

# PSYPIONEER JOURNAL

Edited by  
Paul J. Gaunt

Founded by Leslie Price

Archived by  
Garth Willey



**Volume 10, No. 09: September – October 2014**



- 266 – Physical Phenomena Remembered- CD Review- Steve Hume**
  - 270 – H. N. De Fremery and the ‘Harris Affair’ – Loes Modderman**
  - 291 – “Light” During the War – And After – David Gow**  
**David Gow – Poet and Journalist**
  - 293 – Editorial Notes – Stanley De Brath**
  - 295 – David Gow – John B. McIndoe**
  - 296 – Psypioneer re-equipped – Leslie Price**
  - 297 – Two visitors to Col. Olcott – a note – Leslie Price**
  - 299 – Some books we have reviewed**
  - 300 – How to obtain this Journal by email**
-

# PHYSICAL SÉANCE ROOM RECOLLECTIONS

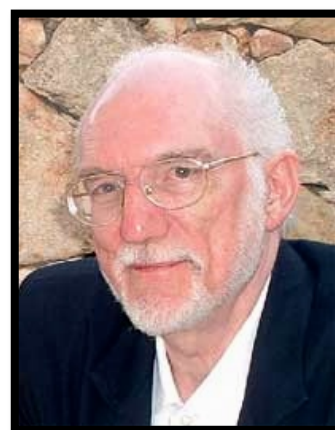
## Compilation Album No. 1 (2014)

### *Wonderful Memories of Physical Phenomena as told by Senior Spiritualists*

#### CD Review by Steve Hume:

A couple of years ago I had the pleasure of interviewing Mrs Jean Scott, former President of Cresswell Spiritualist Church in Northumberland. The reason for this was that I had been asked to review a reissue of *A Path Prepared*, a short biography of the physical medium Isa Northage, for *The Journal of The Society for Psychical Research*. Mrs Northage was alleged to have produced some quite remarkable and novel phenomena, during the inter-war and post-war years, by witnesses who had submitted their personal accounts for publication in the book. Yet she had slipped out of public memory. This was despite the fact that her séances had, apparently, been widely reported in the Spiritualist press at the time. After remarking to Leslie Price, who reviewed the book in *Psypioneer*,<sup>1</sup> that it was a shame that, by then, witnesses of Mrs Northage's activities would probably be quite difficult to find; I embarked on what I anticipated would be a long and frustrating search for some. However, by one of those curious acts of fate that life tends to assault us with sometimes, I discovered, *the very next day*, that a friend of my stepmother's had been a close companion of Isa Northage for many years – hence the interview with Mrs Scott.

Mrs Scott's passing in July this year, reminded me of the attempts by the Noah's Ark Society for Physical Mediumship (NAS), to build up an archive of audio recordings of senior Spiritualists recounting their experiences with the great physical mediums of yesteryear. During my time in the NAS, I had had the privilege of hearing one or two of these, and I found them fascinating. So, the news that Stewart Alexander, a physical medium of note himself,<sup>2</sup> and former President and Archive officer of the NAS, had decided to release some of these recorded reminiscences (plus some extra tracks) on a double CD album, was welcome news indeed.



Stewart Alexander

This collection consists largely of a digitisation of an album previously released by the NAS on audio cassette in 1995. Eight mediums are covered, ranging from Helen Duncan, through Ronald Strong and William Olsen, to Alec Harris. There is also a very rare recording (circa 1951) of Gladys Osborne Leonard (the famous trance medium who contributed to the legendary series of communications involving Sir Oliver Lodge's deceased son, Raymond, and who was extensively tested by other SPR researchers.) giving a personal sitting to the Reverend Charles Drayton Thomas, the well-known psychical researcher. There are also a number of extra tracks, not included in the original NAS collection. These include an account

---

<sup>1</sup> – Volume 8. No 4. April 2012: – *Remarkable Phenomena in Nottingham* – Book Review by Leslie Price: – <http://www.woodlandway.org/PDF/PP8.4April2012.pdf>

<sup>2</sup> – *An Extraordinary Journey: – The Memoirs of a Physical Medium*, by Stewart Alexander. See *Psypioneer* review, by Leslie Price: – <http://woodlandway.org/PDF/PP6.11November2010.pdf>

by the well-known teaching medium, Ivy Northage, of her experiences with, amongst others, Helen Duncan and Alec Harris.

I think that it would be fair to say that the audio quality varies greatly between tracks. Indeed, Stewart remarks on this in his introduction. But this is hardly surprising given that most of the speakers made their own recordings using (probably) inexpensive equipment onto analogue cassette tape, which tends to degrade somewhat over time and worsens in quality further with every subsequent copy away from the original. That said, most of the speakers are easily understood apart from, in places, the Osborne Leonard recording, which is hardly surprising given its age.

After an introduction by Stewart, the collection begins with part of a lecture given by Mr Douglass Lawrence in 1976 at Reading Spiritualist Church. This extract sets the tone for the following accounts, by concentrating on the moral prerequisites for the successful development of physical mediumship, and dispels a number of common misconceptions concerning this. Some of the alleged mechanics of materialisation phenomena are also covered. Of special interest to me was Lawrence's contention that, in order to appear in a recognisable form, spirit entities have to be able to, mentally, hold the details of self-image that they wish the ectoplasm to form around. The implication is that this is far from easy, and is sometimes only partially successful. Lawrence also gives an account of being allowed to handle a sheet of ectoplasm which stretched about ten feet across and five or six feet to the front, after it had emerged from an unnamed medium. The substance in this form is described as being 'translucent, glistening – beautiful', the texture like 'finest quality silk'. This reminded me of Harry Edwards' description of ectoplasm with the medium Jack Webber and differs quite markedly from the 'cheesecloth' description beloved of sceptics.

Lawrence also speaks of his experiences with Helen Duncan. These include being invited by Albert, Mrs Duncan's chief control, to closely examine the interior of the mouth of the materialised form of an old lady, whereupon Lawrence found saliva, gums ('top and bottom'), but no teeth. Lawrence remarks that, at this point in her life, Duncan had almost a full set of natural teeth and, in any case, one could often (but not always) see the medium at the same time as the materialised spirit forms.

There follow numerous similar accounts, by others, including more examples of Mrs Duncan's mediumship.

Of special interest to me, however, were those who spoke of experiences with Duncan and Alec Harris; the former because of her very controversial career, and the infamous trial in 1944; the latter because I know personally someone who, as a young man, sat with Harris and whose account of the spectacular full-form materialisations he witnessed broadly matches the descriptions given here, and also in Harris' biography *They Walked Among Us*.<sup>3</sup>

As already mentioned, tracks 5-8 on the second CD are devoted to the recollections of Ivy Northage, the well-known teaching medium who was a close friend of Helen Duncan who she, nevertheless, describes as 'rough', 'frightening' and, perhaps most tellingly - capable of being 'foolish'. It is for that reason that Mrs Northage's extremely articulate and frank account stands out for me. She describes a séance attended in the company of a friend whose own distinctively marked séance trumpets were apported by Duncan's guides into the room

---

<sup>3</sup>. – The full version book review in *Psypioneer* Volume 6. No 4. April 2010: – *Book Review – Alec Harris* — Paul J. Gaunt: –<http://www.woodlandway.org/PDF/PP6.4.April2010.pdf>

from his home one hundred miles away, and also how she witnessed multiple materialised forms appearing under good red light. But Northage also recounts an occasion when she and Mrs Duncan were having lunch together in a café, when the medium invited her into the toilets, disrobed, and showed her extremely severe bruising that covered her abdomen. This, Mrs Duncan claimed had been the result of white light introduced into a séance the previous day by a thoughtless sitter which had caused the ectoplasm to instantly whip back into her body.

With Harris, Mrs Northage describes a séance where around twenty materialised forms appeared under good red light – from a seven foot tall Red Indian guide, wearing a headdress that reached to the floor, to a small boy of about seven years of age who performed a headstand. All the time, Harris was clearly visible as, on this occasion, the cabinet curtains were open all of the time and the forms did not ‘build up’ as with other mediums, but just appeared with a ‘shimmer’ and disappeared just as suddenly in like manner. Yet they were solid enough for the aforementioned Indian (who did not speak) to demonstrate his name by picking up a flower vase to pour the water on the floor, only for the next materialised spirit form (a very tall and ‘austere’ looking lady) to loudly berate the unfortunate incarnate acquaintance that she had come to meet, as to the existence of the resulting large puddle.

With both Helen Duncan and Alec Harris, and the other mediums mentioned, we are told of multiple materialised forms of wildly differing ages, racial groups, and physical build, appearing in good red light very close to the sitters – eighteen inches, in one case, with Duncan. There are also numerous examples of the forms being recognisable to relatives and also giving evidential information, in various forms, in further support of identity.

Clearly, if one is of a mind to believe the sceptics about all this stuff, then these witnesses were all cretinous to a quite alarming degree. One could be left wondering how they could be taken in so easily. Could an addled brain and ‘will to believe’ really produce such astounding confabulations?

There is simply too much contained in this collection to cover all of the accounts in detail. Suffice to say, they are mostly of a similar stamp to those just outlined, at least to the extent that they fly in the face of theories involving regurgitated cheesecloth, hidden wires and trapdoors, or accomplices dressed in black gimp-suits etc.

Speaking as someone with a fair amount of experience of sitting in physical circles myself; on listening to these recollections, I was struck by a couple of things: –

Firstly, it is obvious that these earlier mediums were producing phenomena of a much more advanced order, at least in terms of full form materialisation, than has been apparent in more recent years, at least with the few modern mediums that have become publicly known. That is, of course, if the recollections of the witnesses are accurate and truthful.

Secondly, I would agree that most people do not have much of a clue as to how fallible human cognition (especially related to memory) can be under some circumstances. With regard to this, for example, I was struck by the fact that some of the witnesses describe materialisations as exhibiting vivid colours when, in my experience, red light practically renders one colour blind.

However, I have also witnessed confabulation and exaggeration on the part of sceptics myself, in the opposite direction, quite recently, where events that were regarded as being ‘suspicious’

had *actually* been pointed out by the medium herself very early on in a séance a number of times. On this occasion it was the sceptic's memory that was faulty (he had completely blanked the medium's attempts to inform everyone what she'd noticed) and it was only the audio recording of the event that proved this later.

The account given by the late, and exceptionally cautious, researcher Tony Cornell concerning his one séance with Alec Harris in the 1950's, in his book *Researching the Paranormal* also springs to mind in this regard.<sup>4</sup> Cornell's account, based on notes he completed shortly after the event, is truly remarkable for the number of glaring internal inconsistencies contained within that do not, logically, support his contention that the whole business was fraud on Harris' part. When I recently questioned a senior SPR member who knew Cornell about this I was told that Cornell had admitted privately, in front of witnesses at an SPR event that, in fact, there was much that he could not explain about the Harris séance he attended.

A great deal more could be said about this. But, in short, especially as I have witnessed some of the stronger phenomena myself (including with, ironically, Stewart Alexander) I am not persuaded that all the contributors to this collection were all either lying or deluded. The phenomena described are simply too extreme, and the accounts too consistent, to be written off casually just because people sometimes do not remember things 100% accurately, or are (in my opinion) often a bit too accepting of weaker phenomena that *could* have been produced by 'normal means', and are innocently subject to confirmation bias on occasion – as are all human beings, sceptics included. As has been pointed out more than once by others, if we were to reject witness testimony in the law courts in like manner, then our legal system would scarcely be able to function and miscarriages of justice would probably be a lot more common than they are.

