

PSYPIONEER

Founded by Leslie Price

Editor Paul J. Gaunt

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Notes by the way...

Spiritualists bearing gifts

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In Spring 2008, Stansted gave a substantial quantity of early Spiritualist journals and books to the Society for Psychical Research. Included were some volumes of journals that have been scarcely touched by historians, such as Yorkshire Spiritual Telegraph, Spiritual Magazine and Human Nature. What might be called the eBay value was certainly thousands of pounds (even £1000 per volume in the case of “Carrier Dove” of

San Francisco.). The SPR decided to add some of these items to their reference library at Cambridge, but much of the rest was sold. Some Council members received lists.

What King Tut's tomb contents were for Egyptology, this collection could have been for the study of Victorian Spiritualism: As telescopes bring into focus distant objects, so old journals do for history. They fill in the personalities and events of the past, recalling much that cannot be found in books. It goes without saying that no accurate and detailed history of Spiritualism can be written without reference to such periodical volumes. Without them, history is superficial, often perpetuating misquotations and fallacies.

But a bound volume may be more, or less, than a name in a list. On the plus side it may include a signature trail of former owners, like the bound volume of "Spiritual Scientist" at CPS which belonged to Madame Blavatsky, or the volumes of "The Spiritualist", once in the possession of GWCSL which Kate Cook had owned. There may be extra items bound in the main one, like propaganda leaflets with the Yorkshire Spiritual Telegraph. On the negative side, there can be issues missing, as Besterman found when he catalogued the SPR copies of "Spiritual Magazine"; similarly there is an issue missing from the CPS copy of "Spiritual Notes" volume 2.

The assessment of an old periodical volume therefore takes time and personal examination. Ideally, a decision on its future home, if discarded, would also be a careful one. A number of libraries have incomplete sets that could be usefully supplemented. The great advantage of library ownership is that at least in principle, the volume might be accessible to a wider community of scholars. When a volume is sold into private hands, it is largely lost to scholarship for the foreseeable future- excepting that of the purchaser.

Not all libraries are equal however. To convey volumes to a library like the Harry Price collection, in London for example, while it is threatened with closure, would be doubtful. And even Cambridge can be loftily indifferent to attempts by SPR members to find out about the society's own books.

Our friends in the SNU and SPR have therefore between them lost an opportunity to advance the study of the pioneers considerably. It is not as bad as the burning of some Nag Hammadi Gnostic documents for firewood, but certainly it shows that the reverence which Psypioneer has for the records of old workers, and which is indeed reflected in the sale room prices, is not universally shared in the psychic field. For a brief moment in over a century, these volumes emerged into daylight, and then once more they were lost to sight. Future students of the SNU education scheme, visitors to Stansted Hall, anyone seeking to know the pioneers better, may share in our deep sense of loss.

Leslie Price

# Sir Arthur Conan Doyle The Movietone Newsreel

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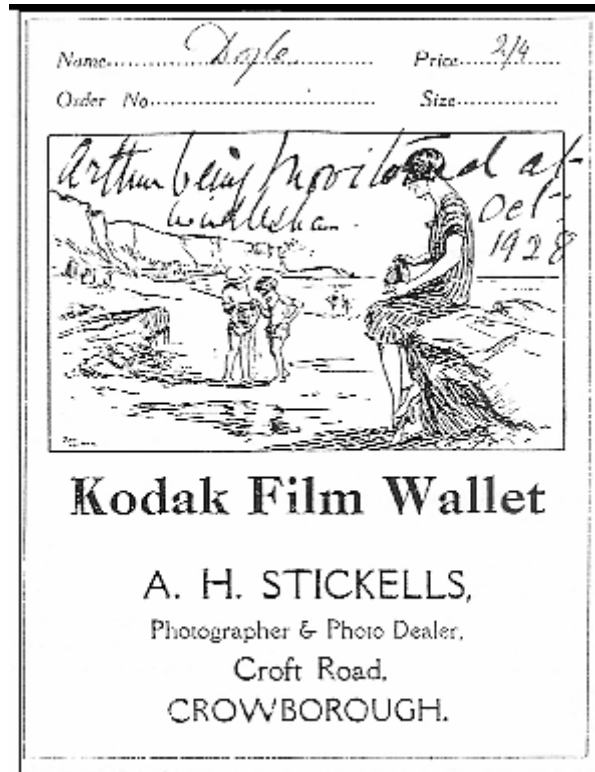
In October, 1928 one of the first Movietone Newsreels ever made featured Sir Arthur Conan Doyle speaking on his writing of the Sherlock Holmes stories and of his firm belief in Spiritualism. It was recorded in the rose gardens of his Sussex home, Windlesham, by William Fox for the Fox-Case Movietone and the Fox Film Corp.

The 10 minute clip is now available on our host's website www.woodlandway.org (Woodlands Sanctuary Foundation Inc.)



A still photograph from the scene of the shoot*

The Movietone clip was released for viewing in America in May, 1929 and Sir Arthur's presentation was said, in a *New York Times* review, to be superior to that of George Bernard Shaw and the King of Spain's interviews because of the easy flow of Sir Arthur's words. A second release was made after ACD's death in 1930, and another version was reissued in 1974 by Blackhawk Films. Woodlands Sanctuary is pleased to be able to bring to you the original 1929 version, obtained in DVD format.



The envelope which contained the Conan Doyle family photographs*

* From the Richard Lancelyn Green Collection - now held by the Portsmouth City Council following RLG's death in March 2004. Three photographs plus the Wallet were shown in an article by Michael W Homer and Christopher Roden in the 1995 Volume 6 issue of "ACD, The Journal of the Arthur Conan Doyle Society". The handwriting on the Wallet is that of Lady Conan Doyle.

Garth Willey

PROFILES...

PHOEBE PAYNE BENDIT

By Dr Laurence Bendit

Introductory Note by Pyspioneer:

It is now forty years since the passing of the clairvoyant Phoebe Payne. Yet her work with husband Dr Laurence Bendit lives on, and is cited for example by Davina Thomas in a paper on "Telepathic Thought-forms" in "The Christian Parapsychologist" June 2008.

By kind permission of Lisette Coly, vice-president of the Parapsychology Foundation, New York, we are reprinting this tribute to Phoebe which appeared in their Newsletter, September-October 1969, vol. 16 No. 5.

Phoebe Daphne Payne, also known as Mrs. Laurence J. Bendit, died on April 13, 1968. It might be more accurate, in view of the beliefs she and I shared, to say that her body died and that she then found herself in a world where, unless she and many others are self-deceived, she would find herself very much at home. For, from birth seventy-eight years before, she had lived consciously in two worlds: the usual one of physical life, and that other which, for lack of a better term, we call "psychic." Had she not been shy, shunning publicity, she would probably have been known to a wide public for her very accurate and objective clairvoyance. As it was, she worked quietly among small groups of people, specializing as she went on – first, in medical matters concerning both body and mind, and later in an endeavor to understand the deeper aspects of life through the mechanism of pure, unconditioned mind, for which perhaps the best term is the Sanskrit, *manas*.

