

# PSYPIONEER JOURNAL

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# DANIEL DUNGLAS HOME

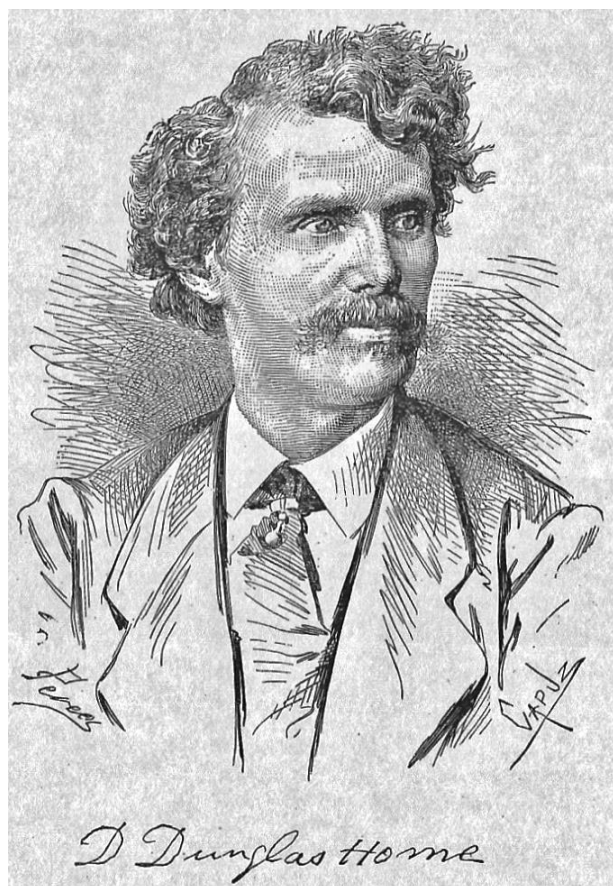
(March 20th 1833-June 21st 1886)

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## Home's expulsion from Rome in 1864

We have previously published, "The Late D. D. Home, Medium," and also "Mr. D. D. Home: His Last Years, Last Illness, and Burial," by his second wife. They were married in 1871, neé Julie de Gloumeline.<sup>1</sup> Home hoped to become a sculptor and went to Rome to study, but his intended plans were severely interrupted.

Below is taken from "D. D. Home His Life and Mission," by Mme. Dunglas Home (Home's second wife), edited with an introduction by Sir Arthur Conan Doyle republished 1921 pages 113-114:



In November, 1863, the intending sculptor went to Rome to study his art. For six weeks he quietly pursued it among the artist colony there, with several of whom he was acquainted; but on the 2nd of January, 1864, he received a proof that the Papal Government had neither forgotten nor forgiven his refusal, eight years before, to let the monastery gates close upon him.<sup>2</sup> He was summoned before the chief of the Roman police, subjected to a long interrogatory, and finally ordered, on the ground of sorcery, to quit Rome within three days.

Mr. Home at once claimed the protection of the English Consul; the result of whose intervention, joined with that of a distinguished personage friendly to Home, was somewhat incorrectly related by the Times correspondent in writing to that journal:—

<sup>1</sup>.—See *Psychicist*: Volume 6. No 9. September 2010:—<http://woodlandway.org/PDF/PP6.9.September2010.pdf>

<sup>2</sup>.—This is referring to the period of Home's cessation of his mediumship for a year. This began, Home states, in February 1856. Pope Pius IX, 1846-1878 the longest-reigning elected pope in the history of the Catholic Church gave an audience to Home soon after he renounced his purpose of entering a monastery. This can be read in the first few pages of Chapter III of *D. D. Home His Life and Mission* by Mme. Dunglas Home, republished 1921 read on line or download:— <https://archive.org/details/ddhomehislifemis00homeiala>

“On Monday morning,” said the correspondent, “the British Consul saw Monsignor Matteucci, the Governor of Rome, and complained that any British subject should be interfered with in consequence of his opinions. He stated that Mr. Home had conducted himself during his residence in Rome in a strictly legal and gentlemanly manner; and demanded that the obnoxious order should be rescinded. Monsignor spoke of dangerous powers of fascination, of the prohibition by the Government of all the practices of the black art; and finally assented to Mr. Home’s remaining, on condition of his entering into an engagement, through Mr. Severn, that he would desist from all communications with the spiritual world during his stay in Rome.”

Mr. Home entered into no such engagement. He could not. Nothing was more common with him than for manifestations to occur unexpectedly, and he could do nothing to prevent their happening. The actual written promise that he gave, at the request of the Governor of Rome, was word for word as follows:—

“I give my word as a gentleman that during my stay in Rome I will have no *séance*, and that I will avoid, as much as possible, all conversations upon Spiritualism.”

No *séance* was held; but behind the Governor of Rome there were higher powers still, who were determined that, *séances* or no *séances*, Home should leave the city. The British Consul was falsely informed that Home had broken his promise, and Home himself was once more ordered to quit the Papal territory, the excuse made being that, since he could only promise to hold no *séance*, and was unable to say that manifestations would not occur in spite of such abstention, it was impossible to allow him to remain. It deserves to be added, as characteristic of the methods of the defunct Papal Government, that for the four weeks preceding the expulsion none of Home’s letters had been delivered to him, the authorities retaining them to study their contents at leisure.

“Is there anything against Mr. Home’s character?” asked a high personage who interviewed the Governor of Rome on his behalf. “No,” replied Monsignor Matteucci, “nothing. During the two months he has been in Rome *we have had him watched*, and we believe that his character is without blemish. But he is a sorcerer, and cannot be permitted in Rome; and he must go.”

Home left for Naples; and was escorted to the railway station by a number of his friends in Rome, as a mark of sympathy and a public protest against his expulsion. The present King of Italy, then Prince Humbert, was at Naples at the time; and by his Highness’s command Mr. Home was presented to him, and favoured with an invitation to a Court ball. A short but pleasant stay in Naples was followed by a few weeks at Nice, where Mrs. Milner Gibson was then among the winter residents, as was also, it would seem, Sir E. B. Lytton. Several *séances* were held at Nice; and about the beginning, of April, 1864, Home returned to London. He addressed the Foreign Secretary on the subject of his expulsion from Rome; and on Earl Russell declining to make any representations to the Papal Government, Mr. Home brought the matter before the House of Commons, through the instrumentality of Mr. Roebuck. He did this in no expectation of obtaining redress,

but it concerned him to make as widely known as possible that the reasons of his expulsion from Rome in no way affected his character.

It was on this occasion that Mr. Milner Gibson was driven out of the House by the jocose appeal of Mr. Roebuck to the President of the Board of Trade, whom Roebuck mistakenly assumed to be a Spiritualist. Nothing came of the question in the House of Commons beyond the discussion that ensued; but the correct facts concerning Mr. Home's expulsion from Rome were reported next morning in the leading English journals, which was all that he had expected or sought.

[See page 120 of this issue:—*Hansard's official report of the question asked in the Commons about the expulsion of Home from Rome*]

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Published in *Light* November 4th 1922, page 691 we find an interesting addition to Home's police interrogation:

## **D. D. HOME AND HIS TIMES.**

### **A HITHERTO UNPUBLISHED LETTER OF THE FAMOUS MEDIUM.**

By courtesy of Mr. Harry Price we give a copy of a holograph letter in his possession throwing an interesting sidelight on the career of D. D. Home:—

Copy of four-page Autograph Letter, signed, of Daniel Dunglas Home, the medium. The letter is with original envelope, addressed, by Home to —. Wreford Esq., Pension Anglaise, Via Condotti (Rome). The flap of the envelope bears as a crest (of the Grenville family?) a wheatsheaf, with the words "Otium cum Dignitate" and another design (partly obliterated), with the words "Clarior e Tenebris." The letter is undated, but was written in January, 1864. Mr. Edward Legge, the author, Royal Societies Club, a great friend of Home and Dr. Gully, principal physician at Malvern in 1864, has pronounced the letter genuine. (See "Spiritual Magazine," June, '64.)

January 2nd, received a letter requesting my presence before the police on the 3rd between the hours of ten and one January 3rd, went and was shown to the room of the advocate Pasqualoni. I was accompanied by my friend, M. Gouthier (?), Consul of Greece at Rome. The questions were as follows: The names of my father and mother? Have you published a book? Yes. Your profession? An art student. Your residence? 65, Via del Tritone.

When did you arrive? Six weeks ago. How many times have you been in Rome? Twice. How long did you stay each time? Two months the first, and three weeks the last. How long do you intend to remain this time? Till April! (Have you a fixed residence in France? No. How many books have you written? One. How many copies have been sold? As I am not my own publisher, it would be impossible to say. After you became a Catholic did you exercise your power as a medium? Neither before or after did I exercise my power as a medium inasmuch as it is not a power dependent on my will. I could not use it. How do you make these things? I think the reply I have just given is sufficient for this. Do you consider your power a gift of

Nature? No, I consider it a gift from God! What constitutes a trance? A study of physiology will explain this better than I can. Do you see the spirits asleep or awake? Both. Why do the spirits come to you? As a consolation and to convince those who do not believe in the after existence of the soul!! What religion do they teach? That depends! What do you do to make them come? I was about to reply that I did nothing when on the table where he was writing there came clear and distinct raps. He then said: "But the table no moves." Just as he was saying it, the table did move. What is the age of your child? Four and a half. Where is he? At Malvern. With whom? Dr. Gully. Is Dr. Gully a Catholic? No. When did you last see your child? Two months ago.<sup>3</sup> When do you expect to see him again? In April. He then said without assigning any reason that I must leave Rome in three days. Do you consent? No, most decidedly not, inasmuch as I have done nothing to infringe the laws of this or any other country. I will consult with the English Consul and be advised by him.

D. D. HOME.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>3</sup>.—At St Petersburg on August 1st 1858, Daniel Dunglas Home married into the Russian aristocracy, his bride being Alexandrina de Kroll, daughter of General Count de Kroll and god-daughter of the late Tsar Nicholas. Alexandrina, seventeen, was known as Sacha and on May 8th 1859 their son Gregoire was born. Sacha died 3rd July 1862 ironically of the same disease, tuberculosis that was to eventually kill her husband Daniel on 21st June 1886.

<sup>4</sup>.—Another letter was also published in this issue: We also reproduce another letter in the possession of Mr. Price. — COPY OF LETTER SENT BY HOME TO A MR. COOK, MAY 4TH, 1868.