Unfortunately, at the time of writing, it seems unlikely that physical mediumship of such an advanced nature will become available again. The pressures of modern life, combined with attendant addictions to facile entertainment, mean that it is exceptionally difficult to find people who will happily sit in development regularly for the extreme length of time that it can take to develop *genuine* physical phenomena to the most advanced stages. Jean Scott's husband, John, told me that he knew of circles in rural Northumberland many years ago where the sitters would cycle or walk many miles after an arduous day's work to sit for development. When Dr Barrie Colvin and I attempted to form such a group a few years ago, we could not even find people who were prepared commit to *driving* a short distance.

Stewart Alexander has done us all a huge favour by making this collection available. I am sure that anyone with the slightest *genuine* interest in this subject, whether they be convinced Spiritualists, or of a more (non ideological) sceptical bent, will find it compelling listening.



**The retail cost of the CD Albums is £12.50**

**Enquiries / Orders via Email:** – [stewart.alexander@finka.karoo.co.uk](mailto:stewart.alexander@finka.karoo.co.uk)

**Postal Enquiries/Orders:** – Stewart Alexander c/o 85 Alexandra Road, Hull. HU5 2NX. UK.

---

<sup>4</sup>. – Re Tony Cornell see: *Psypioneer* Volume 4, No 6, April 2008: – *Last minute halt to infra red tests:* – <http://www.woodlandway.org/PDF/PP4.6June08.pdf>

# H. N. DE FREMERY AND THE 'HARRIS AFFAIR'



*It is exactly a century ago that this unfortunate affair developed in the Netherlands and changed all those involved.*

Let me introduce the star players of this drama.

**Hendrik (Henry) Nicholaas de Fremery** (1868 - 1940) was an important man in the Dutch spiritistic scene. Author of several books, about 6 brochures for Harmonia, a talented painter and sculptor, lecturer, a man of great erudition and dedication to the cause, de Fremery was an asset to the movement.

(A word about Harmonia: In 1888 the 'Broederbond (Fraternity) Harmonia' was founded in Utrecht, with the object to build a platform for all the spiritist groups being active in the Netherlands, and bring together Christian oriented Spiritualists and Kardec Spiritists. This object was only partially successful, but Harmonia soon became influential and membership rose continually over the years.)

Being the son of the maire of Monster, de Fremery's religious background was Remonstrant, a Dutch brand of freethinking Protestantism. But his natural inclination was more towards Theosophy than to a Christian philosophy. In 1894 de Fremery married Anna, the daughter of **Hendrik Jan Schimmel**, (1823-1906) a noted poet, playwright and spiritist in those days, who had a great influence on the sensitive and philosophically inclined young man.

After a career as artillery officer in the military, kind of obligatory for people of the higher classes, he quit in 1902 to devote all his talents and time to the cause he came to believe in. Coming from a well-to-do family, earning money for a living seemed not to have been an issue.

For a number of years there was an important periodical for all spiritists in the Netherlands, *Het Toekomstig Leven (HTL)*, founded in 1897 by **Johannes Simon Göbel** (1847-1916) who succeeded in maintaining high quality contents till his lamented death in 1916.

In 1902 de Fremery joined him as second editor, and enriched the bi-weekly magazine with many interesting articles.

Apart from his writing, de Fremery travelled the country to lecture on spiritist subjects; and to know what he was talking about, he attended a multitude of seances with mediums in Holland including those visiting from abroad. Occasionally he encountered frauds, which shocked



him, but also sharpened his awareness of the tricks involved. De Fremery was a close friend of **Alfred Voût Peters**, a well known British psychometric medium who visited Holland on many occasions, always staying with de Fremery in his villa ‘*Meentwijck*’ in Bussum. Often de Fremery accompanied Voût Peters as his interpreter.

Firmly convinced of spiritist truths, de Fremery’s interest in spiritism was nevertheless predominantly scientific. Although no scientist himself, he was more than interested in investigating the phenomena. Later in life he became a good friend of famous Dutch parapsychologist **Prof. Dr.W.H.C.Tenhaeff** (1894-1981).

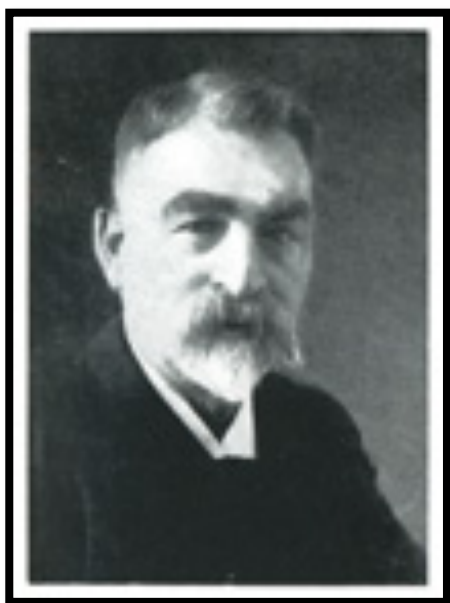
In his scientific interests de Fremery stood more or less alone in the spiritist community. Most people didn’t need scientific proof to believe, and most mediums were not eager to cooperate in experiments by scientists.

This became painfully clear in 1906, when de Fremery championed **Floris Jansen** (1881-1937), a promising ex- medical student who worked out plans for a laboratory in Amsterdam, to develop strictly scientific experiments. One of Floris’ inspirations came from the French scientist Paul Joire who developed the ‘*Sthenometer*’ to measure ‘psychic energy’.

De Fremery was happy to be Floris’ mentor, promoting his plan which suited de Fremery’s own interests perfectly. Floris Jansen became the first Dutch parapsychologist, decades before others went into the laboratory to test paranormal phenomena with scientific means.

De Fremery had hoped for support from the readers of HTL, but that never happened. Several times he explained Jansen’s plans and asked for support in money, and for mediums who were willing to take part in experiments. The effect was so disappointing that de Fremery wrote in HTL of October 15, 1906:

*“I really start to doubt if the subscribers of HTL are my congenial spirits. I’m ashamed to admit to it openly. The lack of interest has painfully struck me.”*



The laboratory existed from 1906 till 1908, when lack of support and lack of money meant the end of this early, worthwhile and unique parapsychological experimentation. Drs. Wim Kramer has been researching Floris Jansen extensively.<sup>5</sup> I only mention the case in passing, because it is representative of de Fremery’s scientific inclination which was, and still is, exceptional in the spiritist community in Holland.

Another player of importance was **J.S. Göbel**, ◀ already mentioned. He and de Fremery got along well. Göbel, 20 years de Fremery’s senior, was a friendly man with a background in education. He was a natural peace maker, a man most people liked, a hard worker with a high standard of integrity.

---

<sup>5</sup>. – For example, Wim Kramer’s paper at 2012 SPR conference “Snapshots of the missing link: the Amsterdam laboratory of Floris Jansen” (1906-1908).

Göbel was one of three people (the others being F.W.H. van Straaten and P.A.J. Nepveu) who founded ‘*de Broederbond Harmonia*’ in 1888, the longest existing spiritist organisation in the Netherlands. As mentioned above, the object of Göbel was an organisation in which Kardec Spiritists and the spiritists who didn’t believe in reincarnation would both find a home. For Göbel these differences of opinion were not the most important; the spiritist conviction that there is life after death could, he hoped, bridge the differences of opinion.

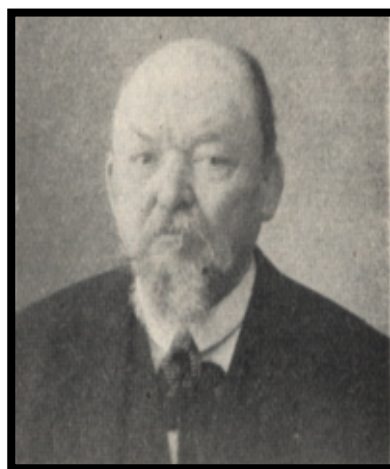


Others were less tolerant. Göbel battled with his co-founder **F.W.H. van Straaten** (1829-1902) ◀ who also founded the ‘*Spiritualistisch Weekblad*’, the only periodical of standing till Göbel began HTL in 1897. The ‘*Spiritualistisch Weekblad*’ of newspaper format, lost subscribers and HTL, a magazine, gained many. Van Straaten was a difficult man, not inclined to work together or respect other people’s opinions. From 1888 till his death in 1902 he was chairman of Harmonia, which function fell on Göbel after his demise.

In 1906 Göbel's chairmanship of Harmonia had become so difficult that he left this post to his successor and concentrated on HTL, a periodical moulded after the best Spiritualistic magazines of those days in England and America.

F.W.H. van Straaten never became part of the Harris Affair because he died in 1902, but his son, **G.A.W. van Straaten**, hiding behind his self proclaimed title as ‘best spiritist ever’, played an unsavoury role in the 1914 developments.

A further important figure in the spiritist scene and in the drama that was about to unfold was **Piet Goedhart**, (1860 - 1935) ▶ a man who comes across from the pages of HTL as utterly dislikable. He was de Fremery’s nemesis, from a lower class family, a self-made man, like Göbel a ‘schoolmaster’, undoubtedly clever but with undisguised aggression against any who dared contradict his inflexible opinions. He was, as his obituary says, feared by his enemies. We can only imagine how hard it was for soft spoken well bred people like de Fremery and Göbel to put up with Goedhart’s lack of manners.



It must have been a happy moment for Goedhart when the Harris Affair brought him de Fremery’s head on a plate, a moment of triumph he anticipated and gleefully helped along for many years, as we can distill from his venomous critiques in HTL on de Fremery’s writings and person long *before* 1914. Goedhart loved to inflict hurt on the people who were morally and intellectually his superior. Parapsychologist Dr. Willem Tenhaeff called him ‘emotionally immature’.

We all know the type. Without Goedhart’s role in bringing about de Fremery’s undeserved downfall, that would never have happened.



After the death of Göbel, Goedhart's militant fanaticism, no longer dampened by moderation, took over the spirit of HTL and the once so balanced magazine went, in tone and diversity, into rapid decline.

Goedhart left Harmonia in 1934 – based on a short obituary in Harmonia's periodical *Spiritische Bladen* of 1935 'not without incidents', to start his own magazine '*Grensgebieden*,' which existed – as far as I know – for 3 years.

Harmonia had to read of Goedhart's demise in the newspaper; they never got an announcement of his death.

And then the centerpiece of it all: **Rev. Susanna Harris** (1854-1932), medium large, invited in 1914 by Goedhart and his '*Vereeniging voor Psychisch Onderzoek*', which he founded in The Hague. (nothing to do with the Dutch SPR).

Harris was at that time a well known direct voice medium, not a very common type of mediumship. Nandor Fodor in his *Encyclopaedia of Psychic Science* mentions an accusation of fraud in Norway (1920). Conan Doyle, in '*The Wanderings of a Spiritualist*' writes about a water test: her mouth was filled with coloured water, and still the voices came. He also mentions how she failed to convince the SPR in Norway. But his evaluation of Harris, based on his own experience was favorable. A report of this test is found in James Coates' '*Is Spiritualism based on Facts or Fancy*' (1919).

Reading about Harris doesn't clarify things. Maybe she had her genuine moments but I feel she definitely knew quite well how to deceive a 'believing' public when the spirits didn't turn up, which might have happened often, as the extreme precautions she took against getting exposed seem to testify. When a medium takes exaggerated measures against the possibility of being found out, some bells are likely to start ringing, but not of the spirit kind. Probably her extremely imposing figure (mentioned almost in every source) and her widely advertised actions for womens rights and as 'apostle for world peace' (of which there is no proof) played a part in her success, as it certainly did in Holland. A woman who does so much good can't be a cheater, many felt. But human nature is a lot more complicated than that.

