

# PSYPIONEER

Founded by Leslie Price

Editor Paul J. Gaunt

Volume 3, No 9; September 2007

Available as an Electronic Newsletter

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## “Forgotten Pioneers of Parapsychology”

*50th Annual Convention of the Parapsychological Association*

Eberhard Bauer has kindly sent Psypioneer the abstracts of a panel “Forgotten Pioneers of Parapsychology” which was held at the 50th Annual Convention of the Parapsychological Association August 2-5, 2007 in Halifax, Canada. The panel was organized by Dr Carlos S. Alvarado and Eberhard Bauer.

**Participants were:** - Carlos S. Alvarado (Parapsychology Foundation<sup>1</sup>), Eberhard Bauer (Institut für Grenzgebiete der Psychologie und Psychohygiene<sup>2</sup>), Gerd H. Hövelmann (Hövelmann Communication<sup>3</sup>), Peter Mulacz (Austrian Society for Parapsychology and Border Areas of Science<sup>4</sup>), Alejandro Parra (Instituto de Psicología Paranormal Abstract<sup>5</sup>), Nancy L. Zingrone (Parapsychology Foundation)

<sup>1</sup> <http://www.parapsychology.org/>

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.igpp.de/english/welcome.htm>

<sup>3</sup> [http://www.parapsych.org/members/g\\_hovelmann.html](http://www.parapsych.org/members/g_hovelmann.html)

<sup>4</sup> <http://parapsychologie.ac.at/eng-info.htm>

<sup>5</sup> [http://www.alipsi.com.ar/investigaciones\\_detalle.asp?art=resumen\\_bial\\_2000-03.htm](http://www.alipsi.com.ar/investigaciones_detalle.asp?art=resumen_bial_2000-03.htm)

While many pioneers of parapsychology are forgotten today, there are some figures that are less-known than others. The purpose of this panel is to present short discussions of some of these individuals. They have been forgotten due to lack of attention to, or availability of, past literature, as well as for language barriers, and differences in the research agendas of today and yesterday. Panel participants will present brief discussion of selected figures with emphasis on basic biographical details and, particularly, on their parapsychological research and theoretical work. The discussion includes the following pioneers: Orlando Canavesio (Argentina, 1915-1957), Max Dessoir (Germany, 1867-1947), Rufus Osgood Mason (USA, 1830-1903), Emil Mattiesen (Germany, 1875-1939), Christoph Schröder (Germany, 1871-1952), Charles E. Stuart (USA, 1907-1947).

**[Note by Psypioneer: -** The order of presentation was Hövelmann, Alvarado, Bauer, Mulacz, Parra, and Zingrone. The panel had a duration of 85 minutes this consisted of a five minute introduction, each of the six speakers had 10 minutes for their presentation, followed by a 20minute discussion]

**Abstracts: -**

**The Many Faces of a Parapsychological Pioneer: Max Dessoir (1867-1947), by Gerd H. Hövelmann (Hövelmann Communication)**

In a certain sense, German philosopher-psychologist Max Dessoir (1867-1947) probably is the best-remembered of the “forgotten” parapsychological pioneers. After all, in an 1889 article, he had introduced the term “parapsychology” which we still use today to identify the areas of our scientific interest and to name our professional organization. In recent decades, that paper has become something of a standard reference. Today, we are able to show that Dessoir had privately suggested the term “parapsychology” even two years previously, in 1887. Yet, beyond that early terminological initiative, very little else is known among modern international parapsychologists about Dessoir, his many other scientific activities pertaining to parapsychology and his remarkably manifold scientific career in various disciplines. But there’s much worth knowing.

In many respects, Dessoir may be considered a young genius (who, incidentally, played the violin for the German Emperor as a child). Dessoir was 20 when he suggested the term “parapsychology”, presumably for the first time. He was only 18 when he had sittings with the notorious medium Henry Slade. At the same age he joined the Society for Psychical Research. He had just turned 19 when he published his first full article, in English, in the SPR Proceedings. At the age of 21, he published the first of two volumes of a comprehensive bibliography of then recent publications on hypnotism (including eight papers that he already had published himself). That bibliography is so obviously useful even from a modern perspective that it was re-issued in the United States in 2002. Max Dessoir was just 24 when he published his famous booklet on the “Double Ego” that led some to describe its author as an “immediate precursor of Freud and his school.” Two years later he published, under a pen name, a booklet of “psychological sketches” including a lengthy chapter on the psychology of legerdemain and its relevance to psychical research, which is still considered one of the best treatments of the subject. Before the age of 30, Dessoir had received both a doctorate in philosophy and an MD degree, could look back on

probably over 100 scientific publications (including half a dozen books) and was soon to become a professor of philosophy at the University of Berlin.

In subsequent years, Dessoir published a voluminous book recounting his experiences with Slade, Palladino, and many other mediums and also dealing in depth with what he termed the “Secret Sciences.” Also, being one of Schrenck-Notzing’s major opponents, he was the spiritus rector behind many parapsychological controversies in Germany during the 1920s, and he initiated important publications such as the *Zeitschrift für kritischen Okkultismus* and the so-called “Three Men’s Book” with its highly skeptical analyses of physical mediumship.

Apart from that, Dessoir was responsible for the establishment of aesthetics as an academic discipline in its own right, he did much to promote systematic historiography of philosophy, he was hired, in 1915, by the German Supreme Command to do a study on war psychology (which, to the probable dismay of those who had contracted him, Dessoir very subtly turned into an anti-war treatment), he pioneered public education through radio broadcasts throughout the 1920s, and wrote several books on art and aesthetics, on the history of philosophy, on psychology in everyday-life, and on the art of holding public speeches. The Nazis virtually terminated Dessoir’s scientific career in 1933.

In 1943, Dessoir’s Berlin home was hit by a presumably American bomb. His library and his extremely important scientific files were destroyed. Dessoir escaped to Königstein near Frankfurt where he died, forgotten by many, in 1947, a few months after his eightieth birthday. Those two post-war years, however, were sufficient time for him to author two more books: an important, highly instructive autobiography and what may be considered a synopsis of his views on parapsychology at the end of his life.

Max Dessoir was the person to give parapsychology its name. He spent considerable parts especially of his early life and career in search of what he called “established and comprehensible facts” in parapsychology. He always was one of the most outspoken critics of the field and at the same time one of the staunchest defenders of its legitimacy. And he ended his life as a reluctant believer at least in telepathy.

### **Rufus Osgood Mason (1830-1903) and the Popularization of Psychological Research in America, by Carlos S. Alvarado (Parapsychology Foundation)**

American physician Rufus Osgood Mason is one of the forgotten figures of late nineteenth-century American psychological research. Born in 1830 in Sullivan, New Hampshire, Mason initially studied in a theological seminary, and later went into medical school, graduating as an M.D. in 1869. He practiced medicine in New York City, where he died in 1903 at the age of 73. While Mason wrote about different medical topics, he distinguished himself for his defense of the therapeutic use of hypnosis. In addition, Mason published on double personality, reporting on a case he observed.

Mason’s main publication in psychological research was his book *Telepathy and the Subliminal Mind* (1897), in which he compiled many articles, some of which

appeared before in the New York Times. His work in the field centered on two areas: case studies, and popularization.

Mason, being a member of the Society for Psychical Research (SPR), occasionally sent cases to the Society. For example, the December 1894 issue of the Journal of the Society for Psychical Research has a case Mason observed in 1870 of alleged supernormal phenomena shown by a hypnotized young hysterical woman. In other publications Mason described cases of ESP dreams, hypnotically-induced mental travels to distant locations, and planchette writing. In an article published in *The Arena* in 1891, he speculated on the existence of a “psychic medium” connecting minds to explain telepathy. These studies, he believed, led us to conclude that “sensation is conveyed from the operator to the subject by some other means than through the recognized channels of sensation.” Such phenomena, he stated at the end of his *Telepathy and the Subliminal Mind*, could not be explained by conventional psychological and physiological explanations.

