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“Double Issue”

CONAN DOYLE PROVES HIS SURVIVAL

Note by LP: As a leading Spiritualist, Conan Doyle has often been reported as a communicator. The summary account below omits one of the most striking cases, that through Grace Cooke¹ but raises the question – who was the mystery Scottish lady who impressed Lady Conan Doyle?

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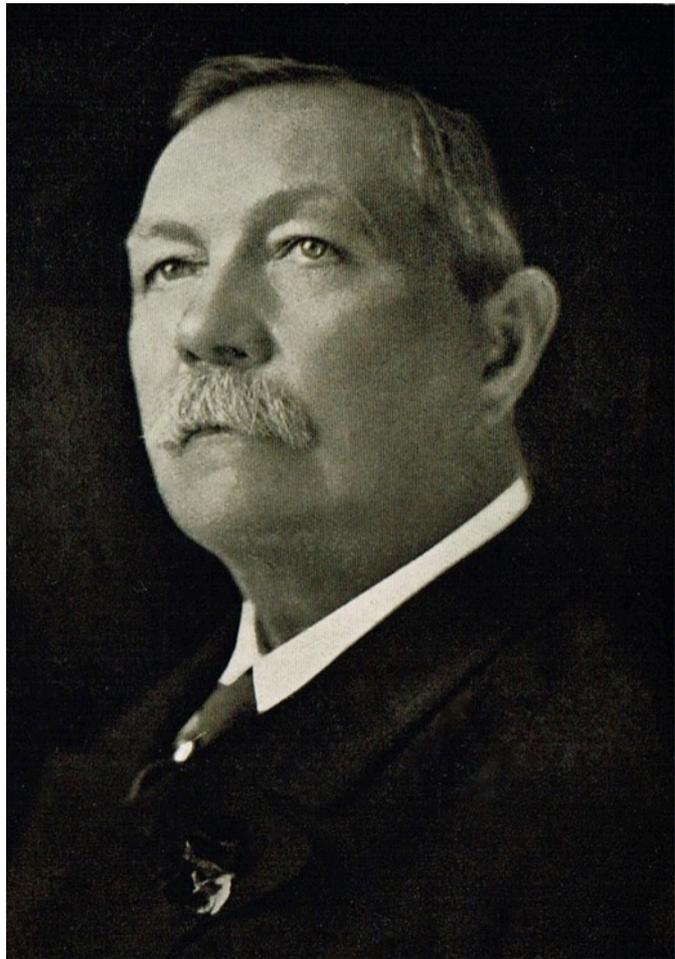
Across the Gulf – by Maurice Barbanell, Psychic Press, 1940, pages 49-62:

A FEW minutes after he died, Sir Arthur Conan Doyle announced that fact in a dramatic fashion to one of his daughters.

Mary Conan Doyle was in her father's psychic library and bookshop in Victoria, South West London, when, to her surprise, the charwoman became entranced. Sir Arthur spoke through her lips and told Mary that he had passed on a few minutes ago.

This was her first news of his death. She knew of course, about his illness, but his passing was not then expected. Confirmation of the spirit message through the charwoman reached Mary a little later on.

Since then, the great champion of Spiritualism, the author who created in Sherlock Holmes one of the greatest characters in fiction, the man who dedicated years of his life to propagating Spiritualism in England and abroad, has returned again and again from beyond the grave, and proved his own survival to his family, relatives and friends. He has continued to lavish affection and to give guidance to his family, and his messages have always been accompanied by incontestable proofs of his identity.



Much of the evidence of Conan Doyle's survival can never be made public. It consists of intimate matters too sacred to be recorded in cold print.

¹ The White Eagle Publishing Trust: http://www.whiteaglepublishing.org/_books/conan_doyle.htm

Doyle, knowing the value of cumulative testimony, has scoured the world for mediums, and has succeeded, again and again, in sending spirit messages that leave no doubt as to the communicator.

Familiar with all the objections raised by critics against Spiritualism when he was on earth, his ingenious mind has devised tests to overcome these suggestions. He has sought out new mediums and given them messages which they did not understand, but were of vital importance to members of his family.

The medium chiefly used by Lady Doyle was sent to her at her husband's spirit instigation. This woman, a friend of mine, knew little of Spiritualism until a series of curious events occurred shortly before Sir Arthur's passing.

She is a woman of culture and intelligence, a Scot with all the qualities of caution associated with that race. Her mediumship has in no way impaired her business acumen, for she is still the head of a commercial undertaking. Although a widow twice bereaved, she was not interested in psychic matters and knew nothing of her own mediumship until she had a curious conversation with a stranger.

Seated one day in the tea-room of a large West End store, she noticed that a woman at her table seemed anxious to get into conversation with her. She resented this approach from a stranger, but her newly-found companion was insistent.

"I am a Spiritualist," she said, "and I saw you in a vision this morning."

That remark aroused the resentment of the Scotswoman, who regarded the stranger as a crank. But the stranger was persistent, for she went on to describe a spirit she could see there. That made the Scotswoman sit up, for it was a perfect description of her dead husband.

She was determined to make her own inquiry into Spiritualism, and spent years attending séances with all sorts of mediums. Finally, she discovered that she herself possessed a psychic gift.

Unmistakable voices would speak to her, giving definite messages. Often these voices would give her information on matters unknown to her, but on inquiry she always obtained confirmation.

About a month after the passing of Conan Doyle, she heard a voice declaring in clear tones, "I am Arthur Conan Doyle. I want you to get into touch with my wife and send her a message."

This surprised the woman. She had never met Doyle. She did not know his wife, nor indeed any member of his family. Being a Scotswoman, full of reserve and caution, she did not feel inclined to approach Lady Doyle unless she were sure of her ground.

"Give me some proof of your identity," she insisted.

The voice replied by giving the initials of every member of his family. These she found were correct when she made inquiries later on.

Still hesitant, she said to the Doyle voice: "Where shall I find your wife?"

The answer came quite clearly, for the voice gave her a telephone number, told her she would not find it in the telephone book, but said it was the private number of the Doyle cottage in the New Forest.

This was a test. Still she thought that before approaching Lady Doyle, she would try to find out whether the number was correct. She inquired at the telephone exchange, but was told: "We are not allowed to give such information."

When people ask for their names not to be printed in the telephone book, the exchange will not usually give you information about them.

Here was a deadlock. She paused for a few moments, and then asked the operator to call the number the voice had given her.

Well, the voice was right, for soon she was talking to Lady Doyle.

At that time the Doyle family were being flooded with alleged spirit messages from all over the world. Lady Doyle and her sons rightly insisted they could not accept spirit messages claiming to emanate from Sir Arthur unless they were accompanied by evidence to prove their authenticity.

The Scotswoman told Lady Doyle her story. She was listened to very politely, but Lady Doyle insisted: "I must have more proof."

This was a rebuff. She had carried out the instructions of the voice and had met with failure.

But Sir Arthur was not dismayed. A few days later she heard his voice again. He knew all about the rebuff, he said, but he was going to prove himself through his new medium.

"What shall I do?" he was asked.

"Go and have a séance with Mrs. Deane," Conan Doyle said, "and I will appear on a photograph."

This sitting with Mrs. Deane, a medium for spirit photographs, was arranged anonymously, and no hint was given as to its purpose. When the plate was developed, and the print taken, there was a striking photograph of Conan Doyle above the head of the Scotswoman.

This picture was shown to Lady Doyle, who admitted that it was a remarkable one and certainly bore an unmistakable likeness to her husband. But even then she demanded still more proof.

If her husband was going to send her messages through this new medium, who was a stranger, she must be absolutely convinced that he was the spirit communicator.

And Doyle provided complete proof in a startling fashion.

The medium was in her London flat a few days later. She had not long awakened and had gone into another room. When she returned to her bedroom she found a key lying on her pillow. She looked at this key in amazement. It did not belong to any door in her flat. How it had got there, she could not explain. She stood there wondering. Then once again came the voice of Conan Doyle.

“That is my key,” he said. “It comes from the door of my study, which is always kept locked at Crowborough. Send for my son, Denis.”

Here was a test—if the statement were true.

She telephoned Denis at Crowborough in Sussex, and told him what had happened.

He jumped into a motor-car and drove down right away to see her. He took the key back to Crowborough, and telephoned the medium later on to say it was certainly the key of his father’s study.

Using some unknown power, Sir Arthur Conan Doyle had transported his key a distance of forty miles. That convinced Lady Doyle, and thereafter the medium became the instrument through whom spirit messages regularly came from Sir Arthur to his wife and family.

These séances were so successful that Lady Doyle was able to say: “My children and I have had the most marvellous evidence of my husband’s continued love and care of us. My boy’s lives have actually been saved through his warnings of the dangerous condition of certain parts of their racing-cars, which they had intended to drive—warnings which were later proved to be well founded. It has been amazing how he has been able to demonstrate his closeness to us.”

Denis Conan Doyle has also given his testimony.

“Since my father passed on,” he said, “I have been in extremely close touch with him. In common with the rest of my family, I never undertake any important step in any aspect of my life whatever, without the advice and concurrence of my father from the Other Side. He has given me splendid and most helpful advice on numerous occasions, on many different matters, and he has shown that his love for, care of, and closeness to his family is fully as great as when he was with us in the physical body.”

At séance after séance through this medium, whom Doyle had found for his family, the great champion of Spiritualism continued to demonstrate that he could still guide them. The sittings took the form of reunions.

And using his extended experiences, Sir Arthur showed that his interest in his family had not been disturbed by “death.” He proved that he knew everything that was going on in their lives.

As Denis himself said: “He has shown himself aware of every feature and every detail of our lives. He has positively proved, again and again, that it has indeed been my father himself who has continued to fill in my life the place which he filled when on earth—that of a most loving and greatly loved father.”