Although born clairvoyant, she was never primarily interested in ESP except as a tool, an instrument she could use. She cared far more for life as a whole, looked at against an essential, spiritual background, than for any form of ESP. Indeed, when some of her friends tried to stop her from marrying on the grounds that it would interfere with her perceptivity, she stated categorically that if she could not be at once clairvoyant and live a full human life, her psychism could not be worth much and it could go by the board. (In fact our marriage made not the slightest difference to her powers in any direct way, while - perhaps I flatter myself - she as well as I gained a very great deal by our association.)

A brief account of her life will explain this passage from her first book, *MAN'S LATENT POWERS*, published in 1938:

To be born clairvoyant is an odd thing, because one is quite unable to assess ordinary life without its counterpart of extra sensory perception. I do not remember a time

when the visible world did not play into and through another world. I had no idea where one ended and the other began: they were both to me ordinary and natural, and they belonged together. . . . The world of the living and of ordinary affairs wove itself across the pattern of the so-called dead and their environment. It was therefore logical enough that, as a child, I should find it extremely difficult to understand what people meant by death, or why they were gloomy about the subject. . . . But being accustomed to the presence of dead people is only a small part of the psychic's life, the threads of which naturally weave themselves through the commonplace happenings of everyday life.

Early Life

She was born in 1889 in the East End of London, at that time a very poor area with many slums, where her parents had to live, since John Payne, her father, had a post in the Thames Iron Works. It was a bad atmosphere for a sensitive child, so that, apart from the fact that her parents were at that time very poor, she had a difficult start. I do not know how soon the family moved away, but her father - of mixed Southern Irish and French Huguenot stock in which the Irish temperament predominated, as it did in his daughter - was a restless person, moving from job to job, from house to house, dragging his unwilling but very loyal wife - an Englishwoman trained as a teacher - and his small daughter with him. It was one of Phoebe's lasting bitternesses that, going to a dozen or so schools in as many years, she felt she had never been properly educated. When she was in her teens, her father refused to send her on to higher education and insisted in her working in his various businesses, where he disregarded her health as much as her or his wife's wishes or needs. (He was not deliberately unkind quite the contrary. But he seemed to have no slightest regard for his womenfolk at any time until he changed in his later years.)

He, however, did not reckon with his daughter's intense search for knowledge and philosophical understanding, which she pursued relentlessly all through her life. Where her "psychism" is concerned, it was not until she was nineteen that she realized anything at all about it.

For Phoebe life was very puzzling and inconsistent at least among human beings, while animals, plants, even stones and pebbles seemed full of life - and behaved decently. Indeed, a dull pebble used to hold her interest for hours, as it had wonderful patterns and scintillations of force which made it an object of unending fascination.

Discovery of Psi Ability

She realized early that the inner world she used to find in the quietness of her bed was double. In one part she was in control: it did what *she* wanted. We label this today the realm of fantasy which is the playground of children of all ages and both sexes. The other world, however, was not so kind. It was in its way as harsh and indifferent as is the physical world. It existed in its own right and was inhabited by its own self-existent entities and objects. She could only affect it, if at all, in the way we affect the physical

environment in which we function. This was the “psychic” world in its objective sense, the “astral plane,” or whatever we may choose to call it.

Then, one day, when she was nineteen she discovered that she was not like other people. She was, on a Sunday morning, at the City Temple, a famous non-conformist hall in central London – she went to all kinds of churches and societies in her quest for enlightenment – when her attention was drawn to a group of three women who were vigorously singing a hymn with the rest of the congregation. She was much amused by the fact that they were neither on the floor of the chapel nor in the gallery, but hovering in mid-air between the two. Then she guessed, since nobody else seemed to pay any attention to them, that she was the only one who saw them. It was a tremendous shock: she said to herself that she must be insane or somehow badly unbalanced, and for weeks lived haunted with this fear.

Then, as often happens, help came. She met a little woman who was a medium and who, for no apparent reason, insisted that Phoebe note her address in case she should ever want to talk to her. This Phoebe did reluctantly and for some weeks ignored the invitation. At last she went to see the woman, who earned a living by giving sittings to enquirers in the usual way of spiritualists. Mrs. Neil, half gypsy by heredity, and also a devoted Swedenborgian, got Phoebe to understand a little about this faculty which was so much disturbing her. She realized that she was perhaps unusual in having it so highly developed, but it was something she could learn to make use of as a direct means of observing things outside the scope of the ordinary senses. It was not very long before the roles of pupil and teacher were reversed. There came a time when, as Phoebe seemed to open up much latent knowledge, Mrs. Neil told her that it was now her turn to learn from her disciple. The two became fast friends and later shared a house until the older woman died.

Her investigations now took a new line. Phoebe went to many séances and tried to understand what was happening. Seemingly by chance, she became the secretary of the Stead Bureau, where W. T. Stead's daughter had established a center for mediums, and where endless students and sensation-mongers came and went. Here she gained much experience in the tactics of the séance, and benefit in leaving her mental field “unconditioned” and of the mediums, whom she liked as people and recognized to be for the most part entirely sincere and honest individuals. She was never a spiritualist, though she recognized the value of spiritualism as a potential stepping-stone for the serious seeker toward a deeper understanding of life. Furthermore, she never worked in trance. If anything, she was more, not less, conscious of physical things while using her clairvoyance.

Work at CPS

She was also a contemporary of Mrs. Garrett's at Hewat McKenzie's College of Psychic Science. Here she got into trouble, for she discovered that if she thought certain things clearly enough and, as it were, projected her ideas into the circle, sooner or later the medium would pick them up and begin to talk about them.

She became sufficiently sure of this to tell members of a group with which she worked that she would get the medium to produce the dead fiancée of a man who was a bachelor and had never had a fiancée. They were so surprised when, at the next seance, precisely this happened; it reached the ears of the director, who thereupon summoned her and told her she must not do things like that. To this she replied that in a college one was entitled to try and learn and should not be expected to be a passive listener. She was then given the alternative of doing as she was told or of leaving: she left.

Interest in Theosophy

Sometime during this period she discovered Theosophy by coming across Annie Besant's book *THE ANCIENT WISDOM*, and was filled with wonder and relief. Theosophy seemed to answer her questions and coincided with what she already knew.

Eventually she joined the Theosophical Society and, though she was never caught up in the attempt of many of its members to make a creed of certain articles of faith, she remained in it and worked with various of its groups for the rest of her life. She found it to be a useful forum where people of like mind could meet and discuss the deeper aspects of life; it had an excellent library; it was world-wide; and a place where even a stormy non-conforming petrel could find a field for work and experience.

This matter is relevant in that, after her time at the Stead Bureau, she was given a chance of doing serious work, using her now much more stabilized and differentiated clairvoyance along medical lines. In the Theosophical Society she met doctors and others interested in the unrecognized aspects of health and disease. It was not long before she began to make a small place for herself because of the accuracy of her diagnostic work – work which was often checked against X-rays or operative findings after she had made her own assessment. At the same time she was her own hardest critic. She was always on the watch for mistakes, tried to confirm her findings, accepted awkward questions when put to her in a real attempt to clarify and not merely to try and trap her, and she was always able to say “I don't know.” Untrained as a scientist – which, as we used to point out to her, was a uncluttered with preconceptions – she had the scientific attitude to a marked degree where her work was concerned.