Harris visited our country at the end of March 1914. The invitation the *Vereeniging voor Psychisch Onderzoek* sent on March 16 mentions several planned seances: from March 31 till April 7 in The Hague, and two others on April 8 and 9 in Amsterdam. By now we know that there were several more seances for an undoubtedly not-too-critical public, in pitch dark, trumpets talking, music box playing, under mainly the guidance of 'Harmony', who some of the articles say was her own deceased child. (In HTL of June 1910 Harris was mentioned as a relatively new *psychometric* medium giving an introductory demonstration as the sidekick of English medium Alfred Voût Peters, who was very well known in Holland. There was no mention of 'direct voice' mediumship, so probably she developed that talent later.)

The seance that rocked the spiritists in Holland was held on April 16 1914.

HTL, always out promptly on the 1st. and 15th of every month, was this time delayed: the issue of April 15 came a few days later.

The reason was a plea on the 14th from de Fremery to Göbel, as he was in doubt about Mrs Harris, based on things he had heard and experienced at a Harris seance on April 9. He

planned to attend the seance of April 16, to find out if this doubt was misplaced or not. Göbel was not pleased; his long article on Harris planned for the issue of April 15th was already written and set. Nevertheless he complied, and the issue of April 15 was therefore a few days late. Nevertheless there was nothing in the issue of April 15 about Harris. Possibly Göbel saw a dark cloud coming his way, as Mrs Harris was very much admired all over spiritist Holland and her seances were well attended. A spot on her reputation would damage not only her, but the spiritist cause as well, something every spiritist was painfully aware of.

But Göbel could not control the subsequent events. The clouds became a storm of never before seen proportions.

The issue of May 1 of HTL ▼ came out with a Supplement, both completely filled with the 'Harris Affair', as it would be called over time.



The facts.

De Fremery gave his own impressions in a lengthy article '*My seances with Rev Mrs Susanna Harris*', starting with a seance he attended on April 9, after getting a notification from de '*Vereeniging voor Psychisch Onderzoek*' in The Hague. This was Goedhart's society which o invited Mrs Harris.

De Fremery had never attended a seance with a direct voice medium before, so he was very interested and happy to pay f 5.- for entrance. The seance was held in Amsterdam, in theater Odeon, still in existence.

De Fremery described the seance room: pitchblack curtains, doors where not a glimmer of light could get through.

The evening before, on April 8, one instant the softest light peeped through the windows, not having any effect on the complete darkness, but nevertheless, according to the medium 'no manifestations had been possible'. This was told to de Fremery by **Mr. G.J.de Bruin**, chairman of Harmonia Amsterdam and the one responsible for the seance room.

At the seance of April 9, 11 women and 13 gentlemen were present, who were instructed to hold each others hands; under no circumstances could the circle be broken, or dire consequences for the medium would follow.

If feeling a trumpet or something else touching one's body, one was instructed to say '*thank you*', and no one was to grip a trumpet. And the most important: no light, *or the medium could die*.

These strict instructions must have put the fear of God into those present, and also some mild wonder about the medium, into the people with more experience. It certainly did arise doubt in de Fremery and de Bruin.

This is how de Fremery graphically describes Harris's entrance:

*"The imposing figure of Mrs Harris, followed by her interpreter, entered the room, and the first thing she did was re-arrange the circle, by putting the 'positive and negative elements' alternately. Then, (like Mary Poppins), she opened her portmanteau from which she took three folded trumpets and a music box. Unfolded, the trumpets were 1 meter in length and by pouring water through them she showed that no devices were hidden inside. She put all three near her knees on the ground. Then she proceeded with an even stronger warning than the one given by the secretary of the Vereeniging voor Psychisch Onderzoek beforehand, mentioning a medium gone blind and another losing his memory because of sitters' misdeeds."*

De Fremery was appointed to sit at Harris' left side and hold her hand. When everyone was sufficiently subdued, the seance could begin, with loud singing of our anthem in utter darkness. Then de Fremery told what happened next, and his scepticism is obvious. A deep voice next to de Fremery said loudly 'Good Evening' and he almost jumped out of his chair. A falsetto voice, 'Harmony', answered. 'Spirits' were saying banal things, to sitters *who gave all the information away*. De Fremery was, understandably, not at all impressed. It was obvious to him that the medium was groping for information and that 'Harmony' used the vocal chords of the medium.

But the bass voice changed directions. De Fremery tried to find Harris's left leg with his right, but couldn't. He then felt a trumpet slap his head. A message 'don't you dare to doubt me', maybe?



De Fremery decided to give the medium, for now, the benefit of the doubt, but he had clear suspicions. So he did what every critical sitter should have done: listen to the medium's breath, and how that differed from, or synchronised with the voices, which proceeded to dialogue *alternately*. His listening at the chest of Harris was revealing: as a voice stopped, she inhaled. The longer the talking, the deeper the inhalation. For De Fremery there was no longer any doubt about the voices: *they were Harris' own*.

That evening De Fremery went home, pondering what he should do. He signed on for the seance of April 16, and decided to talk it over with G.J. de Bruin, who was invited in the fateful seance to sit by her left side. He listened sharply, like de Fremery had done a week before, and came to identical conclusions.

De Fremery, knowing that he would, had asked the sitters to stay a while after the seance, since he planned to confront the medium then and there, without the risk of physical damage to the medium.

All would have gone according to plan, if not a **Mr Richter**, who had harboured his own suspicions, *had managed to crawl on hand and knees to grab the trumpets*, something that was strictly forbidden. He even took them apart.

No 'spirit' protested. The medium, oblivious to what transpired, went on speaking through the third trumpet. Then Mr. Richter called out to make light. The medium was a fake, he announced, and to prove it he had taken two of her trumpets without any objections from the spirits or Mrs Harris. This was about 10 minutes before the planned end of the seance, for which every sitter paid f 5.-, quite a large amount in those days.

De Bruin, in his capacity of chairman of Harmonia Amsterdam, tried to restore order, and everybody started singing again. Lights were switched on, the medium 'awoke' and was, mightily distressed.

Mr. Richter, the real 'culprit', had his own story. He was a member of a spiritist circle, and there he heard from a medium friend that Mrs Harris was in the habit of hiding fresh flowers in her voluminous bosom to present them as 'apports'. Light during a seance would have exposed her and that the voices were all coming out of her own throat, said that medium, and Mr. Richter believed her. With a talent for drama he decided to test Harris in his own way. Later he said that he never planned what he did. He had just acted on the spur of the moment. It was a deadly test. The happy dialogues continued, and Harris never felt it, till Richter spoke out loud.

Later de Bruin testified that Harris' left hand never left his, but her left foot was nowhere to be found. The woman on the right side of Harris told de Fremery that the medium's hand wasn't in hers most of the time. At strategic moments there were suspicious disappearances of hands and legs to where nobody could follow, De bruin testified.

The absolute darkness and all the warnings were the conditions to keep the sitters in awe. Mrs Harris never realised that this darkness was also her undoing, since she couldn't prove she *wasn't* cheating either. After the seance she left in distress with her interpreter, and obviously nobody stopped her to confront her.

In fact, I would suggest, only the people who were actually there at that fateful seance, and who had conceived the idea to listen carefully and from close by, were the ones who had a right to voice an opinion.

Belief is not proof. Backing up a well known medium, no matter what, is not proof of anything either. Testifying based on Harris' many good deeds for charity is the least proof of all. But things got very much mixed up in what happened after April 16 1914.

The press was informed. De Fremery contacted '*Het Vaderland*' and '*Het Leven*', newspapers normally favorably inclined towards Spiritualism. Mr de Bruin informed the *Telegraaf*, a newspaper that was not of the highest moral standard.

Spiritists and other people read to their utter astonishment about the exposure of Mrs Harris. And spiritists started to write letters, angry letters, to the editor of HTL. Göbel decided these people needed space, and he gave it to them. The issue of May 1 1914 had a supplement, and all 35 pages were easily filled with Harris. The issue was 10 days late. Harris must have been the talk of the day.

**1000** ‘*Extra Extra, Read All About It*’ (to paraphrase the musical ‘Tommy’) May 1 issues of HTL were printed. Göbel was a man with foresight. It must have been the closest to a tabloid event in our Calvinist country in those years, and how people must have enjoyed the scandal and the chance to put their own righteous, hypocritical and deeply felt indignation in words, and see them in print!

Understandably Göbel was not amused. In his opening article he mentions that de Fremery’s accusation and also a piece by Mr. Richter that had reached, regrettably, several newspapers, but counter arguments had been refused space in those newspapers. People were interested in fraudulent mediums, not in their defence. (In hindsight, this informing of the press was probably the biggest mistake in the whole affair.)

Göbel began the issue of May 1 with a long article about Mrs Harris and her many accomplishments, meant as a worthy introduction to the medium and written before the whole unfortunate affair developed. Maybe this article of praise and thankfulness to Goedhart and his *Vereeniging for Psychisch Onderzoek* which had invited Mrs Harris was one of the reasons Göbel backed her up all the way, although he must have known that de Fremery’s powers of observation stood for something.

We will never know what transpired, but Göbel made a choice, a good one for the peace in spiritist Holland, but a bad one for honesty and friendship: he let de Fremery down, in more ways than one, as we shall see.

*Here is the letter from March 16 sent by the secretary of the Vereeniging voor Psychisch onderzoek in The Hague, announcing the Harris visit and the planned seances. ►*

|   |                |         |
|---|----------------|---------|
| Lezing van beschrijving medium Harris   | Göbel          | 133-135 |
| Lezing Harris bij haar komst in Ned   | Göbel-Narshuis | 137     |
| Seance 31 mrt / Seance 1 apr  |                | 139     |
| Devers seanceverlagen   |                | 142-145 |
| De geschiedenis van een pseudo-onmasking  |                | 146-148 |
| De opzettende onmaskering, ander verslag  |                | 149     |
| Seance-onmasking tekening   |                | 149     |
| De gronden der onmaskering  |                | 149-151 |
| Onze seances met Mrs Harris   | van H tot E    | 151     |
| Verslag van dame die onmaskering bijwoonde  | Göbel          | 152     |
| Onze seance met Harris  | de Fremery     | 153-157 |
| Zijn er bewijzen gekend dat Harris is onmaskerd?  | van H tot E    | 157-161 |
| Rev Susanna Harris  | Goedhart       | 161-163 |
| J'Accuse et je Pardonne   | M. M.          | 163-167 |
| Permanieren   | Göbel          | 167     |
| De de engelen weesden   | van H tot E    | 168     |
| Het is ons gelukt overeenstemming te verkrijgen met Rev. Mrs. SUS. HARRIS omtrent de Séances.   |                |         |
| Zij zullen plaats hebben op een der volgende data: 31 Maart tot en met 7 April den Haag; 8 en 9 April Amsterdam.  |                |         |
| Wij verzoeken U per omgaande ons mede te deelen of U op één dezer data verhinderd zijt te komen. Wij zullen dan ons best doen U op een der andere Séances in te deelen. Tevens verzoeken wij U bij deze mededeeling f 5.- te willen voegen voor elke plaats die U besproken hebt. |                |         |
| De kaarten zullen dan later beschikbaar worden gesteld. Hierop zullen datum en plaats van samenkomst worden vermeld.  |                |         |
| U gelieve er s.v.p. nota van te nemen dat bij niet tijdige storting der gelden U NIET aan de seance zult kunnen deelnemen.  |                |         |
| Seance met Harris (en commentaar Göbel)   |                |         |
| Le mededeeling en verslag ten commentaar Göbel voor Psychisch onderzoek   |                |         |
| 194 Sweelinckstraat.  |                |         |
| P.S. Postwissels te adresseeren: Secretaris der Weerstandskas.  |                |         |
| ZONDER MEER: s. Harris  |                |         |
| Marcellus Emants 213 +  |                |         |
| Göbel op zijn strepen 221   |                |         |

It’s best to follow the many articles in HTL for chronological purposes.

