and the "Light" became more and more clouded. Then there was the additional fact to be faced, that Mrs Piper herself became, psychically rather than physically, exhausted, and less able to be used from this side.

Now I see you want to know about Frank Strong, and what he said about sin existing only on your plane, and how inconsistent this was with the previous teachings of Stainton Moses, who was supposed to be speaking through Frank's assistance.

It is so difficult to explain everything in black and white when there are so many shades of grey, so many degrees and amounts to be considered. It is like a question in mechanics.

With increased momentum you get an increased rate as multiplied by

space. I am not an expert, but this is practically true. In the same way, spiritual perception acts with increased momentum.

All sin is failure in spiritual perception. Spiritual perception corresponds with the momentum of a falling body in mechanics. Only in Divine mechanics it is a *rising* body; but the same law holds good.

You say truly that an action can only be called sinful when the sinner knows the higher and deliberately turns to the lower.

That is true; but it is only half a truth. It is still the *lack of knowledge* that causes sin. With the fulness of knowledge of the higher (only another way of putting fulness of spiritual perception) *must* come the righteousness of life.

It is the broken gleams, the little knowledge, which is truly a dangerous thing, for it brings responsibility, and therefore the capacity for sinning. Yet the *choice* between good and evil fully made, is the schoolmaster to bring us to the full realisation of our nature as Sons of God.

Now when Frank came over here, he was so greatly impressed by the dynamic force of spiritual perception that for the time he lost all sense of proportion and accuracy of judgment. Compared with the old earth temptations, those in his sphere seemed non-existent, whilst the temptations to goodness were enormously increased.

What wonder that in the delightful sensation caused by his sense of moral and spiritual freedom from old shackles, he should exclaim with youthful fervour: "Sin is only possible in your sphere--it is unknown here!" Any communications of which he formed the channel, would of necessity be coloured by this dominant idea of his. Everything is a question of degree, and he is learning that lesson now, I find. He says: "Why do people in the earth life quote our words as if we were Delphic Oracles?"

Why, indeed? But I am afraid I did much the same whilst so strongly under the Imperator influence.

E. K. B.--Why is Imperator so slow in throwing off his own spiritual limitations?

H. D.--I can read your mind so easily. It is quick and alert, and has already answered its own question. It is because he has a work to do on your plane amongst those who could not come in touch with a higher spiritual development. There are spiritual as well as scientific martyrs, you must remember; and he is one of them. But the Divine Economy works very beautifully here. He is not conscious of any spiritual limitation, and therefore he is happy in his work, and the martyrdom I spoke of is *unconscious*. When it becomes conscious, with him it will mean that his present plane of work is finished, and that he will be removed to another "*Form*" so soon as he is prepared to teach there.

He is essentially a teacher, and a valuable one, for those who have not soared beyond his present perceptions. It is all so much more simple and reasonable than you suppose. It is these crusted old creeds that have misrepresented actual conditions, and yet they also have been, as Imperator; doing their own work amongst the people to whom they have acted as necessary stepping-stones.

That is enough for to-day; take a rest now. H. D.

V

The following conversation between Mr Denton and myself (the last of the series which I propose to give) took place, I see, at Buxton, 4th September 1906.

There had been some correspondence in *The Daily Telegraph* about Time as a fourth Dimension, and I asked my friend if he could say anything to me on the subject. His reply was as follows:--

Time is really a form of perception, *not a thing in itself*--do you understand?

Your limitation of perception you call *Time*.

Another limitation is called *Distance*.

This also is an illusion, or a limitation, whichever you choose to call it.

The White Ray is the Absolute. The spectroscope gives you the limitation which makes the colours perceptible to your human eyes. For the one who is free from these limitations, all colours exist and are present in consciousness at the same moment. But they must be split up and observed severally to enter into the earth consciousness. It is exactly the parallel of Time.

Events in Time coincide with the colours in the Ray. All exist simultaneously for the one who is free from limitations. All must be brought into sequence for the one who is bound by limitations.

This is really the key to so many puzzles, and accounts for so many occult phenomena.

As we transcend the normal earth limits ever so little, so do we develop these abnormal powers, as they are called. But here, as everywhere, the reality is just the converse of the apparent.