Most of Mason’s efforts centered on the popularization of the work of the SPR in the United States. In the above mentioned 1891 article he discussed the SPR’s thought-transference experiments. This was followed by a discussion of thought-transference and other aspects of the work of the SPR in a series of articles in 1893 issues of the *New York Times*. In the articles psychical research was presented to the American public as the cutting edge of psychology.

He also discussed frequently Frederic W.H. Myers’ (1843-1901) ideas of the subliminal mind. Arguing that supernormal phenomena were part of the normal functions of the mind, Mason argued in newspaper articles and in his book *Telepathy and the Subliminal Mind* that the subliminal self was the agent responsible for telepathic manifestations that were in turn communicated to the conscious mind. Later in 1903 Mason published in the *New York Times* a two part article reviewing Myers’ *Human Personality and Its Survival of Bodily Death* (1903), a work that he praised. His views of Myers’ work provided a balance the more negative views of the book of American psychologists.

While Mason’s cases are interesting, he was not a major contributor to the empirical data base of nineteenth-century psychical research. His main contribution was his efforts to popularize the field in the United States, with particular attention to the work of the SPR, and the subliminal psychology of Myers.

### **Emil Mattiesen (1875-1939), German Composer and ‘Metapsychologist,’ by Eberhard Bauer (Institut für Grenzgebiete der Psychologie und Psychohygiene)**

Emil Mattiesen was of Baltic origin. Born on January 24th, 1875 in Dorpat, the son of a councillor, he showed quite early a noticeable musical talent – at the age of eight he set ballads of Felix Dahn to music. In 1892 he started to study philosophy, natural sciences and music at the University of Dorpat and continued his studies one year later at the University of Leipzig. In 1896 he got his Ph. D. with a thesis dealing with the philosophical critique in the work of Locke and Berkeley.

Between the years 1889 and 1903 Mattiesen was going round the world. His aim was to learn different languages, religions, philosophical and ideological systems in a most

comprehensive way. For years he lived in several Asiatic countries to get a first-hand knowledge of the religious systems. Between 1904 and 1908 he spent academic years in Cambridge and London and started to write down his first major work which was finished in 1914 but which could be published only after the First World War in 1925 under the title *Der Jenseitige Mensch. Eine Einführung in die Metapsychologie der mystischen Erfahrung* [Man of Next World. An Introduction into the Metapsychology of the Mystical Experience]. This book, the ambitious attempt to give the psychology of religion a new basis by integrating paranormal phenomena – Mattiesen called them ‘facts of Metapsychology’ – into the phenomenology, psychology and psychopathology of religious, mystical and other “transliminal” experiences – it’s a real treasury of knowledge what could be called today “altered states of consciousness.”

From 1908 Mattiesen was living in Berlin where he developed his musical talent in a systematic way. In the following years he published as a composer seventeen albums [Liederhefte] of songs and ballads. This double talent – as a composer and as a parapsychologist (‘metapsychologist’) – is a characteristic trait of Mattiesen’s work. From 1925 he was living a quiet and retired life near Rostock only devoted to writing his second major work which dealt with the survival problem. The first two volumes appeared in 1936, and the third one in 1939. It was entitled *Das persönliche Überleben des Todes: eine Darstellung der Erfahrungsbeweise* [The Personal Survival of Death: An Account of the Empirical Evidence]. The same year, the Second World War had just begun, on September 25, Emil Mattiesen died of leukaemia. He was 64 years old.

Mattiesen’s legacy to (German) psychical research and parapsychology are two extensive works, comprising all together more than 2,100 pages, which were published by Walter de Gruyter, still today one of the most prestigious publishing houses in Germany for scientific and academic literature, specializing in law, medicine, natural sciences, history, philosophy, theology and religious science. The reasons why Mattiesen’s name is nevertheless nearly forgotten, are intimately connected with following historical and cultural factors: (1) Mattiesen was living in a self-chosen isolation. He did not participate in the public controversy dealing with “occult” phenomena in Germany during the late 1920s and early 1930s (see, for the contrary, the role of Max Dessoir); (2) although Mattiesen was praised as the figurehead of the spiritistic movement in Germany, there was no adequate audience for the sophisticated discussion of his arguments, comparable with the British SPR; (3) when Mattiesen’s opus magnum on survival research was published, the National Socialism had come to power in Germany and there were no parapsychological journals or organizations available which could provide a forum for a detailed and critical discussion; (4) for whatever reasons, Mattiesen’s work remained totally unknown in the English speaking world; his books were never reviewed in the journals of the British and American SPR.

**Christoph Schröder (1871-1952): The Hub of a Parapsychological Network, by Peter Mulacz (Austrian Society for Parapsychology and Border Areas of Science)**

Besides his professional life, little is known about the biographical data of Prof. Dr. Christoph Schröder, Berlin-Lichterfelde-Ost. Trained as a zoologist, he specialized in entomology in which field he edited a three volume textbook, a two volume survey on

the insects of Central Europe, particularly Germany, and published a book on the biology of insects. He made his living as a teacher of biology at a Berlin lyceum.

Hinrich Olhaver of Hamburg, a successful businessman and devoted spiritualist, author of “Die Toten leben” (i.e. The Dead are Alive) had been the founder of a spiritualist group, named Revalo Bund (i.e. Revalo Union) whereby Revalo is just an anagram of his name. This Revalo Bund published, starting in 1925, a monthly journal which in 1927 changed its name to Zeitschrift für psychische Forschung (abbr. Z.ps.F., Journal for Psychical Research). When it faltered after another two years, Schröder commenced publishing his own Zeitschrift für metapsychische Forschung (abbr. Z.mp.F.; Journal for Metapsychical Research – very strange that Schröder used the French terminology) running from 1930 through 1941. In his first issue, Schröder denies any connection between his new journal and the former Z.ps.F., yet not only are they like twins in reference to their layout, also most authors of the two subsequent journals are identical, including Schröder himself who edited Grunewald’s report on his visit to Talpa after the latter’s untimely death.

The Z.mp.F. was edited “in connection with the Institute for Metapsychical Research” which in fact was located at Schröder’s residence. In 1925, Schröder had founded this “Institute,” not least in order to take over the ingenious apparatus designed by Grunewald.

In parapsychology, the early focus of Schröder’s attention was on what he called the “Frau Maria Rudloff’sche Spiegelphänomenik” (i.e. the mirror phenomena of Mrs. Maria Rudloff). “Maria Rudloff” was used as an alias for Maria Vollhart (Malcolm Bird spells the name as “Vollhardt”), coincidentally the mother-in-law of Christoph Schröder. Earlier, she has been the subject of the studies of Friedrich Schwab M.D., that were published in his book on teleplasm (an alternative term for ectoplasm) and telekinesis. By “mirror phenomena” the appearance of crude drawings, such as stick-figures, on mirrors or other flat glass surfaces (windows), mostly overnight, is understood. In isolated cases, lines resembling Arabic characters appeared. The substance of these drawings is said to have been dried-up blood plasma. (The glass surfaces were lost in the aftermath of World War II, and the phenomenon remains disputed.) Mrs. Vollhart/Rudloff also showed some dermal effects, numerous parallel scratches on the back of her hand, as if they had been made by using a brush.

In 1926, Countess Wassilko, together with Eleonore Zugun, visited Schröder and his family, resulting in kind of competition between the two mediums.

There have been five International Congresses for Psychical Research in the years between the two World Wars, organized by Carl Vett – kind of forerunners of the PA Conventions –; of these, Schröder took part at least in the Congress held 1927 at the Sorbonne in Paris.

During the trial of the famous clairvoyant (or rather pseudo-clairvoyant) Erik Jan Hanussen (real name: Hermann Steinschneider) he served, together with Walter Kröner, as an authorised expert (Leitmeritz, Czech Republic, 1931).