On Sunday, March 29 Harris held a moving speech for a full auditorium in The Hague to thank her hosts and promote her worthy causes for peace, and she also recalled the times she was saved from danger by her ‘voices’, for her spirit friends were always with her.

Later seances of the first days of April were also remembered fondly by spiritists who felt obliged to honor the medium that was ‘so villified and suffered so much’. People chose sides.



Harris was the underdog, the poor accused, and had they not all heard the voices of their loved ones through the trumpets of the medium?

*“I know that all the others were satisfied and happy too”, one woman said. And “I write this alone for the people who are denying these things”, said another.*

Of course Goedhart, sharpening his pencil, thought for some time how to place his dynamite in the most effective way. His article was a frontal attack on de Fremery, who, factually had not been the one disturbing the seance.

But Goedhart knew ways to blame him anyway, and here are his arguments:

De Fremery *‘should have known’* that Mr Richter was planning an attack, and he *‘should have kept him from doing so’*. He could, according to Goedhart, have *‘anticipated what Richter had in mind’*. (How? Clairvoyantly?) De Fremery also should have made sure the medium was scientifically searched *before* the seance began. His listening to Harris’ breath and his subsequent conclusions were of no scientific value, decided Goedhart, since obviously de Fremery, *“always thinking he knew more than anyone else”*, was too inexperienced to be capable of understanding that what happened was totally normal. Conclusion: the medium was no fraud at all.

And, Goedhart added, de Fremery’s shallowness and arrogance was, of course, backed up by an equally shallow and arrogant person, Mr de Bruin, who naturally judged things psychical like his mentor de Fremery. Goedhart then continued to ‘prove’ that the medium ‘of course’ was completely genuine.

Later Goedhart was accused himself for not having organised a try-out seance before Harris was set loose in the country, to test her with some scientists present. It was her first visit to the Netherlands, and Goedhart must have been aware of controversies around her mediumship in other countries. But Goedhart knew how to divert attention from his own omissions by blaming someone else. He ended his venomous piece with:

*“Mr de Fremery would do best to publicly retract his hasty conclusions, and study diligently for a number of years before writing about these matters again.”*

That was a strange advice to a man who had already written several books and brochures about spiritism that are still among the best ever written by a Dutch spiritualist. (Goedhart never wrote a book nor a brochure.)

Back to April 16. Göbel placed a letter in HTL from a woman who actually was there at that fateful seance. It didn’t go that well, even before the disturbance of Mr Richter.

My own experience with modern Harmonia seances, a medium in front of a hall full of eager people, is enough to recognise what happened in 1914: the desperate medium plucking information out of the blue *that isn’t recognised* and the incompetence covered up by “of course you didn’t recognise her, you didn’t know her, did you?”

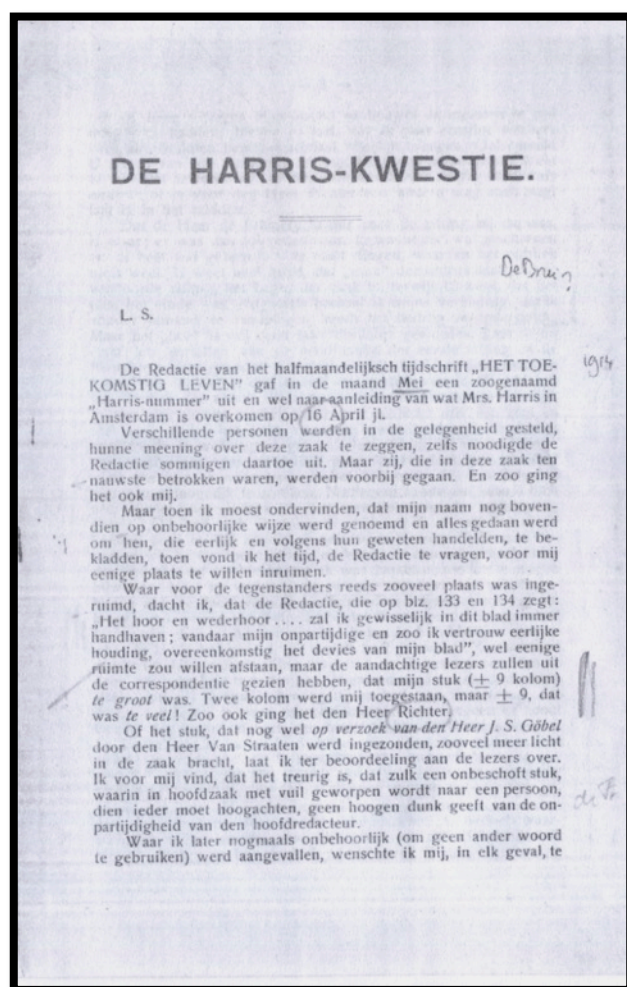
The woman herself was visited by the deceased daughter of a friend, who ‘gives her best to mother.’ Even William Stead (died in 1912) was using the trumpet. There were rappings. And a German spirit singing a song (in every seance the same) together with the public,

which sang so hard that the trumpet voice was drowned. When our reporter mentioned this, the trumpet fell on the ground: *conditions had been broken*.

Then Mr Richter ended it all and everybody was terribly anxious about the medium, and not to make light before she herself gave permission. When the light was made at last, the shocked sitters found Harris on the ground, *blood trickling from her mouth*.

Several people now gave their opinions in HTL, in longer and shorter fashion. **R.O. van Holthe tot Echten**, an important man in spiritist Holland, wrote a lengthy article in which he brought up several other mediums who were genuine and nevertheless something *seemed* amiss for the people who were there, one of them being Eusapia Paladino, of whom we now know that she occasionally took to cheating, but nevertheless she was one of the best physical mediums ever. Van Holthe tot Echten didn't seem to realise that 'proof' about other mediums doesn't constitute 'proof' that Harris was in the clear.

Then, again, Goedhart came with accusations that de Fremery was planning to find fault with Harris from the beginning *'like he always does when he visits a seance'*, because *'there is nothing he likes better than exposing mediums'*



Goedhart also 'knew' what de Bruin and de Fremery talked about before the seance, although he was not there to listen. It was 'obvious' to Goedhart that 'a plot was well under way'. He rambled on. De Fremery was a coward, an unscientific nitwit, fantasy prone, a nobody who had no clue of what a good medium looked like, and more in the same vein. In the end his conclusion was that *"the one-sided claims of de Fremery, with disregard of everything that points to the great psychic gifts of Mrs Harris, show us that Mr de Fremery in the field of psychic investigation can only reap the laurels of superficially minded people, like he did before. We (the readers) will know what to think of his verdict on Mrs Harris."*

Then a new player in the Harris circus came with his own arguments, explaining in many words how wrong de Fremery was, because he, G.A.W. van Straaten being the most experienced and knowledgeable of all, said so.

The arrogance of van Straaten knew no limits, bringing up the 2000 seances he visited, though surprisingly without apparently encountering any fraud.

Van Straaten never published in HTL till then, nor did he do any useful work for spiritism or Harmonia that we know of, but suddenly it was suggested de Fremery should listen to him and do as he, van Straaten 'advises him to do'.

Some fragments from this letter, were given, by Göbel, in the space of 8 columns:

*"You are undoubtedly fallen, dear brother, and therefore you have made yourself impossible in the spiritist world for a long time. But not we are the ones to punish, for who of us is without sin and faults? Let me try to give you a hand to lift you up, and do accept this good advice, given to you not from anger in my heart but in love for a brother who (maybe) out of an exaggerated feeling of honesty made a faux pas. **Take your leave as editor of HTL, in the interest of this worthy periodical, in respect to the head-editor and in the interest of our case.** This is not fun, I mean it, it is necessary."* And he added: *"Administrators are plenty around to help brother Göbel in your place."*

Administrator, mind you, of a man who had at that point in history done more intelligent and creative work for spiritism than anyone else, devoting his life and his many talents to the cause he believed in.

Von Straaten also told de Fremery that he was guilty of putting back the cause of spiritism 10 years, that he had slapped spiritism and the peace movement (!) of England and the USA in the face, that he had 'ungentlemanlike' kicked and insulted a 'poor, defenseless woman' who devoted her whole life to worthy causes, and on top of all that he claimed of 'brother de Fremery' that he '*always visits seances*' with the sole objective to discover cheating, with his 'aura of mistrust' etc .

Knowing what we know about de Fremery's character, I can only imagine his disgust at this despicable and false 'advisor'. who certainly had his own hidden agenda in accusing a man far superior to himself, of something *he didn't even do*, or ever would have wished to happen the way it did.

Most amazing maybe was that Göbel, a fair and honest man, gave this nobody so much room to throw his 'loving' mud in the face of his friend, while he refused to place a very important article of the man *who was actually there* and even presided the seance of April 16: G.J. de Bruin.

De Bruin was understandably vexed about that, and decided that his voice was worth hearing. So his planned article ▲ was sent to the subscribers by de Bruin himself, mentioning the fact that Göbel refused to place it in HTL, and that consequently, although many people favorably disposed to the medium got plenty of space, the people who were there, de Bruin and Richter, were never heard about what really transpired. (Göbel's own excuse for that is at the end of this article).

In hindsight this is one of the most confusing aspects of the whole affair. What made Göbel choose sides with the likes of Goedhart and van Straaten? Did he fear an escalation by printing anti-Harris material? Was he afraid of the venomous pen of the two gentlemen? He certainly had experience with the father of G.A.W. van Straaten, back from 1888 on, and maybe his leaving the post of Chairman of Harmonia in 1906, with a lot of painful problems,

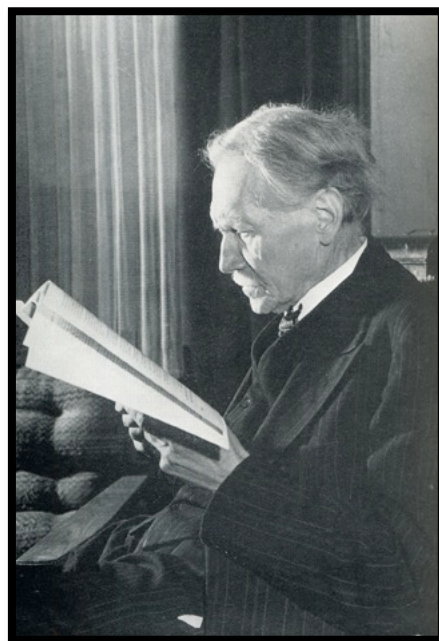
had something to do with the son, but this is pure speculation. We also know that Goedhart was craving for more influence, which he accomplished almost the moment Göbel died.

De Bruin's version of this fateful seance was quite interesting.

He forcefully denied Goedhart's accusations that there had been a conspiracy, as he also did in the Telegraaf article of April 29. As mentioned above, Richter had no plan, it just came up during the seance.

Neither de Fremery, nor de Bruin were informed about Richter's plans, simply because *there had been no such thing*. De Bruin also stated that he, Richter and de Fremery were not the only ones with misgivings. Several others had been to one or more seances and they had seen enough of Harris, one of them being **Dr. K.H.E. de Jong** (1872-1960), ► a noted classicus who was also a well known active spiritist. De Jong disturbed one of the earlier seances (April 2) with accusations, as we read in the May 1 issue of HTL.