Not long ago Doyle sent a spirit warning to his son which prevented him from being involved in a crash in a racing-car.

Denis was undecided which of two cars to purchase. Finally he decided on one. Then came a message from Sir Arthur warning him that this car had an unsuspected weakness on the left side of the cylinder blocks.

Later, Denis was able to confirm the truth of the spirit message.

He bought the second car. Then came another warning cautioning him against a mechanical defect. When the car was tried out at Brooklands, it was found that one of the master bolts was not gripping by half a turn of the thread.

Recently Lady Doyle was ill. To prove that "death" had not robbed him of his medical skill, Sir Arthur, who was a practising doctor before he turned to authorship, gave a detailed diagnosis of his wife's complaint before any X-ray examination was made. The spirit diagnosis was recorded, word for word. After the X-ray plate was taken, it was found that the diagnosis was absolutely correct.

I could fill the whole of this book with accounts of Sir Arthur's many spirit messages given through mediums in different parts of the country, and indeed through mediums abroad.

One of the most dramatic returns occurred in an aeroplane whilst it flew a mile above the lights of New York City.

This story really began with a lecture given by Conan Doyle in Washington in one of his lecturing tours in the United States of America. Sir Arthur was interviewed by a newspaper man who put this question to him: "Why is darkness necessary to the production through a medium of some psychic phenomena?"

Doyle replied: "It strengthens the psychic vibrations through which the communications come by reducing earthly distractions and thus aiding concentration by the medium."

That answer produced a question which made Doyle wonder. The journalist asked: "Have you ever considered experimentation with a séance in the cabin of an aeroplane, high above earthly distractions?"

Doyle paused. Then he said he had not thought of such an experiment, but the suggestion was interesting.

Years later, this journalist was invited to attend a séance at which the voice of Doyle addressed him. There was no mistaking the tone, for it had the famous author's distinctive intonation and diction which once heard could not be forgotten.

Doyle reminded him of the conversation at their last meeting in Washington. Thereupon the journalist repeated the suggestion of attempting a séance in an aeroplane.

Would Doyle try to speak if it were arranged he asked. Sir Arthur promised to do his best.

After many difficulties the newspaper man succeeded in inducing American Air Lines to let him charter an aeroplane for his purpose. The only preparation made for the séance was the darkening of the windows to exclude moonlight and starlight.

Beside the medium, some friends were invited to be present. Soon spirit voices were heard speaking through trumpets that had been placed in the darkened cabin.

The climax was reached when they heard the unmistakable voice of Conan Doyle declare: "I want to congratulate you on having arranged this experiment. This is an epoch-making flight. This is an adventure more fantastic than death itself! To think that we are all together here flying high above the night lights of your great New York City. It is quite wonderful." The voice trailed off.

Soon Doyle was heard again.

"Is Ford here?" he asked.

Arthur Ford, the well-known American medium, was one of the passengers.

"Yes, Sir Arthur, I am here," he responded.

"Good evening, Ford," said Conan Doyle.

"This is a marvellous experience isn't it? "

Ford recognized Doyle's characteristic voice, but inquired whether he could put a test question.

"Where did I last speak to you and who was present?" he asked.

The reply came without hesitation.

"I remember very well," declared Conan Doyle; "at lunch the last day of the Cantlon trial at my hotel. David Gow was among those present."

"That is quite right," Ford replied. "Thank you, Sir Arthur."

The last time he had met Doyle was at his hotel on the last day of a trial which had aroused interest amongst Spiritualists. And the man mentioned, David Gow, was present.

Another striking spirit test given by Sir Arthur Conan Doyle was the reproduction of his earthly signature.

When I was recently in America, I stayed for some days in the Boston home of Dr. Crandon, whose wife, Margery, is the most famous medium in the world. She has in her possession Doyle's spirit autograph, which came through her mediumship.

Sir Arthur, as a gift, had sent her a copy of his book, *The Edge of the Unknown*. It arrived in Boston on the day he passed on. It had not been handled by Doyle, but was sent straight from his publishers.

At a séance this book was placed on the table, together with a pencil and fountain pen.

Everyone present clasped the hand of his neighbour, until no one in the circle had a hand free. When the lights were put on, there, on the title page, was a perfect signature by Conan Doyle.

Yes, death could not silence the greatest champion Spiritualism ever had, the man whose interest in this fascinating subject was aroused when he was twenty-seven years of age, and who devoted the last thirty years of his life to pleading its cause in the Press, in books and from the public platform.

Ever since he passed on, the voice of Sir Arthur Conan Doyle has continued to speak from beyond the grave, carrying on the propaganda which was his chief interest for nearly half his earthly career.



Sir Arthur and Lady Conan Doyle

DIRECT VOICE – TWO VIEWS

Note by LP: Direct voice is a puzzling phenomenon; after all, how can a disembodied voice be heard in the air? We present below two views from the London Spiritualist Alliance. Mercy Phillimore was its secretary, who retired in 1952; she also edited *LIGHT* just before that. Who was the medium to whom she took exception? She certainly disliked Leslie Flint and elsewhere wrote a negative private report on him. Roy Firebrace, late of Military Intelligence, had the advantage of his own voice circle for a time, about which more in a later issue. At the time of the 1944 Duncan trial he was particularly associated with the International Institute; I met him once or twice and wish I had dared to ask him to explain his role in her case.

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Light November 26th 1942 front page-379

DIRECT VOICE SOME DIFFICULTIES AND A WARNING

By MERCY PHILLIMORE

THE passing of Mrs. Etta Wriedt at Detroit, U.S.A., on July 3rd, at the advanced age of 83, has just been brought to our knowledge. The direct voice mediumship of Mrs. Wriedt has not been equalled during the last twenty-five years. This is the opinion of those who knew her well and who have sat with other Mediums of the same type.

Direct voice mediumship is as remarkable as it is rare. A few people who have had excellent results through direct voice mediumship have published their experiences. The most popular books are *Glimpses of the Next State* and *The Voices*, by Admiral Usborne Moore (Mrs. Etta Wriedt, Medium). *Towards the Stars*, by Dennis Bradley (Valiantine, Medium) and *On the Edge of the Etheric*, by J. Arthur Findlay (Sloan, Medium). *The Dead Have Never Died*, by E. Randall, of U.S.A. (Mrs. French, Medium).

These books and many articles on some other notable direct voice Mediums have created an immensely keen desire on the part of nearly every investigating Spiritualist to have this unique experience. Not only have we this intense and persistent desire for direct voice mediumship amongst ourselves, but an interest purporting to be from the spirit side was shown some years ago for the cultivation of this form of mediumship. The Control of one of our most famous Mediums caused the formation of a number of circles. She selected and grouped together many people with the request that they should sit for direct Voice: but, as far as I know, no success resulted. I myself sat by request for many months in one of these circles.

There is no doubt that good direct voice is one of the most dramatic and arresting forms of psychic manifestation that can be experienced. As I have said, it is, however, very rare. Furthermore, really satisfactory results are infrequent among those who have the opportunity of participating in such circles. This is a statement which will be rejected, I know, by many who are very enthusiastic about direct voice mediumship. I am prepared to offer an explanation for this statement, for we are constantly being asked for introductions to direct

voice Mediums with questions about special features and advantages of this form of mediumship.

For fear that I should be thought to undervalue direct voice, let me say quite clearly that I have had not only numerous sittings of the kind spread over nearly thirty years, but that on a few occasions I have been the fortunate recipient of just those extraordinarily striking results which cause the enthusiasm to which I have referred.

What I am anxious to do is to point out an exaggerated idea commonly held about direct voice and to show the disproportion of favour attached to it for offering communication with the departed as compared with other forms of mediumship. This opinion is based upon my own experience and from hearing the experiences of hundreds of people who have sought evidence of Survival through all available types of mediumship.

Direct voice is due to a combination of both mental and physical mediumship. All forms of mediumship fall into one or the other group, for manifestations are either subjective (mental) or objective (physical). Direct voice mediumship may perhaps be regarded as the finest example of the meeting ground between the two types, where the maximum ability is shown to harness and to direct the forces which are available. Fine quality mental mediumship is required because first-class evidence of identity is possible. Fine quality physical power is required because voices are objective, and for that an intelligently moulded instrument, or voice-box, is necessary. It must be presumed that for the production of sounds of speech and articulation a finely constructed instrument is required, an instrument constituted in accordance with the principles of construction of a human thorax, throat, mouth and tongue, otherwise articulated speech would be impossible.

A person possessing the psychic qualities suitable for voice mediumship is mostly found also with powers favourable for materialisation, lights, sounds, levitation and telekinesis, the latter being the movement of objects without apparent contact.

MORE COMPLICATED

If there is the willingness to direct physical power to the production of voice, the other forms of physical manifestation will be less. If power is used with the intention to encourage the variety of physical manifestations, the voices must necessarily be less in frequency and volume. For good voice phenomena concentration of power on voice is essential. The other types of manifestation must be permitted to take a minor place. Each type of mediumship, mental and physical, has its snags and difficulties, and so direct voice, being a combination of the two, is beset with the full range.

Thus, it is a fallacy to suppose that voice phenomena, being produced outside or away from the Medium, come free of the usual influence associated with the mental phenomena, as, for instance, in trance. Far from being a simpler and more direct method of communication with the departed, it is more complicated, and, hence, probably more susceptible to interference. But "interference" arises from meagre power, or more power insufficiently developed, or from a state of mind of Medium and sitter which instead of being passive and selfless is dominantly active and persuasive. The open mind which is free from entangling domination is necessary for the least-influenced results. This applies equally to mental and physical mediumship, for ectoplasm active in physical manifestations is amply proved to be ideoplastic, i.e., subject to the influence of mind.