The true norm is the Perfect Ray--the Ceaseless Sound--the Perfect Vision; and the abnormal is the limitation upon the earth, or upon any succeeding plane, short of the Absolute. But naturally we consider that normal which happens to be our standpoint for the moment.

Already to me the earth limitations appear *abnormal*, and my more extended capacities mark the norm of existence for me. This must be the case naturally.

Prevision would be more accurately termed *Whole vision*--seeing the whole and not the tiny section.

In moments of intense joy or realisation of any kind, Time seems to cease, and a moment may hold an Eternity. Any absorbing emotion, joyful or sorrowful, may bring this experience. For the moment *you are out of yourselves*. This is literally true. You are living in the next

Dimension. Time and Space no longer exist for you. Most of you have had some such experience, but of necessity it can be a flash only in the midst of your normal life. Ask me something now.

E. K. B.--A man writing lately in *The Daily Telegraph* of Time as a fourth Dimension said something about the cube as being an infinite number of flat planes of infinite tenuity, heaped up one over the other. To the person who knew only length and breadth, the cube would have no existence. Such a person would realise only an infinite number of planes in sequence. Yet they would all *co-exist* for the three-dimensional man of the present day. The suggestion appeared to be that, in exactly a similar way, events which to the three-dimensional man can only be perceived normally *in sequence*, would *co-exist* for a four-dimensional being. This would mean practically the annihilation of Time, as giving sequence. Do you see Truth in this idea, and can you tell me if it extends also to Space?

H. D.--Certainly. That is just what I meant as regards Distance. *All* limitations are mental, as a matter of fact. We have them here, but infinitely fewer than in the old earth life.

Mind has always been able to flash from pole to pole and to affect those at a distance, because mind and distance occupy two different planes. The latter is an earth limitation. As the veil lifts a little, even on your side, so you become conscious that mind has these powers; but the powers were always there. It merely means that you have come up with your own mental capacities to some small degree.

E. K. B.--Is there any help here for my constant problem: Why should one's individual life be only *now* evolving in Eternity? Do you see what I mean?

H. D.--Yes; but I hardly know the answer to that tremendous problem. Still, I will try to suggest a few thoughts to you.

To be conscious of holiness and virtue we must have known its antithesis--evil and separation, which are really synonymous. Separation from Holiness *is* evil. It is a condition, a limitation.

It is to the Divine Essence just such a limitation as Time is to the mortal. Separation is therefore the antecedent cause of all limitations. These *must* exist where the Wholeness or Holiness is absent.

I must use the language of earth or you would not understand. Logically, of course, Holiness can never be absent, since it is the cause of all Existence; but it is *apparently absent*, and this apparent absence, this separation, this evil in fact, acts as a spectroscope. *It analyses, and thus brings into our consciousness the White Ray of the Divine Nature.*

We can go no further than that. The Divine Chemistry, beyond this fact, must remain a mystery, probably for ages to come.

We cannot tell *why* things are thus arranged; we only know that it is so.

As well ask *why* the White Ray of Light gives out its colours only through separating them.

But it is easier to speak of the co-ordination of *events*. Take your own suggestion of the cube--that will help us best.

Take it that each life is a cube of planes, of experiences. These experiences are co-existent and knit together, as firmly in the life of a human being as the many planes are co-existing, and knit together in a mathematical cube. You can dissect the cube and slice off infinitesimal small planes in sections.

So is the individual life sliced off into an infinite number of planes by the sequences of Time (our three-dimensional condition).

But these experiences--great or small, important or trivial (from your point of view)--*exist in the cube of that person's earth pilgrimage*, as the colours exist in the White Ray.

The Ray may be split up into sequence, but the colours belong to it all the same, and by a *perfectly seeing eye* would be known and recognised without the help of the spectroscope.

The true seer is the one who sees the cube of your life; before whom it is spread out, without Time Separations, into planes of experience. This is the real secret of all *foretelling*. Such people, when honest, have some amount of access to the cube of earth life, some more, some less.

Many mix up and confuse what they see; but they do see beyond the plane section which Time gives to the normal human being.

I think you have taken enough now.

I will only add that, of course--as you know--there is nothing arbitrary in the cube of life, as I have called it. It is built up of necessary experiences and necessary consequences. But it is built up by Love and Wisdom, the two Elements of the Divine Nature, in which we live and move and have our being. H. D.