The inventory of the Harris Affair papers contains several letters of de Jong to de Fremery, warning him to be very alert for deception in Harris' seances. In de Jong's mind there was no doubt about her being a trickster.



That there was no love lost between de Jong and Goedhart is obvious from a letter to de Fremery, from May 1, where he writes: "*the truth will find her way, and the spiritual scalp of Mr. Goedhart will be hanged in Meentwijken (de Fremery's villa in Bussum) as a trophy.*"

(This wish is a little unexpected, since de Jong became Goedhart's fellow editor in 1934, when the periodical 'Grensgebieden' was founded.)

Be that as it may, other people with doubts didn't accumulate real evidence. This was done by de Fremery, Richter and de Bruin on April 16 and at Harris' seances in the two weeks before that date.

Back to de Bruin's article, where he went deeply into the nonsense the medium kept producing in her 'messages,' and everyone who has some experience with bad or fraudulent mediums will smile at his examples, which are still the same now, a century later, as then.

"I felt myself attending a 2 dimes public seance", de Bruin said. But these seances were f 5.- p/p. "Didn't the sitters have a right to get something for their money?"

Mrs Harris seemed a master in extracting 'useful' information from the people 'receiving' a wonderful message. She told de Bruin about Miss K.v.H. (her interpreter) who picked her up from the train, and in the carriage Harris kept asking questions about a woman S. she knew

would be attending a seance. Miss K.v. H gave her the information about S. without suspicion, later to experience how exactly this information was used!

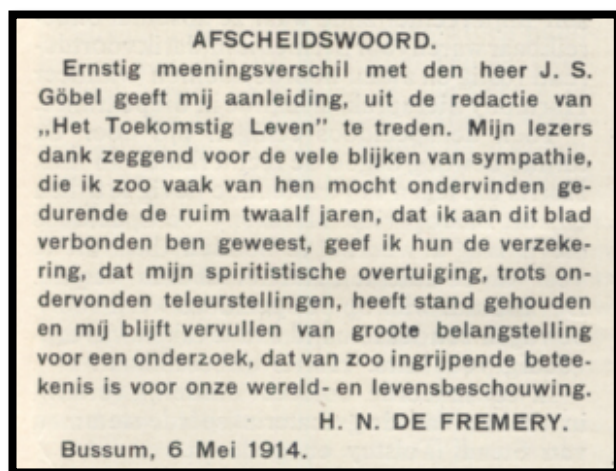
Maybe we remember Richter's information about Harris planting flowers in her bosom. That could well be true, for de Bruin mentioned Harris 'seeing' a spirit with a rose in her hand, meant for one of the sitters, and lo and behold, the spirit left the rose for all to see somewhere in the seance room. How wonderful. Only, the rose turned out to be withered. So useless it was that the woman for whom the rose 'materialised' didn't even pick it up after the seance.

Another trick de Bruin mentioned: Harris told the public at every seance she was suffering from blood spitting. When blood came from her mouth at the disturbed seance of April 16, it was, of course, taken seriously. Was she suffering from tuberculosis? Certainly not. And, writes de Bruin, "she prevented me from removing the blood from her lips, with my handkerchief."

De Bruin is very clear in his verdict of Göbel, who selectively placed letters of pro-Harris spiritists and refused the ones written by people anti- Harris and pro- de Fremery. This goes, he says, for the letter of de Bruin, but also for a lengthy letter of Mr. Richter, the man grabbing the trumpets, who didn't get space in HTL to explain himself either. (see Göbel's explanation below)

De Bruin defended de Fremery, whom he deeply admired for his calm, and his merits for spiritism, and it was very clear that he heartily disliked Goedhart, whom he saw as the main incentive for the escalation.

He wrote: "*I have seen your natural bent to stir up quarrels, like you showed then and there on the Harmonia board. It would be good for you to stop doing that. You still think you're standing before a classroom, but you are fighting thinking people, with far more experience than you have.*" And at the end of his lengthy article he encouraged Goedhart to leave Harmonia, because 'only then peace will return'. "*You succeeded in driving Göbel and de Fremery apart*", he writes, "*leave before you damage even more.*" It must have been clear to de Bruin that this would be the last thing to happen. Harmonia was stuck with Goedhart for exactly another 20 years, and more damage was indeed done.



Harris, the treacherous medium went away, and even an amount offered her of f 500.- could not keep her in Holland..

Then, in the May 15 issue of HTL, there was a very short note by de Fremery ◀:

**“Serious difference of opinion with Mr J.S. Göbel has given me cause to leave the editorship of Het Toekomstig Leven. Thanking my readers for the many signs of sympathy which I received in the twelve years I have been part of this magazine, I can give them my assurance**

**that my spiritist conviction, despite disappointments, is still there, as is my interest in investigations that is of vital importance for our worldview and philosophy of life.”**



That's all. In comparison to all the other lengthy articles very easy to miss. De Fremery himself wanted it that way, Göbel explained in the issue of July 1.

Still Göbel saw reason to give lots of space to sentimental journeys of, among others, the 'nurse' who took care of 'poor Mrs Harris' after her 'terrible experience' in Amsterdam, and another who specifically mentions how she kept saying 'I feel so lonely', which was plenty of reason to pity the mistreated medium and villifying de Fremery in the course of their writings. One may ask if these people were aware of what really transpired that evening, or if they were floating on the tide that was drowning the voice of reason more with every page in HTL.

It's impossible in the space of a single article to go over every letter in the subsequent issues of HTL. But in the issue of June 1, there was a lengthy article by de Fremery, who had been contemplating his reactions to all the false accusations over a few weeks, and also licking his wounds, I imagine.

*It is the last time we will hear from him in HTL or in any spiritist periodical for a long time.*

In this article he evaluated with characteristic honesty his own part in what happened. He started with stating that the many writings of his co-spiritists in favour of Mrs Harris made him think deeply, and even doubt his own conclusions. Could he possibly have been wrong after all? But, he wrote, *"my conviction, in which I seem to stand alone – there's not one co-spiritist who stood beside me - is still unchanged. I have reason to regret that the final section of my article in the Harris issue of HTL, through a misunderstanding was never published. It should have been: "To ban her (Harris) from our midst is a duty. Her false play should be proclaimed, she, who has the nerve to bring up people like William Stead, William Booth and others, hoping to make the impression needed to be believed."*

De Fremery then explained why he sent his article to *Het Vaderland* and *Het Leven*; these two newspapers had already published about Harris. He also wanted make sure that the negative publicity came from the side of the spiritists themselves, and not from people outside the movement.

Then de Fremery knelt down, and reflected honestly on a better way of action he could have taken. Although he spoke about his misgivings with Göbel before the seance of April 16, he asked Göbel to keep it between them.

*"That was wrong", he writes, "I should have gone to The Hague to talk openly with him and with the 'Vereeniging voor Psychisch Onderzoek' (meaning: Goedhart). I should have told them my misgivings and ask them to do the same as I did: listen to Mrs Harris breathing. That should have been comradeship between co-spiritists and in the interest of spiritist investigation. My own position would have been stronger, and I would have more people on my side than I had now; certainly every one who would have done what I did."*

Then he names the two people with the same experiences: G. J. de Bruin in Amsterdam, and **W.G. Grottendieck** in The Hague. We were not yet introduced to Mr Grottendieck, but this gentleman wrote to de Fremery on May 6, affirming de Fremery's later observation that Harris *only used one trumpet and only her own voice*. Grottendieck had been involved in investigations of the British SPR, wrote de Fremery.

After having fought a losing battle with Goedhart's accusations and saying that he is "*unable to equal his (Goedhart's) tone, and in this respect happy to declare myself his inferior*" de Fremery stressed again that only the gentlemen de Bruin, Grottendieck and himself were qualified to judge, since only the three of them were mindful of checking Mrs Harris thoroughly during the seance. "*All others who were not there and didn't do any checking may have heard what transpired from others, they know what is written, but they don't know from direct experience. Which in this case makes a colossal difference.*"

How right he was. The rest of this long article was written in a style we never before saw in de Fremery's writings. He could be a bit ironic, occasionally almost sharp, but, as a man in perfect command of the Dutch language, never purposefully hurtful. We all know how the way words are arranged can contain inherent meaning for who reads well. This letter, the last thing he would write for the readers of HTL, showed that he could be hurtful if he chose. And at this moment in time de Fremery has nothing to lose, since he had lost everything already.

His venom was directed at Goedhart, which was no surprise. His sarcasm is painful to read, because we can imagine the hurt lurking behind his words. I wish I could translate the whole long article but that is impossible.

His conclusion was adamant: "***I didn't find deception because I expected to find any; I found it because it was there.***"

It's predictable that an answer to this outburst from de Fremery came very soon. First an article from R.O. v Holten tot Echten, loyal to Goedhart and made from the same mold. He tried to impress his readers by giving examples from history of all kinds of mediums and the deceit some saw in their actions, which has nothing to do whatever with the case in question. But R.O. van Holten tot Echten rambled happily on, ending his piece of muddy thinking with a renewed accusation of de Fremery, that the writings of de Fremery's 'superiors' (meaning Goedhart, van Straaten and himself, I imagine) should have been "*reason enough to retract his verdict, since, in doubt, the medium is cleared till real evidence presents itself.*"

And then came Goedhart. Seldom a name (good heart) was so misplaced. His letter was again of the kind that makes the reader sick. Who would have thought otherwise: he used de Fremery's doubt, his honorably admittance that he could have handled this unfortunate affair differently by openly talking it through with Göbel and Goedhart before informing the press, as a means to slap him in the face, again. Goedhart has no problem with interpreting things his way. His vicious and vocal animosity jumps out of every abusing sentence, and also de Bruin is insulted, again. It must have been a golden episode for Goedhart.



By now we all know that the medium Harris did succeed in one thing: to bring out all the underlying conflicts in a very revealing way, dividing Harmonia and the spiritist community for years to come.

But the end was not yet there. Next thing was a lengthy article: 'Mrs Harris Mediumship, Pro and Contra', by **G.P.H. Zahn** (1861-1926), ◀ antiquarian, publisher and magnetiser, who analyses a number of the arguments given. Based on his own evaluation of what transpired he came to the conclusion that

there is ‘no absolute certainty that Harris was cheating, but also no definitive proof that she wasn’t’.

He was quite critical about several writers and their flawed logic. Zahn concluded that he was sure de Fremery had the interest of the spiritist movement at heart, and for him this prevailed above the interest of medium Harris. But, said Zahn, he could have been more careful and less rash in his conclusions.

Then Zahn attacked the ridiculous letter of G.A.W. van Straaten, and breaking a lance for de Fremery’s tireless work for spiritism and his 12 year long succesful editorship of HTL, he voiced his regret that van Straaten saw cause to hurt de Fremery as deeply as he could, in the guise of ‘loving advice’ that was not asked for. And he adds: “loving advice can only come from a loving heart, and someone with love in his heart is unable to write as van Straaten did.”

Then, at last, came the so much wished for support for de Fremery, from the pen of Harmonia’s Chairman **C. Monod de Froideville**. Here we had the voice of reason from inside Harmonia. De Froideville was very angry. He asked his readers to remember the many good things de Fremery did over the years, and was indignant that many queued up to criticise and humiliate de Fremery in every possible way, and almost no one voiced another opinion. “What has happened to the fraternity of Harmonia”, he wondered. “Disharmonia would be a better word”. Like Zahn he attacked G.A.W. van Straaten, saying that the so-called ‘brotherhand’ given to de Fremery was in reality one to slap him. Then he adressed van Straaten: “I was planning to give you on paper a merciless beating.” And he did.