This fact helps one to realise the supernormal composite nature of ectoplasm as a material substance, for it appears to combine the elements of matter and some aspect of the life-essence of the soul, since it is directly influenced by mind. Presumably, in order for ectoplasmic forms to be rapidly constituted during a sitting, it is an advantage for the “sphere of influence” to be free from active thought of all except those who are, by desired intent, operating on the ectoplasm, such as the Guides of the Medium and the communicators who may be able to manipulate it. The sitters can help negatively by keeping their minds to themselves. Sitters do not often think of this, but mentally invade and incidentally influence the operations. It must be by understanding and an act of will that a sitter refrains from interference. We do not ordinarily realise to what an extent our feelings, thoughts and auras invade our environment and impinge upon those around us.

Amongst the many who sit in direct voice circles only a very few are the recipients of sustained conversation capable of giving that mass of ideas and fact which is possible through mental mediumship, and particularly trance. The majority who get anything at all receive only fragmentary utterances, often very difficult to hear. Were a trance Medium never able to give the average sitter more than is generally obtained through voice mediumship, very few trance sittings would be held, but one has to recognise the remarkable phenomena and the results obtained by particular people.

Here and there a sitter is found who evidently provides “conditions” very helpful for voice phenomena, and one suspects also that, added to this element, there must be a communicator who excels at this particular type of communication. It is on the strength of these rare instances that the tremendous reputation of voice phenomena is built. Voice mediumship is ordinarily very difficult to develop. Mrs. Etta Wriedt spent nine years before she considered herself sufficiently developed for professional work, but what a reward was hers, and, incidentally, for those who experienced her power!

To-day it seems that the few who are favoured with this form of power are disinclined to give sufficient time and energy to development before starting on a professional career. There are circumstances which relieve the Medium of some of the responsibility. There is this insistent demand which to some extent is based upon false ideas regarding the average voice mediumship. The public wants voice mediumship. Some people are fascinated by the meagre phenomena of the moderately good but insufficiently developed voice Medium, and, in the failure to appraise its value, they become hopelessly credulous. That is a misfortune for the struggling Medium, for such people not only reduce his will and effort to improve his development, but they may lull him into a false sense of security, and, at the same time, drive away others who would be prepared to help him fit himself for the better use of his gifts. Also bad habits in a séance room remain unchecked, and all this adds difficulty to the Spiritualist Movement to win and hold within the Movement the public with ordinary sense and sensibility.

A REGRETTABLE EXPERIENCE

I have recently had an experience which can only be deeply regretted by anyone who knows what properly developed voice mediumship is, and, moreover, who would guard the bereaved inquirer from those elements in the Movement which hinder instead of help.

In order to sit with this particular Medium for direct voice, it is required that the applicant shall first have a private sitting for mental phenomena. A private sitting was arranged for me by a lady known to the Medium. Trance was not permitted, I was told, without the Guide's previous consent, and so the Medium remained normal and attempted clairvoyance, etc. Nothing transpired of a nature that could be attributed to the psychic faculties. We had a pleasant chat, and the Medium talked very sensibly about sittings in general, saying that power was intermittent and could not always be counted upon, and, unfortunately, this was one of the occasions when little could be done. I was agreeably impressed with our talk and truly welcomed the candid confession. Always we advise our Mediums to inform a sitter if on any particular occasion the power is not forthcoming; this is the honest and correct thing to do. Such variability is inevitable with all Mediums, however gifted. With the most gifted and properly developed, of course, there are fewer occasions on which it is advisable to cancel the sitting.

PRELIMINARY SITTING

At the sitting I have referred to we talked for about an hour, and then I was told by the Medium that the Guide would be willing to admit me to a circle for direct voice, and that I was to arrange a time with the secretary. My friend, who arranged the sitting for me, had a similar experience. Neither of us had satisfactory results. We had, in fact, merely been "vetted" by the Medium as a preliminary to admission to a circle for direct voice. For our private sittings each of us paid a fee that is ordinarily only charged by very few of the leading trance Mediums.

The practice of seeking assurance that a prospective sitter is a bona fide inquirer is perfectly right and advisable, but commonsense suggests that it is hardly wise for a self-respecting Medium to undertake this work himself. Very few people, especially inexperienced inquirers, would come through such a meeting without giving away many points about themselves which, if referred to at subsequent sittings, would have to be discounted as possible evidence. I can claim that I was careful to give away nothing during the preliminary sitting, and I was assured by my friend that she also did not.

We went together to the circle for direct voice. We sat in a very small room, just large enough to seat some twelve or thirteen sitters in the usual complete darkness. A luminous cross was placed upon the mantelpiece, on the floor were laid two trumpets, two luminous plaques and a bell. We sat for nearly two hours, during which nothing of a psychic nature occurred. Uproarious singing was maintained the whole time, dozens of airs followed one after the other; an occasional hymn, the favourite songs of the last war, a selection of musical comedy and music hall refrains popular to-day and during the last thirty years; a regular jolly pandemonium. Had we been an hilarious party at an old-fashioned music hall, night club or rather rough road-house with beer mugs, we should have felt at home, and possibly quite cheered; but, having regard to the purpose of the occasion and to the effect it would have on anyone introduced as an inquirer into Spiritualism, either through bereavement or intellectual interest in the subject, I can declare that it was an outrage to decent feeling.

We know that often, at voice sittings, singing is necessary. The “voices” find it easier to speak on the sound vibrations of the human voice, which are judged to be better than those of mechanical music. But if such a performance as I have referred to is necessary for this Medium, I should certainly suggest that, assuming the possession of voice mediumship is genuine, prolonged development is advisable before further public work is attempted.

At the end of the voice circle the Control purported to speak, admitted failure, and invited the sitters to another circle at a later date. The invitation was accepted.

WHO WAS JOHN?

The second circle was composed of many of the same sitters, with others to make up the number. I judged the second group of people to be a more favourable one than the first from the point of view of obtaining psychic results. The procedure was the same; the singing was a little less continuous, as manifestations occurred this time. The trumpets with the luminous rings were vigorously swung immediately in front of the Medium. The bell was thrown across the floor and voices were heard in the trumpet. Habitueés of the circle had messages which they declared were evidential. A voice addressed me announcing that he was John, my husband! I was urged to respond to him. I did so in a non-committal way, but could elicit nothing of any value. The Guide seemed to be sorry and towards the end of the circle invited me to come again. Afterwards the secretary repeated the invitation, which I did not then accept. I decided to reflect upon the episode, and, later, I decided to write this account for LIGHT in the hope that the many who have the interests of Spiritualism at heart will consider ways and means of minimising the less desirable displays and activities which offend good taste and common sense.

In the course of the three sittings with this Medium I can only say that I witnessed nothing at all which could justifiably be accounted due to psychic activity. On the other hand, there was nothing to prove that it was not genuine. That an inaccurate message was given to me proves nothing beyond the fact that that particular effort at communication, if it were such, was unsuccessful. All Mediums at times make inaccurate statements, and one would be foolish to expect any kind of activity to be perfect continuously.

At the two voice séances the proceedings were brought to a close with prayer, which seemed to me to be out of place on account of the tone that had prevailed throughout, there having been a complete absence of any indication of reverence, devotion or good taste.

Two points emerge from such an experience, and they indicate what is needed. One, the need for adequate training and development of psychic power before a Medium is launched into professional work; the other, that in the séance room methods and habits should be encouraged which do not hinder the best interests of Spiritualism, but help to build it up and make it a Movement of which ordinary sensible people have no need to fight shy.

Direct Voice Phenomena

By BRIGADIER R. C. FIREBRACE, C.B.E.

From an Address given at the London Spiritualist Alliance on Thursday, June 26th, 1947.

THE Direct Voice is one of the most interesting and at the same time one of the most perplexing types of mediumship. In fact, so great are the difficulties which arise in connection with it, that there are some psychical researchers who consider that it has not been proved that such a phenomenon exists. I hope to show you, however, that there are good grounds for my own opinion that the Direct Voice is a genuine phenomenon.

I would like first to describe, in some detail, one particular Direct Voice circle, as it will serve, on general lines, as a description of most circles. And I have chosen the circle for which John Sloan, of Glasgow, was the medium, as recorded by Mr. Arthur Findlay in his book *On the Edge of the Etheric*. Sloan was a working man who all his life had been aware of supernormal happenings in his presence. The sittings took place in darkness and began by Sloan taking his place at a harmonium. On this he began to play hymns, but before the last was over he would be controlled by an entity named "Whitefeather," but usually known as "Whitie." In the centre of the circle were two trumpets which, as the séance proceeded, floated about the room continuously, touching the sitters, and on request touching any part of the body, such as a finger held out, without any fumbling. I have tried to do this in darkness by normal means, and have watched other sceptics try, but the sure touch of the trumpet cannot be imitated by fraudulent means. At times the trumpets would fly round the room at a great speed, often apparently very near the noses of the sitters, but never hitting them. It seems that the intelligence moving the trumpets could see in the darkness.



BRIGADIER R. C. FIREBRACE, C.B.E.

At times a trumpet would poise itself in front of a sitter, and he would be addressed by a voice which, when conditions were good, would succeed in identifying himself by giving his name and other evidential particulars. Mr. Findlay kept careful notes of 39 sittings he had with Sloan. From these, at which 83 separate voices spoke to him or to personal friends, he made records of 280 separate communications. Of these, he classifies 182 as A.1; i.e., neither the medium nor any person present could have known of them. 100 he classifies as A.2, being

information which the medium could have obtained from reference books. I consider that this is a remarkable level of accuracy and one which is not easy to attain in any form of mediumship. Included in the evidence are items which were unknown to any of those present and which therefore had to be verified by subsequent inquiry.