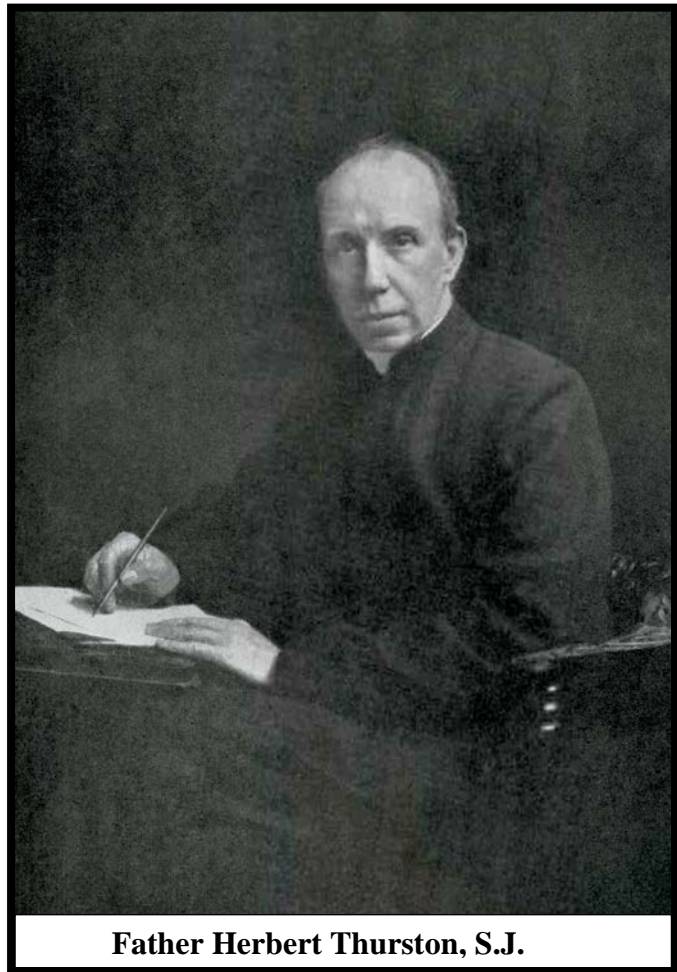
DEAR MR. COOK,—It was most kind of you to have written me a few lines. You will be glad to hear that I am both well and happy. I am sure this was all arranged by a higher power. As to the mob, it was a paid one, of that I am certain. I will be glad to see you any time. Yours faithfully, D. D. HOME. Cox's Hotel, Jermyn-street, St. James'.

A critical analysis of Home's conversion to Catholicism and of the inference that the whole story of the spirits' warning that his power was to be suspended for a year, was nothing more than a convenient fiction, and Home's possible insincerity of character is fairly discussed below by an English Jesuit Priest Herbert Thurston, S.J. (1856-1939) taken from *The Church and Spiritualism*, 1933 Chapter IV pages 61-82. Thurston is no stranger to the pages of *Psypioneer* see especially: *A Surprising Jesuit* September 2006.<sup>5</sup>

## THE CONVERSION OF HOME, THE MEDIUM

THAT the medium, Daniel Dunglas Home, was received in to the Catholic Church at Rome, and was admitted to an audience with Pius IX, is a fact well known to all who have given any attention to the career of that famous psychic. To do him justice, Home deals with the subject very fully in the first series of recollections which he published under the title of *Incidents in My Life*.<sup>6</sup> Whether the writer's candour be real or only apparent, it is not perhaps easy to determine, but he evidently wished to produce the impression of meeting his critics fairly and in the open.

At the time when Home came to Rome he was twenty-three years of age, having been born in Scotland in 1833, though nearly all his life since early childhood had been spent in the United States. The medium's spirit-rapping experiences began in 1850, and in the following year he had already acquired a considerable reputation, sometimes holding circles as often as six times a day.<sup>7</sup> In



**Father Herbert Thurston, S.J.**

<sup>5</sup>.-The English Jesuit Herbert Thurston (1856-1939) wrote many articles critical of Spiritualism from 1917. Four of these were immediately republished as "Modern Spiritualism" (London, Sheed & Ward, 1928 – The Tweldepenny Series) and so displeased Arthur Conan Doyle that he published "The Roman Catholic Church, a Rejoinder" (London, Psychic Press, 1929). Two of Thurston's final articles, written from his death bed, emphasised the disarray caused by the failure of the No War Prophecies. (prior to World War II) See:—*A Surprising Jesuit*:—<http://woodlandway.org/PDF/PP2.9September06.pdf>

<sup>6</sup>.-*Incidents in My Life* – First Series 1863, *Incidents in My Life* – Second Series 1872, and *Lights and Shadows of Spiritualism* 1877 are available in one volume (Volume II – *D. D. Home: His life and Mission* 1888, and *The Gift of D. D. Home* 1890): SNUi—<http://www.snui.org/index.php?act=viewProd&productId=9>

<sup>7</sup>.-*Mrs. Home, D. D. Home, His Life and Mission*, p. 11.

1855 he crossed the Atlantic, and after spending a few months in England, he came to Florence in the autumn. There, in the month of December, an attempt was made to assassinate him, but only a very slight dagger wound was inflicted. The motive of the outrage was never discovered, and some scoffers even have doubted the reality of the occurrence, despite the very circumstantial account of the affair which Home supplies in his *Incidents*. To his biographer, however, who emphasizes “the shock caused to his sensitive temperament” both by the outrage and the extreme severity of the winter, the state of the medium’s health seemed mainly responsible for the fact that shortly afterwards he lost, or at any rate declared that he had lost, his special psychic gift. On the evening of February 10, 1856, as Home himself records, “the spirits told me that my power would leave me for a year.”

At this time he had been on the point of undertaking a journey to Naples in company with Count Branicki and his family who were all Catholics. The psychic wrote to explain that, as he was no longer able to promise any manifestations, he felt he ought to decline their invitation to join them. He was informed, however, that he need feel no scruples, as he was wanted for his own sake and not for any exhibition of his powers. The party spent three weeks in Naples, and in spite of the suspension of his mediumship, phenomena took place in Home’s presence, though he explains them by saying that his being there seemed to develop the power in others. It is stated that one of the Royal Princes, who joined in a séance which was held in the house of the American Minister at the Court of Naples, was himself a medium, and manifestations occurred by which Mr. R. Dale Owen, the Minister in question, was converted to Spiritualism. Then, on a change of scene, new influences were encountered, and Home’s religious views underwent a change, which his second wife, in her *Memoir*, introduces as follows:

“From Naples, the Branicki family and their guest went to Rome, Where the Catholic influences that surrounded him exerted themselves constantly and effectively to turn his thoughts towards seeking refuge in the Church. They were aided by the cruel experiences he had recently suffered. The falsehood of friends to whom he was much attached had wounded him keenly, the occurrences that closed his stay in Florence had profoundly saddened him; and while these clouds darkened the natural sunshine of his spirit, a veil had been suddenly dropped between him and the world beyond, and all counsel and comfort from it was withdrawn. In this gloomy moment, Catholic advisers suggested to him that the peace of mind he longed for might perhaps be found in the Church of Rome, and he sought and read with intense eagerness works relating to her doctrines.”<sup>8</sup>

Home’s own account, written in 1863, states that, when all natural and spiritual consolations were withdrawn, “life seemed to me a blank,” accordingly he was led to read Romish books, and then,

“Finding them expressive of so many facts which I had found coincident in my own experience, I thought that all contending and contradictory beliefs would be forever set at rest, could I but be received as a member of that body. My experiences of life and its falsity had already left so indelible a mark on my

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<sup>8</sup>.—*Home’s Life and Mission*, pp. 67, 68.



soul, from my recent experiences of it at Florence, that I wished to shun everything which pertained to this world, and I determined to enter a monastery.”

We really have no record of experiences at Florence, save the attempt upon his life, which seem adequately to explain so profound a depression. It is impossible not to conjecture that either some love disappointment had occurred or that his sudden propinquity to the next world had thoroughly frightened him. Be this as it may, the account goes on:

“After two or three weeks of serious deliberations on the part of the authorities, it was decided that I should be received as a member of the Church and I was confirmed. The Princess O(rsini) was my godmother, and the Count B(ranicki) my godfather on the occasion. I was most kindly received by the Pope, who questioned me much regarding my past life. He pointed to a crucifix which stood near to us, and said: ‘My child, it is upon what is on that table that we place our faith.’ He also gave me a large silver medal which it has since been my misfortune to lose.”

From the Memoir written by Mrs. Home we learn that “an English prelate, Msgr. Talbot, accompanied Home to the Vatican,” and it appears that the same Msgr. Talbot, a personage with whom readers of Purcell’s *Life of Cardinal Manning* are made very familiar, had been instrumental in arranging for his confirmation. A letter of his to Home, giving him directions regarding this, was preserved among the papers found after the medium’s death, as was also a special Papal blessing which, Mrs. Home declares, “guaranteed to him and his relatives an entry into Paradise.” The fact that the writer belonged to the Orthodox Russian Church may explain the quaintness of this impression regarding the purport of a Papal blessing, as also the following remark connected with the reception: “There was nothing said of demoniacal possession. Possibly in welcoming her new son, the Church had hopes that she might one day canonise him as a worker of miracles.”<sup>9</sup>

On the other hand, I know of no evidence to suggest that Home’s conversion was regarded in Rome as an important conquest. He was received, and baptised conditionally, by Father John Etheridge, an English Jesuit then resident in Rome. Brother Arthur Everard, S.J., who died only in 1922, was present on the occasion, and I learned from him that the little ceremony took place quietly. I can find no mention of the reception in *The Tablet* or in the *Civiltà Cattolica* or in the *Giornale di Roma*, in all of which the more striking occurrences of this kind were commonly recorded. No doubt Home’s aristocratic friends, like the Branickis, will easily have procured him an introduction to the Hon. and Very Rev. Msgr. George Talbot, who even then, as we learn from the Catholic Directory, was a Cameriere Segreto of His Holiness and resident at the Vatican. It is also possible that at this very early date in his career, when the young medium had hardly been six months on the Continent, and had never remained long in one place, his fame as a psychic had awakened no echo in Papal Rome. In that case it may quite conceivably have happened that no special warning was addressed to him

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<sup>9</sup>.—Mrs. Home, *op. cit.*, p. 68.



regarding spiritualistic practices, the more so that his avowed intention of entering a religious order would have disarmed suspicion.

This purpose was apparently quite serious at first, even from Mrs. Home's account of it. She writes:

“Whom the king smiles on, courtiers smile on; and the gracious bearing of the Pope was imitated by all the hierarchy of Rome from cardinals downwards. The path that led the young convert up to the monastery gates was strewn with roses, and amidst the applause and encouragement of all around him, he might have finally seen those gates close upon him, but that—but that the nearer he drew to the monastic life the less that life allured him and the stronger became his misgivings. . . . Convinced that to shut himself up in a convent cell would be a fatal error, he drew back and refused to enter. This determination was no sooner arrived at than he quitted Italy; and in company with the Branicki family came to Paris in June, 1856.”<sup>10</sup>

It all sounds very much like:

The Devil fell ill, the Devil a monk would be;

The Devil got well, the *devil* a monk was he.