Starting in 1932, Schröder published an additional quarterly, “Mitteilungen der Gesellschaft für metapsychische Forschung” (i. e. Notes from the Society for

Metapsychical Research) which was bound together with his Z.mp.F., so every third issue was split between the two periodicals. He was running this “Society for Metapsychical Research” though being previously affiliated to the “Deutsche Gesellschaft für wissenschaftlichen Okkultismus” (DGWO, German Society for Scientific Occultism) in the context of which he had published his brochure “Grundversuche auf dem Gebiete der psychischen Grenzwissenschaften” (i. e. Basic Experiments in Psychic Scientific Fringe Areas) in 1924. In 1937, the quarterly changed its name to “Die Unsichtbare Wirklichkeit” (abbr. U.W., The Invisible Reality).

Schröder, not tremendously important a parapsychological researcher as such, was nonetheless pivotal in parapsychological networking due to the fact that in the journals he edited (regardless of their confusing and often changing names) many noted parapsychologists of that time found a forum to publish their papers, e. g. Grunewald, Mattiesen, the Austrian Kasnacich and some others. It needs to be particularly emphasized that his periodicals were published until 1941, i. e. even during the first years of the war. In contrast, the (admittedly more important) Zeitschrift für Parapsychologie (i.e. Journal for Parapsychology) terminated its appearance by mid-1934 when Gabriele, Baroness Schrenck-Notzing, Albert’s widow, resolved to withdraw her financial support, leaving Schröder’s journals the sole surviving ones in Germany.

### **“Biology Without Metapsychics, a Bird Without Wings”: Orlando Canavesio’s Contributions to Parapsychology, by Alejandro Parra (Instituto de Psicología Paranormal)**

Surgeon and neurologist Orlando Canavesio, one of the pioneers of parapsychology in Argentina, was born in Buenos Aires in 1915. He focused on medical and biological aspects of psychic phenomena, and also he was one of the few Argentinean experts in the advance of scientific diagnosis in mental disease. He founded the Asociación Médica de Metapsíquica Argentina, AMMA (Argentinean Medical Association of Metapsychics) in 1946. The Association published the journal Revista Médica de Metapsíquica, of which AMMA issued only three copies.

He was interested in using EEG in psychical research to study brain activity associated with ESP performance, what he referred to as the “metapsychic state.” He studied self-claimed psychics such as the dowsers Enrique Marchessini, and Luis Acquavella, Eric Couternay Luck, Federico Poletti, and Conrado Castiglione, who worked as psychics.

Some of Canavesio’s main studies included an early EEG study, and many comprehensive case studies of a single psychic, such as Eric C. Luck one of his “star” psychic. In a paper published in 1947, he said that states conducive to ESP ranged “from deep-sleep, normal or somnambolic, to an apparent wakefulness characterized by an expectant attention, concentration or isolation”. In a study with psychic Eric Courtenay Luck, Canavesio took EEG measures while Luck went into trance and reported that the “alpha rhythm disappears, becomes more or less regular, and the potential diminishes by 60%”. Canavesio thought that dowsing performances were better suited for EEG testing. Canavesio’s medical dissertation was entitled Electroencefalografía en los Estados Metapsíquicos (Electroencephalography in

Metapsychic States). It was the first dissertation in Latin America based on a parapsychological topic, and it was granted by the Faculty of Medicine of the University of Córdoba.

Canavesio attempted to place parapsychology within government institutions and universities. Canavesio was appointed head of the Instituto de Psicopatología Aplicada (Institute of Applied Psychopathology), which was established in 1948 to determine whether the spiritualist movement could represent a public mental health concern. Canavesio also was a strong defender of the incorporation of parapsychology (or metapsychics) in the chairs of psychology medicine at the faculties of medicine in Argentina.

In addition, Canavesio participated in numerous public events. He gave a number of lectures in scholarly forums, as well as in radio programs, and in newspapers. Argentina was represented for the first time in one of the most important international parapsychological events when Canavesio participated in the First International Conference of Parapsychological Studies held at in Utrecht in 1953. He presented some of the work he reported in his dissertation. He also participated in a psychical research conference on parapsychology in Bologna.

Unfortunately, most of Canavesio's efforts did not have much impact. One aspect possibly leading to the neglect of his work was that the psychological movement displaced the medical approach to parapsychology, so that psychologists, and not physicians, were usually the professionals that were the most interested in and involved in parapsychology. Some felt that Canavesio's work had several pitfalls, and that it lacked an adequate methodology. Canavesio's approach was mainly qualitative, instead of the quantitative approach used by some European psychical researchers.

Canavesio was interested in other topics, such as dowsing, psychology, medicine, experimental psychopathology, and Jung's theories. He also participated in PK experiments conducted by parapsychologist José María Feola who directed the "Grupo La Plata". This group was a home-circle formed by non-spiritualists interested in the physical phenomena of Spiritualism, who carried out a series of experimental sessions of table-tipping, table levitations, raps, and other phenomena between 1950 and 1955.

On December 14, 1957, travelling to Mar del Plata city in his car, Orlando Canavesio had an accident, as a consequence of which his left leg had to be amputated. He died soon after. Canavesio was only thirty-eight years old, and was starting a new parapsychological society at Rafaela. Its guiding principle was expressed in a motto printed on the cover of the journal: "Biology without metapsychics, a bird without wings."

### **Charles Edward Stuart (1907-1947) and Experimental ESP Research, by Nancy L. Zingrone (Parapsychology Foundation)**

Charles Stuart was an important member of the ESP research team at Duke University from 1931 until his death in 1947 at the age of 39. Born in 1907 in Pennsylvania, Stuart obtained a BA in mathematics with a minor in philosophy from Duke University in 1932. While an undergraduate he volunteered to be tested for ESP and

produced an endless stream of card-guessing results, which, among other findings, contributed to the establishment of the decline effect. In Rhine's monograph, *Extrasensory Perception*, published in 1934, Stuart's photograph appeared on the frontispiece as one of the Laboratory's high-scoring "star" subjects. Stuart was also featured in the text as one of Rhine's principal assistants, along with J. Gaither Pratt.

Moving into the Duke Ph.D. program in psychology after his graduation, Stuart became a formal member of the Rhine group. His Ph.D. was awarded in 1941, only the second time Duke University had conferred the degree for a dissertation devoted to psychical research. Titled "An Analysis to Determine a Test Predictive of Extrachance Scoring in Card-Guessing Tests," it highlighted both Stuart's methodological and his mathematical expertise. Like Pratt, Stuart spent two years working away from the Laboratory. In Stuart's case, he was the fourth Thomas Welton Stanford Fellow in Psychical Research at Stanford University, serving in that capacity from 1942 to 1944, following John L. Coover (1912-1937), John L. Kennedy (1937-1939), and Douglas G. Ellson (1939-1942).

Stuart suffered from heart disease throughout his adult life and, consequently, was not among the group of young men who left Duke in 1941 to serve in World War II. Although his illness sometimes kept him from the Laboratory, he was one of the most prolific members of his cohort. Not only was Stuart a contributor to the debate over statistical methods then being developed in psychology and parapsychology, not only did he take the lead in the Laboratory's interaction with its critics, not only did he co-author an early testing manual with Pratt as well as provide a key contribution to the Laboratory's magnum opus, *Extrasensory Perception after Sixty Years*, but Stuart also conducted and published a wide variety of experiments. For example, he refined Warcollier's drawing methodology and established a robust line of free-response testing both to bring the experience of ESP in life more fully into the Laboratory and to maintain subjects' motivation across a testing session.

Committed to methodological relevance in light of then "modern" psychology as well as to a reasoned response to substantive criticism, as a single researcher or in collaboration with others, Stuart's experiments are exemplars of good design. Among them were: examinations of the relationship of atmospheric conditions, personality characteristics, changes in guessing tempo, and subjects' estimations of success to forced-choice scoring; and classroom versus single subject test administration, and subjects' target "reception" styles to free-response scoring. To his credit, Laboratory members remembered him as a congenial colleague, dedicated not only to his own and the field's advancement but to that of his colleagues as well.