There is no doubt, to my mind, that the information given was supernormally obtained. The question now arises as to whether it was *delivered* supernormally. It could have been obtained clairvoyantly by Sloan and given out by himself in trance, or normally, a pretence being made that it was being given through the trumpet by the alleged communicator. In order to clear up this point, Mr. Findlay many times held the hands of the medium and put his ear close to his mouth. He could feel his breath, but even with Findlay's ear just touching Sloan's lips no sound could be heard. To exclude the possibility of collusion between Sloan and his friends, this precaution was carried out in the rooms of the Glasgow Society for Psychological Research, when no one was present but the medium, Mr. Findlay, and the latter's personal friends.

My own Direct Voice circle, which I have previously described here at some length, was of the same general type; that is, it took place in complete darkness and the voices used a trumpet, but there was difference, in the fact that the medium, unprofessional, was never in trance. It took us nearly two years to develop the first sound, although we were fortunate in having movements of the trumpet early on. At first the voice could only make sounds, then short words, then long words, then short sentences. After a year we arrived at a point when we had lectures of about a thousand words, spoken clearly by the communicator; lectures on intricate subjects beyond the powers of any of the sitters.

In his book *The Blue Room*, Mr. Clive Chapman describes a Direct Voice circle in New Zealand which was always held either in daylight or in strong artificial light. At first the voice only sang, while Mr. Chapman played the piano. He recognized the voice, a woman's as that of an old friend who had had a fine contralto voice in life. One evening he stopped playing in order to hear the voice better. It sang on for a little while and then faded slowly out, and was not resumed when he began playing the piano again. Later, other voices came, and it was discovered that they were singing messages. Two or more voices would sing together, and instrumental music was added; some of the instruments being unknown, and not recognized by experienced musicians. Finally the circle obtained spoken voice communication in full light. Chapman was instructed to play a certain piece of music, and towards the end of it the voices would begin to speak. One feature of this circle was that voices were often heard making asides to each other, carrying on a conversation and at times talking about the sitters.

An interesting case of voice mediumship is that of a Mrs. Blake, of America. She normally sat in daylight for voice phenomena and used two trumpets, rather thinner than usual, and constructed so that the broader ends fitted into each other. The sitter put one end of the joined trumpets to his ear and the medium the other to her ear, or at times against the palm of her hand. Voices were then heard in the trumpet, at times of a strength that could be heard at a distance of a hundred feet. Dr. J. H. Hyslop, the famous investigator, sat with Mrs. Blake and was satisfied that the evidence given was supernormal. In an endeavour to discount the supernormality of the voices, the theory was produced in certain quarters that Mrs. Blake talked out of her ear, although it was admitted that there was no evidence that such a thing was possible. This is an example of the lengths to which some investigators will go to avoid the hypothesis that spirit is involved. If Mrs. Blake talking through her ear is admitted as an

hypothesis, I feel that I may be allowed to formulate the more credible one that some investigators at times talk through their hats!

I think I have said enough to show that this disputed phenomenon of the Direct Voice does really occur. It is a different and more difficult question to say how it is produced. Mr. Findlay was told—and I quote from *On the Edge of the Etheric*: “From the medium and those present a chemist in the spirit world withdraws certain ingredients which, for want of a better name, is called ectoplasm. To this the chemist adds ingredients of his own making. When these are mixed together a substance is formed which enables the chemist to materialize his hands. With these, he then constructs a mask resembling the mouth and tongue. The spirit wishing to speak places his face into this mask and finds that it clings to him; it gathers round his mouth, tongue and throat. At first difficulty is experienced in moving this heavier material, but by practice this becomes easy. The etheric organs have once again become clothed in matter resembling physical matter, and by the passage of air through them your atmosphere can be vibrated and you hear his voice.”

This is one explanation, and there are other accounts which seem to confirm it. But such partial materializations present a difficulty. Where does the sound come from? An explanation was given to Mr. Findlay in reply to an observation by him that he had on occasions heard a slight hissing sound issuing from the lips of the medium. His communicator said that from the medium’s mouth is projected a materialized ectoplasmic tube to carry the vibrations of his larynx to the spirit speaking. The medium’s larynx is used to vibrate the atmosphere, the spirit’s materialized mouth, throat and tongue to form the words.

There are other statements which tend to show that the medium’s breath is used to aid in the production of the Direct Voice. The control of a well-known Direct Voice medium, Mrs. Everitt, claimed that he used the medium’s breath in speaking. If Mrs. Everitt held her hand over her mouth the volume of the voice diminished, and if she completely covered it with her palm the voice stopped. Mrs. Everitt could never speak simultaneously with the spirits. Other mediums have found no difficulty in this respect.

Archdeacon Colley relates an amusing incident with the medium Dr. Monck. The medium was awakened from sleep to greet a materialized fellow-student. They had to speak in turn, as there was an impasse if they tried to speak at once. Evidently they were both using some common factor for the production of their voices. Mrs. Etta Wriedt once gave a sitting to seven deaf mutes, with no one in the room besides herself who could utter an articulate word. No voices were heard! That might be held to show that the vocal organs of the sitters are drawn on for the voice, and it is true that many sitters complain that their vocal cords are tired and hoarse after a sitting.

Other accounts of the production of the Direct Voice speak of a “voice-box,” without going into details of exactly what is materialized. The earliest mention of such a box was by Stainton Moses, who said: “I did not observe how the sound was made, but I saw in a distant part of the room, near the ceiling, something like a box, round which blue electric light played, and I associate the sound with that.” This description is interesting to me, as I have seen, at a voice sitting, what purported to be a voice-box. It was floating high up in the room, was of a luminous blue colour, and in general resembled Stainton Moses’ description. To me, however, it seemed to be vibrating, and not so much a box in the literal sense of that word. I have always thought of it as resembling a nautilus, or argonaut, that curious sea creature of

the mollusc type, which can sometimes be seen in hot waters. It seemed to be in a constant state of pulsation.²

The voice-box in the Margery Crandon sittings has been photographed as a white mass on the medium's shoulder, attached to her left ear and nostril with ectoplasmic tubes. It has also been photographed hanging from her breast. This box is certainly intimately connected with the organism of the medium, being attached to the ear and nostril. In the case of Margery Crandon a control machine was sometimes used. This necessitated the medium's tightly grasping a mouthpiece with her mouth and tongue. If she failed to do this, a luminous float on the top of a column of water fell, and could be detected by the observers.

So far, as regards the production of Direct Voice, we have discussed the dark sitting, in which it is possible to imagine the creation of some materialized ectoplasmic form of apparatus. At sittings held in light, when the trumpet is used, we may consider that the interior of the trumpet provides sufficient darkness for the materialization of the voice-box or mask. It is, however, in sittings of the type of the Blue Room manifestations, and with Mrs. Blake, that I find it difficult to credit any explanation of the mask type. So far as we know ectoplasm it cannot stand light, at any rate for a prolonged period, and it would seem that some other method must be used. The problem would be to devise an apparatus which could transform vibrations of a frequency which does not affect our atmosphere into those of one which does, and which are within the band of vibrations which we can hear. The only clue we have is the fact that in such sittings as those of the Blue Room great stress is laid on the necessity for vibrations of sound, e.g. music. But how these physical vibrations are used to render audible those of the communicators we simply do not know. It is a scientific problem which has not been solved, and one which is probably beyond the power of the amateur to solve.

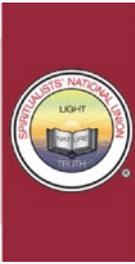
What are these voices which speak to us? Are they, as they nearly always claim to be, the voices of the dead? I think that a study of the evidential messages which have been given by the Direct Voice will persuade most people that there is strong evidence for the supposition that these voices originate from what is known as the Other Side. At its best, the Direct Voice produces evidence of the very best quality, equal or superior to that of any other form of mediumship. Even though the voice itself may not be recognized—and it is often claimed that the voice is recognized—the form of speech as well as its content can be most convincing. Let me give an example.

I took a friend in the Royal Artillery with me to a sitting. He had been stationed in Waziristan. A voice spoke to him calling him Jo and giving his own name, which was that of a subaltern who had been shot by the Waziris. He had been in the same regiment as Jo, and my friend is only called Jo in the regiment; it is not his name. The voice went on to ask if Jo remembered the little girl in Murree. The communicator and Jo had spent their last leave together in Murree, and Jo *did* remember the little girl! The next query as to whether he remembered the incident with the sponge defeated Jo, who denied all knowledge of the sponge. Three months later he wrote to me and said that he had remembered all about the sponge. I think that is good evidence.

² Can anyone identify where Mr Moses spoke of this box? LP

I have said that Direct Voice, at its best, can provide first-class evidence of survival. It is a very attractive form of phenomena because, for one thing, there is the hope of hearing the actual voice of a discarnate friend. But I would like to issue a warning. The cases I have quoted are exceptional, and really good Direct Voice mediums are very scarce. In relating these cases I do not want to give the impression that it is easy to obtain evidence of this kind. It is better to seek evidence through trance and other forms of mental mediumship than to hanker after the Direct Voice simply because it appears more spectacular. The inexperienced sitter would perhaps do better to keep away from it.





PI^{the}ONEER

*We have several times drawn the attention of readers to what is now a free on line journal, appearing every other month from the S.N.U. and also edited by Paul Gaunt, **The Pioneer**.³*

This deals more particularly with the history of the Union and its workers. Among the items in the March 2015 issue⁴ is an account of Spiritualism in Blackburn, and of Tom Tyrrell, an outstanding mental medium little known outside Northern England; and a discussion of local variations in the wording of the Seven Principles, which draws on material preserved in the Britten Museum at Stansted.