VI

The next selection that I shall give from my automatic script comes from an entirely different personality, which can be sufficiently indicated by the initials E. G.

E. G.--Worship is a necessary part of each soul's training, and we can only worship that which we feel to be above and beyond ourselves. As we grow older and become more developed in spiritual consciousness, so do we tend more and more to worship the inner and intangible, rather than the outer and manifest. So whilst the instinct of worship is always the same, the objects and methods must continually change with our own advancing realisation and unfolding consciousness.

Those limitations which once made for reverence are in time found to be cramping and to lead to superstition.

It is the same with the education of either children or of childish nations.

In both cases a *display* of power is necessary to command obedience,

because the childish mind can only apprehend from the outer, and realise the existence of that which it sees physically demonstrated. Tell a child of tender years that to be naughty is to be unhappy, and in ninety-nine cases out of one hundred he will neither understand nor believe you. But take away his toys or his sweets or put him in a corner; make him, in fact, *physically* aware of the truth that to be naughty is to bring unpleasant consequences upon himself, and you have taken the only argument which he is capable of realising at a certain point of consciousness.

This is why certain nations, at the child point of development, *must* be treated as children. They don't realise the appeal to the spiritual, and will only misconceive you and your motives, and read cowardice in your attempt to treat from a standpoint they have not reached.

It is the same with certain religions, and this is the cause of much failure in mission work.

Theosophy and Roman Catholicism appeal strongly to comparatively immature minds.

Those who care more for form than for essence are always in the immature stage.

They love big words and mysterious sayings and doings. To have something apart from others--whether it be happiness or knowledge--is their idea of bliss. Hence in most theosophists, as in all Roman Catholic converts, you find this note of immaturity and monopoly. I say *converts*, because those born in the Roman Catholic faith are on different ground. Their spiritual life may grow and develop in spite of the creed limitations into which Fate has cast them, but those who deliberately *choose* such limitations give the best possible proof of their own standpoint. And the same may be said also of all strict creed religions.

They have their great and valuable uses, as prison bars have their uses in a community which has not learnt to respect the rights and property of its neighbours.

Withdraw these bars and you let loose upon society a pestilential crew of murderers and marauders. Relax the bars of creed and you will find the same result. But as bars are not necessary for the advanced souls who recognise that to murder or defraud their fellow-creatures leads to their own misery, apart from any detection or punishment, so creeds are not necessary, under a corresponding evolution of the spiritual instinct, which tallies with the social and moral instincts noted above.

And as treadmills and oakum picking can be dismissed in the one case, so can much of the theological machinery for the discipline and punishment of sinners against spiritual laws be dispensed with, in the case of those who are, spiritually speaking, *coming of age*.

They come then into the full liberty of Sons of God, and shall be no more treated as servants, *but as sons*, as the Apostle puts it.

This brings me to my special subject.

There are many things of great and transcending interest which we are obliged to keep secret from our younger children, partly because they would fail to understand, but still more because they would *misunderstand*, and this to their own hurt and disadvantage; not to speak of possible injury to others through them.

Spiritual Evolution is the true Doctrine, but it is not food for babes in spiritual life.

To have an unlimited series of advancing lives and advancing experiences unfolded before their eyes would not only dismay and bewilder, but would also paralyse their energy for good, and terribly augment their capacity for evil--for the *not good*.

Until they are sufficiently versed in spiritual experience to realise the difference between purity and impurity, good and evil, God and the world, fame and peace, pleasure and happiness, the peace which passes understanding and the false glamour of sensual passion and sensuous self-indulgence, so long it is dangerous for them to know, with absolute certainty, the real facts of the case.

Even the terrible and abhorrent pictures of an Eternal Hell, of endless flames and of undying worms, have had their uses.

In this form alone could the thoroughly immature mind be made to realise the discomfort and misery that would inevitably attend wrong-doing. It *was* a truth, although not a literal truth. Many literal truths convey a false impression to the immature mind, whilst a symbolic truth may convey as true an impression as such a mind is capable of receiving.

The old ideas of Heaven and Hell are already doomed; but other ideas, equally untrue from the literal point of view, still hold their own, and will be more slowly eradicated. It is well this should be so. The world at large is not prepared yet to take this further step.