## PRIVATE DONOR ENSURED LIGHT'S SURVIVAL

The weekly Spiritualist newspaper, LIGHT, founded in 1881, may have been saved from closure by a private donor in 1897, according to a new book. The donor, actually an SPR member, gave £4250 over a seventeen month period, which is about £320,000 in present money values.

The donor was Dr Arthur Conan Doyle, who had become wealthy as a result of the success of the Sherlock Holmes stories. In his new biography "Conan Doyle", Andrew Lycett writes:

*"The London Spiritualist Alliance trod a comfortable middle path between scientific enquiry and mystical arcana. At the start of the year, Light had been relaunched as part of an internal restructuring which left Arthur's Portsmouth friend General Drayson still on its council. Arthur saw the magazine as a worthy recipient of his money."* (p.337)

This donation is important in establishing the seriousness of Conan Doyle's early commitment to psychic studies. Although his belief in Spiritualism fluctuated in the years to 1916 when he began his public campaign, the placing of this treasure clearly suggests where ACD's heart lay.

See also in this issue "Conan Doyle Reassessed"

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Below is taken from 'Light' Vol. LXXIX No. 3439 Summer, 1959: -

## A SPIRITUALIST'S VIEW OF PSYCHIC RESEARCH

BY MURIEL  
HANKEY

[Note by Psypioneer: - In last months issue<sup>6</sup> we published an article on the founder of the 'British College of Psychic Science' (B.C.P.S.) entitled: - 'Knight Errant of Psychic Science James Hewat McKenzie'. Muriel Hankey<sup>7</sup> was personal secretary to J. Hewat McKenzie becoming organising secretary of the B.C.P.S., in 1930.

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<sup>6</sup> <http://www.woodlandway.org/PDF/PP3.8August07..pdf>

<sup>7</sup> Thoughts of Muriel Hankey – William V. Rauscher see: - [http://www.woodlandway.org/PDF/Leslie\\_Price\\_PP11.pdf](http://www.woodlandway.org/PDF/Leslie_Price_PP11.pdf)

Later in 1949 she was invited to act as Principal of the 'Edinburgh Psychic College and Library' whilst its Principal was on a sabbatical, then becoming Secretary and Principal of the 'London Spiritualist Alliance' (L.S.A.); this became the College of Psychic Science (C.P.S.) in 1955. She wrote articles for various specialist publications such as *Tomorrow*, *Psychic Science*, and *Light*. Her book 'J. Hewat McKenzie Pioneer of Psychical Research' published in 1963 is still readily available second-hand see: - reference<sup>8</sup>]

### **Muriel Hankey: - 1895 – 1978**

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*(From a Lecture delivered to the Society for Psychical Research)*

The title of this talk is not a subject that I would have chosen myself, for several reasons, one of which is the question "What is a Spiritualist?" I am not at all sure that I qualify as a spiritualist to-day. Another reason is that it all depends upon what is meant by "Psychical Research". Both terms have a very different connotation to-day, from, say, fifty years ago when one was almost synonymous with the other.

I think there never was a time when Spiritualism in its broadest sense was not practised: ancient histories and religious cults of all times and in all countries are full of the belief in survival, in some form or another, but it is usual to think of modern Spiritualism beginning with the alleged spirit rappings produced by the Fox sisters in Hydesville, U.S.A., a century ago. The cult spread like the proverbial wild fire, and in England caught the attention of many notable people. The interest led to the founding of the principal Societies or bodies which exist today, viz. the British National Association of Spiritualists, the Society for Psychical Research, the Marylebone Spiritualists Association, the Spiritualists' National Union and the London Spiritualist Alliance, now renamed the College of Psychic Science.

It may be interesting to notice that the Society for Psychical Research and the London Spiritualist Alliance came into being almost simultaneously. This Society elected their first President in 1882, and the L.S.A. elected their first President in 1884, but that body, the L.S.A. had its roots in the former British National Association of Spiritualists in 1873. The S.P.R. was registered on August 7th, 1895, and the L.S.A. on August 19th, 1896. Both Societies employed the same solicitors, with the minor change that Messrs. Scott, Spalding and Bell had lost their Mr. Spalding in the intervening year. Perhaps he had gone ahead to learn some of the answers to some of the problems that are still bothering us today!

However, note this: the objects of both Societies-the Researchers and the Spiritualists -were *exactly the same*. Let me quote paragraph (b) from these Objects:

*To seek, collect and obtain information respecting, and generally to investigate the phenomena commonly known as psychical or as spiritualistic, including hypnotism, somnambulism, thought-transference, and all matters of a kindred nature.*

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<sup>8</sup> <http://www.abebooks.com/servlet/SearchResults?an=hankey&sts=t&tn=mckenzie&x=0&y=0>

When the L.S.A. changed its title in 1954 this object (b) was amended to include "To study the application to the subject of survival and communication with the discarnate and to disseminate the knowledge gained thereby." I do not know if there has been any amendment in your own Articles.

Apart from their titles, then, how did the two Societies differ? I would conjecture that there was very little difference in their original aims; in fact, they are shown to have been identical. Perhaps it was considered that there was room in London for two or more such Societies? Perhaps there was a slight difference in the climate of opinion as to policy or pattern of organisation?

As time went on there seemed to be a widening of the ways, at first hardly noticeable but of recent years very marked, and this Society now seems to be interested almost solely in the academic side of the subjects mentioned.

At the present time there is a very definite line of demarcation between spiritualists and psychical researchers. Apart from the religious presentation, the spiritualists begin with the premise that death is not extinction; that the conscious personality does survive, and from that premise it is but one step to their belief (or do you think it is but a wishful hope?) that communication between the discarnate and the living is not only possible but factual, and is practised daily through the channels of professional or private mediumship. Fervent and convinced spiritualists, who are satisfied with their findings, sometimes become very gullible and therefore vulnerable. They are profoundly shocked on finding an instance of fraud, seldom understanding the psychological factors that may be involved in the seance room; the multiplicity of influences at work. Psychical researchers seem to take almost a diametrically opposite view; they seek first to explain all paranormal or supernormal phenomena in terms of E.S.P. Guessing, Telepathy, (the extension of the mind), anything that you will, even to the movement of underground water, rather than entertain for a moment the simple hypothesis that there may be an invisible death-surviving intelligence operating behind the phenomena.

At least, that seems to be the modern method. It was not always so, of course. In your Journals there are some magnificent cases recording the examination of what could be called spiritualistic phenomena from which positive deductions in favour of survival and communication may be drawn, these cases attested, as they are, by responsible investigators.

Most people who are not, as it were, born into spiritualistic families, first look into the subject at a time when they have suffered a deep bereavement; they have the wish and will to believe, and this emotionally receptive quality provides the best material for success in the seance room. Other people have enquired into the subject from a purely dispassionate curiosity as to what it is, what evidence there is for the claims made by the spiritualists, and this cold scrutiny may not evoke the co-operation of any surviving personality, which, for all we know, may be an essential factor in the manifestation of many psychical phenomena.

Let me indulge in a little personal reminiscence. I "came into the subject," as they say, in May 1915; that is a long time ago. I was prompted not by any personal grief and need of comfort, nor any desire to experiment, but merely to take a job (against

the wishes of my parents) as secretary to the late J. Hewat McKenzie, an avowed spiritualist. I was then quite young, totally ignorant of matters psychic, but McKenzie set me some severe homework. My so-called leisure time was spent in reading under his direction Swedenborg, Voltaire, Blavatsky, Maitland, William James, F. W. H. Myers, Kingsford and many other writers on philosophy, Psychical Research, Theosophy and the like. Very few modern authors can compete with these old masters; one notable exception is Raynor Johnson.