Paul J. Gaunt

“Remembering our old workers”
Spiritualism in Blackburn
Blackburn holds a significant place in Spiritualist history and within the Spiritualists’ National Union

Below is quoted from the “Two Worlds”, May 17th 1895, under the editorship of Edward Wallis, who co-founded the journal with Emma Hardinge Britten in 1887:

“Blackburn has been a centre of Spiritual activity for a number of years, and was for a long time the scene of the operations of one of the strongest, most harmonious, and most successful societies in the kingdom. Audiences of upwards of a thousand persons assembled for some time, and month after month, on Sunday evenings, 7, 8 or 9 hundred people listened to our speakers and mediums.

“Among the earnest and devoted workers of those days the subject of our sketch for this week, Mr. R. Wolstenholme, did yeoman’s service, and we are pleased to have him in our portrait gallery. He it was who, some ten years ago, seeing that there was a likelihood of the termination of the Glasgow engagement with Mr. and Mrs. Wallis, set on foot the scheme to bring them to Lancashire to live and labour for Spiritualism. Quiet, observant, thoughtful and persevering, outspoken and high-principled he has won respect and esteem from all sorts and conditions of men, and after a spell of rest has again consented to be president of the Blackburn Society, which society, by the way, has just successfully entertained the Lyceum Union for their Annual Conference.”¹



Richard Wolstenholme

Richard Wolstenholme was born in the village of Rhodes, near Manchester, in 1842. He was one of the founders of the “Blackburn Psychological Society” and its first President, which continued for some years. In 1895 he was elected a member of the Board of Directors of the Two Worlds Publishing Company Limited; below, Wolstenholme briefly outlines in his own words the early years at Blackburn and the forming of the Society:

¹ This was the tenth Annual Lyceum Conference, held on May 12th 1895 at the Blackburn Spiritualist Society. Thomas Olsan Todd was elected President for the ensuing year, Alfred Kinnon Hon. Secretary and J. Scudiffe Treasurer.

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³ The Pioneer Journal: <http://www.snu.org.uk/spiritualism/pioneer>

⁴ Volume 2. No. 2 March 2015: http://www.snu.org.uk/documents/pdf/SNU%20PIONEER%2002_02.pdf

SOME EXPERIENCES OF C.W. LEADBEATER

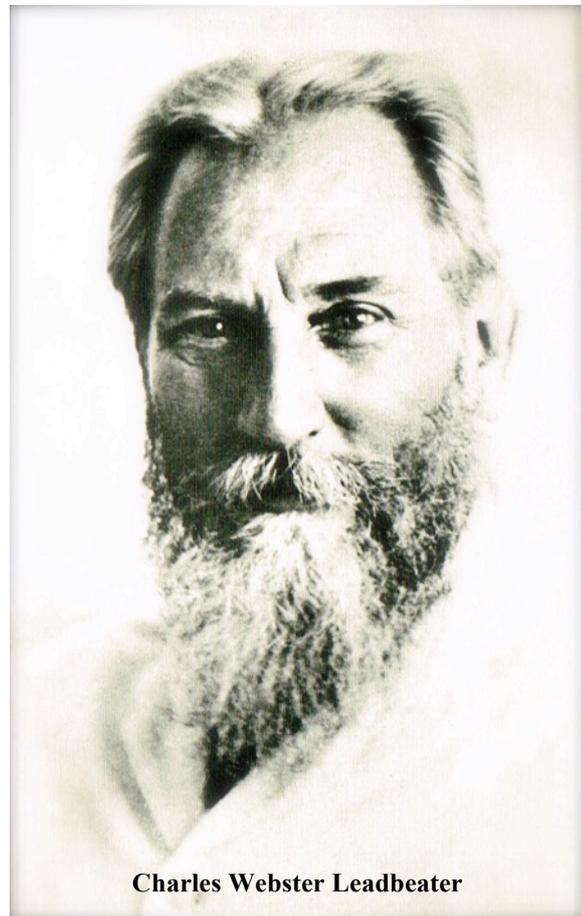
Note by LP: Charles Webster Leadbeater, who died in 1934 in Australia, was perhaps the most influential clairvoyant of his time. His books, such as *The Chakras* have been widely read by Spiritualists as well as Theosophists. In 1982, Gregory Tillett published a biography of him *The Elder Brother* which challenged the account he gave of his life, and the Ph.D. thesis later awarded for this research is available in line.⁵

The thesis includes material not found in the earlier book. Except where stated, the thesis is the source for the notes appended below to the account by the international Theosophical lecturer Clara Codd of stories she heard Leadbeater tell.⁶

—s—

Reaching Sydney, I was once again in the beloved Manor.⁷ Bishop Leadbeater was still there, though older and frailer than of yore. Lectures and meetings were soon in full swing for me. Bishop Leadbeater was still holding his usual Monday nights, when we all gathered in the Refectory and he sat in a big armchair in his red Bishop's robes, with his little boy pupils draped round him and his little girls all sitting on the floor demurely sewing. We older people sat round outside them and were clearly not nearly so important.

A Swedish doctor was in the Manor just then and one Monday he asked C.W.L. about a hunter friend of his who had had a dog he was very devoted to before he died. The doctor wished to know whether the dog was 'individualized' that is, whether through the influence and companionship of the hunter, his dog had developed enough to be put in touch on the other side with a divine ego waiting to commence a physical evolution. For once C.W.L. said he would look and see, though he did not generally exhibit his



Charles Webster Leadbeater

⁵ Charles Webster Leadbeater 1854-1934 – A Biographical Study by Gregory John Tillett:
<http://www.leadbeater.org/>

⁶ So Rich a Life by Clara M. Codd 1951 pages 370-374: Pretoria, Institute for Theosophical Publicity, 1951.

⁷ The Manor was a private Theosophical centre in Sydney. An excellent history was lately been published as an Occasional Paper by "Theosophical History": The author is Nicolas Van Gelder.
<https://books.google.co.uk/books?id=VoeaoAEACAAJ&dq=the+manor+theosophical+history+van+gelder&hl=en&sa=X&ei=ITAtVfL6OoSWavHSgcAH&ved=0CCAQ6AEwAA>

clairvoyant powers in public. He did not pass into a trance state, he merely looked up and waited some time. Then he exclaimed that he had found the hunter, and investigating, found that he was not a sufficiently evolved man to bring about such a mighty change in his dog, but the devotion of the dog was so complete that he would not be able to rejoin his 'group-soul', the origin of collective animal instinct, until his master had returned to the next earth life.

Sometimes, generally at the instigation of one of his children, C.W.L. would tell us marvellous tales of his adventures when a boy in South America. His parents seemed to have let him do whatever he wished for he told us of one occasion when he tried to go across some peninsula alone through the jungle, as a boy of twelve. He made friends with the natives and one of them in Peru showed him where the lost treasures of the Incas were hidden. When the depredations of the Spanish conquerors became too frequent the Peruvians hid their treasures. All these centuries the secret has been kept. C.W.L. told us that he was taken under water in some big river where the mouth of a great cave was situated. Inside the cave stood great golden figures of the ancient Incas, and piles of money and jewels. He also saw at night one of the ancient ceremonies still performed annually by the lineal descendant of the Incas who in daily life was a housepainter. On this one night he dons the feather cloak and the ancient insignia of the Peruvian rulers and C.W.L., watching from the top of a hill, recognized, in after life, that many of the symbols and signs were Masonic. Everyone knows the story of the cruel death of his little brother⁸ when his father, who was building a railroad, had taken the two boys with him on a far journey.⁹

They were attacked by a band of half-caste rebels. The father and servant escaped, but the two boys were made prisoners. For refusing to stamp on the cross the little brother was cut down by the leader, and the older boy was hung up between two saplings and had his feet roasted by fire. His father and the servant rescued him that night, as all the guards lay round in drunken sleep, and the story of their escape through the jungle is as wonderful as any Jules Verne tale. To the end Bishop Leadbeater carried the scars of that torture on his feet and the marks of the bullet wounds in his leg.

He always acquired a large library, and one section was full of ghost stories. I asked him to lend me some and he told me to come in whenever I liked and help myself. I have heard him tell the tale of the were-wolf he saw in Scotland when a boy several times. It is so remarkable that I will tell it again shortly here. As a youth at St. John's College, Cambridge, he went on a reading vacation with three other boys to the Shetlands or the Orkneys, I forget which.¹⁰

They put up at a little hotel, and used often to wander along the high cliffs. As is common in that part of Scotland, one day a heavy mist suddenly descended, and Mr. Leadbeater found himself separated from his friends. Advancing cautiously he came to a cave which was full of bones and remains of fresh meat. He supposed some crofter used it as a slaughter house. All at once a queer-looking girl appeared. He asked her if she knew where he could put up for the

⁸ No historical trace of this brother has yet been found. However a Charles Leadbeater does appear with his wife and one child arriving in Brazil in a shipping record discovered by Pedro Oliveira:
<http://www.cwlworld.info/html/bio.html>

⁹ Census data indicate that his father was a clerk or book keeper.

¹⁰ No record has been found of C.W. Leadbeater attending a university.

night, return to the hotel being too hazardous. She motioned him to follow her and led the way down to a tiny two-roomed cottage on the shore. At first the old mother would not hear of his staying, but when, his curiosity aroused, he produced a gold coin, she could not resist that. She began to prepare supper, and C.W.L. and the daughter sat down at the table. He thought it must be the lengthening light for it seemed to him that he saw the girl's face suddenly shoot out like an animal's snout. Supper over, the old woman shook down dried bracken fern in the corner of the room for him to sleep on, and taking up the candle prepared to retire into the other room, the girl meanwhile having left the house. On C.W.L.'s enquiring where her daughter would sleep the old woman said that she would be all right.