During this time she had a curious experience. She was trying, with one or two other observers in the room, to study clairvoyantly the lung tissue of a patient, using what has been falsely called “X-ray sight” to do so. The description is false because X-ray pictures are flat shadows varying in density with the tissue through which the rays pass. But Phoebe “saw” the object under scrutiny with a three-dimensional vision comparable with ordinary sight. During this work on the lung, a woman who had no business in the room came in. The director of the experiment was angry. The intruder, a sensitive if thick-skinned woman (contradictory as this may seem), responded in like manner. Phoebe was caught in the blast of the explosion and found, to her surprise, that the little piece of lung (“as large as a postage stamp”) she was studying began to enlarge like a figure in *Alice in Wonderland* until it was “the size of a tea-tray.” Then it occurred to her that if she could so alter her perceptions as to allow this, she could also

stop it: and at her command it stopped so that she was able to examine things as if she were using a powerful microscope. Indeed, the similarity with the microscope is close to what happened, if one can imagine a “zoom” objective bringing what is seen to a higher and higher pitch of enlargement. She found eventually that, in the same way, she was able to slow time down, so that a rapidly moving object seemed to stand almost still for as long as she needed it.

Her practice grew. She would often find the cause of obscure pains for which surgeons could find no “real” cause, and which were due to the slight “lesions” which osteopathy could cure; and so on. Or, she might be asked to go to a haunted house or to cope with somebody who was in trouble and fear over uncontrolled “psychism.”

Marriage

From 1937 onward we began our personal close cooperation, although we were married only late in 1939. I first noticed her in about 1930, when a group, part medical and part amateur, met to discuss the subtler aspects of health and disease. There was another member of the group with a reputation for clairvoyance, but I soon found that he provided an answer to every question, and that this often did not make sense; and he had no sense of humor. Phoebe, on the other hand, would often say, “I don't know,” followed perhaps by “I must try and look that up”; and she had a sometimes caustic sense of humor. It was however, not for some years that we became known to one another in any personal way.

It is at this point that her attitude to herself and her abilities show most clearly. If I say that she was not interested in these abilities as her own possession, this is true. She had no sense of her own importance about them; and indeed, so reserved was she that in years to come, I often had to press the point that if she had noted something important – let us say a message from what seemed to be a dead person – it ought to be passed on even if it embarrassed her to do so. On the other hand, she realized that she had an instrument at hand which she should use for good purposes when it could be of value. She had a very strict code of ethics about these things.

Some may ask why she did not lend herself to more laboratory test work. Actually she did a limited amount both when she was trying herself out (the records have been lost) and when we were working with the Society for Psychical Research. But she preferred to use her energies on people's problems rather than on satisfying curiosity, however legitimate, from a scientific point view. She felt that any real scientist who considered the mass of evidence already available and failed to accept that ESP had – in Professor McDougall's words – been proved “beyond reasonable doubt” could not be a true devotee of science, but only of the cult of a “scientism”, which masqueraded as science. Further, she felt that many investigators made things difficult for such as herself by what she called their “mincing machine minds”: set to cut up and destroy rather than to find out.

Together we wrote a book, *THE PSYCHIC SENSE*, in which my psychiatric knowledge was brought together with hers. As we worked we developed a technique by which our minds almost functioned as one. We had some amusement from friends who, thinking themselves clever, would say, “You, Phoebe, wrote this bit,” or “This is obviously Laurence,” as they were usually wrong. She also worked with Kenneth Richmond, once a pupil of Jung's, and after his death, she worked with Mrs. Jung (we both had high regard for Jung and his wife). The result was that, while she retained her capacities, she would, as she said, “be able to pick them up and put them down again” just as she would a magnifying glass or a telescope. Her interest in life in general became more intense, and gradually focused on the means of perception which, as mentioned earlier, could come from learning to use *manas* as the point of perception.

Two Levels of Psi

This led us to differentiate between two levels of “clairvoyance”:

One we called “perceptivity,” which referred to the overall sensitivity which the individual achieves only as a result of deep search for Reality: a Spiritual or Essential quality. The other was perception, covering a whole range between physical sensation through ‘metasensory’ perception - such as that of people who hear the sound of meteorites far off in space before air waves can possibly have reached them - into extra-sensory perception, which is where the average mediumistic type of person' operates. These two kinds of cognition originate, one at the physical level, the other at the deeper or essential, and “move” towards one another in some cases, so that they blend; but this does not of necessity occur, especially where the sensitive is more concerned with ESP and its phenomena than with ultimate truth.

This philosophy rested on a clear sense of a difference, usually obscured even among parsons, of the radical difference between Spirit and soul or *psyche* – also called colloquially “mind.” Without this the quest for understanding must reach a dead end – as seems to be the case in some parapsychological departments, where, because, as one eminent worker wrote, “one cannot bring Spirit into the field of Science,” things have gone dead for years. It is too easy to dub things as “spiritual” or an entity as “a spirit” when they are nothing of the kind. Indeed, my wife was rash enough to dispute with Jung over what he described as “a spiritual experience,” saying that it seemed on the contrary to be a purely “psychic” one. Both were right, if Jung had had a “peak experience” arising out of the Gestalt which came from a rather commonplace psychic vision; the experience itself was not spiritual, what Jung brought into it was.

Man was, to her – as to Saint Paul, a fact many pastors have forgotten – a Monad in which Spirit or *pneuma*, *psyche* or soul, and *soma* or body were essential parts. And, while we have considerable experience of the last two, our search should be basically to know the first. So it is logical that she felt that psychism and psychical research were of secondary importance only: useful as a means, but not an end.

A corollary to this view of man as a threefold being was that she felt that a difference should be made between survival and immortality. To her, it was clear, the psyche survived the death of the very obviously mortal physical body, but her experience showed her that the elaborate patterns of the earth-mind gradually faded as time passed after physical death. However, true individuality, that of the spirit or essence of man, existed beyond the realms of space-time as we know them, and beyond also the curious sort of space-time of the psychic world, where (as we know from dreams if not otherwise) both space and time are plastic, not fixed as in the physical world. Hence only that which was no subject to space-time seemed to be the really immortal aspects of man.

To the very last Phoebe Payne Bendit kept a healthy scepticism even about her own powers. Her words were “The more we know, the less we seem to know.” And one wishes others thought the same, as only so can we develop upon the mysteries of life and death.

THE GRAVE
Of
William Stainton Moses
1839 - 1892

“A joint founder of the Society for Psychological Research”

William Stainton Moses died on Monday 5th September 1892, at the residence of his mother in St. Peter’s, Bedford.

Moses is interred at the old Bedford cemetery, which was established in 1850, and opened in 1855. Through gross neglect,¹ the grave itself is very difficult to locate and is not readily visible unless the actual location is known. The original site is a large plot containing a family grave stone, and a large Celtic Cross structure standing in excess of six foot, marking the earthly resting place of William Stainton Moses. The whole Moses plot is edged with stone, but is now totally entwined with ivy and other creeper- like growth, so the grave cannot be seen from the various paths and access points.