At the same time I find it hard, indeed practically impossible, to believe that Home, living for six weeks among the type of Catholics to whom a budding vocation must have introduced him, can have failed to carry away a clear understanding of the attitude of moral theology towards the practices of the séance room. Although his power had left him, or perhaps more correctly, the prickings of conscience deterred him from exercising it, there was plenty of talk in Rome at that date about “Magnetismus,” and under this term was included not only hypnotism, or mesmerism, but the whole body of related phenomena.

It was in the month of August of that very year, 1856, that the Congregation of the Holy Office published a notable encyclical on this matter, and although Home left Rome in the preceding June, such decrees are not issued before much discussion has taken place and considerable interest has been awakened in the subject in ecclesiastical circles beforehand. In this encyclical the practices of those are denounced who “boast that they have discovered certain principles of augury and divination,” and the phenomena which passed under the name of “clairvoyance” and “somnambulism”<sup>11</sup> were definitely condemned as “superstitious,” while special reference is made to those who profess “to call up the souls of the dead, to obtain replies, and to discern things unknown and distant” (*animas mortuorum evocare, responsa accipere, ignota et longinqua detegere*). The conclusion is drawn that, “whatever the process followed,” this use of physical means to procure a non-natural effect involves a deception which is altogether unlawful and heretical, and is an

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<sup>10</sup>.—Mrs. Home, *op. cit.*, p. 69.

<sup>11</sup>.—It is worthwhile to note that Dr. Haddock's experiences with his psychic “Emma” were published in 1851 under the title *Somnolism and Psycheism* (Sic).

offence against sound principles of morality.<sup>12</sup> Without being able to pronounce too positively, I get the impression from Home's manner of speaking in his book, *Incidents*, that he was by no means unacquainted with the standpoint of Catholic moralists, and that he was rather ingenious in so wording his references to his psychic phenomena as apparently to justify them from theological censure. For example, speaking of the Papal audience granted to him, he remarks:



**Pope Pius IX**  
**Giovanni Maria Mastai-Ferretti**

“It has since been frequently said of me that at this interview with the Pope, I had promised him that I would not have any more manifestations; but it is hardly necessary, after what I have narrated, to say that I could not have made any such promise, nor did he ask any such promise to be made.”<sup>13</sup>

Of course, Home could not promise that he would not have any more manifestations, any more than a man could promise that he would never see a ghost or hear the wail of a banshee; but Home could very well promise, and the Pope might very sensibly have exacted a promise, that he would never hold any more séances or deliberately *provoke* manifestations. The very fact of his choosing to contradict an allegation which no sane critic could put forward, points to the fact that the medium very probably did give a demanded pledge of the kind I have suggested. Home's little economies in

the matter of phraseology may sometimes be discerned by a comparison of his own statements with those made, generally from manuscript materials, in the biography which was afterwards compiled by his second wife. The following passage, which may be quoted at length, will supply an illustration:

“In June, 1856, I went to Paris, and as I had been advised to do by the Pope, I sought the counsel of Père de Ravignan, one of the most learned and excellent men of the day. During the winter I again fell ill . . . and for some time I was confined to my bed. The time was fast drawing nigh when the year would expire, during which my power was to be suspended. The Père de Ravignan always assured me that as I was now a member of the Catholic Church it would not

<sup>12</sup>.—The more significant passages of this encyclical are printed in Denzinger-Bannwart, *Enchiridion*, nn. 1653-1654.

<sup>13</sup>.—*Incidents*, p. 95.

return to me. For myself I had no opinion on the subject, as I was quite without data except his assurance on the point.”<sup>14</sup>

Now it seems that Père de Ravignan’s assurance was not an absolute prophecy but a conditional one, which Mrs. Home, no doubt from a letter, gives more correctly as follows: “Have no fear, my child;<sup>15</sup> as long as you go on as you are now doing, *observing carefully all the precepts of our Holy Church*, your powers will not be allowed to return.”<sup>16</sup> It is quite certain, as we shall see, that Home did not carry out the condition I have italicized. Be this as it may, his account of the renewal of the manifestations runs as follows:

“On the night of the 10th of February, 1857, as the clock struck twelve, I was in bed, to which I had been confined, when there came some loud rappings in my room, a hand was placed gently on my brow, and a voice said, ‘Be of good cheer, Daniel, you will soon be well.’ But a few minutes had elapsed before I sank into a quiet sleep, and I awakened in the morning feeling more refreshed than I had done for a long time. I wrote to the Père de Ravignan, telling him what had occurred, and the same afternoon he came to see me. During the conversation loud rappings were heard on the ceiling and on the floor, and as he was about to give me his benediction before leaving, loud raps came on the bedstead. He left me without expressing any opinion whatever on the subject of the phenomena.”<sup>17</sup>

It will be noticed that Home adopts the attitude of being merely the subject of these manifestations. If we could trust the fidelity of his account, they came to him unsought, and since he alone had the experience, it is impossible to contradict him. The same pose is maintained in the paragraph which immediately follows, though his widow, as we shall see, gives him away in the biography she compiled in 1888:

“The following day (Feb. 11th) I had sufficiently recovered to take a drive, and on Friday the 13th, I was presented to their Majesties at the Tuileries, where manifestations of an extraordinary nature occurred. The following morning I called on the Père de Ravignan to inform him of this. He expressed great dissatisfaction at my being the subject of such visitations, and said that he would not give me absolution unless I should at once return to my room, shut myself up there, and not listen to any rappings or pay the slightest attention to whatever phenomena might occur in my presence. I wished to reason with him and to explain that I could not prevent myself from hearing and seeing, for that God having blessed me with the two faculties, it was not in my power to ignore them. As for shutting myself up, I did not think, from my having before tried the experiment, that it was consistent with my nervous temperament, and that the

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<sup>14</sup>.—*Incidents*, p. 95.

<sup>15</sup>.—Home preserved several short letters from Père de Ravignan (*ibid.*, p. 73). They usually begin “*Mon bien cher enfant*.” It will be remembered that at this date the medium was only twenty-three. Three of these letters are printed in the Second Series of *Incidents in my Life*, pp. 55, 56.

<sup>16</sup>.—*D. D. Home, His Life and Mission*, p. 70.

<sup>17</sup>.—*Incidents*, pp. 95, 96.

strain on my nervous system would be too great if I were thus isolated. He would not listen to me, and told me I had no right to reason. ‘Do as I bid you, otherwise bear the consequences.’ I left him in great distress of mind. I wished not to be disobedient, and yet I felt that God is greater than man, and that *He* having bestowed the power of reason on me, I could not see why I should be thus deprived of it.”<sup>18</sup>

Anyone reading this version of the story will be led to infer that Home, even according to the standards accepted by Catholic theology, had done nothing blameworthy. The manifestations had presented themselves unsolicited. The medium had been perfectly frank with his confessor, and it was not in his power to prevent the noises and other phenomena from happening. No man was bound in conscience to take such extraordinary precautions against a recurrence of the phenomena as the shutting himself up in his room. But every intelligent reader who has any acquaintance with Père de Ravignan’s character will be satisfied that the great preacher can have said nothing so foolish. Home had not been merely the passive victim of this visitation of spiritual influences. It is his widow, a quarter of a century afterwards, who makes the matter quite plain. She informs us that the news of the return of Home’s powers spread to the Court. So preternaturally rapid was the diffusion of this intelligence that two days afterwards, in spite of the medium’s invalid condition:

“An Imperial invitation to the Tuileries followed and he was presented to the Emperor and Empress. This was on the 13th of February, and certain personages of the Court were selected to be present at a seance held the same evening.”<sup>19</sup>

So it was not merely that during his visit to the Tuileries “manifestations of an extraordinary nature occurred,” but that Home went back the same evening to hold a séance in the presence of a company of invited guests. If he is thus convicted of improving upon the facts to suit his purpose in one particular, he is clearly capable of doctoring his account in other directions. I accordingly suggest that the whole story of the spirits’ warning that his power was to be suspended for just a year, was nothing more than a convenient fiction. So far as I can discover, it lacks all independent confirmation. It depends upon the medium’s word alone, and there is no evidence that it was ever heard of until Home had grown tired of the restraints of Catholicism and wanted once more to figure before admiring eyes as the most wonderful magician of his time.

I believe that if the real facts of the case could come to light, it would be found that Home had got a hint that Napoleon III was anxious to witness the phenomena which had attracted so much attention in America, England, and Italy. So flattering a prospect would have been seductive to any young man, and there was certainly a strong blend of snobbery in Home’s composition. He accordingly invented the tale that the suspension of the phenomena was not due to any religious scruple of his own, but to the action of the spirits. By great good fortune the spirits had so arranged things that the fallow year expired and his health was miraculously restored just in time for him to

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<sup>18</sup>.—*Incidents in My Life*, p. 96.

<sup>19</sup>.—*Mrs. Home, op. cit.*, p. 70.

go to the Tuileries and to be presented to the Emperor and Empress, and thereupon a séance duly followed.<sup>20</sup>

One, extremely suspicious feature in Home's story of the year's suspension is a certain incident which occurred in Paris and which he assigns in his book to the summer of the year 1857, under the chapter heading: "1857-8 —France, Italy and Russia—Marriage." The account had best be given in his own words:

"In an hotel situated on the Boulevard des Italiens, I was introduced to a family, consisting of Mr. H—, his wife, and their two sons, both of whom were at that time in the English army, and had just returned from the Crimean campaign. The father, a cool-headed, truthful-minded man, was a countryman of mine, and our conversation soon turned upon the wonders of second sight and ghost seeing. Presently, whilst we were talking together, we were startled at hearing loud sounds coming from a distant part of the room and slowly approaching us. I at once suggested to them that some spirit desired to communicate with us. The unseen one assented to this by making the sounds for the alphabet,<sup>21</sup> and the name Grégoire was spelt out, with the additional information that he had passed from earth, giving the time of his departure. This the two young officers at once and strongly contradicted, for they recognized in the name a very intimate friend, an officer in the French army in the Crimea, whom they had only just left there suffering under a slight wound, but so slight that it gave no apprehension of an unfavourable kind. He, however, now gave them other proofs of his identity, and during the whole of the remaining hours of the afternoon and evening he continued to make his presence manifest. Several times things were brought from parts of the room distant from us and there were frequent raps and his friends felt touches. Sounds resembling the firing of musketry were heard."<sup>22</sup>

The rest of the story, with the verification of the death of Grégoire," is of no particular interest in the present connection. The point which concerns us here is that the incident did not, and could not have been taken place in the summer of 1857, when the Crimean War had long been over, but in the summer of 1856, when the troops were returning. This fact was pointed out by a reviewer of the book in *The Spectator*, and Home himself, writing to the same journal, admitted that the date must be 1856.<sup>23</sup>

It follows, of course, from this that the incident occurred during the supposed suspension of Home's mediumistic faculties and not very long after his reception into the Church. Moreover, it cannot for a moment be maintained that Home on this occasion was merely a passive instrument who could not help what had happened. The

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<sup>20</sup>.—The curious thing is that an exactly similar and equally sudden recovery of powers which Home declared to be in abeyance took place when he was invited to attend a reception by the Czar in the Imperial Palace at St. Petersburg.