Then he pointed the finger to Goedhart and his *Vereeniging voor Psychisch Onderzoek*: “I really would like to know”, he writes, “what exactly you have done to avoid all this, by, with ‘scientific’ means, testing the medium, and making sure no cheating could possibly happen?” De Froideville then ended his emotional letter with his regret that de Fremery was no longer an editor of HTL, and he thanked him for everything he has learned through the many articles from de Fremery’s hand.

Strangely enough Göbel saw reason to react critically to the things de Froideville wrote, by disputing de Frioideville’s chronology, but avoiding going into the main contents of de Froideville’s letter, though he stressed again the impartiality of himself as an editor.

Why Göbel was so keen to comment on one of the very few letters written by someone with a positive view on de Fremery, while he *never once* commented on the mud throwing by Goedhart, van Straaten and many others, is food for thought. Especially because it happened again in two subsequent letters from P.L. Thierens and J.C. Heijer, both defending de Fremery and angrily attacking van Straaten (Heijer), who ended with: “Mr. de Fremery’s leaving the spiritist movement would mean a disaster for the healthy scientific investigation of spiritism in our country.”

Göbel obviously was very anxious to defend his own actions in the affair. He must have felt he had a lot of explaining to do. More surprising even were several notes of Göbel in the Thierens article. One of which stated that ‘good readers of HTL will know that Goedhart has been fighting de Fremery’s outlook on spiritism for three years already, but not de Fremery as a person.’ Which is remarkable, since Goedhart was incapable of making such distinctions, as ‘every good reader’ would have noticed.

In a second note in the same Thierens letter, Göbel broke a lance for Goedhart and van Straaten, who both were ‘*honest, clear and fair*’ in their objections.’ Göbel’s judgement of what is ‘honest and fair’ underwent a strange twist over the weeks.

Reading through it all it is amazing how keen people were to ‘teach others a lesson,’ one way or another, sometimes most likely grabbing their chance to vent their longstanding grudges. This seems the case with C.J. v. H. t.E.- K.v.H., the wife of van Holthe tot Echten, who attacked Dr. de Jong, finding fault with him and his disturbance of the seance of April 2. Sanctimoniously she ended her letter with “*The battle we are fighting within our movement is more painful than the battle against dogma and materialism. The ethical, etherical, lofty [word missing in original] that should characterize the influence of the unseen world, will give way more and more as a result of people wallowing ever more deeply in the mud of their invented accusations.*” Invented?

The last contributions in the issue of June 1 came from the wife of Göbel, A. Göbel-Nierstrasz.

She started with a quote from the Bible, ‘*Do Not Judge*’ (Joh 7:24) which brings us in the right mood for everything else she has to say, mainly by lamenting the poor medium again. “*Do the gentlemen not feel that they have slandered the name of a woman, a stranger, being here without support, without friends? They not only hurt her badly physically, but even more spiritually.*” This rhetoric went on and on, Mrs Göbel was a sentimental woman and her reasoning was questionable. The rest of her letter was devoted to ruminating many arguments others have been ruminating already.



The issue of June 15 was almost like normal, filled with articles about non-Harris subjects. Except a letter from **Marcellus Emants** (1848-1923), ◀ a well know writer in those days (still in print), and very much interested in spiritism. Emants started with supporting de Fremery. Then he reported his own experiences with Harris, more or less in the vein of de Bruin’s article on the Harris affair: the totally meaningless messages, often to the wrong people. He added his own experience: the medium came up with ‘you have something to do with Paladino’. Not surprisingly, because Emants had discussed Eusapia Paladino loudly with a lady, before the seance started, doors open.

He also related that he asked a question, upon which the ‘control’ threw down the trumpet, indignantly stating that Emants was forbidden to ask questions, *because that meant he was distrustful.*

Who wouldn’t be?

His conclusion: “*Although I would be happy to accept the truth of the spirit hypothesis, seances like the one mentioned here are of no value at all. At the seance I had with Eusapia Paladino (in 1903), the thought of cheating never came up, but at the seance with Mrs Harris I was unable to put this thought out of my head for a single moment.*”

Of course Göbel had a comment on Emants' letter, and apart from other explanations he finds fault with Emants' mistrust, which is, Göbel says, "*not the means to form an objective opinion*". Would Göbel really have done otherwise, in the light of Emants' experience?

The very last mention of the Harris Affair was in the issue of July 1, by Göbel. He finally referred to the letters of the two people who had an important part in the proceedings of April 16: de Bruin and Richter. Their comments are, as said earlier, absent from the relevant issues of HTL.

Göbel explained: he had offered both gentlemen the space of 2 columns. Richter refused, but wanted his lengthy piece in 'de Telegraaf' to be copied in HTL, and also another article he wrote on the matter, which proposal was turned down by Göbel, who "*saw no proof of deception in both articles*" (One may ask where the proof to the contrary is in all the attacking articles he *did* place!)

The article de Bruin wrote was turned down by Göbel, since "*not half a column of the 9 columns was about his own views on the matter, and the rest is about other people and things not relevant to the case.*"

(Having read de Bruin's article this is a weird way to look at it. It's possibly one of the most relevant articles written in the Harris Affair, more so because de Bruin *was there*, and most other people were not.)

After being turned down by Göbel both gentlemen turned to de Fremery for advice, who wrote Göbel that he suggested to them to publish their stories as a brochure, and send it to all subscribers of HTL.

At this Göbel saw his authority threatened. He more or less forbade de Fremery to use the addresses of HTL for this purpose, and de Fremery answered that he could send post to whoever he pleased. This correspondence was part of Göbel's evaluation on the first page of the issue of July 1. He warned his readers about what was to come, and ended with his assumption that the readers of HTL will make up their own minds if he was right in refusing both gentlemen space in HTL.

In the end, as far as I know, only the brochure of de Bruin was distributed, written by him only. What became of Richter's plans I don't know.

What happened after 1914?

The HTL issue of July 1 was the last one in which de Fremery was mentioned. After that: silence, as if he never existed. It must have been disheartening for a man who served and spread his spiritist conviction for many years, to have it all taken away from him by his own friends and fellow spiritists. Accomplishments are soon forgotten but grudges do not easily die. Many, many years later Goedhart and his comrades brought the Harris affair back to memory, but without naming de Fremery explicitly. His 'misdeed' was used as an example of the consequences of rash judgement, something Goedhart, of course, had never been guilty of. J.S. Göbel died on January 1 of 1916, only two days before his 69th birthday. He was seriously ill for some time and knew he was going to die. There had been an extensive private correspondence between Göbel and de Fremery around the Harris Affair, some of it being in



the archive of Utrecht. But both gentlemen, no longer in contact after the unlucky escalation in 1914, were reconciled shortly before Göbel's death.

De Fremery wrote a sympathetic *In Memoriam* in the January 15 issue of 1916. He said:

*"During the 12 years in which I had the honor to work with him, I had ample opportunity to know and appreciate him, and although our paths didn't go parallel till the end, the sympathy we had for each other was still there. Across our differences of opinion we reconciled shortly before his demise: there is far more that connects us than what divides us."* And after having praised Göbel's many accomplishments and character he finishes with: *"Thankful for what he did for spiritism, our appreciative thoughts and feelings of sympathy go up to him. God be with him!"*

As for J. Goedhart, too much is already said about him. He died suddenly in his sleep, in 1935, at the age of 75.



As already mentioned, his relationship with Harmonia and HTL, a periodical that never recovered from the loss of de Fremery and the death of Göbel in 1916, came to an end in 1934. What transpired we don't know, but things were never easy around Goedhart. In 1934 he started his own magazine '*Grensgebieden*' ◀, under the pretence of being 'scientific', which, judging from the contents of the articles, it never was. One scientist though did contribute: classicist Dr. K.H.E. de Jong. Of the other editors Mr. S. de Laat de Kanter, a jurist, was equal to Goedhart in attacking science, preferably parapsychology, in his lengthy articles.

Goedhart was missed by his pals, and his obituary in '*Grensgebieden*' praised him into heaven for his merits for spiritism, his honesty and his wonderful personality. The past tells us differently. About the dead nothing but good?

There is no evidence in my possession to suggest *Grensgebieden* did survive its third year.

Reverend **Susanna Harris** seems to have survived quite well her 'terrible illness' as a consequence of her being accused of fraud.

As said before, she was again very much controversial in 1920, when she was tested by the SPR in Norway in 25 sittings and accused of fraud, again. She died in 1932. I have no direct information on her years between 1914 and 1932, but since Nandor Fodor in his *Encyclopaedia* only devotes a very short entry to her, it's probably a sign she wasn't the great medium people wanted her to be in 1914.<sup>6</sup>

---

<sup>6</sup>. — **Footnote by LP:** Lis Warwood, like the present author above, has drawn our attention to *Is Modern Spiritualism Based on Facts or Fancy*, London, Fowler [1919] by James Coates which contains positive

H. N. de Fremery went to greener pastures on November 16, 1940, at the age of 72. His friend Prof. Dr. Willem Tenhaeff wrote a sympathetic and informative obituary in het *Tijdschrift voor Parapsychologie* of that year. He reminisced about de Fremery's merits for the development of parapsychology in Holland. When in 1920 the Dutch SPR was founded, de Fremery was one of the board members. A few times he wrote articles for het TvP (*Tijdschrift voor Parapsychologie*). Tenhaeff mentioned his own regret that de Fremery after 1920 never again became the leading figure in parapsychology he could have been, and never came to writing down his rich experiences during his active years as editor of HTL, during which time he met a multitude of interesting people, although Tenhaeff urged him many times to do so. Probably de Fremery's memories culminating in the Harris Affair of 1914 were still too painful to force himself to this task.



Tenhaeff ended his obituary by stating that, although de Fremery never again wished to take a leading role, his interest in parapsychology in relation to spiritism never waned.

*"This may not withhold us from remembering him as a man who worked for many years at the front of parapsychological research and in that capacity suffered under much bias, from his fellow spiritists of whom many couldn't appreciate his parapsychological view on the spiritist question, as well as from others who a priori rejected spiritism because it didn't fit their world view. His memory will always be honored in our midst."* Here is the announcement of the cremation of de Fremery in *Het Vaderland* of 11/21 1940.▲

## Personal evaluation

This article is written from my own perspective on this short period in history. I don't pretend not to be biased myself. It is almost impossible to read HTL over a number of years, and not to get a fair impression of the characters in the leading roles of those days. The gap of a century seems to disappear and one feels as if one knows these people in person.

To me, however, it is obvious that the escalation of this whole unfortunate affair was far more determined by outspoken characters with long existing grudges and power issues than by the

---

accounts of seances with Mrs Harris. Noteworthy is a test seance in 1918 whose report was signed by Felicia Scatcherd, Dr Abraham Wallace and Estelle Stead among others. The report had appeared in *LIGHT* February 2 1918. It is possible also that Mrs Harris was the medium in the Crookes seances featured in *Psypioneer* February 2014, which were attended by Miss Scatcherd. In *LIGHT* for 1913-14, are a number of interesting accounts of evidence produced by Mrs Harris; among those testifying were Dr Crawford and Admiral Moore. A letter from Mr De Fremery was published, but the weight of opinion supported the medium, though it was conceded that her work was uneven. We hope to publish some of this discussion later.

importance of the facts. After all, how many well known mediums have been exposed, rightly or wrongly since 1848 without bringing down the people who did it?