Someone recently told me that he never attends lectures now because practically every speaker only re-hashes the contents of a book, old or new, that he has read. Well, I shall not be guilty of that crime! As I have indicated, these are only my personal reflections, presented in rather a haphazard manner.

In the first few months of my association with Mr. McKenzie, although organising his lecture tours in London and Scotland, I still thought that spiritualists were deluded people and mediums were frauds. My concepts of survival were vague, and in pondering upon the possibility of continuing in a life after death I would literally become dizzy to the point of fainting. But the McKenzies eventually influenced me very markedly; Mrs. McKenzie with her level judicial mind, which she still retains, and he with his hard-headed business acumen. He was sometimes harsh, always a stern disciplinarian; albeit he could be sympathetic, particularly with mediums whom he considered to be genuine; he understood their temperaments and difficulties, and knew what "made them tick", better than anyone else I have ever known.

It was through the McKenzies that I met such people as Dr. Abraham Wallace, Sir William Barrett, Sir Oliver Lodge, J. Arthur Hill, Mrs. St. Clair Stobart, Robert Blatchford, Lord and Lady Glenconner, Lady Rhonnda, Mrs. R. Champion de Crespigny, the Reverend C. Drayton Thomas, Dr. J. F. Thomas, Dr. William Brown, Kenneth Richmond, and others of a like calibre, with some of whom I became close friends. I could not think that all these people were cranks or imbeciles. Most of them had no apparent idiosyncrasy except this interest in "psychics", with a greater or lesser degree of belief in survival and communication. And so at that time I termed myself a spiritualist, proud to be associated as a modest member of this distinguished company.

From 1920, when McKenzie founded the original British College of Psychic Science, I became interested in the research aspect, my interest stimulated by the experiments at the College. Doubtless these were then conducted under conditions that would not be considered acceptable by psychical researchers today, but in my belief anything that was pronounced by Hewat McKenzie to be genuine was indeed genuine. His endeavour in the physical seance room was not to see if fraud were taking place, but to make sure that it could not.

In earlier days almost without exception, seances were held in a quasi-religious atmosphere, and whilst many people may frown on such methods today nevertheless they appeared to produce results which the modern clinical methods do not; the point in favour of strict experimental research is that there is no room for emotional delusion. None the less there may possibly be delusion, or false conclusions drawn from statistics. You may know the case of a dental surgeon, interested in Dr. Barnado's Homes, who for thirty years recorded the cases of dental treatment to the

boys in two homes. In one, the boys were given milk straight from the cow; in the other home the boys drank pasteurised milk. In Home A, drinking “raw” milk, there was a markedly less amount of dental decay than among the boys of Home B, drinking pasteurised milk. After thirty years, therefore, the Dental Surgeon made a pronouncement in accordance with his findings, that “raw” milk was better for teeth than was pasteurised. His successor, not too happy about the findings, continued the research, and *he* found that the water drunk in Home “A” came from a well, and that drunk by Home “B” came from the mains tap. On analysis, it was shown that water from the well contained definite traces of fluorine, and it is known that fluoride arrests dental decay, hence the condition of the boys’ teeth in Home “A”. Which man was right? Or did the truth lie between the two? Or was there a third as yet undiscovered factor?

### **The Witchcraft Act**

Since the Repeal of the Witchcraft Act in 1951, there has been a tremendous change in the pattern of things. Under the easement consequent upon the removal of old restrictions, Spiritualism has come to be officially recognised as an unorthodox religion, and therefore by styling oneself a “spiritualist” or having the word “spiritualist” in the title of a Society, a religious implication is automatically implied. It was mainly for this reason that the London Spiritualist Alliance changed its title in 1954 to the College of Psychic Science, McKenzie's original British College having lost its identity in amalgamation with the International Institute in 1938. This position relating to the spiritualist attitude is not obvious to everybody. Whilst the College endeavours to encourage and demonstrate mediumship, and provide facilities for people to use it, it also accepts the survival of human personality as the simplest hypothesis of many otherwise inexplicable phenomena, but it does not belong to the body of opinion that Spiritualism is in itself a religion.

So, whereas the spiritualists have achieved a certain status under the cloak of religion, the psychical researchers have veered away from the spiritualist angle into a new field now generally termed Parapsychology-not a new word but now popularised. Mediumship is called the PSI factor or E.S.P. (some types of E.S.P. are measured against the laws of chance-if chance can have a law!) and there is a regrettable tendency to denigrate the work of those earlier fine pioneers of fifty years ago. Indeed, I recently heard whispers that one of the eminent founders of this Society was to be “exposed” as the victim of deliberate fraud. It is sometimes shocking to me that progress has to be pursued by destroying all that has gone before towards arriving at the position in which we find ourselves today.

Now if you do not like my apparent criticism of this Society, and its modern policy, let me tell you a little story. Last year I was chatting with two friends from Canada, who are, incidentally, also connected here. One of these two made a somewhat critical remark concerning the Queen. As a staunch royalist I protested somewhat warmly that I would listen to any other criticism but not a word about my Queen, whereupon the other Canadian interposed “But she is *our* Queen, too, you know!” So if I seem to criticise your Society (really an unforgivable discourtesy from a guest speaker) I would also remind you that it is my Society, too. I am, and have been, a member for many years.

But you see my difficulty in taking any stand to speak under the title you have given me tonight. I am a spiritualist inasmuch as I believe in survival after death, though I am not prepared to debate in what manner or for what duration we may survive: I do believe that communication with those who have departed earthly existence does take place under certain conditions, though I deprecate the tendency to accept *everything* that is said in the seance room as emanating from spirit, which quite clearly it does not. I am *not* a spiritualist in accepting it as a religion *per se* though I think that psychical phenomena help to interpret religious history; and I do not wholeheartedly subscribe to the Seven Principles which are adopted by most of the Spiritualist churches and societies throughout the British Isles. For those who do not know them, they are:

1. The Fatherhood of God
2. The Brotherhood of Man
3. The Communion of Spirits and the Ministry of Angels
4. The continuous existence of the human soul
5. Personal responsibility
6. Compensation and retribution hereafter for all the good and evil things done on earth
7. Eternal progress open to every human soul

For one thing, what exactly is an angel? For another, with the difficulty of our lack of terminology, what is the human soul? “human” indicating man, and “man” mortal, implying rather a limited than a continuous existence? And what is soul? And what is meant by personal responsibility?

If not a spiritualist, can I then call myself a psychical researcher? Only insofar as I am interested in research; I commend the meticulous care with which your Society has carried out its investigations and the scrupulous detail in which they have been recorded. I agree that all phenomena should be examined with unbiased scrutiny and assessed in accordance with all relevant facts. I am not in sympathy with the attitude of the majority of psychical researchers who have deviated from the impartial explorations of the early workers in the field, and are now striving fruitlessly to confine psychics within the framework of one or other of the exact sciences, to which they quite obviously do not belong. The result has been the accumulation of a mass of statistical data which may have its value in some other field but gets us nowhere in psychics.

What is meant now by Psychological Research? What is the object? Is it limited merely to ascertaining how many people can throw dice? how many can guess or pre-recognise the turn-up of cards? how far subterranean streams will affect the foundations of a house? If so, how do these pursuits fit in with object (b) already quoted? Have they any “end product”? It seems to me that Psychological Research has yet to discover that psychics lack the essential qualities which would enable them to be dealt with in the orthodox scientific manner, producing quantitative data.

I find myself, then, neither completely in the camp of the Spiritualists nor of the Psychological Researchers, but rather a solitary unit in no-man’s land between the two, trying to explain the one side to the other, meanwhile being liable to be shot by both.

I hope the day will come when the spiritualist and the researchers will find a common meeting ground whereby each may profit from the qualities of the other, that they will pool their resources, the spiritualists be enlightened and the researchers provided with the material they so badly need. Thus knowledge may be gained and shared, and at last some positive progress be made.