In the middle of the night he was awakened by a great grey wolf, scrabbling at his chest. The cottage door was wide open, and the full moon was shining in. His first thought was astonishment that wolves still existed in Scotland. Then he drew a bowie knife he carried and struck at the wolf in the chest. With a savage howl the animal bounded out, and C.W.L. at once barricaded the door with everything available. In the morning he thought the mother looked at him very curiously, but they all sat down to breakfast. Reaching over for something, the shawl which the girl was wearing fell apart, and C.W.L. saw a bloody mark on her dress. The sun was now shining brightly and paying the old woman he set off on the cliff walk to regain his hotel. As he neared the cave he heard bounding footsteps behind him. There was the wolf. He lost consciousness and fell and the next thing he remembered was finding his three friends bending over him. They took him back to the hotel and he was ill with brain fever for some weeks. On recovery they all went round to the cottage on the shore, but the occupants had fled to some other part of the islands.

Another story I heard, him tell was of a queer happening when he was a little boy of ten. His father knew very well the Victorian occultist, Bulwer Lytton, who would often come to dinner. One evening when Bulwer Lytton was expected C.W.L. ran down to the dining-room hoping to be able to take a sugarplum and escape with it before the elders came in. Unfortunately he was not quite quick enough, and so had to hide under the table. Unable to escape, he had to stay there all during the dinner. But he said he was properly punished, for dinner being finished, his father and guest sat down to wine and cigars by fire. The subject of their conversation he did not remember, but suddenly Bulwer Lytton rose and placed some letters on the sideboard, and going back to his seat by the fire, beckoned the letters, which falling off the sideboard apparently by their own volition, then wriggled their way to Lytton's feet! Petrified with fright, the small boy had to wait until the others left the room before he could seek asylum in his nursery.¹¹

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Footnote from "The Masters and The Path" by Rt. Rev. C. W. Leadbeater Theosophical Publishing House, India 1925 pages 40-41:

Madame Blavatsky has often told us how she met the Master Morya in Hyde Park, London, in the year 1851, when He came over with a number of other Indian Princes to attend the first great International Exhibition. Strangely enough, I myself, then a little child of four, saw Him also, all unknowing. I can remember being taken to see a gorgeous procession, in which among many other wonders came a party of richly-

¹¹ Leadbeater's father died in 1862 from T.B., after a long illness, when the boy was about 8. It is difficult to see how Lytton would have known the Leadbeaters. This story should be considered in relation to the one quoted below it.

dressed Indian horsemen. Magnificent horsemen they were, riding steeds as fine, I suppose, as any in the world, and it was only natural that my childish eyes were fixed upon them in great delight, and that they were perhaps to me the finest exhibit of that marvellous and fairy-like show. And even as I watched them pass, as I stood holding my father's hand, one of the tallest of those heroes fixed me with gleaming black eyes, which half-frightened me, and yet at the same time filled me somehow with indescribable happiness and exaltation. He passed with the others and I saw Him no more, yet often the vision of that flashing eye returned to my childish memory.

Of course, I knew nothing then of who He was, and I should never have identified Him had it not been for a gracious remark which He made to me many years afterwards. Speaking one day in His presence of the earlier days of the Society, I happened to say that the first time I had had the privilege of seeing Him in materialized form was on a certain occasion when He came into Madame Blavatsky's room at Adyar, for the purpose of giving her strength and issuing certain directions. He Himself, who was engaged in conversation with some other Adepts, turned sharply upon me and said: "No, that was not the first time. Do you not remember, as a tiny child, watching the Indian horsemen ride past in Hyde Park, and did you not see how even then I singled you out?" I remembered instantly, of course, and said: "Oh, Master, was that you? But I ought to have known it." I do not mention this incident among the occasions when I have met and spoken with a Master, both parties to the interview being in the physical body, because I did not at the time know that great horseman to be the Master, and because the evidence of so small a child might well be doubted or discounted.¹²

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About Leadbeater's death, Lis Warwood told Psypioneer:

The West Australian (Perth, W.A.) on Friday 2 March, 1934 p. 18, noted that Leadbeater had died, after an illness of 16 days, in the afternoon on March 1, 1934 at St Omer's Hospital, West Perth. Leadbeater had been travelling from India to Sydney on the ship Mooltan, but on becoming ill, had left the ship at Fremantle and immediately entered the private hospital where he ultimately died.

The Daily News (Perth, W.A.) March 2, 1934, p. 4, also noted that a special Requiem Eucharist for the repose of Bishop Leadbeater was to be held on Sunday (March 4) at the Liberal Catholic Church in Brewer Street, East Perth, and that the celebrant would be Rev. Harold Morton, who had travelled to Perth from Sydney on learning of Leadbeater's illness.

The Sydney Morning Herald recorded on 22 November, 1934 (p. 6) that Leadbeater left an estate of just £69, and that it had been necessary to take out probate on Leadbeater's will, as he was trustee of certain church land in New South Wales. Leadbeater bequeathed his ecclesiastical vestments to (Rev.) Harold Morton (of Mosman, a Sydney suburb) and his rights to royalties on certain books to Curuppumullege Jinarajadara, of Adyar, Madras, and to the Theosophical Headquarters at Adyar.

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¹² Leadbeater consistently represented himself as being born in 1847, the same year as his colleague Annie Besant, but his birth certificate shows he was born in 1854 in Stockport. The Great Exhibition was in 1851.

WAITE AND SPIRITUALISM

Note by LP. The mystical writer Arthur Edward Waite is largely forgotten today, despite a wonderfully researched biography by R.A. Gilbert: *Magician of Many Parts* (1987). But he has some claim to be a pioneer of Spiritualism.

Light June 4th 1942 page 180:

MR. A. E. WAITE



So the leader has left us! The Master-mind has ascended: to what lofty spheres of intelligence who will venture to hazard an opinion? But we do not hesitate to state our opinion as to Waite's legacy to mankind. It is a very great inheritance, and one that (we are convinced) will continue to appreciate largely in value as time passes.

To the eloquent appreciation of this great man from the pen of Mr. Lewis Spence, which we publish, we would add only this: That Waite achieved before the close of his long earthly life the reward of his labours in that exalted mental atmosphere to which he had toiled and attained. The latter chapters of the great book, *Shadows of Life and Thought*, which is his autobiography, point clearly to his achievement of the Quest.

C.R.C.

(Charles Richard Cammell Editor of *Light*)¹³

¹³ For more on Mr Cammell's editorial fate, see *Psypioneer* June 2011: <http://www.woodlandway.org/PDF/PP7.6June2011.pdf>

ARTHUR EDWARD WAITE: AN APPRECIATION

By LEWIS SPENCE

Page 181:

THE greatest British master of the Occult in our time has passed beyond the pronaos of that temple with whose mysteries he was so familiarly occupied while still in the flesh. The witness to his vast knowledge of the psychical and supernatural remains with us in what may be described as a veritable treasury of personal literature, rich in distinction, remarkably individual expression, and disclosing a ripeness of erudition which might cast lustre on the mystical exposition of any age. Regarding this monumental performance as a whole, one need not hesitate to hail its begetter as equal in arcane fellowship with the most celebrated exponents of British mysticism, with Roger Bacon, Robert Fludd, and Thomas Vaughan, whose writings, indeed, his own equalled in profundity and spiritual authority, while in genuine expository trenchancy and value they frequently surpass them.

For it was as a demonstrator of occult philosophy, a guide among the labyrinthine windings of mystical literature, that Arthur Edward Waite chiefly surpassed. Early in life he acquired by patient study and meditation that extraordinary and seemingly flawless knowledge of arcane literature which was to stand him in such stead when later he approached editorial and critical labours of a scope which only a long life of arduous toil and devotion to his subject could have carried to fruition. So various, indeed, are the occult themes at which he wrought that their totality seems more the work of a body of scholars, than the single efforts of an individual writer. Rosicrucianism, the vast and tormented problem of the Holy Grail, the mysteries of Freemasonry, the Kabbalah, mediaeval magic, to mention only a few of the topics with which his researches were associated, were all treated with that illuminating perspicuity and masterly touch which revealed itself in all he wrote, and his conclusions were invariably sound and responsive to logical sentiment.

Doubtless we have all experienced a momentary sense of disappointment in perusing certain works of the master, have felt midway in his pages that we have arrived at an impasse where it was either impossible to follow his argument, or to penetrate the profundities of a style which certainly had preferences for the obscure. It is, indeed, the bane of mystical literary performance, that it must continually remain in dread of a revelation which it dare not make. By critics in a hurry, Waite has been charged with obscurity and preciousness. These censors have, of course, defeated their own case by an argument so jejune, manifesting a lack of knowledge of the tendency of occult revelation with which an acquaintance with the writings of the masters of arcane science would have equipped them. What is so often mistaken for obscurity in Waite's writings is brought about by the supreme difficulty of linking up those passages which convey such material as may be revealed, while veiling or omitting that which cannot, in its entirety, be included, but which must still be suggested in order that coherence may be achieved.

It is as though the translator of a work in a foreign tongue were prohibited from rendering important and even vital parts of his original into the equivalent English, and must content himself with unsatisfactory generalities. Waite's ability to triumph over this difficulty has never been equalled in the annals of arcane writing, and those who attribute to him a wilful or affected obscurity can realise little of his extraordinary aptness in abridgement and what might be called the *précis* of occluded essentials.