The funeral took place at noon on Friday, September 9th and was officiated by the Rev. W. Hart-Smith, rector of St. Peter’s Church Bedford. It was reported in two Bedford

¹ See also the neglected grave of Emma Hardinge Britten. See Grave News: - <http://www.woodlandway.org/PDF/18.PSYPIONEERFoundedbyLesliePrice.pdf>

papers, Psypioneer has already published the obituary of “*Bedfordshire Independent*,” September 1892.²

The grave monument is in good condition and its inscription clearly reads: -

**IN LOVING MEMORY OF
REV.D WILLIAM STANTON, M.A.,**

ONLY SON OF WILLIAM AND MARY MOSES

**BORN AT DONNINGTON LINCOLNSHIRE, NOV 5TH 1839
DIED AT BEDFORD SEPTEMBER 5TH 1892
KNOWN AS M.A. OXON**

**FOUNDER AND PRESIDENT OF THE LONDON SPIRITUALIST ALLIANCE
A JOINT FOUNDER OF THE SOCIETY FOR PSYCHICAL RESEARCH**

**EDITOR OF ‘LIGHT’ AND FOR 18 YEARS ENGLISH MASTER AT
UNIVERSITY COLLEGE SCHOOL LONDON**

**“OUT OF DARKNESS INTO HIS MARVELOUS LIGHT”
“HE BEING DEAD YET SPEAKETH”**

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It is interesting to note on the grave stone, “*A joint founder of the Society for Psychical Research*”. Attention was drawn by Leslie Price in the first issue of Psypioneer (May 2004) that the “*SPR was conceived by Spiritualist*”<sup>3</sup> this however is not generally stated by the ‘Society for Psychical Research’ (S.P.R.) today. On the S.P.R., website ‘History of the S.P.R.’<sup>4</sup> under the heading ‘The Founders’ there is no mention of Stainton Moses.

Dawson Rogers briefly informs us that William Stainton Moses<sup>5</sup>: - ..... “*had been associated with him in the old British National Association of Spiritualists, and in the founding of the Society for Psychical Research*”... Rogers continues: - ...“*for when he suggested the formation of such a society to Professor Barrett they both felt that Mr.*

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<sup>2</sup> See page 14 [http://www.woodlandway.org/PDF/Leslie\\_Price\\_PP2.pdf](http://www.woodlandway.org/PDF/Leslie_Price_PP2.pdf)

<sup>3</sup> See, PP1.1: - [http://www.woodlandway.org/PDF/Leslie\\_Price\\_PP1.pdf](http://www.woodlandway.org/PDF/Leslie_Price_PP1.pdf)

<sup>4</sup> See, A Brief History of the S.P.R: - <http://www.spr.ac.uk/expcms/index.php?section=29>

<sup>5</sup> Taken from the First Assembly of the London Spiritualist Alliance (L.S.A.) meeting on Tuesday 22<sup>nd</sup> January 1889, page 50 of *LIGHT*.

*Stainton Moses was the man to seek. At his urgent instance, as well as by the request of Professor Barrett, Mr. Stainton Moses came up specially from the country and moved the resolutions which practically founded and formed the society.”*

The S.P.R.<sup>6</sup> drew much of its original foundation and enthusiastic support from the Officers and Council of the ‘British National Association of Spiritualists’ (B.N.A.S.). The S.P.R., officers and council in 1882 consisted of a total of 22 men, of which at least 12 were or had been B.N.A.S., officers and council members!

There were 29 officers and council positions available, of which at least 16 of these were occupied by B.N.A.S., officers and council members!

The B.N.A.S., officers and council members as cited below are taken from ‘*Spiritual Notes*’ volume 1. July 1878 – June 1880, these members held these positions at the S.P.R: - Treasurer and Secretary, 12 of the 18 council seats, and 2 of the 8 vice presidents positions!

Stainton Moses held two positions, Vice-President and Council member. He resigned from the S.P.R., in 1886.

In the following article I have cited the involvement of Spiritualists that had held important positions in the ‘British National Association of Spiritualists’, and the positions they held as the first officers and council of the ‘Society for Psychical Research’.<sup>7</sup>

Paul J Gaunt

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⁶ The SPR was constituted on February 20th, 1882, and its council appointed.

⁷ List of SPR Officers and Council for 1882 taken from page 1 volume 1 of the SPR proceedings 1882-3.

THE SOCIETY FOR PSYCHICAL RESEARCH

OFFICERS AND COUNCIL FOR 1882

PRESIDENT

HENRY SIDGWICK.

VICE-PRESIDENTS

ARTHUR J. BALFOUR, M.P

REV. W. STAINTON MOSES – *B.N.A.S., Council. Experimental Research Committee, Hon Secretary, Vice President, General Purposes Committee*

PROF. W. F. BARRETT

HON. RODEN NOEL

JOHN R. HOLLOND, M.P

PROF. BALFOUR STEWART

RICHARD H. HUTTON

HENSLEIGH WEDGWOOD – *B.N.A.S., Council, Finance Committee, General Purposes Committee*

COUNCIL

PROF. W.F. BARRETT

FREDERIC W.H. MYERS

EDWARD T. BENNETT – *B.N.A.S., Council, Experimental Research Committee, Séance Committee, General Purposes Committee*

FRANCIS W. PERCIVAL – *B.N.A.S. Hon. Member, Experimental Research Committee*

WALTER R. BROWNE

FRANK PODMORE – *B.N.A.S., Council, General Purposes Committee*

ALEXANDER CALDER – *B.N.A.S., President, Finance Committee, General Purposes Committee*

C. LOCKHART ROBERTSON, M.D

WALTER H. COFFIN – *B.N.A.S., Council, Experimental Research Committee*

E. DAWSON ROGERS – *B.N.A.S., Council, Vice President, Séance Committee, Soirée Committee, General Purposes Committee*

DESMOND G. FITZGERALD – *B.N.A.S., Vice President, Experimental Research Committee, Séance Committee, Soirée Committee, General Purposes Committee.*

PROF. BALFOUR STEWART

EDMUND GURNEY

MORELL THEOBALD – *B.N.A.S., Council, Finance Committee, Auditor*

CHARLES C. MASSEY- *B.N.A.S., Council, Vice President*

HENSLEIGH WEDGWOOD – *B.N.A.S., Council, Finance Committee, General Purposes Committee*

REV. W. STANTON MOSES – *B.N.A.S., – Council, Experimental Research Committee, Hon Secretary, Vice President, General Purposes Committee*

G. WYLD, M.D – *B.N.A.S., – Vice President- Experimental Research Committee- Finance Committee, General Purposes Committee*

HON TREASURER

MIORELL THEOBALD – *B.N.A.S., Council, Finance Committee, Auditor, General Purposes Committee*

SECRETARY

EDWARD T. BENNETT – *B.N.A.S., Council, Experimental Research Committee, Séance Committee, General Purposes Committee*

The B.N.A.S., (founded in 1873)⁸ must have been a substantial platform and of high influence for the founding and launch of the S.P.R., in 1881-2, with its influential membership, which in itself did not hold any religious or philosophical dogmatism, and its members being from all walks of life. The B.N.A.S., held, as indicated above, an *Experimental Research Committee*, as well as a *Séance Committee*.

This short report is from *Spiritual Notes*⁹ July 1879 page 168, and gives us some indication as to their *Psychical Research*: -

⁸ See page 3: - <http://www.woodlandway.org/PDF/PP3.1January07..pdf>

⁹ *Spiritual Notes* July 1878 – December 1880 inc, *Spiritual Notes* gave way to a new weekly journal *LIGHT*, the first issue was published on January 8th 1881.