<sup>21</sup>.—In this process of communicating by raps, five raps was the convention usually adopted to indicate that the spirits wanted the alphabet to be called in order that they might spell out a message.

<sup>22</sup>.—*Incidents*, p. 123.

<sup>23</sup>.—*The Spectator*, April 4, 1863, p. 1838.

alphabet was called—obviously a long and cumbrous process of communication—and the name was spelled out with other messages, while the manifestations continued the whole afternoon and evening. None the less, Home declares in the preceding chapter that until the power returned, as predicted; on February 10, 1857, he “had followed out Père de Ravignan’s injunctions most conscientiously.”<sup>24</sup> It is evident that there is a serious contradiction here even if we confine ourselves to the medium’s own narrative, and it is not less plain that the transposition of the Grégoire” incident from 1856 to 1857 was somehow a very convenient lapse of memory in the interest of Mr. Home’s credit for consistency.

But what throws a still more significant light upon the possible motives for this little inversion of chronological order, is the statement made about the convert medium in de Ponlevoy’s *Life of Father de Ravignan*. Home himself has the courage to quote the whole passage in his *Incidents*,<sup>25</sup> but I prefer to use the published English translation.

“We cannot conclude this chapter [says Père de Ponlevoy] without making some mention of that well-known American medium who possessed the unfortunate talent of turning other things besides tables, and of calling up the dead for the amusement of the living. Much has been said, even in the newspapers, about his close and pious intimacy with Father de Ravignan; and it seems that an attempt has been made to use an honoured name as a passport to introduce into France and establish there these precious discoveries of the New World.

“The facts simply stated are as follows: It is quite true that after the young man had been converted in Rome, he was there furnished with an introduction to Father de Ravignan, but at this time he had given up his magic together with his Protestantism, and he was welcomed with the interest which is due from a priest to every soul, ransomed with the blood of Jesus Christ, and especially, perhaps, to a soul which is converted and brought back to the bosom of the Church. On his arrival in Paris he was again absolutely forbidden to return in any way to his old practices. Father de Ravignan, agreeably to the principles of the faith which condemns all superstition, prohibited under the severest penalties he could inflict, all participation in or presence at these dangerous and sometimes guilty proceedings. Once the unhappy medium, beset by I know not what man or devil, was unfaithful to his promise: he was received with a severity which prostrated him. I chanced at the time to come into the room and I saw him rolling on the ground and writhing like a worm at the feet of the priest, so righteously indignant. The Father was touched by this frenzy of repentance, raised him up and pardoned him, but, before dismissing him, exacted a written promise confirmed by an oath. But a notorious relapse soon took place, and the servant of

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<sup>24</sup>.—*Incidents*, p. 99.

<sup>25</sup>.—It must be remembered that Home’s book appeared simultaneously in French and English and that the popularity of de Ponlevoy’s *Vie du R. P. Xavier de Ravignan* was so great among all classes of French readers that its allegations could not be passed over in silence.

God breaking off all relations with this slave of the spirits sent him word never again to appear in his presence.”<sup>26</sup>

The “notorious relapse” was evidently the séance given by Home before the Emperor at the Tuileries, the fame of which spread even to America. The other backsliding, which under Pere’s de Ravignan’s severe rebuke elicited such a “frenzy of repentance,” may well have been this very “Grégoire” episode which has just been recounted. Home was forced to make some reply to the uncompromising indictment of Father de Ponlevoy. After quoting the passage he comments as follows:

“If the rest of the book is not more truthful than this statement it is certainly not worth reading. The good Father de Ravignan well knew that I was not an American, and that this power had begun with me before I ever saw America, for I had told him all my history. He also knew that I never invoked the spirits.<sup>27</sup> No good name is, or ever will be, required to introduce, or accredit a God-given truth, and I know far too well the power of facts to think that they required the passport of even Father de Ravignan’s name. His biographer must have had a limited education too, both religious and historical, to write of these things as being the ‘fine discoveries of the New World,’ for they are readily to be traced in every country of which any record is preserved to us.<sup>28</sup> It is perfectly untrue that I ever abjured any magical or other processes, for I never knew anything of such, and therefore I could not abjure them.”<sup>29</sup>

Home then declares that he told Father de Ravignan that the spirits would return to him on February 10, 1857, but that the Father assured him there was no fear of that as long as he went to the sacraments. “I followed his injunctions most conscientiously, but on the very day promised they came as I have described.” Finally the medium asserts:

“I never yet violated any promise to my knowledge, and as to the biographer coming in and finding me rolling on the ground and crawling like a worm, it is an entire falsehood. But had it even been true, it would not have been the place of a priest to make such a thing public. If I took an oath, and wrote it down as alleged, that writing will have been kept. Let it be forthcoming to save the character of this Father A. de Ponlevoy, that he may prove the truth of the statement he makes. In the meantime, I say that it is without even any foundation of truth. The last time I saw the good Father de Ravignan, I would only reason with him, for as I then said to him, no man had a right to forbid that which God gave. I left him without confessing even, so that I had not been on my knees at all, much less crawling like a worm.”

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<sup>26</sup>—A. de Ponlevoy, S.J., *Life of Father de Ravignan*. Eng. trans., pp. 545-546. (French edit., II. pp. 298-299.) I have corrected one or two phrases in the English version.

<sup>27</sup>—This seems to me a very quibbling reply. To form a circle and to sit awaiting manifestations, to do this in a darkened room in order to observe “spirit lights” (*Incidents*, pp. 25, 33, 36, 38, 49, 66, 72, etc.) is surely a manner of invoking spirits.

<sup>28</sup>—And yet the spiritualists, both of England and America, every year celebrate the 31st of March as the anniversary of the foundation of modern Spiritualism, which took place in 1848 at Hydesville, New York.

<sup>29</sup>—*Incidents*, p. 98.



No impartial person who will make acquaintance with Père de Gabriac's *Life of de Ponlevoy*, a man who became at a later date Provincial and Master of Novices, and who for his austerity, charity, and holiness was universally revered, can for a moment believe that his description of the scene between Home and Père de Ravignan was an unscrupulous fabrication. It seems equally impossible to suppose that it was a case of mistaken identity, or that Home had fallen into a trance state and did not know what he was doing. There is practically no choice but to conclude that one of the two was telling a deliberate untruth, and can we hesitate to decide on which side the perjury lay?

Home had every motive of interest impelling him to contradict a story in which he played so ignominious a part. He was also by nature an intensely sensitive man. On the other hand, Père de Ponlevoy had no adequate motive for inventing such a tale. He almost certainly would not have touched on the matter at all, except for the fact that Home *more suo* was magnifying his acquaintance with the great preacher and had managed to convey that this intimacy was equivalent to an approval of his mediumship. It may be noted that at a later date (January, 1864), after the first series of Home's *Incidents in My Life* had been published in English and French, the medium was banished from the States of the Church on account of his spiritualistic practices. Thereupon he endeavoured, though without success, to induce the British Government to make his expulsion an occasion for diplomatic intervention. But the story (recounted at wearisome length in the second series of *Incidents*) is too long to tell here. It will be sufficient for my present purpose to have shown that there was certainly a strain of insincerity in Home's character, and that his air of frankness and geniality was, at least to some extent, a calculated pose. It does not seem to me that this invalidates the evidence for his astounding phenomena, but it should probably render us cautious in accepting any statement for which we have no better authority than the medium's own word.

There will be occasion in future chapters to make frequent reference to the manifestations produced by Home. Sir A. C. Doyle has described him as "the most remarkable man since the Apostles," and as one who was "in some aspects more than a man." He tells us further that he was "of so sweet a nature and so charitable a disposition that the union of all qualities would seem almost to justify those who, to Home's great embarrassment, were prepared to place him upon a pedestal above humanity."<sup>30</sup> It must be admitted, however, that the judgment expressed by others, in their estimate of Home's character was not so favourable. Mr. Frank Podmore, who was a resolute sceptic, but who had not apparently come into personal contact with the medium, states in his book *Modern Spiritualism*:

"There can be no doubt that he [Home] produced on most persons the impression of a highly emotional, joyous, childlike nature, full of generous impulses, and lavish of affection to all comers. That he possessed in full measure the defects of his temperament there can be as little doubt; affections so lightly given were wont to be as lightly recalled: vanity seems to have been the permanent element in his character; he basked in admiration; for the rest he showed throughout a disposition to take life easily, and to look out for 'soft

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<sup>30</sup>.-Doyle, *The Vital Message*, p. 55.

jobs.’ In short, as Mr. Andrew Lang has described him, ‘a Harold Skimpole, with the gift of divination.’ The malignant side of his character showed but rarely, and then chiefly in his attitude towards rival mediums. But it flashed out when his vanity was wounded; and after his second marriage he treated many of his old friends with indifference and some with marked ingratitude!”<sup>31</sup>

Mr. Stainton Moses, who did know Home personally and who was himself a medium of considerable power, tells us that Home “accepted the theory of the return in rare instances of the departed, but believes with me that most of the manifestations proceed from a low order of spirits who hover near the earth plane”; adding further “he is a thoroughly good, honest, weak and very vain man, with little intellect and no ability to argue or defend his faith.”<sup>32</sup> Home was certainly not devoid of ability in certain directions. He gave recitations and readings which were remarkable for dramatic power, he played the piano with feeling, and, though a man of little or no education, he seems to have acquired a fair conversational knowledge of French and Russian. The very fact that, in spite of his humble origin, he managed to get himself accepted in high aristocratic circles, not only in England, but also in France, Italy, and Russia, seems to prove that he possessed a certain adaptability. The two Russian ladies whom he successively married both belonged to distinguished families who were received at Court, and there is good reason to believe that both wives were devoted to him.

Still, even Sir A. C. Doyle seems to have discovered at a later time that Home, in his private capacity, was not quite the ideal character he had previously depicted. The frank statement made in the following passage is creditable to the writer’s honesty of purpose.

“Whilst upon this subject [writes Doyle] I may say that when in Australia I had some interesting letters from a solicitor named Rymer. All students of Spiritualism will remember that when Daniel Home first came to England in 1855 he received great kindness from the Rymer family, who then lived at Ealing. Old Rymer treated him entirely as one of the family. This Bendigo Rymer was the grandson of Home’s benefactor and he had no love for the great medium because he considered that he had acted with ingratitude towards his people. The actual letters of his father, which he permitted me to read, bore out this statement, and I put it on record because I have said much in praise of Home and the balance should be held true. These letters, dating from about ’57, show that one of the sons of old Rymer was sent to travel upon the Continent to study art and that Home was his companion. They were as close as brothers, but when they reached Florence and Home became a personage in society there, he drifted away from Rymer, whose letters are those of a splendid young man. Home’s health was already indifferent, and while he was laid up in his hotel, he seems to have been fairly kidnapped by a strong-minded society lady of title, an Englishwoman living apart from her husband. For weeks he lived at her villa, though the state of his health would suggest that it was rather as patient than lover. What was more culpable was that he answered the letters of his comrade

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<sup>31</sup>.—Podmore, *Modern Spiritualism*, Vol. II, p, 228.