Holland is a small country. Inside the spiritist movement people knew each other, and choosing sides, preferably the side that is obviously on the winning hand, is human nature. Had it been otherwise, probably other people had come forward, suddenly remembering something ‘suspicious’ in their seances with the medium Harris.

We can’t change history. Maybe de Fremery can smile, up there somewhere, in the knowledge that after a century the man he was is not forgotten. Which is quite an accomplishment for any human being.

### **Sources:**

Het Toekomstig Leven Year 1914, issues May 1, May 15, June 1, June 15, July 1  
Het Toekomstig Leven 1910, Issue June 1  
G.J. de Bruin De Harris-Kwestie 1914  
Invitation P. Goedhart for Mrs Harris seances, March 16 1914  
Loes Modderman , Harmonia's Wel en Wee (2008)  
Arthur Conan Doyle, The Wanderings of a Spiritualist (1921)  
James Coates, Is Spiritualism Based on Facts or Fancy? (1919)  
Grensgebieden Jrg 1 Nr 1, Jrg 1 Nr 12 (1934/1935)  
Inventory by Drs. Wim Kramer of the documents concerning the Harris Affair, at the Utrecht Archive  
Tijdschrift voor Parapsychologie, volume 1940

With gratitude to Drs Wim Kramer for his advice and for sending me copies of documents.



**Introductory note:** Below is taken from *LIGHT*, August 14th 1931 page 386, written by the journal's former editor David Gow who by this time was advisory editor, under George Lethem:

## **“LIGHT” DURING THE WAR— AND AFTER**

**By DAVID GOW**

*LIGHT* was born into a world teeming with activities in which I think religion and politics were most conspicuous, science and philosophy taking very minor places.

Some of the leading figures in the movement so far as *LIGHT* was concerned were active forces in either religion or politics, or both. Mr. Rogers, for example, was a political journalist, the Rev. John Page Hopps (who for some years wrote the editorials in *LIGHT*) was a political speaker as well as a leading figure in Nonconformist circles. Psychical Research included some notable figures in politics—Lord Balfour amongst them.

But all the political and social activities of those days were moving on, as under a remorseless pressure, to the Great War. A study of *LIGHT* of pre-war years will show that the portents and omens of the coming world-calamity were seen by the clearer-minded amongst its contributors—those who could see below the surface of things. They were sensitive to the signs of the times—they felt the coming of some great catastrophe which would arrive as a Nemesis to the social injustice and the political un-wisdom of the civilised world and its rulers. But they hoped and prayed that the disaster would be in some way averted.

### **BITTER YEARS**

It was not to be. In August 1914, the first year of my editorship, the blow fell. Things went from bad to worse, and only the most optimistic of us expected individually to survive the great ordeal. “Goods and services” became scarcer and scarcer as the war took its terrific toll of men and materials. *LIGHT* shrank in size to a bare eight pages, and even those were produced at an exorbitant cost, for “newsprint” – the paper on which newspapers are printed – became scarce and costly. Had the war continued much longer *LIGHT* might have appeared, if it were published at all, on a single sheet. All our supply of “blocks” of photographs and other illustrations, in the hands of the printers, was commandeered by the Government for munitions of war, for copper and zinc were very scarce, and printing works generally were laid under toll.

Those bitter years from 1914 to 1918 are like a nightmare to look back upon. But *LIGHT* survived it all into a time when, after the great purging, Spiritualism came more to the front than ever it had done before. Whole-sale bereavement had its part in the change, but only a part. There had been a great national chastening of soul. People had suffered in mind, body and estate, and the old political shibboleths and theological fallacies had lost their power.

During the war and after it, LIGHT gained many readers and contributors who but for the experience of the war would never have thought about the subject at all. We gained new adherents from the Church, from Medicine, from the Press and from the Stage. I met many of them, during the early stages of their inquiry into the evidences for survival. Some of them were people of distinction in their various callings.

I found it necessary, as Editor, to make certain changes in the tone and material of LIGHT. The old dry academics of earlier days had to be greatly modified. Some of the things with which the thoughtful reader was concerned in the earlier years had lost their importance. But I had to resist the demand from many quarters that LIGHT should be made purely popular and propagandist, that it should appeal to the emotions of the reader rather than to his intelligence. It needed no little resolution to follow the lines originally laid down, even with some needed modifications.

It was plain that Spiritualism, while it had strong religious implications, was not all a matter of religion. Science, in fact, was beginning to eclipse the old religious outlook, and at one time seemed in a fair way of setting up an orthodoxy of its own. Indeed, it was one of the most striking phenomena of the post-war years that the general reader was taking a keen interest in Science. The writings and speeches of Lodge, Einstein, Eddington and Jeans were conspicuous items in the press. The man in the street became aware, sometimes with surprise, that Science was becoming less materialistic in its outlook; indeed that such revolutionary changes were going on that it seemed as if Science and Religion were making up their ancient quarrel.

Even before the war there were signs of this coming reconciliation, and many notes and articles in LIGHT in those days took account of them. To me these great changes in Religion, Science and Philosophy are amongst the vital things noted and recorded in our pages. Beside them the many items dealing with séance phenomena, doctrinal differences in psychical science and philosophy, speculative theories and *personalia*, however much in the picture, are apt to look rather small.

Some of the earlier writers in LIGHT looked for and worked towards a synthesis of Religion and Science, based upon psychical evidences, and their views have been taken up and continued ever since. They found perhaps their most conspicuous expression in the lectures and writings of Dr. Ellis Powell, a man of brilliant mind, journalist, lawyer, scientist and Spiritualist. He was a member of the London Spiritualist Alliance, and a frequent and valued contributor to our pages. It was plain to him, as to others who made a study of Spiritualism on its philosophical side, that the message of Spiritualism was not all expressed in the idea of human survival, infinitely comforting as it is, alike to those who mourn loved ones who have passed from mortal life and those who view their own inevitable fate with doubt or dismay.

## RELIGION V. SCIENCE

The proof of a spiritual world not only makes the Universe more intelligible, throwing light on the meaning of mortal life, but also in the form of Spiritualism and Psychic Science it holds the seeds of the Religion and Science of the future. At present they are so intermixed that it is hardly surprising if there is some conflict as to whether Spiritualism is Religion or Science. To LIGHT and its conductors it presents itself as both, at present



interfused but later to be separately developed as a dual-unity, supplying a great interpretation of the mysteries of life and death.

I believe that from the beginning these ideas were present in the minds of those who founded LIGHT, and those who have conducted the journal since their day. Certainly this line of reasoning has been expounded many times in our pages. For LIGHT has never limited itself to the presentation of Spiritualism in its narrow and popular sense. It has taken the larger view and given due weight to the religious, scientific and philosophical values. These have been conspicuously set forth by such writers as Mr. C. C. Massey, a man of outstanding intellectual quality, "Quaestor Vitae" (Mr. Oswald Murray) and Sir William Barrett, as well as by Dr. Ellis Powell and "M.A. Oxon," not to mention Sir Oliver Lodge himself.

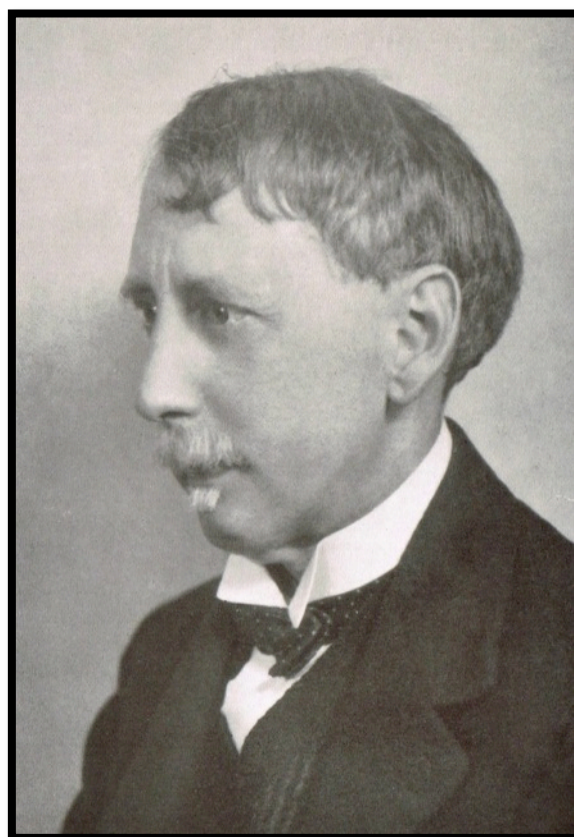
It was no easy task which fell to the conductors of the journal to deal adequately and faithfully with a subject so many-sided in its issues, ranging as they did from psychic faculty and séance phenomena to matters of cosmic importance. The greatest human mind could not have coped with such a problem without a fault or failure, but I am certain that all of us who attempted the task could plead that whatever our imperfections we did our best.

—§—

## DAVID GOW

### *Poet and Journalist*

David Gow took over the editorship of *LIGHT* on the death of Edward Wallis in January 1914, taking the journal through the Great War years and continued as editor until April 1931. He then took up the position as advisory editor, under George Henderson Lethem, who took over on April 20th, Gow continued for 18 months as advisory editor, before retiring due to poor health. He died on Thursday November 2nd, 1939 age 73. His funeral took place at Golders Green Crematorium on the following Monday, and was conducted by Mrs. Barbara Hewat McKenzie of the British College of Psychic Science. Previously in the October 1927 issue of their quarterly journal, its editor Stanley De Brath, made reference to David Gow:



## EDITORIAL NOTES

THE portrait of Mr. David Gow,<sup>7</sup> which is the frontispiece to the present issue,<sup>8</sup> will be welcome to many as presenting the photograph of an indefatigable worker for Spiritualism whose levelheadedness has steered the movement through many mazes. He took over the editorship of *Light* in January, 1914, on the decease of E. W. Wallis, having previously for some years written the editorials and notes which had before then been supplied by the Rev. John Page Hopps.

The editorial succession was Stainton Moses (M.A., Oxon); Edmund Dawson Rogers; E. W. Wallis; and David Gow; but there were brief intervals when the paper was run by J. S. Farmer and Richard Harte.<sup>9</sup> Mr. Gow's experience in journalism is a long one, and he was a contemporary of R. L. Stevenson, Alfred Harmsworth, Richard Le Gallienne, and others who later became famous. Indeed, all his Press life has been marked by acquaintance or friendship with famous men and women. He wrote for the provincial Press, for trade journals, for such papers as "Cassell's Saturday Journal," and the "London Magazine," a Glasgow paper, and the "London Scotsman."

In poetry, he is included in anthologies of Scottish writers. He gained most of his literary education from Scottish sources, under the tutorship of William Sharp ("Fiona Macleod") and Professor Robertson, but refers his journalistic training mostly to E. D. Rogers. He says, "I am nowadays regarded as very English—except to myself—and the Scottish interests are mainly sentimental and ancestral, though I am not permitted to forget them, for ancestral Gows come through occasionally at circles, *even when I am not present*, to greet me and to send greeting messages through others that I may not forget the pit from which I was digged."

His spiritualistic reminiscences would fill a large book. He knew nearly all the leading folk right back to the days of Garth Wilkinson, Mrs. Guppy, and Emma H. Britten, John Lamont, James Robertson, and many other worthies and pioneers. While editing *Light* Mr. Gow at one time wrote regularly for a London paper, and we can agree cordially to his last remark—"Variety is the spice of life, and it is very essential in Spiritualism, where over-devotion to the one thing breeds cranks and fanatics."