The Research Committee of the B.N.A.S: - *VERY little has of late been heard of the work done by this Committee, although the Committee has nevertheless been pursuing its researches with considerable activity. This circumstance is sufficiently intelligible when it is considered that the Committee has undertaken a very difficult problem – one, indeed, which is considered impracticable by many experienced Spiritualists, viz., that of obtaining undeniably abnormal phenomena, explicable only on a spiritual or psychical hypothesis, in presence of a circle not always strictly constituted by the same sitters, and fairly representing the scientific and critical element of investigation. It is to be borne in mind, also, that the Committee take note only of phenomena which are absolutely not susceptible of any rational explanation, outside of the above hypotheses, on the part of the sceptical inquirer. The conscientious honesty with which this programme is adhered to merits the respect of all truth-seekers, and has already obtained a wide recognition amongst the more earnest and careful section of investigators, in whose eyes this quality invests the Research Committee with the authority which is so requisite in the case of a body forming the connecting-link between the candid and sceptical inquirer and the Spiritualist. The Committee has latterly held some séances with Mrs. Fox Kane, whose mediumship, however, in its present form, does not appear to be well adapted for the purposes which the Committee has immediately in view. More recently they have had a series of seances with Mrs. Elgie Corner (Florrie Cook), which séances are still being continued from week to week, and will no doubt aid in throwing some further light upon the conditions which are necessary for the exercise of the various forms of mediumship, even if they do not result in any absolute demonstration. Dr. Stanhope Speer and Mr. Meugens have recently joined the Committee.*

The primary meetings/conferences were held in rooms of the B.N.A.S., at 38, Great Russell Street, London in early 1882 which resulted in the formation of the S.P.R.

The S.P.R., website ‘S.P.R. History’ gives no recognition to *any* of the names mentioned in this article in association with B.N.A.S., or, the cooperation and help it must have received from the B.N.A.S., It states: - ... “*founded in London in 1882 by a group of prominent scholars*”. The names that follow e.g., Henry Sidgwick, Frederic Myers, Edmund Gurney, Rayleigh, Balfour family, etc., cannot entirely be credited as the actual or joint founders of the society as much of that work was undertaken before their arrival. Although they shortly took control of the new society, no credence or acknowledgment is given to the great value of the work of the major Spiritualist players in the foundation of the S.P.R., It cannot be denied that the S.P.R. had substantial roots in the B.N.A.S.

Supplementary Summary

Since completing this article Leslie Price has brought my attention to a similar article on the break down of Spiritualists in the first S.P.R., council and their officers, carried out by John Fraser Nicol in 1972. This research/paper was part of a book review of Alan Gauld's "The Founders of the S.P.R."¹⁰; S.P.R., members will be able to read this on-line.¹¹

My original research was directed on similar ground as Nicol's, but it was difficult to establish who were actually Spiritualists, as Leslie points out in his article¹²: - *We should also be aware that the term "Spiritualist" carried various meanings, often wider than today, and is not incompatible with the terms "scholar" or scientist*".

For example I did not feel comfortable in calling William Barrett¹³ a Spiritualist, so I decided to use the names of individuals who not only held membership at a Spiritualist Association but held prominent positions as Council and Officers of the B.N.A.S.

1) Fraser Nicol states that 68% of the first S.P.R., council were Spiritualists; he includes Barrett as a Spiritualist. Nicol records that there were a total of 19 council members including the president (Sidgwick) in the 1882 S.P.R., council. Nicol included a (Spiritualist) lady Mrs. George Boole who resigned¹⁴ because she was the only female on the council. Mrs. George Boole's name is not on the 1882 S.P.R., council list, Fraser Nicol does not include on his list of 1882 S.P.R., council Prof. Balfour Stewart, who was a council member, possibly Stewart replaced Mrs. Boole.

2) Nicol also states that the council elected a Spiritualist Hon. Secretary (Bennett) also a Spiritualist Hon. Treasurer (Theobald).

3) Finally he states that the council elected a Vice-Presidency of whom 50% were Spiritualists.

In comparison to my research: -

1) Fraser Nicol claimed 68% of the S.P.R., council members were Spiritualists, this shows that there were 13 Spiritualists and 6 Non-Spiritualists.

¹⁰ Published by Routledge & Kegan Paul London 1968, Schocken Books, New York 1968

¹¹ Proceedings Volume 55, Part 205, March 1972

¹² http://www.woodlandway.org/PDF/Leslie_Price_PP1.pdf

¹³ SPR members can read on line, Sir William Barrett (1844 – 1925) by Brian Inglis. Journal of the SPR Vol. 55, No. 810

¹⁴ The council minutes for September 27, 1882

In these figures he has counted in as a Spiritualist Mrs. George Boole although she is not shown on the 1882 official list and had resigned. He has not balanced this with Prof. Balfour Stewart who is on the official council list, but not on Fraser Nicol list of council. Also he has added the 1882 S.P.R., President Henry Sidgwick to the council figures.

I have shown that there were 66.7% B.N.A.S., members on the S.P.R., council, meaning that there were 12 B.N.A.S., and 6 Non-Spiritualists.

2) Both accounts are in agreement Hon. Secretary and Hon. Treasurer both Spiritualists and B.N.A.S.

3) Fraser Nicol states that 50% of Vice-Presidents were Spiritualists, meaning that there were 4 Spiritualists¹⁵ and 4 Non-Spiritualists, but he does not list them.

I have shown that there were 25% B.N.A.S., members as S.P.R., Vice-Presidents, showing that there were 2 B.N.A.S., and 6 Non-Spiritualists.

An overall percentage of all 29 S.P.R., Council and Officers positions would be: -

Fraser Nicol 65.5 % Spiritualists showing 19 Spiritualists 10 Non-Spiritualists

Paul J. Gaunt 55 % B.N.A.S., showing 16 B.N.A.S., 13 Non-Spiritualists

These two avenues of research into the unrecognised Spiritualist influence played in the formation of the S.P.R., and its early councils and officers are still awaiting recognition in the history of the “Society for Psychical Research”

It is interesting to note that after the early resignation of Mrs. George Boole in 1882 it would not be until 1901 when another woman was to serve on the SPR council: - Eleanor Sidgwick.

In next months issue we will publish “The Work of Mrs. Henry Sidgwick” which is her obituary notice published in “*LIGHT*” 6th August 1936.

Paul J Gaunt

¹⁵ I would suggest Nicol included Hon. Roden Noel as a Spiritualist.

PASSING OF MRS. ANNIE BESANT

Introductory Note by Pyspioneer:

In the August issue¹⁶ we published 'When the Devil went down to Dublin: Annie Besant in Ireland' by Wendy E. Cousins. Although the LIGHT article below¹⁷ largely follows the usual sources on Mrs Besant's life, it seems useful to note her attitude to Spiritualism. Only fragmentary references to her investigations of mediumship in the 1880s have ever been published.

Mrs. Annie Besant, President of the Theosophical Society, died at Adyar, India, on Wednesday, September 20th, in her eighty-sixth year.