<sup>32</sup>.—Stainton Moses as reported in the *Proceedings of the Society for Psychical Research*, Vol. IX, p. 293.

very rudely and showed no sense of gratitude for all the family had done for him. I have read the actual letters and confess that I was chilled and disappointed. Home was an artist, as well as a medium, the most unstable combination possible; full of emotions, flying quickly to extremes, capable of heroisms and self-denials, but also of vanities and ill-humour. On this occasion the latter side of his character was too apparent.”<sup>33</sup>

In spite of these unamiable traits, it still remains true that Home as a medium was never detected in fraud. I believe I have read all that has been written on the subject, but the various stories told to Home’s discredit, of his having shuffled off his slipper and used his bare foot, for example, to touch those assisting at a séance, seem to me quite unconvincing and inadequately attested. The rationalists who were up in arms at the very idea of preternatural phenomena were just as ready to circulate stories to discredit Home as they were to fabricate calumnies against the Church.

One statement must be here referred to, because it has been more than once quoted of late, and because it seems to rest upon an authority whom all Catholics regard with deep respect. “Cardinal Mercier,” we are told, “in his book *La Psychologie* (II, § 239 note), mentions that Home, shortly before his death, confessed to a friend (Dr. Philip Davis) that he had disgracefully deceived the public as to the nature of his actions. ‘*Ce n’ était qu’un habile charlatan,*’ adds the Cardinal.”<sup>34</sup> Now Dr. Philip Davis in the book referred to, affirms a dozen times over that Home’s phenomena were produced without any kind of trickery. In the preface, and elsewhere, Dr. Davis declares that he had been present when in a good light a large dining-room table rose off the ground without anyone touching it, and he describes other manifestations which he had himself witnessed. If, on the other hand, he says that Home, just before his death, reproached himself with deceiving people, the deception, as Davis clearly explains, consisted in this, that the medium had pretended that the phenomena were produced by spirits, whereas he did not know how they were produced, and doubted the existence of any such spirits. The Cardinal’s statement, which occurs only in a casual footnote, was probably made upon some secondhand report of what Davis had written. No one who examines the book *La Fin du Monde des Esprits* could for a moment suppose that the writer meant to charge Home with trickery. The whole work is written in a directly contrary sense.

Finally, not the least surprising of the anomalies in the career of Daniel D. Home is the religious attitude of his first wife, née Alexandrina de Kroll, who was a goddaughter of the Czar Nicholas of Russia. In an appendix to Home’s book *Incidents in My Life* (first series) is an account written by Mary Howitt (who eventually herself became a Catholic) of Mrs. Home’s last days on earth. She died of consumption, at her sister’s residence, Château Laroche, Dordogne, France, on July 3, 1862, being then only 22 years old. When “Sadia” learned from her doctors that she was doomed, she, from the first, showed perfect resignation, and Mrs. Howitt says of her:

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<sup>33</sup>.—A. C. Doyle, *The Wanderings of a Spiritualist*, pp. 171-172.

<sup>34</sup>.—*La Fin du Monde des Esprits*; see pp. 287-289. There seems to be some question as to the identity of the writer of this book. It has been alleged that the name “Dr. Philip Davis” was merely a pseudonym adopted by a writer who had no connection with the medical profession.

“The sting was already taken from death, nor through the whole after-trials and sufferings of her physical frame did she lose her equanimity or firm confidence in the future. This calmness indeed, became the most striking feature of her long and painful illness. It was so profound and marked as to be almost phenomenal, and was noticed as such by the eminent physicians who attended her in London and subsequently in France, as well as by the bishop of Périgueux,<sup>35</sup> who frequently visited her during the latter part of her earthly life. The last Sacraments were administered to her by the Bishop, who wept like a child and who remarked that ‘although he had been present at many a death-bed for heaven, he had never seen one equal to hers.’”

After dwelling upon her singularly joyous spirit, as one who with the simplicity of a little child accepted the divine love as a natural gift, the writer continues:

“She loved the Saviour and rejoiced in Him, responding to His unspeakable goodness with the whole allegiance of her soul, but Gethsamene and the bloody hill of the Crucifixion were not present to her mind; the agony and woe had no place in her experience. She was, it must be remembered, the embodiment of her own Greek church; of that church in which she was educated, the most ancient faith of which has ever recognised the Saviour less as the Crucified than the Arisen, the triumphant over suffering, sin, and death, as the Victor not the Victim, as the Lord who said to His chosen ones: ‘Rejoice that your names are written in heaven.’”

There is much in these expressions which is surprising, though we must, of course, remember that Mary Howitt was not at this time a Catholic, and would probably, if questioned, have called herself a Christian Spiritualist. We are further told that during her illness “Mrs. Home commenced to see and converse with the denizens of the spiritual world,” notably her mother and father, and the mother of her husband.

“Frequently also, during the first three months and last two months of her illness, not only she, but all those about her, heard delicious strains of spirit music, sounding like a perfect harmony of vocal sounds. During the last month, also, the words were most distinctly heard, and were recognized as the chants for the dying used in the Russian church.”

None the less the funeral service is stated to have been performed by the vicar-general of the diocese, and the servants and peasantry seem to have paid her remarkable tributes of respect and affection. One would be disposed to think that Mrs. Howitt had misconceived the whole situation, or had perhaps accepted unquestioningly the husband’s highly imaginative version of these last scenes. But the third Earl of Dunraven, who was a practising Catholic, and knew Home well at a later date, quotes without suspicion the statement that the Bishop of Périgueux administered the last Sacraments to Home’s first wife.

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<sup>35</sup>—This must have been Monseigneur Charles T. Baudry, who himself died in March, 1883, nine months later. He had previously been a much-esteemed professor of theology at Saint-Sulpice.

That the first Mrs. Home shared her husband's beliefs as to his intercourse with spirits in the beyond can hardly be doubted, and we have evidence that she was frequently present at his séances. On the other hand, he states quite positively in his *Incidents in My Life* (first series) that they "were married first in the private chapel of the country house of my brother-in-law according to the rites of the Greek Church, and afterwards, at the church of St. Catherine according to the rites, of the Romish Church." The whole situation is very puzzling and I have no adequate explanation of it. My only purpose is to state without prejudice the facts so far as they are known to me. The vicar-general of Périgueux, who is said to have presided at the burial of Mrs. Home, was Msgr. Félix de Las Cases, who in 1867 was consecrated Bishop of Constantine and Hippo in Algeria, by Msgr. (afterwards Cardinal) Lavigerie.

It is only since writing the above that in the little volume of Père Xavier Pailloux, *Le Magnetisme le Spiritisme et la Possession*, Paris, 1865 (pp. 229, 230) I have come across a quite definite statement that four days before the death of Home's first wife, her sister, at Mrs. Home's special request begged Msgr. Baudry to come to the Château Laroche. Mrs. Home wished to die a Catholic, and the Bishop accordingly "received her profession of faith and gave her the Last Sacraments. He was moreover deeply edified at the disposition she manifested at this supreme moment." We are told further that he sent his Vicar General, Msgr. de Las Cases to perform the funeral and to receive Mrs. Home's sister, who also wished to become a Catholic, into the Church.

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We reproduce below from Hansard the official report of the question asked in the Commons about the expulsion of Home from Rome.<sup>36</sup>

## MR. HOME AND THE ROMAN GOVERNMENT.— QUESTION

MR. ROEBUCK said, he wanted to ask a Question of the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, and it was one to which he also begged the attention of the noble Lord at the head of the Government also. It referred to the treatment of an English subject abroad. This gentleman, Mr. Home, had a power, as he believed, of bringing spirits to his call. He was what was styled a "Spiritualist;" but that had nothing to do with it, for Mr. Home was, he believed, a man of good behaviour. Well, this gentleman went to the Papal States, and did not controvert any of the regulations of the Roman Government; he went to Rome for the purpose of cultivating one of the fine arts, and in order to carry out that design he took a studio and incurred considerable expense. Some time after his arrival he received a notice desiring him to call upon Signor Matteucci, the Minister of Police.

He went to Signor Matteucci's office accordingly. The Minister asked him his age; and on his stating it, Signor Matteucci expressed his opinion that Mr. Home was eight or nine years older than he stated himself to be, to which opinion the gentleman

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<sup>36</sup>—HC Deb 30 May 1864 Vol 175 cc839-44 839

himself demurred. The controversy went on, and Signor Matteucci said, "You have published a book in France and England stating that certain spirits wait upon you?" "Well," said Mr. Home, "I have done that." "Then," said Signor Matteucci, "will you undertake that no spirits shall come to you while you are in Rome?" Mr. Home replied, "No, I can't do that; the spirits come to me of their own accord; they don't come when I call them, and I can't answer for the spirits; but I will answer for this—that I will hold no séance; I will do nothing to solicit their coming to me; I will do nothing contrary to the law of the city of Rome." Thereupon Signer Matteucci gave him to understand that he would be allowed to remain in Rome undisturbed.

Some time afterwards the person second in command of the police of Rome sent for Mr. Home, who went to his office and found no one there. After his return home he received a peremptory message to wait upon this second Minister of Police; and on presenting himself the following day that functionary said to him, "You were not here yesterday." Mr. Home replied, "I was, and I have a consul to prove it." The other then, observed, "I don't care whether you were here or not; you must go out of Rome in forty-eight hours." That was the whole story.

He had heard the noble Lord at the head of the Government talk about *Civis Romanus sum* on one occasion. He now wished for a very much stronger application of the term, Mr. Home was an English citizen, and wherever he was the aegis of England should protect him against any infringement upon his liberty which the law did not allow. He wanted to know whether the noble Lord at the head of the Government would allow any English citizen to be treated in the manner Mr. Home had been—whether he would not protect an Englishman wherever he wandered with the name of an English citizen? He wanted to ask the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, whom he now perceived in close consultation with the noble Lord, whether he would not protect this gentleman against the proceedings of the Papal Government? God knew that he had no feeling about the Papal Government; and as for the old gentleman at the head of that Government, he had a high respect for him, and hoped he might live many years in the enjoyment of his high position.