[**Note by Psypioneer:** - Some small corrections in this article have been made, as advised by Muriel Hankey's daughter, Mrs Denise Iredell who noted "*Having read the re-print from 'Light' which was Mother's Lecture delivered to the S.P.R., it strikes me as being accurate except for two or three minor typographical errors. Muriel never wrote her Lectures, but merely had a postcard with half a dozen key words as prompts. Therefore I imagine that someone at the S.P.R. must have wire-recorded the lecture. People in the audiences at Duke University, and other places in the U.S.A. where she lectured, habitually did that!*"]

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## **EMMA'S FIRST BOOK REPRINTED AFTER 150 YEARS**

Psypioneer has reprinted the almost forgotten first book of Emma Hardinge. "Six Lectures on Theology and Nature" were originally delivered in Chicago in 1880, and written in shorthand down by a sympathiser at the time. They were preceded in the book by an autobiographical introduction.

"Six Lectures" has become of major importance for those seeking to understand the mystery with which Emma was surrounded. There is reason to believe that the genteel childhood existence which is here evoked by Emma may conceal considerable trauma as well as poverty. (Emma was christened in Bethnal Green, then a district in London's darkest East End).

The lectures are a powerful refutation of orthodox theology, and as well as praising Spiritualism (in which she had been active for about five years in America.) they offer an astronomical interpretation of the origin of religion. It is thought that Emma was introduced to this view by Ernest de Bunsen, a German philosopher who settled in London and secretly was part of the "Orphic Circle" of occultists.

A notable feature of the lectures is its grand description of life's evolution over millennia. (Wallace and Darwin had only proposed natural selection as the mechanism for this a few months before).

Emma began one lecture by reading extracts from orthodox theological theologians about the eternal damnation of children. She was unremittingly hostile to what she called priestcraft. At the same time, her language frequently echoed biblical passages to an extent that would not happen in modern trance addresses.

The lectures form an important part of the chain which stretches from the first lectures that Emma gave, to her final unfinished autobiography.

See books for sale page 213

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**Notes by the Way – Leslie Price: -**

## **ARTHUR CONAN DOYLE REASSESSED**

Any student of the pioneers will encounter ACD and have to take a view. He was one of the most famous investigators of mediumship, a promoter of Spiritualist philosophy, and a prolific author. But there are a number of problems.

Arthur was not always an accurate writer. Whether he was remembering his life, putting technical details into his stories, or musing about the Fox sisters, the student should be wary.

Because of the international reputation of Sherlock Holmes, the market for his original books pamphlets and letters has long been very inflated. Book collectors and dealers with no special interest in the paranormal therefore buy such source material, at times driving out the ordinary enquirer. The material is also at high risk of theft from psychic libraries and other repositories. Ironically a few Spiritualist pamphlets which were reprinted by Rupert Books were not commercially successful.

Legal disagreements between the owners of ACD archives, inside and outside the family, have also made it difficult for biographers. In his new biography, Andrew Lycett devotes a sombre Afterword to these feuds. He has been able to use, in the British Library and Portsmouth some of what was previously unavailable. It is apparent however, that some material relevant to the first wife and two children has been destroyed.

In assessing ACD, Spiritualists tend to rate him highly, even as a saint, while parapsychologists and most biographers are appalled or amused by his credulity.

But his assessment of particular cases is always worth considering, though there is indeed a pattern of over-acceptance.

There is no doubt that his contribution was massive. Lycett's book shows that he was an important benefactor to LIGHT long before his public avowal (see our story in this issue). He was president of so many bodies, like BCPS, LSA and ISF (Acting). One could argue that his unsuccessful campaign to get the SNU to accept the leadership of Jesus Christ was a turning point for the whole movement, leading directly for example, to the rise of the GWCSL. (The SNU appears only once in the index to the

new biography; there is undoubtedly a story to be documented about ACD's substantial involvement with the Union.).

A disturbing element for all readers is Arthur's neglect of the two children from his first marriage, possibly under the influence of their step-mother, whose own two sons with Arthur were wastrels. Another is the plethora of spurious prophecies, often received through the mediumship of the second wife, which marked ACD's last years.

Psypioneer readers have already been reminded of one forgotten episode in ACD's life- his shock resignation as LSA president shortly before his death. We expect to fill in some other gaps in the generally accepted picture of ACD in the months ahead.

Meanwhile, our readers will find Andrew Lycett's new biography the most full and contemporary starting point for their study of Conan Doyle.

<http://www.orionbooks.co.uk/HB-34072/Conan-Doyle.htm>

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## **EX-SPIRITUALIST PIONEERED THEOSOPHICAL HEALING**

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Henry Olcott, first president of the Theosophical Society from 1875-1907, discovered he had healing capacity by accident in Ceylon in 1882, when he was called upon to treat a paralytic. He exercised a wide ministry of healing until ordered by higher authority to stop in October 1883. (Olcott had been an active Spiritualist from 1853.)

Theosophical historian Michael Gomes has investigated the background and consequence of this discovery in his July 2007 Blavatsky Lecture "Colonel Olcott and the Healing Arts", available from the Theosophical Society in London ([www.theosophical-society.org.uk](http://www.theosophical-society.org.uk)) at £5.50 plus 75p post and packing.

There was no suggestion that Olcott's healing was assisted by a spirit guide or by a specific Mahatma. Rather, he was in the animal magnetic tradition, like Deleuze, whose manual of guidance on how to heal was published in translation in America in 1837.

However the practice of healing within Theosophy has been a troubled one. Anxiety about the dangers of magnetic healing, mesmerism, hypnotism and the like has surfaced at intervals. For anyone interested in the history of healing, this lecture is an excellent resource on the many individuals who took Theosophical healing onwards, from Adelaide Gardner to Dora Kunz.

Some of the people healed by Olcott showed no gratitude. This shocked Blavatsky, though a medical writer once reported that of ten lepers healed, only one returned to express thanks.

**If purchasing this Lecture from the London T.S., remember that some other Blavatsky lectures about the psychic pioneers ( e.g. by Arthur Ellison and a previous lecture by Michael Gomes on early Theosophy in England) are currently in a special sale, as the society revamps its book room ) .**

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## EXPERIENCES OF MR. GEORGE SPRIGGS

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*[Note by Pioneer: - George Spriggs, (1850 – 1912) was a British materialisation medium, who in November of 1880 went to Melbourne Australia and returned to England in 1900. Between 1903 – 1905, he gave free medical advice in the rooms of the London Spiritualist Alliance. The Psycho-Therapeutic Society<sup>9</sup> was founded in London on April 1<sup>st</sup> 1901; George Spriggs was its first president and was for some years a healing medium at the society.]*

Below is taken from Light March 3, - 10, 1906.

*Four valuable and interesting Papers, dealing with ‘Some Notable Personal Experiences’ written by Mrs. W.P. Browne, Mrs. M.H. Wallis, Mr. George Spriggs and Rear-Admiral W. Osborne Moore, were read before a crowded meeting of the Members and Associates of the London Spiritualist Alliance, in the Salon of the Royal Society of British Artists, Suffolk-street, Pall Mall, on Thursday evening, February 22<sup>nd</sup>, last; Mr. H. Withall, Vice-President, in the chair.*

MR. GEORGE SPRIGGS, who was the last speaker of the evening, said: -

It is just thirty years since I first interested myself in the subject of Spiritualism. I was then in Cardiff, whither I had gone on a matter of business, and, as it happened, I was met on my arrival by a Spiritualist, who spoke enthusiastically of his beliefs, and invited me to attend a séance at his house. This invitation I accepted, and after a few days of experimenting in table turning and automatic writing, I got into communication with the spirit world. I remember, however, distinctly informing the

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<sup>9</sup> A preliminary meeting was held at the house of Dr. George Wyld on Sunday 10<sup>th</sup> February 1901 to consider the advisability of establishing in London a society for the systematic study and investigation of Animal Magnetism, Mesmerism, Hypnotism, Christian Science, Faith Healing, and Higher thought Healing. Between 60-70 interested persons came to this first meeting. Initially the society's headquarters were at Trafalgar-Buildings, Northumberland Ave, Charing Cross, London W.C., by 1903 they had moved to 3, Bayley Street, Bedford Square, W.C. In April 1906 the Society took over the whole first floor of 3 Bayley Street, Sprigs was still president and it is reported that the Society had made steady progress in its five years of existence to date. Its organ was ‘Psycho-Therapeutic Journal’.

spirit who communicated that I could not believe unless I saw for myself. The spirit then gave me his name and told me what had been his address, and also the name and address of his father, who, he said, was in earth life a lawyer, whilst he himself was a doctor. This information was given through table tipping, and the spirit added that he wished to be known by the name of 'Light.' As a matter of fact, the circle which was formed in Cardiff some months afterwards was called 'The Circle of Light.'