MRS. ANNIE BESANT has ranked for nearly half a century as one of the greatest woman orators in the world, if not the greatest. Her earlier years were troubled and turbulent. She was associated with Charles Bradlaugh in a cause which brought her much public obloquy; and for a time she was one of the brilliant band of militant intellectual Socialists – the Fabians – which included George Bernard Shaw, Sidney Webb and others, who still survive, as well as many equally famous who have passed on.

It was through her journalistic association with W. T. Stead that she was first brought into direct touch with the Theosophical movement. She had been for some years engaged in an enquiry regarding the phenomena of Spiritualism when, sitting in the Fleet Street office of the *National Reformer* (of which she was joint editor with Bradlaugh), "brooding over her disappointments in the search for Truth, she suddenly heard a Voice say to her, 'Are you willing to give up everything for the sake of learning the Truth?'" She did not know who it was that spoke, but she answered, "Yes, Lord."

A few days later (says Mr. C. Jinarajadasa), W. T. Stead, then Editor of the *Review of Reviews*, sent her Madame Blavatsky's *Secret Doctrine* to review and "the moment she read the work it was as if a long lost synthesis of truth suddenly flashed out in her mind. She asked for an interview with the author, and from that first sight of Madame Blavatsky, Annie Besant's whole life was changed. She separated herself from her Secularist friends and also to some extent from Socialism," and became in turn Madame Blavatsky's disciple and successor. In 1907, she was elected President of the Theosophical Society – a position she retained to the end, although latterly there were

¹⁶ <http://www.woodlandway.org/PDF/PP4.8August08..pdf>

¹⁷ *LIGHT* September 22, 1933 page 595.

sections of the Movement, chiefly in America, which did not acknowledge her leadership.

In November, 1893, Mrs. Besant landed in India for the first time and a new and important chapter of her life began. She went as President to the headquarters of the Theosophical Society at Adyar, Madras, but gradually she identified herself more and more with the people of India and ultimately became a leader in the India Home Rule movement. When the great war broke out in 1914, she was suspected by the Government and was interned for a few months. "No statesman in Britain nor the British officials in India seemed to realise," writes Mr. Jinarajadasa, "that Dr. Besant was not an agitator working up an agitation, but rather a far-sighted leader who saw the need to open up a festering wound whose poison would otherwise permeate the whole organism." On being liberated, she was elected President of the National Congress; but she speedily lost her popularity with the masses in India by opposing Ghandi's non-co-operative movement. With some of the moderate Indian politicians, in 1925, she prepared the Commonwealth of India Bill, which was introduced into the British Parliament, and which prepared the way for the efforts now being made to formulate a constitution for India as an integral part of the British Empire.

Occasionally, Mrs. Besant came to this country on a lecturing tour and always she drew great audiences whenever she spoke and whatever her topic, for she was an orator of the first order, but in the closing years of her life India was her home.

Mrs. Besant wrote books sufficient to crowd a moderate-sized library. The full list shows 326 works up to 1923, omitting those written in collaboration with others. Most of these deal with Theosophy and allied subjects the most important of all, judged by their influence, being probably *The Ancient Wisdom* (1897) and *Esoteric Christianity* (1901), in which Theosophical beliefs and their relation to Christianity are explained in terms at once clear and attractive.

Unlike Madame Blavatsky and some other Theosophists, Mrs. Besant never attacked Spiritualism and never minimised the importance of its teachings. As exemplified in her book, *Four Great Religions*, her aim was to find points of agreement in belief and practice and to show how, in her view, all could be merged in the Theosophy Philosophy. She herself claimed to have a highly developed power of clairvoyance, which she devoted not only to the study of the various phases of reincarnation (pre-birth and post-death) but also to the elucidation of scientific problems, as in her book, *Occult Chemistry* (1908).

Mrs. Besant held high rank in the Co-Masonic movement; she was Honorary Scout Commissioner for all India; and, in recognition of her work for education in India, the degree of Doctor of Letters was conferred on her when the Hindu University was established.

Although she was never directly associated with them, Spiritualists will join in doing honour to her memory. She approached Theosophy through Spiritualism; many,

including the present writer, have been induced by the stimulus of her books to examine the foundations on which belief in Survival and supernormal phenomena rest, and so have been led through Theosophy to the firm ground of Spiritualism.

G.H.L.¹⁸

"THINK AND SPEAK KINDLY OF EACH OTHER"

The following extracts from an address delivered by Mrs. Besant to the members of the London Spiritualist Alliance on October 21, 1909, indicate her attitude towards Spiritualism. They are taken from *LIGHT* of October 30 and November 6, 1909:

"I recognise on all sides brethren in the various schools of thought, all of us aiming at a single goal—the spiritualisation of the humanity to which we all belong; and there is one thing I may say here because I say it so constantly outside – almost always when lecturing to public audiences, almost always when referring to the life after death – we are bound to remember with gratitude the work done in the past by those of your leaders who faced ridicule, obloquy, and antagonism of every kind, in bearing testimony to the reality of human individuality on the other side of death; and the Spiritualistic method remains the only one that can be used against the materialist, the sceptic, the man who is not willing to go into the subject unless he can be furnished with prima-facie evidence for the survival of mankind after death.

"Over and over again, when dealing with the materialist and knowing he will not receive any evidence except that which will appeal to his senses and which he can gain without a long course of study and training, I have recommended such a one to attend a carefully chosen Spiritualistic seance in order that, breaking down the barriers of materialism, he may be able to listen to teachings which he scoffs at, until, to some extent, he is convinced. Yet, as many of you know, Theosophists hold that there are certain dangers in connection with Spiritualistic investigation, but, on the other hand, that is also recognised by the most thoughtful and earnest Spiritualists, and they – quite as

¹⁸ GHL: this is George Henderson Lethem, who was appointed Editor of *LIGHT* and took up his duties on April 20th 1931. GHL took over from David Gow, who had occupied the position of Editor of *LIGHT* since January, 1914.

Mr. Gow agreed to remain as Advisory Editor on condition that his successor should be a trained journalist with a knowledge of, and sympathy with, the subject of Spiritualism. This was the case with George Henderson Lethem.

much as we – warn people who go along this line of investigation of the dangers which beset the pathway of investigators – dangers against which it is necessary they should be on their guard.

"In bidding you farewell for a time I would ask all who are our Spiritualist brethren, as well as those who are Theosophists, to forget all antagonism, to think and speak kindly of each other, remembering there are many ways to knowledge and each man must choose his own way for himself."

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HELEN DUNCAN

1895, 1897 or 1898 – 1956

Much reference has been made in the pages of Psypioneer to Mrs. Victoria Helen McCrae Duncan (née MacFarlane). Recently in the August 2008 issue we published “The First Duncan Trial” in 1933¹⁹. In 2006-7 Leslie Price undertook took the exasperating task of challenging the erroneous information given on the various websites especially the B.B.C. History, starting with “We Shall Fight Them on the Web Sites”²⁰ and also doubting that Helen Duncan was responsible for the passing of the Fraudulent Mediums Act, 1951 (See February 2008 issue “Is Mrs Duncan the victim of a logical fallacy?”²¹). [For more information on Helen Duncan use our Psypioneer search engine at Psypioneer News.²²]

Robert Hartley’s book was reviewed by Psypioneer²³, and is available through our “Books for sale”

It’s now Psypioneer’s turn to ask our readers: -

¹⁹ <http://www.woodlandway.org/PDF/PP4.8August08..pdf>

²⁰ <http://www.woodlandway.org/PDF/PP2.6June06.pdf>

²¹ <http://www.woodlandway.org/PDF/PP4.2February08..pdf>

²² Use Psypioneer search engine – Helen Duncan: - <http://www.woodlandway.org/>

²³ <http://www.woodlandway.org/PDF/PP3.11November07..pdf>

WHO is RIGHT?