---

<sup>7</sup>. – Photograph was taken by Dora Head; throughout the duration of the British College, and also after its amalgamation, numerous portraits by Dora Head adorned the pages of their journal, *Psychic Science*. Psypioneer have from time to time re-published various portraits, for example, Mrs R.W. Dundas, Evan Powell, Lilian Bailey, and Eileen Garret etc.

<sup>8</sup>. – *Quarterly Transactions of the British College of Psychic Science, Ltd.* Vol. VI.—No. 3. October, 1927 pages 163-164.

<sup>9</sup>. – See Psypioneer: Volume 7. No 8. August 2011:—*Origins and Editorship of Light – Paul J. Gaunt ...etc:—*  
<http://woodlandway.org/PDF/PP7.8August2011.pdf>

On Gow's resignation, the Spiritualists' National Union President John B. McIndoe wrote this tribute to his work, published in their first official journal "The National Spiritualist," May 1931 edited by George Berry:

## David Gow

What Spiritualism owes to David Gow cannot be expressed in precise terms, it can be appreciated fully only by those who have been in close contact with him during his 20 years' association with *Light*.

He commenced as a contributor under Mr. Dawson Rogers, and soon became leader writer. Since 1914 he has been editor. These 17 years include some anxious and trying times, when faith and courage, wide experience and clear vision were essential qualities. These he possesses to a peculiar degree, they have gained for him a wide circle of admirers, while his genial unassuming nature has endeared him to a host of friends.

In his contributions to *Light* his leading articles have been instructive, broadminded and indicative of wide reading and, varied knowledge of men and affairs, his criticisms have been sane, just, shrewd, but kindly; his advice invaluable to many an enquirer, while his humorous "Rays and Reflections" have aroused many a smile.

There is scarcely a phase of journalism in which he has not played his part, he has been reporter, leader writer, sub-editor, and editor of several journals. He has written on politics, finance, religion and a host of other topics. He has written humorous stories and concocted comic sketches and jests. He was a regular contributor to *Judy*; *Moonshine* and other comics of a past generation.

Archaeology and literature have interested him, while his output of poetry has been considerable. A recent volume, "Four Miles from Anywhere," has been well received.

He has made few appearances on the platform as a public speaker. A notable instance occurred some 10 years ago in connection with the Lambeth Conference, when he addressed a gathering of Bishops on Spiritualism. His wide knowledge and experience of every phase of the subject eminently fitted him for the task.

*Light* and its editor have been held in high esteem in Fleet Street. They have been a valued source of information and help on all psychic topics, and Mr. Gow's personal influence has had a large share in bringing about the marked change in the attitude of the Press which has occurred during recent years.

Such is the man who has asked to be relieved of the main burden of his editorial duties. He is being retained as Advisory Editor, and will still instruct us in leading articles and amuse us in "Rays and Reflections." May he be long spared to do so, and to enjoy a well-earned leisure.

He has met most of the great mediums and the outstanding figures in Spiritualism and psychic research of recent years. His reminiscences would make

interesting reading and be valuable to the future student and historian. Will he do us this further service by arranging for their early appearance.



## PSYPIONEER RE-EQUIPPED



*This edition of Psypioneer is the first to be produced using new hardware and software made possible by the JV Trust, Spiritual Truth Foundation and the Survival Joint Research Committee Trust. We should like to express our deepest thanks to these bodies. Psypioneer could not have been produced for much longer on the previous computer. With colleagues across the world, we are now able to continue the provision of good quality information about pioneer psychic workers.*

LP.

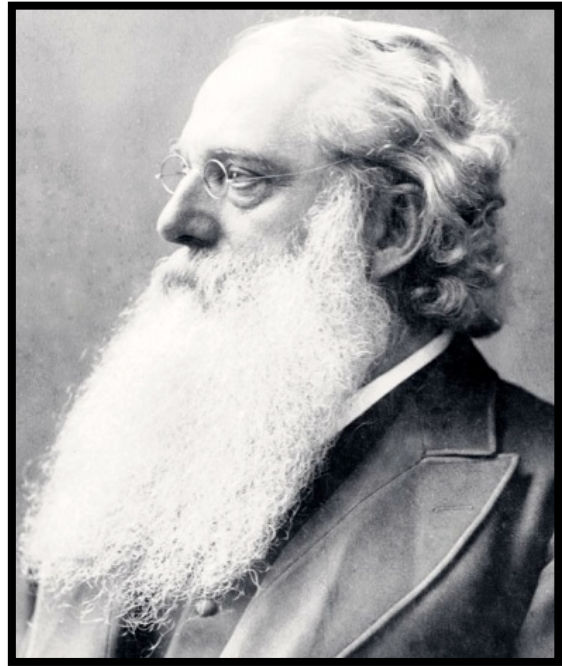




## Two visitors to Col. Olcott – a note

In his “Old Diary Leaves” vol. 1 Henry Olcott recalls of Madame Blavatsky and himself (p.395ff.)

“Our two hearts drew us towards the Orient, our dreams were of India, our chief desire to get into relations with the Asiatic people. No way, however, had yet opened on the physical plane, and our chance of getting out to our Holy Land seemed very slight, until one evening in the year 1877 an American traveller, who had recently been in India, called. He happened to sit so that, in looking that way I noticed on the wall above him the framed photograph of the two Hindû



Colonel Henry Steel Olcott

gentlemen with whom I had made the Atlantic passage in 1870. I took it down, showed it to him, and asked if he knew either of the two. He did know Moolji Thackersey and had quite recently met him in Bombay. I got the address, and by the next mail wrote to Moolji about our Society, our love for India and what caused it. In due course he replied in quite enthusiastic terms, accepted the offered diploma of membership, and told me about a great Hindû pandit and reformer, who had begun a powerful movement for the resuscitation of pure Vedic religion. At the same time he introduced to my notice, in complimentary terms, one Hurrychund Chintamon, President of the Bombay Arya Samaj, with whom I chiefly corresponded thereafter; and whose evil treatment of us on arrival at Bombay is a matter of history.”

There have been doubts about Olcott meeting Indians in 1870, but Paul Johnson recently informed me.

“Hurrychund Chintamon was the second Indian entered in the Adyar Membership records now available online from The Art Archive. The first, Toolsidas Jadarjee, #120 in the entries, precedes #123 Chintamon and has been considerably more elusive. TS founder Herbert Monachesi gave his name as Tulsidas Jadarjee in an October 6, 1875 New York Mercury article “Proselyters from India,” claiming that Thackersey and his travel companion had been on a Hindu missionary journey to the West, but no evidence had ever appeared in support of this claim.

The November 20, 1869 Louisville Daily Express described the two men on a business journey that had brought them to Chicago, where they were as of the date of the story. It reported that they were heading to St. Louis, New Orleans, and Boston. The mission was clearly a business trip involving their interest in the cotton trade, which took them to Mobile, Charleston, and Savannah in addition to the above-named destinations. The Galveston Daily News of November 21 reprinted a story from the New York Tribune of November 12: “[it is] to open the way for future direct commerce, that the gentlemen have visited out shores...During their stay in the



Fifth Avenue Hotel they have visited at least fifty of our leading merchants to whom they had letters, and they created much astonishment by their easy manners, and perfection of English. Both are clothed in European style, with the exception of handsome Turkish caps.” The New Orleans Daily Picayune ran a first page story on December 3, noting that they “have been in our city for several days...are to leave to-day on a tour through the Atlantic States, via Mobile, Montgomery, and Savannah. The object of their visit is to establish if possible direct trade with this country in the matter of bagging, etc., and to see the cotton fields of the South.” The Macon Weekly Telegraph of December 24 noted that they were in Mobile “for the purpose, the Register says, of obtaining a closer insight into the cotton business as transacted in this country.” The Charleston Courier of December 26 featured their visit on page 1 as “Distinguished visitors from Afar,” reporting that they had arrived from Savannah and that “Thackersey is a Barrian or merchant of caste, Jadarjee is a Brahmin of the priestly caste...he has lost caste, and on his return to his native country will be an outcast from among the Brahmins. But as he is wealthy he will care little about this...Our reporter...found them very pleasant in conversation and very communicative. They speak our language very correctly and very intelligently. Both are engaged in the purchase and sale of cotton in Bombay, and are on a tour of inspection through the cotton growing states.” They were noted as “Our Hindoo Visitors” in the Philadelphia Evening Telegraph of 6 Jan 1870.

The New York Times for January 13, 1870 included the names “Moolja Thackersy, Toolsidas Jadarzee,” and “Colonel. Hy. S. Olcott” has having departed the previous day on the steamship Java, bound from New York to Liverpool.”

This last sentence of course confirms Col. Olcott’s memory of having previously met Thackersey. These 19<sup>th</sup> century shipping records are indeed of great value to historians!

You can follow Paul Johnson’s further investigations on the History of Adepts web site.<sup>10</sup>



---

<sup>10</sup>. — <http://www.historyoftheadepts.com/historyoftheadepts/?p=1622>

## 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>

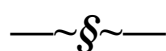
**Mrs Miller's Gift' – a Celebration of 75 Years of the Edinburgh College of Parapsychology formerly Edinburgh Psychic College & Library**, by Gerald O'Hara & Ann Harrison, published by Saturday Night Press Publications, England 2007. Paperback ISBN: 978-0-951-4534-9-0, available at Amazon. Psypioneer review, by Paul J. Gaunt pages 1-4:—<http://www.woodlandway.org/PDF/PP4.1January08..pdf>

**Mrs Miller's Gift CD:—Helen Duncan Séance, Ernest Oaten and Harry Edwards**, Written and produced by Gerald O'Hara B.Sc. Psypioneer review, by Paul J. Gaunt pages 106-107:—<http://woodlandway.org/PDF/PP5.4April09.pdf>

**The Indescribable Phenomena – The Life and Mysteries of Anna Eva Fay**, by Barry H. Wiley published by Hermetic Press, Inc., Seattle Washington 2005. ISBN: 0-945296-50-9, available at:—[http://www.hermeticpress.com/product\\_info.php?products\\_id=45](http://www.hermeticpress.com/product_info.php?products_id=45) Psypioneer references by Leslie Price pages 39-42:—<http://www.woodlandway.org/PDF/PP5.2February09.pdf>

**Immortal Longings – FWH Myers and the Victorian Search for Life After Death**, by Trevor Hamilton published by Imprint Academic in Exeter, U.K (also VA, U.S.A) 2009. ISBN: 9-781845- 401238 H.B, 9-781845-402488 PB, available at Amazon. Psypioneer review, by Leslie Price pages 157-148:—<http://woodlandway.org/PDF/PP5.6June09.pdf>

**Talking to the Dead – Kate and Maggie Fox and the Rise of Spiritualism**, by Barbara Weisberg published by HarperSanFrancisco New York 2004. Hardback ISBN: 0-06-056667-1, available at Amazon. Psypioneer review, by Paul J. Gaunt pages 9-10:—[http://woodlandway.org/PDF/Leslie\\_Price\\_PP2.pdf](http://woodlandway.org/PDF/Leslie_Price_PP2.pdf)



### **How to obtain this free Journal**

The Psypioneer journal is at present available, complete with all back issues on the web site <http://www.woodlandway.org> and we are greatly indebted to our Australian friends for hosting and posting this Journal. You can obtain it free and direct by sending an e-mail entitled "Subscribe" to [psypioneersub@btinternet.com](mailto:psypioneersub@btinternet.com) or "Unsubscribe" to discontinue.

To contact Psypioneer please e-mail [psypioneer@btinternet.com](mailto:psypioneer@btinternet.com)

Paul J. Gaunt