'Light' subsequently promised that he would reveal himself to me, and this he did in a most complete manner. The incident occurred one night after I had retired to rest. The room was in perfect darkness, and the blind was drawn down. Suddenly I saw a very bright light on the floor, which gradually developed until it assumed the form of a human being—a full-sized man. The form seemed to be illuminated, and full of life and expression. I asked: 'Are you Dr. Jenkins?' and the reply came: 'Yes.' I then said: 'Now I do believe, and will never doubt again.' From that time I never have doubted.

### **A Spirit's Practical Assistance**

I was then living at 24, Louden-square, Cardiff, but I was not satisfied with my lodgings at that address, and it occurred to me that, being convinced of the reality of the spirit world, those living therein might be able to give me a little practical assistance. So I asked through the table, 'Can you tell me where I can obtain comfortable lodgings? I wish to be with churchgoing, temperance people, who have not a large family.' This was rather a large order, no doubt, but at that time, of course, I was a novice, and did not understand. However, the reply came: 'Yes,' and through the table there was spelt out this message: 'Go on Saturday, at 3 p.m., to 3, Edward-street.' I did not know of the existence of Edward-street at the time, but I looked up the directory and found it there, as given in the message. On the Saturday, therefore, I called at the house and inquired if they had lodgings to let. The young lady who answered the door said 'No,' as her brother-in-law was frequently away from home, being captain of a vessel, and that she was staying with her sister, who was then absent at Milford Haven, and who did not care to have anyone in. Eventually, however, she said she would see what could be done, and told me to call again in a few days' time. I did call again, and saw Mrs. Lister, the landlady, with whom I went to reside, and I must say I was very comfortable.

An interesting incident in connection with this experience is that I was told through the table to say nothing for three months as to how I came to hear of these lodgings. Mrs. Lister asked me repeatedly who recommended me to her house, but I did not give her a direct answer. When, however, the three months had expired to the very day she again asked the question, and I told her the actual truth. She then said that on the morning her sister's letter was received at Milford Haven she told Captain Lister she had had a dream in the night respecting someone who had gone to live at their house and who was very comfortable. When they went downstairs it was at once apparent that the dream had reference to the letter there awaiting them. But, she added, it was well she did not know at first how I came to hear of them, as she would have been afraid to live in the house with me. They were not Spiritualists.

It was through going to reside at this address that I met my old friends, Mr. Rees Lewis, Mr. Smart, and others. With regard to the name and address of his father given by the spirit called 'Light,' we searched all the old directories at the libraries and could not find any trace of either the name or the address. It was not until we were joined by Mr. Smart, who was at that time in a legal office, that we were successful in this respect. He looked up some of the old law directories and found the name and address exactly as stated.

For thirty years the same spirit has been my companion and friend, and has helped me much in my medical work.

### **A GOOD TEST BY THE CRYSTAL**

About that time I had a little experience of crystal-seeing, the crystal being only a small letter-weight. One day a striking message came in the crystal concerning Mr. William Nicolson. It was this: 'Your father will pass away leaving you no money. You will have to go to Australia.' He could not accept this statement because he was positive he would have money under his father's will. He also declared that he would never go to Australia. Time passed, and I went to Melbourne. Some time afterwards I received a letter from Mr. Nicolson in which he said: 'I utterly rejected the idea of emigration when you prophesied it, and if you only knew the compelling forces and misfortune necessitating removal you would stare! My father has gone over to the great majority, and to my surprise had but little to leave me. The great expectations which (as an only son) I had a right to entertain landed me into very bitter disappointments...So you see that my ridicule of your prognostications has resulted in my being forced to admit your true clairvoyance.'

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Mr. Spriggs next related, very briefly, a wonderful experience in which he played an important part as the medium, the full details of which are given by Mr. Hugh Junor Browne in his pamphlet entitled 'A Rational Faith.' As that pamphlet is now out of print and the tests of spirit presence and identity are so remarkable that they deserve the fullest possible publicity, we give the main facts, as far as we are able, in Mr. Browne's own words.

### **Spirits bring Tidings of a Tragedy.**

Mr. Hugh Junor Browne states that in December, 1884, in conjunction with one of his employes, named Murray, his son William, then eighteen years of age, bought a yacht called the 'Iolanthe,' and after having some slight alterations made, they, together with another son, Hugh, twenty years of age, started on a trial trip in her on a Saturday afternoon, promising to return on Monday, December 14th. This was contrary to the wishes of Mrs. Browne, but as Murray was a sailor, holding a mate's certificate, Mr. Browne did not feel particularly anxious about them.

On December 20th, 1884, before any information regarding the yacht, its occupants, or anything connected with it, had reached him from earthly sources, Mr. Hugh Junor Browne sent to the 'Harbinger of Light' (January, 1885) the following particulars regarding the spirit revelations he had received through the

mediumship of Mr. George Spriggs with reference to the tragic fate which befell his two sons and their companion, although, at the time, Mr. Spriggs 'was not even aware that his (Mr. Browne's) two sons were absent from home, much less gone yachting.' Mr. Browne said: -

'Not returning on the 15th, we naturally became very anxious about them, and on the following morning early I called on Mr. G. Spriggs, the medical clairvoyant (who had on a former occasion diagnosed my wife when suffering from nervous debility, when she derived great benefit from his treatment), requesting him to pay her another visit, as she was not so well again.

'I made no reference whatever to the cause thereof, as I wished to leave his mind completely clear, so that I might get a true clairvoyant tracing, if possible, in regard to the missing ones, and in the following report I have bracketed my interpolations to render them more distinct from the clairvoyant's utterances.

'A little before 8 a.m. Mr. Spriggs called. Taking my wife's hand as he went into the trance state, the first words he said were, "Have you been down at the sea?" To which she answered, "I have not." He then continued, "There seems to be a great depression of spirits in connection with the sea. At night, when all is quiet, you have great sorrow and trouble, and it seems as if you give way to tears." [Which was quite true, as my wife on their not returning when expected was impressed that something serious had befallen them.] He completed his diagnosis and again remarked, "All seems connected with the sea."

'For the first time, I now made a slight reference to what was uppermost in our minds by asking, "Can you perceive any serious loss at sea?" To which the clairvoyant, still in the trance state, replied, "I cannot see that they are in the spirit world, but if you will give me something by which I can trace them, I shall endeavour to find out."

'I fetched the pocket books of my two sons and placed them in the clairvoyant's hand; then he commenced, "They seem to be in a small boat in a bend of a river, they have a big sail and a small one" [which was quite correct]. "They go down what looks like a wide river, and have a little trouble with what seems to be the sea" [evidently referring to Hobson's Bay]; "there appears like a tower and a pier close by on their right" [this I take to refer to Williamstown lighthouse and pier]; "the sea seems to broaden out as they go, then I see the land on their left hand, and there seem to be clouds arising as if a storm were coming on; they seem to bear off to another pier" [they were seen passing Brighton pier on the morning of the 14th]; "after a time they endeavour to return, but have the wind against them, and after sailing about for some time they land; they seem to have a little difficulty with the boat as they near the shore." [This I account for by their not having taken their anchor with them, it having fouled in a snag in the Yarra some days previously.] "After making the boat fast they go up a little embankment, and seem to be wet through. . . They walk about and seem to be considering what they should do." [I conjecture that they were hesitating whether they would leave the boat there on the night of the 14th, and make their way home by land, but that the fact of Murray and Willie having left their boots behind determined them otherwise.] "I think you will have news of them to-day." [The

only tidings we received of them that day were that they were seen passing Brighton on the 14th, as already stated.]