More accurate is the claim that he fails to enlighten his reader, even a knowledgeable reader, as regards the tendency and fundamentals of his argument. In nearly all his works we reach a point when he seems to be marking time, where the keenest disappointment is occasioned by the manner in which he keeps us in anxious suspense, while he marches onward in almost incoherent processional prose. His grip is not to be questioned. He knew his material far too well for that. It was his inability to present a clear and well built up picture of a movement, an epoch, a philosophic or mystical ideal which here betrayed him. Had he had in his composition even a suspicion of Moteley, Prescott or Gibbon, the 'pictorial' historians, many of his pages would have been greatly more perspicuous. He is essentially and by nature the least exact and perspicuous of writers. Even so, his summaries and conclusions are most excellent and valuable. He is not wilfully obscure. He is merely caught up in a turgid, stylistic meandering of his own devising.

In no place is this lack of the visual and the panoramic so noticeable as in his two works upon the Holy Grail, *The Hidden Church of the Holy Grail* and *The Holy Grail, its Legends and Symbolism*. The narrative concerning the texts which compose this corpus is not well-knit, and its operosity is apparent in the poverty of its exegetical conclusions. The long drawn nature of these accounts and summaries, and the occasional inexactitude or indefiniteness of entire passages, especially those which are comparative or analogical, rob the subject of its native mystery. Across the landscape of both books there hangs a fog which is not that of mysticism but which arises out of lack of creative purpose, and absence of synthesis. A comparison of Waite's work in this field with that of Miss J. L. Weston reveals his inferiority in exegetical expertise, rambling as much of Miss Weston's output certainly is. An apprenticeship in a more or less exact science, such as Folk Lore, would have served him well when he came to deal with such topics.

If I cannot find myself in agreement with Mr. Waite's conclusions in his *The True History of the Rosicrucians*—believing that body to be of much older provenance than he considers it—I am at least able to admire wholeheartedly the profound erudition it manifests, as does its sequel, *The Brotherhood of the Rosy Cross*. Nor may I speak of his encyclopaedic works on the subject of Freemasonry, to which sodality I have not the keys. Of capital importance to the study of Magic are his translations of the works of Eliphas Lévi, *The History of Magic* and *Transcendental Magic*, the second of which is the most illuminating compendium extant of the processes and rites of ritual Magic which we possess. No better guide to the intricacies of the thaumaturgic art exists.

Mr. Waite also enriched the study of Alchemy by treatises which not only have removed obstacles from the path of many a student, but which remain monuments of alchemical exposition. *The Lives of the Alchemists*, an early essay, is at once the most romantic and the most illuminating study which we possess in English, not only of the material and spiritual processes of the grand quest, but as regards its notable protagonists, while *The Turba Philosophorum*, a symposium of ancient alchemical writings, is explanatory of much that would remain otherwise vague and baffling.

Lesser, but by no means unimportant works, are *The Magical Writings of Thomas Vaughan*, which is prefaced by a most valuable introduction upon the history and development of Western Magic since Alexandrian times, and *Devil-worship in France*, a delicious parody of the fin-de-siècle French publications which dramatically presuppose the existence of Satanism in alcoves the most unlikely and preposterous.

Nor must the vast adventure of making plain the philosophy of Paracelsus, *The Life and Writings of Paracelsus*, be forgotten. This immense task, accomplished with address and the graces of scholarship, remains, I think, the most achieved work of English occult literature which has appeared in these latter days.

In his *Collected Poems*, published in two volumes, Mr. Waite gathered the poetical output of a long and devoted career. Graceful, endowed with purity of form and marmoreal in line and sculpture, these are, as might be expected, chiefly on themes mystical and arcane, white flowers blossoming out of the sacred soil of devotional meditation.

For generations another such as Arthur Edward Waite may not appear upon the English occult scene. Let us thank God who gave him to us. He was a great mystic, a great master and exponent of Magical Science, and a great man.



However, for his significance to Spiritualism, we must turn once more to Miss Phillimore.

Light June 25th 1942 page 207:

L.S.A. COMMENTS AND RECORDS

BY MERCY PHILLIMORE

ARTHUR EDWARD WAITE

ALTHOUGH a most interesting appreciation of Arthur Edward Waite has appeared in this journal from the pen of Mr. Lewis Spence, I cannot refrain from making a further reference to such a dear friend of LIGHT and of the Alliance as A.E.W., now that he has passed beyond.

The aspect of his personality which I knew so well, was other than that which is revealed in his literary work. Arthur Edward Waite was a delightful human being, serene in manner, with a disposition to approach ordinary things, and comment on them, with a tender humour. His voice and laughter had that quality that instantly brings out the sweetness of human association.

One of my earliest recollections is of a winter about the year 1916, when he was writing, by request of a publisher, a book on the Philosophy of Andrew Jackson Davis. This book does not bear his name as author. He was not sympathetic to the seership and writings of Davis, and pretended to be overborne with weariness at the task. He used to come fairly often to our library to borrow and consult the Davis books. This was at our old rooms in St. Martin's Lane. The Davis books were housed in a room on the top shelf close to the ceiling. He usually came late in the afternoon. The room was lighted by low-hanging, shaded lamps. He would climb dangerously to the top of a none-too-robust ladder, and perched, high up in the dimness, would browse on the books; from time to time deep groans would amuse us, groans to remind us of how bored he was. Although Davis was not for A.E.W., he was and is a storehouse of knowledge and wisdom for others.

Once again let me recall Mr. Waite's gay remark, made with a big sigh, in comment on something peculiarly surprising: "The universe is not without an element of waggery."

Knowing that he could not long be with us, I went down to Canterbury, as recently as March this year, to see him, as I guessed, for the last time. An artist, too, should have gone to put on canvas what I saw. Mr. Waite was wearing a bright-coloured flowered dressing gown; his handsome features had become more sharply defined, and were set off by longish, silvery hair. It was, fortunately, one of his good days. He was prepared to talk, and I have kept notes of the conversation. This is one of the things he said which will interest our readers: "The most important and desperate need of the time is the proving of Survival. If only a Spiritualist would begin a chronological production of attested cases of evidence. I should like to see one old and one new case of evidence of Survival each week in LIGHT!"

It is not at all easy to get attested cases of evidence, so please let this be a reminder to those who can give such information that to do so is a service to others. Waite's autobiography was somewhat discursive, but below are the main passages on Spiritualism:¹⁴

Shadows of Life and Thought

Arthur Edward Waite

Pages 57-58:

".....my wanderings had taken me once to the crowded purlieu of Edgware Road, and in the side-window of a corner pork-butcher's shop I had seen displayed to my astonishment a few copies of the *Medium and Daybreak*, a journal devoted to Modern Spiritualism. Having long contemplated the columns of a front page, I went in to purchase a copy, taking care to address him whom I assumed to be the master rightly, a tall, broad, expansive personality, with goodwill inscribed upon him. My youth and nervous hesitation must have drawn him towards me shewing thus early an interest in subjects which were evidently near to his heart. He told me of trance orations, of spirits assuming material forms, of dead men coming back, and probably gave me two or three elementary pamphlets, brought forth from a drawer beneath one of his counters. It is remembered to this day that I emerged from that talk with a vague feeling that all this was like a story of which I had heard previously; that it was not strange and new; that it was rooted in the likelihood of things rather than abnormal and far beyond the ken.

I had been referred evidently for means of further knowledge to the offices of the Spiritistic paper in question, and thither I fared accordingly, namely, to Southampton Row, where I made a speaking acquaintance with James Burns, proprietor, printer and editor of the *Medium and Daybreak*. It proved among other things that he had begun to reprint *Anacalypsis* in crown octavo and had contrived a first volume, when the enterprise was held up for want of funds. My visit was repeated on several occasions, and I was like one beginning to awaken, while many hands beckoned me, as if from doors ajar. Is it because of the rapid things which followed hereon that dates and times

¹⁴ *Shadows of Life and Thought* by Arthur Edward Waite Selwyn & Blount, London 1938.

and places are confused together in memory? There must be a leap in the dark no doubt over certain moons to reach another stage.

Page 60-62:

There came a time when I could almost say that I was acquainted sufficiently with the whole output of Spiritism, so far as England, America and France were concerned. I speak of books chiefly, but there were Journals also, *La Revue Spirite* in France, *sub nomine* Allan Kardec, who founded that monthly and it is still, I believe, flourishing. In the States there was the *Banner of Light*, and many others came after it. *Light* had been founded in England, with Stainton Moses as Editor,¹⁵ while W. H. Harrison, a born journalist of his period, evidently owned as well as conducted *The Spiritualist*. I met him once only, at the rooms of Captain James, about whom I shall speak later, and liked him well. But his enterprise came to grief, having exhausted whatever funds were collected to start it. I was seven-league boots' distance from anything like belief, either in the alleged facts of Spiritism or in its super-mundane revelations; but certain works carried a fairly strong appeal; and if there were time for everything I should like to read them again, far as I am from any living concern in "veridic hallucinations", or whither they lead recipients in hypotheses of the other life.

The *Footfalls on the Boundaries of Another World*, by Robert Dale Owen, has really a happy title; and though I do not know that it carries much better warrants than the delightful *Night Side of Nature*, by Catherine Crow, [sic Crowe- Pp.] it is written with utter sincerity in a very pleasant manner, while its general appeal is illustrated by the eloquent fact that the *London Journal*, that Queen of the Byways, almost a twin-sister of the *Family Herald*, took French leave, owing to the rottenness of copyright law, and ran it from week to week in its columns. No doubt it rejoiced the parlour-maids and shopkeepers' wives by thousands; and it is not unlikely that the "cause" itself was helped.

But there was also "*From Matter to Spirit*," a very different work, prefaced by Augustus de Morgan and said to have been written by his wife, in which case I should think that the Master Mathematician overlooked those pages. Surely they savour a little of him who wrote a certain *Budget of Paradoxes*.