IN WHAT YEAR WAS HELEN DUNCAN BORN?

Helen Duncan's daughter claims that her mother was born in 1895

Two worlds of Helen Duncan - Gena Brealey 1985²⁴ 25th November 1895

And also Mary Armour, a Helen Duncan biographer²⁵

However some websites and authors state that Duncan was born in 1897

The official Helen Duncan web site²⁶ 25th November 1897

B.B.C. History²⁷ 25th November 1897

Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia²⁸ 25 November 1897

Clan Duncan Society – Scotland U.K.²⁹ 25th November 1897

Who was Helen Duncan? Helen Duncan article by our Helper Vi Kipling³⁰ 1897 (Violet Kipling F.S.N.U.) 1897

Survival After Death Org .UK (ISS)³¹ 1897

Hellish Nell - Last of Britain's Witches- Malcolm Gaskill 2001³² 25th November 1897

The Strange Case of Hellish Nell: The True Story of Helen Duncan and the Witch Trial of World War II -Nina Shandler³³ 1897

²⁴ With Kay Hunter, Regency Press London 1985

²⁵ Helen Duncan (1895-1956): my living has not been in vain: the true story of Helen's life and work. London: 2000.

²⁶ <http://www.helenduncan.org.uk/helenstory/witchcrafttrial.html>

²⁷ http://www.bbc.co.uk/history/scottishhistory/modern/oddities_modern.shtml

²⁸ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Helen_Duncan

²⁹ <http://www.clan-duncan.co.uk/hduncan.html>

³⁰ <http://www.psychics.co.uk/psychics/helenduncan.html>

³¹ <http://www.survivalafterdeath.org.uk/mediums/duncan.htm>

³² Published by Fourth Estate 2001 see also page 133: -

<http://www.woodlandway.org/PDF/PP2.6June06.pdf>

³³ Da Capo Press 2006

And other writers claim that Duncan was born in 1898

The Trial of Mrs. Duncan - The Old Bailey Trial Series 1945³⁴ 25th November 1898

Helen Duncan the Mystery Show Trial - Robert Hartley 2007³⁵ 25th November 1898

Medium on Trial - Manfred Cassirer 1996³⁶ 25th November 1898

Regurgitation and the Duncan Mediumship - Harry Price 1931³⁷ November 25th 1898

Occultism & Parapsychology - (Edited by Leslie A. Shepard) 1991³⁸ 1898

The Story of Helen Duncan – Alan E. Crossley 1975³⁹ November 25th 1898

One would perhaps consider that the official Helen Duncan web site or the Clan Duncan Society would be correct in establishing the subject of their websites correct details - 1897? Well, at least Duncan's own daughter would know her mothers birth date - 1895? Surely the trial notes would be correct - 1898? The authors would have no doubt checked Duncan's birth certificate in their book researches? And then, the encyclopaedias must surely be correct?

Paul J. Gaunt

SO WHICH YEAR WAS HELEN BORN?

³⁴ Jarrolds Publishers (London) Ltd. 1945 Edited, with a foreword by C.E. Bechhofer Roberts

³⁵ HPr (Publishing) 2007

³⁶ PN Publishing, Stansted Hall Stansted, Essex. 1996

³⁷ Bulletin of the National Laboratory of Psychical Research 1931, see also page 147: -

<http://www.woodlandway.org/PDF/PP3.7July07..pdf>

³⁸ Encyclopedia of Occultism & Parapsychology - (Third Edition), Gale Research Inc 1991

³⁹ Arthur H. Stockwell ltd, Ilfracombe, Devon. 1975

PROFILES...

FRED EVANS'S MEDIUMSHIP

BY THE EDITOR of *The Golden Gate*⁴⁰

Introductory Note by Psypioneer:

The name Fred Evans was pre-eminent in slate-writing in the 1880's onward. Later, Stainton Moses introduced the name "Psychography" to categorise Independent, Direct or Spirit Writing.

Fred P. Evans was born in Liverpool, England on June 9th 1862. One of his great grandfathers was Robert Owen,⁴¹ one of the first British converts to Spiritualism by Mrs. Maria Hayden in 1853 (London).

In 1884 Evans investigated Spiritualism, his introduction was with the well known American test medium Mrs. Ada Foye. After developing his mediumship Evans gave his first professional séance in February 1885, then on Sunday 21st June 1885 he demonstrated his mediumship before the "Society of Progressive Spiritualists" in San Francisco at Washington Hall where his spirit guide produced over thirty messages between a pair of sealed slates in the hands of a committee chosen by the audience.

The report below⁴² outlines his mediumship prior to Evans and his wife embarking on their trip to Australia. The couple left for Australia in August 1888, arriving in Sydney on Thursday 19th, they were welcomed by the N.S.W. Association of Spiritualists. The following day they continued on to Brisbane arriving Sunday evening where they were received by the "Brisbane Psychological Society".

On January 3rd 1889, Mr & Mrs Evans continued with their tour arriving in Melbourne on January 10th 1889 where he gave his last séance on May 10th 1889. The couple then left for Sydney on the final leg of their tour on May 13th and in early September of this year, Mr. and Mrs. Evans returned home to San Francisco.

The above information has been taken from "Psychography Marvelous Manifestations of Psychic Power through Fred P. Evans" by J.J. Owen 1893 The Hicks-Judd Co San Francisco. Evans' tour of Australia will be articulated in the next issue.

⁴⁰ "Golden Gate", San Francisco, Cal. Editor of this paper I believe to be J.J. Owen.

⁴¹ "Mrs. Hayden's visit to England in 1852 -3 and the conversion of Robert Owen" See: - <http://www.woodlandway.org/PDF/PP2.10October06.pdf>

⁴² Taken from "LIGHT" 22nd September 1888 page 472

Mr. Evans first saw the light in Liverpool, England, June 9th, 1862. At the age of thirteen he went to sea, where he rapidly learned the duties of a sailor. Bright, active, brave, and shirking no duty, he never failed to win the good opinions of his shipmates and officers. He followed the sea for seven years, the last two as quartermaster in the steamship service of this coast, and under Captain Morse, of the steamship, "Alameda," with whom he and his wife sail to-day for Australia.

Having had quite enough of the sea, in 1884 Mr. Evans sought for and obtained employment as a clerk in the office of Lang and Ruggles, brokers, of this city (San Francisco). It was during this time that his attention was first attracted to the phenomenal phases of Spiritualism. In company with an old shipmate, he dropped in one evening at Washington Hall, where Mrs. Ada Foye was holding one of her remarkable rapping and ballot test séances. Mrs. Foye often sees and describes spirits, giving names and other evidences of identity, independent of any ballot.