And as for Mr. Home, in the presence of the right hon. Gentleman the President of the Board of Trade (Mr. Milner Gibson), he must say that he regarded this spirit-calling as an hallucination. He had no feeling on the subject of that wonderful power, except one of, he might say, contempt for the whole thing; but Mr. Home being an English citizen, he was anxious that this country should protect him as long as he did not disobey the law. That gentleman at forty-eight hours' notice was put into a railway carriage and ignominiously expelled out of the Roman States; and when Lord Russell was asked what he would do, he said, "I will do nothing." It might be said that Mr. Home went into the Roman States knowing that the Pope was all-powerful and despotic; but—he knew he was going on a violent hypothesis—if an English merchant went into Russia, and the Emperor said, "Cut off that English merchant's head," would England stand it? He appealed to the noble Lord to protect this unfortunate gentleman, and he begged to ask whether anything had been done by Her Majesty's Government to procure him redress?

MR. LAYARD expressed his regret that Mr. Home should have placed himself in such a position that the Roman Government had called upon him to leave Rome. But Mr. Home appeared to have infringed the Roman laws. It was alleged that the cause

of this disagreeable circumstance was that he was in the habit of communicating with certain spirits of the other world. The Papal authorities said that this was against their laws, and they, therefore, called upon him to leave Rome. Now, he (Mr. Layard) did not wish to give any opinion as to whether that gentleman had or had not communication with unearthly spirits. Neither was he prepared to cavil with the Roman law or the Roman authorities. Such appeared to be the Roman law, and so it was administered within the Roman territories. When a gentleman visited a foreign country he was naturally compelled to conform to its laws, and if he refused to do so it was for the authorities to exercise the power vested in them, and to remove him. The same principle was recognized in England, before the repeal of the Alien Act, which enabled the British Government to remove a foreigner from this country under certain circumstances. It was impossible for Her Majesty's Government to interfere in the case in question. All he could say was, that when Mr. Home was first called upon by the Roman Government to furnish explanations in regard to a certain work he had published, and in regard to his alleged intercourse with the spirits of another world — by no means good spirits, but quite the contrary — he sought the protection of the British Consul.

The British Consul, whose duty it was to deal with such questions, at once communicated with the Roman authorities, and endeavoured to obtain a withdrawal of the order to Mr. Home. Upon this application the Roman authorities at first gave Mr. Home leave to remain at Rome upon his undertaking it is understood, to abstain from communicating with the other world; but they afterwards changed their mind, whether because they believed that those mysterious spirits were holding converse with Mr. Home, or from some other cause, he (Mr. Layard) could not say. But, at all events, they were determined that neither Mr. Home nor any of those spirits should make Rome their dwelling place, and, accordingly, they requested him to depart. Such was the law of Rome, and the House would see it was impossible for the British Government to interfere in the matter. This was not a question in which there was any protection needed for either the person or property of a British subject. There was no charge of ill-treatment, nor of any attempt to injure the property of a British subject. All that this gentleman was required to do was to leave Rome within a certain time.

He had no doubt that Mr. Home had suffered great inconvenience from this circumstance, as he appeared to have wished to follow the profession of a sculptor, and to have expended some money upon his studio and house in Rome. The law, however, was such as had been stated, and he was bound to submit to it. Her Majesty's Government had made such remonstrances as the nature of the case permitted, but those remonstrances had proved unavailing, and he was afraid they could do nothing to compel the Roman Government against their will to receive this gentleman and his supernatural visitants.

MR. HENNESSY said, that Mr. Home was a gentleman who stated that he had intercourse with spirits, who foretold future and related past events, and he believed that he accepted fees for his séances.

[Mr. ROEBUCK: Never.]

Suppose he had done so.



[Mr. ROEBUCK: Suppose he had not.]

What, however, he wished to point out was that in this country we had very stringent laws against conduct similar to that of Mr. Home. Fortune tellers and persons attempting to foretell events were liable to be taken up and punished by our laws. He would not discuss whether our laws or the laws of Rome were sound or not. What he asserted was that in each case they were founded on the same principle. There were a great number of English residents at Rome every year, and he had heard many of them state that nothing could exceed the courtesy and attention they always received from the Papal Government. This was the only complaint he had ever heard of against that Government, and he was glad to learn that Her Majesty's Government thought it was not well founded.

MR. SCULLY said, the hon. and learned Member for Sheffield had made a mistake in bringing that complaint against the Roman Government. That Government and Mr. Home were quite agreed; the only difference between them was as to these spirits, for whose good behaviour that gentleman could not be answerable. The only persons to blame were the obscene spirits in the habit of calling occasionally on Mr. Home. The hon. and learned Member said he had a great respect for "the old gentleman" at the head of the Roman Government. That was not a decent mode of reference to the head of the Catholic Church, and it was not justifiable on the hon. Member's part, even although he might have a bigoted prejudice against Catholics.

[Mr. ROEBUCK dissented.]

The House had been occupied all that evening with spirits and nothing but spirits; and he thought they had had enough of them. For himself he did not believe in any spirits except the spirit invoked by the Witch of Endor, for which there was Scripture authority. The President of the Board of Trade had turned the tables on the hon. and learned Member having left the House, not liking, perhaps, to face the spirits on that occasion.

The hon. and learned Member had asked what Earl Russell would do if an English merchant, "not a gentleman," had his head cut off at St. Petersburg. Why he would do exactly what he had in regard to Mr. Home—nothing. Russia was too strong to go to war with. But if the merchant who was not a gentleman had his head cut off by the Roman Government, Earl Russell would then go to war, because the Roman Government was weak. The hon. Member for Sheffield must know, as a lawyer, that the Roman Government in this case had acted within its strict right. England used to expatriate Papists, as she called them, at her pleasure, without receiving any remonstrances from Foreign Powers. The men thus sent away were not even foreigners, but their own countrymen. As for foreigners, England had always excluded them whenever she liked, on any excuse or on no excuse. He trusted they would not have a renewal of that night's exhibition; and he could not see what on earth could have been the hon. Member for Sheffield's object, unless it were the propagation of his extraordinary doctrines.

Main Question put, and agreed to.

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# The Origin of the London Spiritualist Alliance

*"The London Spiritualist Alliance is undoubtedly the most powerful single Spiritualistic organization in the world. Its membership extends throughout both hemispheres, and it includes all classes of people, ranging from the humblest citizen to those of historic importance."*

Horace Leaf "Under the Southern Cross" London, Cecil Palmer, 1923.

Whose idea was the LSA? And having been established only in 1884, how did it rise to such eminence over the next four decades? The first question was answered by Stainton Moses (M.A. Oxon) who was elected the first president, and may well explain why it flourished, though the American links mentioned in the note below never became significant.

LP.

## NOTES BY THE WAY.

Contributed by "M.A. (Oxon.)"<sup>37</sup>



It is within the knowledge of the readers of "LIGHT" that I have been engaged recently in promoting the formation of a society of old Spiritualists in London. I did this, not of my own motion, though I fully recognise the desirability of having such a band of Spiritualists among the other societies that exist, but by the urgent request of those invisible friends who are accustomed to influence me when their purpose requires it.

It was on October 21st, ult., that I received the first intimation of what was wished. I had not had any such message for a long time, for the power has ceased with me except when it is revived by those who use it, and this is not done except for a specific purpose. On this occasion the message was urgent, and I was powerfully influenced. On October 25th I set myself to do what I was told, and at a conference formed a committee to carry the idea into effect which had

<sup>37</sup>.-Taken from *Light* February 9th 1884 pages 53(front page) - 54

been impressed on me. On November 5th came a further message, the gist of which is contained in the circular letter which I addressed to Spiritualists on the subject of the proposed society. That letter is, to a very large extent, a reproduction of what I was then told.

Again, on January 3rd, 1884, I had further information. There would be difficulties, some of which I was told that I was then unaware of. I have since learned what they are. But, as I was also told, they have melted. I was urged strongly to persevere and to contemplate a successful completion of preliminaries in the spring.

It is necessary, for the purpose of making clear what I have to say, to quote some parts of what I then received as my instructions. The source of the messages is the same as that familiar to the readers, of "Spirit Teachings." "The Chief has said all that is necessary; but many of our friends are inspired with a desire to take the matter in hand, and are anxious to be heard. The details of action you know he never meddles with. He inspires the idea, and leaves to others the execution of it. It is his practice always, for he is far removed from the life of your earth, and its practical possibilities are not within his grasp. We have with us some friends who are very anxious that you should open relations with America . . . A., and B., and C., . . . and especially Benjamin Coleman."<sup>38</sup> The latter is now awaking into renewed activity. He has wider views than he ever had, for *the latter part of his life was beclouded with adversity and consuming care, and he had lost to a great extent his interest in Spiritualism*, though he always maintained his sympathy with your work.... He feels that a great opportunity is now offered, and he is very anxious that it should not be missed. He is strongly desirous that you place yourself in communication with America." There was more to the same effect.

I rejoined that America was a large place and that I had no special person with whom I was led to act; I would rather secure a stable organisation here first. The reply came at once:—"Benjamin Coleman suggests A E. Newton and his wife, who are large-hearted, and *the latter of whom at one time greatly influenced him. He has a strong recollection of the influence of Mrs. Newton when she came to England*, and (as he says) preached a mission leading from a mere phenomenal Spiritualism hardly in advance of Materialism to an advanced conception of man's duty and destinies. He believes that you would be much in sympathy." I still demurred, and said I must act in my own way, and as the occasion demanded; I would not agree to do anything respecting America. It was replied: "Our friend is disappointed. He has lost none of his determination of character, and he is urgent that we tell you that you are wrong."

So the matter dropped out of my mind. It was quite what I should expect Coleman to do. He was most generous in his appreciation of all I did for Spiritualism. He often expressed to me what he called his disgust at frauds, and all that brought discredit on the cause for which he had done so much. But in spite of all he maintained to the day of his departure from earth a lively interest in what I told him. I used to visit him frequently at his pressing request to keep him informed of what was being done.

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<sup>38</sup>— Obituary: Mr. BENJAMIN COLEMAN departed this life at 5.30p.m. on Wednesday, June 18, at Bernard Villas, Norwood, in the 71st year of his age. He had been failing for a year, and was attacked by painful internal symptoms about a week before his decease. Taken from Spiritual Notes July 1879, page 178.

My story now enters on a new phase. On January 31th I received a letter in a strange handwriting. It bears date January 18th, and is signed A. E. Newton. The writer commences with an apology for addressing me. He had fallen in with a copy of my "Spirit Teachings," and was moved to send me an expression of his sympathetic approval. He goes on to tell me how more than thirty years ago Mrs. Newton had developed the gift of mediumship, and how, in the privacy of the home circle, he had investigated through her instrumentality the mysteries of Spiritualism. His experiences had been on the same lines as my own. Hence his drawing towards me.

He continues:—"A few days ago Mrs. N. was moved to write a message in a tone of unusual elevation and vigour. No name was appended, but she heard the word 'Rector' repeatedly spoken in connection with it. Not perceiving any significance in the word she did not mention it at the time. But a day or two afterwards, on taking up your book, her eye fell upon that signature. Whether the writer was the same intelligence in both cases, we are not informed: but shortly after this incident she was strongly impressed—I may say impelled—to request me to write to you and endeavour to open personal communication with you as a step towards important ends in the future."