It was another kind of satisfaction to make acquaintance with Napoleon B. Wolfe and his *Startling Facts in Modern Spiritualism*, because of its caustic wit and trenchant criticisms of trance orators, like Emma Harding [sic Hardinge – Pp.] and Cora Tappan. Their number was legion in America, even in those days. Wolfe, however, had a comedy on his own side, owing to a group of spirits testifying continually from the other side, at his own séances, that they and no others were arranging to produce in materialised forms the whole deceased Napoleonic Dynasty in the face of day. But Napoleon B. Wolfe crossed over willy-nilly and met them possibly there, for they never came here.

Finally, to make an end of these pleadings for the time being, there was the notable and rather beloved personality of Colonel Olcott, who, before he became the Founder and first President of the Theosophical Society, had produced his *People from the Other World*—in or near 1870—assuredly more amazing and more startling than the diatribes and promised pageant of N. B. Wolfe. In the wide world of phenomenal records there is

¹⁵ Psypioneer readers will not need reminding that Moses did edit LIGHT for a time, but not initially. LP.

nothing to compare with the materialisations of that volume. One after another, séance after séance, in the homestead room for circles or in the open air of the violet nights, those “people” came in crowds. And dear old Olcott took it nearly all in good faith and told it in all simplicity.

“That is best which lies the nearest” is an old adage, and perhaps for this reason Spiritism was for long my chief concern, in case I could “bring it to book”, as the Hon. Roden Noel, another inquirer, termed it. It seems to me that I had a considerable faculty in my studies for extracting the quintessence of books, and it remained with me. I followed a star also, which took me to the best of their kind, though forgotten now for the most part by all. One among many such was by another American, Dexter, seriously reflective on phenomena, careful and even acute. He was to be preferred before Judge Edmonds, who attracted greater notice.

On the other hand, I misdoubted from the beginning, and for long, the chief prophet of the subject across the Atlantic, namely, Andrew Jackson Davis, always excepting one curiously pregnant fact, that whether or not he dictated *Nature's Divine Revelations* in deep trance, as claimed, it is quite clear that some few years prior to the epoch-making Rochester Knockings, a complete theory and presentation of the hither hereafter, or life on the other side, was set forth in those volumes. When the dead came back at Hydesville and elsewhere, when a hundred weekly and monthly journals seemed insufficient to contain the messages given forth in circles and in controlled discourses, their pictures of the other world did nothing but reproduce, underscore and perchance extend the Davis unfoldings about the Summer Land. I have not heard that anyone save myself has noticed this; but it stands beyond question. The sin of the Poughkeepsie Seer's later days was that he wrote anything further. His life was passed in spoiling the Divine Revelations, much as Philip James Bailey, a born poet of his class, expended some five and thirty years of his subsequent span in spoiling *Festus*. I am prepared even now to affix his thesis to the portal of the first Spiritist University—wheresoever built and opened—and to maintain it against all comers. It does not signify that there is any brief in my hands for the Revelations as such; but they made Spiritism before it happened to be born. The rest of the sorry Davis output can be thrown over among the rubbish, with his *Diakkas*, and “their earthly victims” as first and chief in the condemned pile.

It remains to be said that the horizon opened by Spiritism, as of another world and its prospects, and of the possibility in earthly life of belonging in a sense to both, led me further away from the notion of an Infallible Church which offered Hell opened to Christians in place of Eternal Hope. I beheld on the further side, in the so-called hither hereafter, a place where men can dwell and healed by slow degrees of all their hurts can find new life in new and other work, world without end, because of endless worlds.

Page 68:

My detached but somewhat earnest concerns in Spiritism, because of its bare possibilities, did not change or diminish: they grew unawares within me, as I was drawn further in the direction of that occult lore to which I have alluded briefly. If the putative occult sciences covered by that field were paths leading to experimental knowledge, then Spiritism belonged thereto and was perchance the key thereof, even as the magnetic trance was a key to so much that passed under the name of Spiritism. Now it happened that much as I hated my odd volume of *Isis Unveiled*, for the reason given, it was helpful

as an *omnium gatherum* of esoteric claims and pretences, a miscellany of magic and its connections, with the sole exception of Alchemy, in which I cannot recall that H. P. B. ever evinced any personal interest.

Pages 71-73:

Is there anyone, I wonder, in England, who has met with an American book which was called *Ghostland*, being the unfinished biography of a certain Chevalier de B., and—for the rest—the record of alleged “Researches into the Mysteries of Occult Spiritism”. This was the after-title, and this had a spell of power which worked wondrous well in my particular case. Did I not know Spiritism at first hand, so to speak, in respect of what may be called its memoirs, having never had much chance or profit among its visible signs and happenings? But my dear old friend, J. M. Watkins, a beloved publisher, whose shop is emblazoned all over, within and without, on the hither side and the further, with Signs, Sigils and Talismans, telling of Great Mysteries, will assuredly remember *Ghostland*. It may be he alone, since Mead left us to explore more deeply the approximate hereafter on its own ground. There is a record that, according to Mead, *Ghostland* was the inward side of the life of Lord Lytton, the Chevalier de B. answering obviously to Bulwer. You will remember, some of you, those age-old ribald lines:

“And Bulwer-Lytton, Lytton-Bulwer erst,
Unseen amidst a metaphysic fog,
Howls melancholy homage to the moon.”

If Watkins wishes, it can rest for ever at this; but Mead’s explanation will not work in fact. The character sketch in *Ghostland* which passes for the Chevalier de B. is that of a “poor creature”, after all is said, and does not respond to the first Lord Lytton, however we choose to regard the once “familiar face” of him whom Tennyson called in his terrific derision, “the padded man that wears the stays”. This was long prior to *Zanoni* and doubtless also to a certain evocation on the roof of the London Pantheon.

Lytton Bulwer’s son, Owen Meredith, first Earl of Lytton, told me too briefly about it in a letter long after 1881 and his father’s death. I hoped that *Zanoni* and the *Strange Story* were not fiction utterly, but if they were that there might be a kernel of fact in the “Records of Occult Spiritism”, notwithstanding the utter absence of local colouring to encourage the notion that Chevalier de B. had ever lived in India, to say nothing of other places. I am brought in this manner to recall that the alleged records are a story with a past, and firstly that its appearance in print was sponsored by Emma Harding Britten, whom we have met with prior to her marriage, in connection with certain diatribes of Napoleon B. Wolfe, when she was Emma Harding only, figuring as a trance medium and reproached for such pretence in the author’s Startling Facts.

It is just to add that some years after, and when all concern over the occult triad under notice had finally passed away, I heard—at its value—from Dr. Maurice Davies that he had known the lady in England when she was figuring badly as an actress. Later on he came across her again, when she was speaking under “spirit influence” and was almost disposed to believe in her trance-obsessions because of the vital difference between her two rôles. However this may be, the supposed “autobiographical sketches” produced in *Ghostland* appeared originally in “*The Western Star*”, a magazine published at Boston, U.S.A., under the editorship of Mrs. Britten. This was in 1872, and the periodical in question lasted for six numbers, when “disastrous Boston fires” put an end to its

existence. The activities of the Chevalier were suspended also till *circa* 1874, when there was issued by subscription, under the same auspices, a substantial volume entitled *Art Magic*, otherwise, “Mundane, Sub-Mundane and Super-Mundane Spiritism”. A crowded title-page explained further that the twenty-three sections dealt—among other subjects—with the different Orders of Spirits in the Universe and gave directions for “invoking, controlling and discharging spirits”.

The sections mentioned are grouped into three parts. The first embodies an account of the Jewish Kabbalah, being the work of a person who has not an elementary notion of what he is talking about. It affirms also that the Songs of Orpheus, the doctrines of Pythagoras and Plato’s philosophy are “digests” of Kabbalistic Wisdom. The second part discusses Magic in Egypt, Magic in India, Magic in China and elsewhere. It is preposterous rubbish throughout, in so far as it does not include citations from readily accessible sources. The methods of invoking, controlling and discharging spirits are reserved for the third part, the originals being Cornelius Agrippa, Peter de Abano, Paracelsus, and the notorious magical Grimoires. Such are the qualifications of the Chevalier de B.; of such are his “Mundane, Sub-Mundane and Super-Mundane Spiritism”. Finally, Mrs. Britten has told us, in her preface to *Ghostland* (I) that its autobiographical sketches were “written originally in German”, but, as she did not know that language, the Chevalier put them for her benefit into “rough English”; and (2) that they were written, like *Art Magic*, partly in French and partly in English, for the same reason. In the dilemma of this *lapsus memoriae* I am content to leave the question whether the Chevalier lived only in the second-rate and typically feminine imagination of Emma Harding because, in the universe of evidential things, there was no room for him anywhere else.



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An Extraordinary Journey:—The Memoirs of a Physical Medium, by Stewart Alexander, published by Saturday Night Press Publications, England, 2010. Paperback ISBN:—978-0-9557050-6-9, available at Amazon. Psypioneer review, by Leslie Price pages 294-296:—<http://woodlandway.org/PDF/PP6.11November2010.pdf>

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Dead Men's Embers, by Gerald O'Hara, published by Saturday Night Press Publications, England 2006. Large Paperback ISBN:—978-0-9514534-6-9, available at Amazon. Psypioneer review, by Leslie Price pages 1-2:—<http://www.woodlandway.org/PDF/PP3.1January07..pdf>

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Talking to the Dead – Kate and Maggie Fox and the Rise of Spiritualism, by Barbara Weisberg published by HarperSanFrancisco New York 2004. Hardback ISBN: 0-06-056667-1, available at Amazon. Psypioneer review, by Paul J. Gaunt pages 9-10:—http://woodlandway.org/PDF/Leslie_Price_PP2.pdf



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