On this occasion she saw and described a spirit who came to Mr. Evans and his friend, whom they identified as a former shipmate lost at sea. From that time Mr. Evans sought to know more of the facts and philosophy of Spiritualism. He was told by various mediums that he possessed mediumistic powers of a high order, especially for the phase for which he has since become famous. He commenced sitting for that development, devoting a half hour each evening, sitting in a darkened room. He sat faithfully for over three months, when becoming discouraged at what he considered a hopeless case, he was about to abandon the effort, when suddenly the power came to him. He was soon forced into public work, and resigning his clerkship he announced himself as a medium for independent slate-writing.

This occurred in February, 1885, since which time Mr. Evans has resided continuously in San Francisco, practising his gifts with steadily increasing success and satisfaction, until now, as he takes his leave for a season, there was never so great a demand for his services. About two years ago he was united in marriage with Miss Agnes Hance, herself a fine trance and test medium.

On a few occasions Mr. Evans has gone out into neighbouring towns to display his gifts, and once, in the spring of 1887, under the management of the writer, he visited the principal cities of Southern California, giving seances before large audiences, and under conditions to render deception absolutely impossible. His method of conducting a seance in public is as follows: - The audience is called upon to name a committee of three to go upon the stage and prepare and hold the slates. And this they are expected to do without any interference or assistance of the medium. After the slates have been thoroughly cleaned and sealed together in pairs, and while in the hands of the committee (one pair in the hands of each member thereof), Mr. Evans sometimes (not always) asks permission to touch the slates for the purpose of connecting or imparting his magnetic forces therewith. In our experience with him we have often found the writing to come between the slates, or on the under side of a single slate, without any contact with his hands. The messages written between slates before a public audience, and under the conditions named, are usually written in a patchwork style, from twenty

to thirty in number upon each slate, and addressed to various persons in the audience, most, if not all, of whom are strangers to the medium.

In this, as in other phases of psychography obtained through this medium, we speak wholly from our own experience. During the past three years we have held not less than one hundred séances with him for experimental work. We have had every opportunity for careful investigation. His psychographic control, "John Gray," and his artist assistant, "Stanley St. Clair," (the latter of whom we have found to be a veritable personage and artist who "passed over" from New Orleans fifteen years ago), are to us as real beings, in all save their physical presence, as the medium himself. "John Gray" claims to have been a sailor boy, like the medium, who passed to spirit life about fifty years ago, while endeavouring to save the lives of persons in a shipwreck. He has given us the names of the vessels in which he sailed, dates, &c., which we have not yet attempted to verify. If we had, we doubt not we should have found them correct. The third and last member of his band is a beautiful female spirit, who styles herself "Camelia." She appears to be a silent worker, who comes simply to afford proper and needed elements for the spirit battery.

In our Christmas edition of 1886, we published a slate containing messages in twelve languages, including Chinese, Hebrew, Greek, &c. This slate, which has gone into history, (having been reproduced in all the leading Spiritualistic journals in the world, as well as in many secular papers) was written under the hands of the editor of this journal and his wife, in the presence of Mr. Evans, but without the contact of his hands, in the full light of day, the slate; to our certain knowledge containing, previous to the writing, no mark upon its surface.

We have obtained many pictures in the course of our experiments-one, especially, a fine likeness with autograph of Father Pierrepont, taken for, and in the presence of, Professor Alfred Russel Wallace; and also writing in many colours, without the use of material crayons-in one instance thirty-three shades of colour being produced within slates prepared by us, and which never for a moment left our hands.

About eighteen months ago, "St. Clair" informed us that he was experimenting with a process whereby he hoped to be able to produce, through Mr. Evans's mediumship, permanent pictures of mortals and spirits upon slates. He has now succeeded, and the result, as given below, is well worth mentioning.

Our last seance for experimental work through Mr. Evans was held on Wednesday evening, the 9th inst. The wife of the writer was present. At this séance we obtained twelve slatesful of messages and pictures, including some very interesting work by "St. Clair's" new process. The artist was delighted with the result, and says that he shall be able to excel, by this process, all of his former efforts in spirit picture making.

Upon the under surface of two slates placed upon the table which we first held singly, edgewise, between our hands, and which never for a moment left our hands or sight, a number of pictures were produced, which seem to be as permanent material

upon which they appear. A space some four inches square in the centre of each slate has been subjected to some glazing process, *in* which glazing, not upon its surface, the pictures appear to be photographed. Upon one slate there are four faces, and upon the other three. Two of the pictures on each slate are good likenesses of the writer and Mrs. Owen. Then appear two spirit faces, one of which is that of "John Gray," and the other, which is quite dim, is given as a spirit sister of Mrs. Owen. Around the edges of the glazed surfaces are a number of private messages, thirteen in all, given mainly in close imitation of the writing of the persons from whom they purport to come.

Upon nine of the slates is a private letter to us, running continuously from one slate to another, from "John Gray." He seemed to be in the humour for a friendly good-bye chat. Speaking of "St. Clair's" work upon the slates, he says: "You remember some eighteen months ago, he promised to give you pictures on slates prepared with some kind of paint or varnish. Well, we have just made the second experiment, and find that that we shall soon improve on it. The slate is first sensitized by some process known to St. Clair, and then the intended pictures are photographed on. Mortals can have their pictures taken alongside of their spirit friends, just the same as you have received to-night. We can have your face reflected on the clouds, have your spirit friends near it, and photograph them both." It is certainly very remarkable.

In our experiments with this medium we have learned that not all investigators are able to obtain like satisfactory results. There is something in the aura of some investigators that seems to make it difficult for their spirit friends to come close enough to the medium's psychographic control to enable him to get their thoughts clearly. But even in such cases it is rarely, if ever, that writing is not produced independently, which establishes the fact of invisible intelligence. We have often obtained the writing upon slates in our own hands, when the medium was many feet away, the writing appearing in perfect *facsimile* of that of certain of our spirit kindred, who have, by practice become proficient in the art of spirit writing.

Investigators, who would meet with the best results with this medium, should bring to his séances a hospitable, kindly feeling, and a sincere desire to know the truth. Once satisfied that the slates have been thoroughly cleaned, they should not seek to interrupt the spirits in their work but patiently wait the signal to raise or open the slates. If you bring your own slates, suffer the medium to place hands upon them if he so desires. He may not need to touch them.

The writing is done in the full light, and open and above board, with not the slightest chance for collusion of any kind. There will be no lack of opportunity for the fullest and fairest investigation to all who come in the right spirit. If unjustly suspected, or wrongfully accused, Mr. Evans is quick to bring the séance to a close. He is reasonably proud of his gifts, and jealous of his honour. He will brook no unfairness.

Mrs. Evans, who accompanies her husband to Australia, is a fit companion for such a medium. She is a fine trance test medium, as her sisters of the colonies will soon have abundant opportunity to learn. We are quite sure that our Australian psychic

scientists will find enough in this medium to give them food for thought for many a day. We hope and trust they will treat him kindly, and return him to us in due time. We have need for him here for many years to come.

Saturday December 1st 1888 Stainton Moses publishes in “*LIGHT*” under the heading “Notes by the Way”: - *The usual fate has overtaken Mr. Fred. Evans on his arrival at Brisbane. He has been “exposed”* To be continued in the next issue.

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