‘On my asking where they were now, I was answered, “They seem to be somewhere towards Mornington, but I cannot define the locality exactly, the medium never having been where they are. I cannot trace further at this sitting.”

On resuming next morning, the clairvoyant thus continued: “They appear to have taken a rest for a time after landing from the boat; they had been looking about the bank. After a time they get into the boat again and go out to sea” [a boat answering the description of the “Iolanthe” was seen on the morning of the 15th at eight o'clock from Frankston, off Rickard's Point, steering in the direction of Schnapper Point-this I learnt by telegram.] “After they are out some time I observe on their left-hand side a number of rocks; it looks gloomy and threatening. There is a heavy cloud at their back, the sea seems to rise, and they make for land again, but it is difficult for them to see the pier they want to reach; the wind is changing about, the sails flap, and one of them tears. One, who is not so tall as the others, is sitting at the end of the boat, and he calls to the others to do something with the sail in front.” [This answers the description of Murray, who was not so tall as either of my sons, and who would be at the helm and attending to the main sheet while my sons looked after the jib; to my knowledge Mr. Spriggs never saw Murray or knew anything about him in connection with the boat or otherwise.] “They seem to be in a difficulty about the ropes not working properly.” [There was a pause here, and the inference left on my mind was that the catastrophe occurred at this period, which has subsequently been corroborated in communications received from my sons.] “This appears to have taken place about a mile and a-half from land, in deep water. There are a number of rocks in the neighbourhood which cause the water to be more broken, and there appears to be an undercurrent as if it were a channel where they are. There is a sandbank on the other side. This occurred on the morning of the 15th inst.”

‘On the 17th we sat in a circle to try if we could hear anything of the missing ones from our spirit friends. The medium, Mr. Spriggs, was controlled by one of his guides, who said that one who had recently left earth-life wished to speak to us, so he would withdraw for a short time. He was then controlled with difficulty by Willie, the younger of my two sons, who seemed to be much distressed, sobbing most bitterly. The first words he uttered were, “Oh! forgive me, Mamma, it was all my fault.” It was he who had bought the yacht in conjunction with Murray, who was about thirty years of age. His brother Hugh only went out with them to keep them company. . . On the evening of the 18th both of my sons spoke through the medium. The elder one, Hugh, exhibited all the signs of one being resuscitated after having been drowned. Murray spoke a few words through the medium one evening. He said, “Oh, Mr. Browne, tell my mother I have been. Can you forgive me, Mrs. Browne?” “To which an affirmative answer was given. . . My wife had entreated the three of them not to go out in the yacht on the night of the 13th; but they were so anxious to try her sailing qualities, after having painted and put her in trim since they purchased her, that they did not care whether it was stormy or not, and started accordingly. Both my sons corroborate the clairvoyant's descriptions of their cruise, only they say it was nearer the Cheltenham than the Mornington side of the bay, as they were tacking against the wind, between Rickard's Point and Schnapper Point, that the “Iolanthe” upset, filled, and went down.\*

‘In reply to my inquiries Willie said: It was about nine o'clock on Monday morning (the 15th), nearer the Cheltenham than the Mornington side of the bay, that the ‘Iolanthe’ foundered.’ ’

### **Watch Recovered from a Shark.**

In a further communication to the ‘Harbinger of Light,’ written on March 21st, 1885, Mr. Browne stated that on December 21st (the day after his first letter was written), he learnt that the body of William had been found floating in the sea near Picnic Point, minus the left arm and part of the right. At the inquest, on December 23rd, the doctor who made the post mortem examination stated that ‘there were no marks of injuries occurring before death.’ On December 27th, a shark was caught at Frankston, twenty-seven miles from Melbourne, and on being opened its stomach was found to contain a portion of the right arm of Hugh, and a part of his waistcoat, in the pocket of which were found an old gold watch, his keys, pipe, and about twelve shillings in silver. The watch was found to have stopped at nine o'clock, the exact time at which, nine days previously, Mr. Spriggs, when under control, had said that the accident had occurred.

In reply to a critical reader who asked why his sons, when communicating through Mr. Spriggs, had not mentioned about their bodies being attacked by sharks instead of merely stating that they were greatly decomposed, Mr. Browne says: -

‘My son Hugh, when communicating, called his elder brother aside, out of hearing of his mother, and informed him, through the medium, regarding the mutilation of his brother William's dead body by a shark. This I did not mention in my letter to you for obvious reasons.\*\* Hugh, also, the day previous to the shark being caught at Frankston, told a friend who was in Adelaide (about six hundred miles from Melbourne) at the time, and who is a clairaudient, that a large fish had got part of one of the arms and had turn his waistcoat off the body. On being asked if it was a shark, he replied, It may be, but I have never seen one like it before.’ The shark when caught was said to be a white or deep sea shark, the head of which species is quite different in shape from that of the common blue shark with which Port Philip Bay is infested. I may add, I received a letter from another friend in Adelaide, to whom the clairaudient mentioned the fact at the time, confirming his statement.

‘I consider that the description of the yacht and its occupants, and of their cruise, given through Mr. Spriggs, is one of the best instances of clairvoyant power that I have either read or heard of, whatever may be said of it by those opposed thereto, who cannot possibly know as I do the circumstances under which it was given. Opponents should bear in mind that I have no object to gain in being deceived myself or in misleading others in this matter. I may here also state that on the evening of the 31st December my son William materialised himself at Mr. Spriggs' circle, at which I was present. I recognised him distinctly, as did several others who were there and who knew him when he was in earth-life. He held up his left arm in order to show me that the injury to this limb of his physical body did not affect its spiritual counterpart. On another occasion my son Hugh partially materialised himself, but not distinctly enough for me to swear that it was he, as I could do in regard to his brother. I may add that both Hugh and William were over six feet in height, while the medium is not five feet seven inches high.’

## Mediumship a Sacred Power

In concluding his interesting address, Mr. Spriggs said: -

I may state that, of all the circles I held, none gave me so much satisfaction as those at which the spirits manifesting themselves proved without a doubt that they were the friends of those on earth. Passing over all the phases of mediumship in which I have been engaged, such as table turning, trance, automatic writing, crystal-seeing, moving of objects in the light, and materialisations-for the latter of which I sat two or three times a week for fifteen years-the one which appeals to me the most, and is to my mind the most beneficent, is that which enables me to diagnose disease and help suffering humanity. I can also declare without hesitation, after thirty years' experience, that mediumship is healthy and uplifting if it is used and practised in a proper manner.

I could relate to you many more interesting experiences did time permit, but I will now close with an expression of gratitude to 'Dr. Jenkins,' 'Swiftwater,' 'Skiwaukie,' and others who have been and still are constant helpers and companions.

Mediumship is to me a sacred power, and one that must be exercised on spiritual lines to be of benefit. (Applause.)

After several questions had been answered, a hearty and unanimous vote of thanks was accorded to Mrs. Browne, Mrs. M. H. Wallis, Rear-Admiral Moore, and Mr. George Spriggs, for their interesting and instructive papers.

\* Not a stick of it was found although Mr. Browne offered a handsome reward for anything belonging to the boat.

\*\*Mrs. Browne was so seriously unwell that Mr. Browne had not informed her of the discovery of the body of William or of the capture of the shark.

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Paul J. Gaunt