After some remarks on other subjects Mr. Newton continues:—"I should have stated at an earlier period in this long epistle that in the earlier stages of the spiritual outpouring, as long ago as 1855, Mrs. Newton was led, by what seemed a Divine Voice, to leave for a time her family, to which she was devotedly attached (myself and three young children), and go alone across the ocean to London, an entire stranger, for the purpose of introducing there the higher views of Spiritualism which had been revealed to us. . . . Amongst those who welcomed her gladly were old Robert Owen, Mr. Cox, of Jermyn-street, and *Mr Benjamin Coleman*. . . . Some years later, when Mr. Coleman was in this country, he *made, in my presence, a most remarkable acknowledgment of the impulse he had received at the time of her visit to him in London*. This leads me to state that a day or two after the request that I would write you was made, Mr. Coleman very unexpectedly presented himself to us, for the first time since his transition, reminded us of the above facts, earnestly seconded the request referred to, and particularly desired that I should inform you respecting Mrs. Newton's early mission to London and its results. *He further alluded to the fact that his later years were sadly clouded by adversities, including the loss of property, and of faith in Spiritualism, with which, he said, he became 'thoroughly disgusted.'* But he had now come to see more clearly, and wished to enroll himself among its prompters, and thought the establishing of communication between yourself and us would be of good use."

Now, all discussion as to the subject matter of this letter apart, it contains a remarkable parallel to what was said to me by Rector, writing for Benjamin Coleman on January 3rd, in London. Almost the same words describe the closing years of his life, "beclouded by adversity," "sadly clouded with adversities." The same intelligence is at work: of that there can be little doubt. And that intelligence is very like my friend Coleman's as I knew him. He—assuming this intelligence to be himself—acted just as he would have done in the flesh. There is evidence of the same dominant and rather domineering will, the same impatience of contradiction, the

same tenacity of purpose. I would not acquiesce in his wishes; and he forthwith went off to get his way otherwise.

There is always an apparent flaw in these narratives as we judge them, and this is no exception. What is wanting to make the thing complete is that he should have told Mrs. Newton that he had tried me unsuccessfully, and so had gone to her:<sup>39</sup> or that he should in some way have given one of us proof of his independent action. He did not do so apparently: Mr. Newton's letter contains no mention of such a statement. But he certainly conveyed to them information which sufficiently proves that the same intelligence approached both Mrs. Newton and myself. And he gave that evidence of a plan, a scheme of work, underlying the apparently dissociated phenomena, that marks the interference of spirit with our world, which it has been one of my objects to illustrate by this personal narrative. I am far from desiring to press deductions from it too far. I do not think it proves Coleman's identity by itself: but it is one of many such narratives, and their cumulative force is very great.

M. A. (Oxon.)

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<sup>39</sup>.—And yet, when one comes to think, he would not be likely to tell the Newtons that I had firmly resisted his views if he wished to induce them to approach me on the same subject.—“M.A. (Oxon.)”

## Founder Members of the LSA

Note by LP. Although we date the LSA from 1884, it had been at a meeting on 25th October 1883 that Stainton Moses had moved for the foundation of a new society upon the dissolution of the Central Association of Spiritualists. At a further meeting on 20th November 1883 the new society was named The London Spiritualist Alliance. Activities however did not begin until 1884. We reprint below the list of founder members. This list in itself is worthy of further research. Note the name of Mrs Britten for example, then settled in Manchester. And of Fred Hockley, the scryer - did Stainton Moses get his crystal from him?<sup>40</sup>

### THE LONDON SPIRITUALIST ALLIANCE.<sup>41</sup>

The time has arrived when it becomes my pleasing duty to announce the constitution of the London. Spiritualist Alliance, with a list of members which already includes most of the old and influential Spiritualists of the Metropolis, together with several well-known names from the provinces, and which will, I have little doubt, receive rapid accessions now that the committee is able to announce that work is about to be begun.

It will be remembered that I proposed the formation of the Society on the dissolution of the Central Association at the close of last year. The primary object in view was to keep together that body of Spiritualists who had acted in concert ever since the formation of the British National Association in the year 1873. The responses made to the circular issued shew that there are a number of Spiritualists who have been associated together at various times during the past ten years who desire to perpetuate or to resume that association under changed conditions adapted to changed times.”

Our first object, then, is association for mutual counsel and support. To this end the committee proposes to commence with a conversazione during the first week in May, particulars of which will be announced in due course. Advantage will be taken of that meeting to ascertain the wishes of members respecting the work to be done by the Society, the engagement of rooms for its library and papers, and other matters which the committee have in mind.

For the present it is deemed sufficient to engage a public room for our social meetings. We shall thus avoid the expense of renting rooms of our own until our income is large enough to warrant the expenditure, and the demand for such accommodation is such as to make us sure that it will be freely used and appreciated. The committee is fully impressed with a determination not to incur any expense that can reasonably be avoided, and in no case to exceed the small income on which they can rely. All that can be spent will be spent on useful work, and the extent of that work must depend absolutely on the amount of funds at our disposal.

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<sup>40</sup>.-Psypioneer Volume 1. No 3. July 2004:—Stainton Moses and the Crystal Visions – Leslie Price:—  
[http://woodlandway.org/PDF/Leslie\\_Price\\_PP3.pdf](http://woodlandway.org/PDF/Leslie_Price_PP3.pdf)

<sup>41</sup>.-Taken from *Light* March 15th 1884 page 108

The month of May has been fixed as the date of the first of what we trust may be a long series of social meetings, at which topics of interest may be discussed, and members may share one another's experience and knowledge, because it may fairly be hoped that the winter then be past, and the season will be more suitable for evening gathering of those who must come, in many cases from a long distance. It will be matter for consideration whether the convenience of some who cannot comfortably attend in the evening may not be met by an occasional afternoon meeting.

These and such topics will be usefully discussed when we meet face to face.

Signed on behalf of the Committee,

March 8th, 1884.

"M.A. (OXON)."

### **LONDON SPIRITUALIST ALLIANCE. FIRST LIST OF MEMBERS**

Mrs. Acworth	Miss Allen	Mr. F. Berkeley
Mr. J. J. Bodmer	Mrs. Hardinge Britten	Countess of Caithness
Mr. A. Calder	* Professor Cassal	Mr. Walter Coffin
Miss A. M. Collingwood	Mr. J. F. Collingwood	Mr. J. Crisp
Mr. Newton Crosland	Signor Damiani	Mr. Fabian Dawe
Mr. James Deane	Dr. Dixon	* Major-Gen. Drayson
Mr. T. H. Edmands {sic- LP}	Mr. J. C. Eno	Mrs. Frances Everitt
* Mr. J. S. Farmer	Mrs. Fielding	Mrs. FitzGerald
* Mr. Desmond Fitzgerald	Hon. Mrs. Forbes	Mrs. Ford
Mr. J. B. Gledstanes	Mr. T. Grant	Mrs. Makdougall Gregory
Mrs. Hallock	Mr. R. Hannah	Mr. Gilbert Harrison
Mr. J. F. Haskins	Mrs. Haskins	Rev. G. D. Haughton
Dr. Hayle	Mrs. Hennings	Mr. Fred. Hockley
Mrs. Honywood	Baron R. von Hoffmann	Miss Houghton
Mr. H. T. Humphries	Sir Charles Isham, Bart.	Mrs. E. M. James
* Mr. Algernon Joy	Mr. Arthur Lillie	Major-Gen. Maclean
Mr. Aladar Madach	Mr. Ed. Maitland	Mrs. Maltby
Miss Maltby	Mr. March	Mr. C. C. Massey
Mr. Maurice	Mr. Stewart Menteath	Mrs. Nichols
Mrs. Parrick	Mr. Richard Pearce	Mr. Cornelius Pearson
Miss Peppercorn	Mr. Francis Percival	Duchesse de Pomar
* Mr. E. Dawson Rogers	Mrs. Dawson Rogers	Signor Rondi
Mrs. Sainsbury	Mrs. Martin Smith	Mrs. S. Smith
* Dr. Stanhope Speer	Mrs. Speer	Miss Speer
Mr. Charlton T. Speer	Miss Spencer	Mrs. Stack
* Rev. W. Stainton Moses	Mr. T. Stocking	Mrs. Stone
Miss L. C. Stone	Mr. A. C. Swinton	Mr. F. M. Taylor
Major Tebb	Miss F. J. Theobald	* Mr. Morell Theobald
Mrs. Morell Theobald	Mr. Wm Theobald	Mrs. Wm. Theobald
Mr. E. Tietkens	Mr. A. Tod	Mrs. Trinder
Mr. J. P. Turner	* Mr. A. A. Watts	Mrs. A. A. Watts



Mr. Walter Weldon	Mrs. Western	* Mr. H. Withall
Miss H. Withall	Mrs. Wiseman	* Dr. George Wyld
Hon. Percy Wyndham,	M.P. Mr. D. Younger	

And eight others who do not wish their names published.

Applications for membership may be forwarded to the Hon. Sec., Mr. Morell Theobald, 23, St. Swithin's-lane, E.C.

\* Member of Committee are thus designated.

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## Spirit Artists Pass

In the list of LSA founder members above, readers may have noticed the names of Miss Houghton and of Mrs Alaric Watts, that is Anna Howitt Watts. These two spirit artists were featured in our previous issue. Both died very soon after the LSA was launched.

### TRANSITION OF MISS HOUGHTON.<sup>42</sup>

Many of our readers will learn with regret that the well-known voice and figure of Miss Georgiana Houghton will be heard and seen amongst us no more in mortal form. After an illness of some nine weeks' duration Miss Houghton passed away very peacefully early on Monday morning last. The malady with which she was suddenly stricken down was paralysis, and from the first articulation was difficult, so that very little conversation could be held. A friend who visited Miss Houghton only a few days since writes that she found her in an exceedingly calm and tranquil state, perfectly conscious, though unable to communicate without great effort any of her thoughts or feelings.

This is rather a brief tribute to an author and artist and suggests that the full value of Georgiana's work was not appreciated by all her contemporaries. But Lis Warwood sent a warmer tribute from "Medium and Daybreak".<sup>43</sup>

### 'Notes and Comments',<sup>44</sup>

"The late Miss Georgiana Houghton's funeral took place at Highgate Cemetery on Monday. Next week we will give a memoir, which space would not permit our doing justice to this week."

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<sup>42</sup>.—*Light* March 29th 1884 page 129

<sup>43</sup>.—Lis also notes, "Georgiana Houghton rather delightfully recorded herself in the 1881 Census as occupation: "Artist in Water Colours under Spirit Guidance" – the only one of the early Spiritualists I have found so far that actually admitted on the census records what they were!"