Frequent examinations have been found useful and inevitable in school training, both as a test of progress and still more as an encouragement.

If you tell a school of boys and girls in January that a grand examination will be held the following December, do you suppose they will work as well and as diligently as if they knew there will be short examinations at Easter and more important ones at midsummer?

Again, if you tell boys of ten years old, who are learning a little history, geography, and arithmetic, just in the Rule of Three and simple fractions, with perhaps a little Latin; of the Algebra and Euclid and Conic sections and higher Mathematics, and Latin and Greek verse and Hebrew and Philosophy, which they must some day confront, you will puzzle and paralyse their brains, and leave only a sense of misery and revolt and helplessness, which will quickly show forth in reckless despair, even concerning the tasks which are well within their present capacity.

God, in His Infinite Wisdom (of which ours is the feeblest reflection), acts in precisely the same way as wise fathers and wise teachers.

Your earth is more or less of an infant school, but before leaving it, some of you must prepare for the higher classes and learn to take your

own spiritual responsibilities.

It is seen that in these days of reaction and readjustment, many minds are puzzled and perplexed by the old doctrines, which they have outgrown, and which were never more than the outer husk and protection for the inner kernel--the casket for the jewel of spiritual truth.

The one term of probation--the one chance for progress--the immediate Heaven or Hell--the Great White Throne of Judgment, instant and inevitable--all these correspond with the frequent examinations, with the good and bad marks--the judging of the school work at the end of each term. The only difference lies in the fact that the schoolboy *knows* he has other terms in front of him, and we are all aware that this is a very unfortunate fact where an idle boy is concerned.

How often you may hear them say: "Never mind! I'm a bit behind now--but I have three years more--I shall catch up later." And this is probably just what they fail to do; for with such characters it is always *to-morrow* that is to see the reformation which so often comes only when life has taught its hard lessons to the defaulter.

Is it not apparent, therefore, that there has been wisdom and goodness in our very theological mistakes and illusions?

The opposition to spiritualistic teachings has its good and healthy side. It is really the fierce antagonism of the undeveloped nature towards a truth it dimly apprehends to be ahead of its own development; and, tiresome as it seems, and *is* from one point of view, it is the best safeguard for the world at large.

Unimaginable horrors would come to pass upon the earth were Power as well as Knowledge put into the hands of the crude and undeveloped.

It would be arming savages with Winchester rifles and quick-firing guns.

Never regret, therefore, this opposition, even whilst fighting against it

in individual cases.

Both *must* grow together till the Harvest--the Tares and Wheat, the Crude and the Developed--and the former are the enormous majority.

This is the reason why all Truth must be born into each world through a fight and an agony; for it always comes as an advance upon normal conditions, no matter in which sphere it may be. And it is through the struggle that the Victory comes and the Light is born.

Let people jeer and deride when they hear of a future life, not so very different from your own; of houses and lectures and boats and horses, of pet animals, and so forth.

Those who jeer and deride or talk of blasphemy are still at the orthodox stage, when it is well for them to know only of *one* school, of *one* term, of *one* chance, and of an immediate and final judgment for the deeds done on earth.

Others are old enough (spiritually speaking) to know the truth *i.e.*--that GOD is in *all*, of an infinite series of spheres, through which each travelling soul must pass, gaining ever fresh light, growing ever into fresh knowledge and realisation of Divine Beauty and Divine Love; spheres differing little externally from the one left behind, but enormously in the capacities and qualities which by degrees the soul will unfold in the Cosmic Journey.

The outer will become more and more the result of the inner condition; for the creative faculty, scarcely born with you, flourishes in the ascending spiral. Down here you are babes, with your clothes made for you, your bottles filled for you, and dependent on others for the conditions of life, but by degrees you will enter on the full responsibility and the full joy and glory of independent existence, which yet will be unified--first into the life of the Affinities--the True and completed Being--and then into the life of that Body of *Christ*, of which St Paul speaks in his prophetic moments, where "there shall be neither Greek nor Jew, Barbarian, Scythian, Bond nor Free," but *Christos*, the glorified and crowned Humanity, shall be all in all--GOD

IN MAN; the coping-stone of the Building, whose foundations were laid as MAN (the Image and Likeness of God) IN GOD.

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