<sup>44</sup>.—*The Medium and Daybreak* No. 731 Vol. XV April 4, 1884 p. 216

## ‘Georgiana Houghton’<sup>45</sup>

“This well-known Spiritualist passed away on the morning of Monday, March 24th, nearly seventy years of age, after having lain for several weeks in a hopeless state of paralysis. For the last six days of her existence in the body she was unconscious and incapable of action. From the first the stroke was regarded as fatal by the medical attendant, but Miss Houghton had such a strong hope in being able to complete her literary task by the publication of another volume, that she would not hear of any such a thing as immediate transition from the body.

“It is not necessary that we give a detailed account of her experiences of Spiritualism, as these may be abundantly gleaned from her recent volumes, ‘Evenings at Home in Spiritual Séance,’ and her work on ‘Spirit Photography,’ which we noticed at length at the time of its publication. But Miss Houghton in addition to being a most remarkable medium, was a very public-spirited woman, and her name and influence in the Cause were known far and near. A letter from her pen appeared on the first page of the MEDIUM as a weekly paper, fourteen years ago to-day, so that we have to regard her as one of our very earliest contributors and correspondents. In all other public phases of the Movement she was equally active.

“It was as a drawing medium that Miss Houghton was most distinctly known. Her style of drawing has never been exactly attained by any one, though some of her pupils have in a great degree succeeded in the production of similar pictures. They are chiefly monograms, consisting of a labyrinth of involved lines of different colours, producing a remarkable and highly pleasing appearance. Many years ago, she made an exhibition of them in a gallery in Bond Street. The effect of the whole when contemplated was of a very soothing character.

“Miss Houghton was in the habit of holding a developing class or circle, for the impartation of this drawing ability to suitable persons. Some of these pupils have attained to great proficiency; they will greatly miss their preceptress.

“To the subject of spirit photography through the mediumship of Mr. Hudson, Miss Houghton paid undivided attention all the time that Mr. Hudson was in practice. Her experiences, illustrated with upwards of fifty examples of spirit photographs, are fully given in the volume bearing on the subject.

“In all spiritual affairs Miss Houghton saw coincidents, which were to her mind highly significant. Days, events, times, seasons, forms, &c., were to her the alphabet of a language from which she derived great instruction, though few could follow her expositions. Her drawings she interpreted in a similar manner, giving them a theological symbolism. It is to be regretted that she made no disposition of her effects. Some steps should be taken to have the full collection of her drawings preserved in some public institution. They are well worthy of such care, and as an example of highly artistic work, produced without the usual artistic effort or experience, they are truly wonderful, and a great psychological curiosity. Her dove,

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<sup>45</sup> .—*The Medium and Daybreak* No. 732 Vol. XV April 11, 1884 p. 234

brought to her by the spirits, and which she had stuffed, was placed in the coffin with her, on the top of which was also interred some wreaths of willow and flowers carefully framed, and which are described in her volumes. Her relatives, not knowing her mind on these matters, thought they were better placed thus away, than to become desecrated by passing from hand to hand or into wilful neglect. It was to be regretted that Mrs. Tebb was absent in Algiers, who knew the deceased so well, and who might have gained some of her intentions towards the last.

“The relatives not knowing her spiritualistic friends, and the most intimate being abroad, but little notice could be given to the Movement of the decease and funeral. It was announced at Neumeyer Hall, on the previous Sunday, and Mr. Burns, on the part of the Movement, was invited to the funeral, which took place at Highgate Cemetery, on Monday, March 31, 1884.”

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In LIGHT, a very appreciative tribute appeared to Mrs Watts, who with her husband was closely linked to that newspaper.

## NOTES BY THE WAY

Contributed by “M.A. (Oxen.)”

### *In Memoriam*

ANNA MARY HOWITT WATTS.<sup>46</sup>

I record with the deepest sorrow the sudden departure of one of the brightest and gentlest spirits that our cause has ever enlisted in its service. Anna Mary Howitt, the much-loved wife of Alaric Alfred Watts, passed away, after a very brief illness, on July 23rd, while on a visit to her mother, the venerable Mrs. Howitt, at Dietenheim, in the Tyrol. She had been for some considerable time with her mother, and her husband, who had been detained by his work in London, was about to rejoin her, when news came that she had been seized by that terrible scourge, diphtheria. This was followed with awful suddenness by a telegram announcing her departure from the body. An irreparable loss was thus accompanied by special accidents of distress, for the last sad rites were necessarily hurried to completion before the mind could fairly realise the mournful event that had occurred.

This is not the place nor the time to estimate Mrs. Watts’s work in Spiritualism. The familiar initials, “A.M.H.W.,” stud the pages of its literature from the earliest days of *The Spiritual Magazine* down to the present number of this journal. She was unwearied in her labours, and had accumulated a vast mass of interesting and valuable matter, which she was constantly occupied in arranging for publication. On these various records of fact she would hang the comments which her own ripe experience and keen spiritual insight supplied. She was spiritually and psychically

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<sup>46</sup>—*Light* August 2nd 1884, front page.

gifted in a very high degree, and her work, valuable as it was from the care and pains bestowed on it by an intellect of rare culture and refinement, derived an added value from the gifts of the spirit that were bestowed in rich measure upon the writer, as well as from her own gentle and kindly nature. Of her it may, with truth be said that in all that she wrote through all these long years no word of anger or of bitterness, nothing that could wound or hurt, no unseemly fling at any man's honest beliefs, can be discovered by the minutest search. Such thoughts were alien from her nature: they could have found no harbour in her mind. She had clear perceptions of truth, and her loving nature was content with setting them forth as the best antidote to error. One of the latest letters I had from her contained some characteristic remarks on the recurrent angry disputes between Spiritualists and other seekers after truth. She deplored such disputations; and longed for harmony and peace.

Hers was the true artist-life, a poem in all its relations. As daughter, sister, wife, and friend, she was all that a soul so pure and unselfish must needs be; full of a simple dignity, animated by unfailing sympathy and love.

I have said that up to the very close of her life on earth her mind was occupied with the service of Spiritualism. On my desk lies an unanswered letter of July 5th, full of bright and cheery comment, and affectionate interest in my own work, and sympathy with my own cares. She had taken pains to write out for me some cases which she thought would interest me, and be of profit, perhaps, to others. This is, probably, the last work on which she was engaged, for soon after that letter was dispatched from Méran, Mrs. Howitt moved to Dietenheim, and the end came with awful suddenness. These closing words of my friend I have thought it not unfitting to print here. They will have a melancholy interest for many to whom her writings are familiar. The cases were all known or told to herself, and bear especially on certain portions of our correspondence... [these cases follow in the original issue of LIGHT].

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# The Psychic Art of Madge Gill

Last October an exhibition was held at the Orleans Gallery Twickenham of the work of Madge Gill. See “Gallery opens doors to Spiritualism” *Psychic News* November 2013. This wider recognition is welcome, but it was not her first public notice. Readers of *Psychic News* had been introduced to her in 1969:

## PSYCHIC ART GETS BOROUGH EXHIBITION

This extraordinary modern-looking self-portrait of the artist was shown when an exhibition of Madge Gill’s psychic art was held in London in May last year.<sup>47</sup>

**A LONDON arts council, in connection with its local authority, makes Spiritualist history in September. Newham will be the first London borough to hold a psychic art exhibition – actually in the town hall.**



The council has scooped almost 300 paintings, and drawings by Madge Gill, the remarkable psychic artist who passed on eight years ago aged 77. They have never been exhibited before.

Man behind the exhibition is borough librarian Jimmy Green, who is also publicity officer for Newham arts council, the sponsors.

Why should they want to exhibit psychic art? Madge Gill and her son Lawrence both lived in the borough. Her work has been recognised for its artistic merit. The town hall regarded the psychic story as debatable.

### Painted in modern style

Green acquired the pictures in 1963 when he was invited by Madge’s son to look through various items which had to be cleared because the house faced demolition.

Now, Spiritualists can see these remarkable pictures when the 11 day exhibition opens on September 16. A description will outline Madge’s story, referring to the psychic “theory.” Admission will be free.

Green spent three or four days at Madge’s house sorting out pictures when he first heard how her sophisticated and modern style was spirit-inspired. Her son gave them to the council.

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<sup>47</sup>...*Psychic News* July 19th 1969, page 8.

“I am open-minded on the psychic side of it,” Green said last week, “I wouldn’t like to express opinions on things I don’t understand.” The more he has studied and researched Madge’s work, the council officer has become progressively fascinated with the pictures, which include 1,000 postcard drawings.

**He is baffled by the largest acquisition – a 34-foot long calico in ink. Despite the obvious attention to minute detail it received, Green has proof it was completed in only four months. He has record of an exhibition at which it appeared, four months after a date inscribed on the picture.**

Soon after the works were obtained, the project had to be shelved while London boroughs were reconstituted under the Greater London Council scheme. Now six years later, the 160 pictures on exhibition have been catalogued and framed and, in many cases cleaned.

Green added: “The movement and colour impressed me. It was right out of the time scale of any art I knew. There is a preoccupation with light running throughout. It is possible to tell technically that she had only one eye.”

He stressed continually the remarkable effects achieved in the pictures, adding that one was reminiscent of the Picasso single line drawings on glass.

**Madge, an uneducated housewife, maintained this creative output for 40 years. Her psychic faculties manifested after her eight-year-old son’s death in 1918.**

### **Priced at £1,000**

Her outstanding talents were recognised only after her passing. It took Charles Spencer, of London’s Grosvenor Gallery, two years to mount a similar collection. Spencer, an experienced art critic, became convinced of her supernatural gifts.

An information sheet at the Grosvenor exhibition described how one day she was suddenly entranced and controlled by an entity called Myrminerest. The communication led to inspirational drawings, writings, singing, piano playing, and weaving silk mats in beautifully blended colours.

Art critics’ columns overflowed with praise at the pictures’ technical brilliance, commenting they were strangely modern, despite their creation almost half a century previously. One picture was priced at £1,000.

At last an array of attic-bound treasures is to get an official civic airing. And East London ratepayers will see just how amazing psychic phenomena can be.

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## BOOKS WE HAVE REVIEWED

*If you have any problems locating a copy we can contact the author*

**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>

**Helen Duncan the Mystery Show Trial**, by Robert Hartley published by H Pr (Publishing), London 2007. Paperback ISBN:—978-0-9553420-8-0. Psypioneer review, by Paul J. Gaunt pages 244-247:—<http://www.woodlandway.org/PDF/PP3.11November07..pdf>

**Aquarian Evangelist: The Age of Aquarius as It Dawned in the Mind of Levi Dowling**, by John Benedict Buescher Theosophical History Volume XI available at:—then—Occasional Papers. Psypioneer references by Leslie Price page 7:—<http://woodlandway.org/PDF/PP4.1January08.pdf>

**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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