

PSYPIONEER

Founded by Leslie Price

Editor Paul J. Gaunt

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Notes by the way...

ACCESS DENIED

It is feared that a significant part of the Victorian journals given by Stansted to the SPR have been placed beyond the reach of students for the foreseeable future. [See previous issue¹]

An SPR council member, who was among the limited number sent the list of volumes surplus to the SPR’s own archive, bought them and thus averted further dispersal.

However, he has rejected any suggestion of giving access to Psypioneer to copy material in the volumes, pointing out that they are fragile, and might be damaged by the process.

¹ <http://woodlandway.org/PDF/PP4.10October08..pdf>

It is quite true that photocopying or scanning old volumes does expose the spines in particular to damage. This is one reason why Psypioneer makes electronic copies of significant material - so that henceforth it is freely available, without anyone needing to handle the volume again for those pages. The pages from "Spiritual Notes" vol. 2 in this issue are typical examples. They came from a fragile volume belonging to another charity.

Of course a private individual who buys Victorian Spiritualist periodical volumes is not a charity, and does not acquire any obligation to give any access to anyone. He can take the same view as Bilbo, and consider "It's mine, my precious, it came to me."

But the impression so far created by this affair is not a pleasant one. A religious body, to whom believers had left precious historical works, decided to dispose of them, as indeed all bodies must sometimes, for reasons of space or otherwise. If they were a museum, they might be expected to follow the code of practice of the Museums Association, which advises that in disposals, preference should be given to public bodies. But at least they gave it to a registered charity in a similar line of work, though not apparently with any conditions attached to the donation.

The recipient, an academic body (www.spr.ac.uk) after adding some volumes to its archives in Cambridge (where, it must be said, they are not easily accessible) offered most of the rest initially for sale to certain members of its own Council, one of whom acquired some treasures indeed. Although these are basic sources on Spiritualist origins, these sold volumes are now inaccessible to Spiritualists, and indeed to anyone else, such as universities like Freiburg where pioneers have been studied. That, surely, was not the intention of the donor.

It is one thing for a charity to sell off to its members, books left to it by deceased members, but these were donations by another nationally known and legally registered body with thousands of its own members, some of whom would have rejoiced to have the opportunity of even seeing such volumes.

Is it too late for the organisations concerned to come up with some arrangements that will put these volumes to better use? Or is it at the very least, the opportunity to put in place a protocol to ensure that the same thing does not recur in years to come? It is surely important that those giving material to psychic organisations can have confidence it will be handled properly.

LESLIE PRICE

Hippolyte Léon Denizard Rivail

Better known under the pseudonym of

Allan Kardec

1804-1869

Introductory Note by Psypioneer:

Allan Kardec introduced a new doctrine called ‘Spiritism’ whose followers are ‘Spiritists’. Though often used synonymously with ‘Spiritualism,’ the former (also known as Kardecism) is basically principled on reincarnation, teaching that the spirit-soul may undergo numerous incarnations in different mortal forms. Early Spiritualism, in contrast, generally accepted but one mortal birth, with progress through eternity in spiritual states. Kardec is considered a major exponent of reincarnation doctrine in the nineteenth century.

Alexander Aksakof (1832-1903) was a Russian pioneer Spiritualist² and Psychical Researcher from Repiofka, Russia. Though involved in experiments in mediumship, especially physical manifestations,³ he was not sympathetic to reincarnation as advocated by Allan Kardec and his followers. When Aksakof came to England in 1875 the British weekly journal *The Spiritualist* (1869 – 1881c)⁴ published Aksakof’s research into the historical origin of Kardec’s book, *Le Livre des Esprits (The Spirits’ Book)* issued in 1856, which had marked the beginning of Kardec’s Spiritism.

Printed below is the original full article taken from *The Spiritualist*, August 13, 1875. Page 74 -75: This gave rise to a considerable controversy on which we will report in the New Year, so readers are cautioned not to reach premature conclusions on this matter.

² The doctrine of Spiritualism was introduced into Russia by M. Boltine and others in 1854 who had witnessed Spiritualistic phenomena abroad. These efforts according, to Emma Hardinge Britten in her “*Nineteenth Century Miracles*” 1883, paved the way for the first visit to St. Petersburg by D.D. Home, about 1861 (page 349). Strictly, 1861 would not have been Home’s first visit to Russia. At St Petersburg on August 1st 1858, Daniel Dunglas Home married into the Russian aristocracy, his bride being Alexandrina de Kroll, daughter of General Count de Kroll and god-daughter of the late Tsar Nicholas. Alexandrina, seventeen, was known as Sacha and on May 8th 1859 their son Gregoire was born. Sacha died 3rd July 1862 ironically of the same disease, tuberculosis that was to eventually kill her husband Daniel on 21st June 1886. For more on Home, see: - “*Second thoughts on the first Psychic*” page 181: - <http://www.woodlandway.org/PDF/PP2.8August06..pdf>

³ Aksakof gave the Russian public its first book on Spiritualism, entitled “*Spiritualism and Science*” 1872. E.H.B., “*Nineteenth Century Miracles*” 1883 page 354

⁴ “*The Spiritualist*” was first published as: - “*The Spiritualist Newspaper*”: *A Record of the Progress of the Science and Ethics of Spiritualism*. Published by W.H. Harrison

RESEARCHES ON THE HISTORICAL ORIGIN OF THE REINCARNATION SPECULATIONS OF FRENCH SPIRITUALISTS

BY THE HON. ALEXANDRE AKSAKOF, RUSSIAN IMPERIAL COUNCILLOR AND
CHEVALIER OF THE ORDER OF ST. STANISLAS

In view of the approaching publication of translations in the English language of the works of Allan Kardec, of which the principal volume, *The Spirits' Book*, is already out, I feel it my duty to lay before the English public the result of my researches in the direction of the origin of the dogma of Reincarnation. When "Spiritism," newly baptised with this name, and embodied in form of a doctrine by Kardec, began to spread in France, nothing astonished me more than the divergence of this doctrine from that of "Spiritualism," touching the point of Reincarnation. This divergence was the more strange because the sources of the contradictory affirmations claim to be the same, namely, the spirit-world and communications given by spirits. As Spiritism was born in 1856 with the publication of the *Book of Spirits*, it is clear that to solve this enigma it was necessary to begin with the historical origin of this book. It is remarkable that nowhere, either in this volume or in any of the others, does Kardec give upon this head the slightest detail. And why was this? the essential point in all serious criticism being to know before all things how such a book came into existence?

As I did not live in Paris, it was difficult for me to procure the necessary information; all that I could learn was that a certain somnambulist, known by the name of Celina Japhet, had contributed largely to the work, but that she had been dead for a long time. During my stay in Paris in 1873, I explained to a Spiritualistic friend my regret that I had never met this somnambulist in life, to which he replied that he had also heard that she was dead, but he doubted whether the rumour was true; also that he had reason to suppose that this was nothing but a rumour spread abroad by the Spiritists, and that it would be well if I made further personal inquiry. He gave me a former address of Mme. Japhet, and what was my astonishment and joy to find her in perfect health! When I told her of my surprise, she replied that it was nothing new to her, for the Spiritists were actually making her pass for a dead person. Here is the substance of the information which she was obliging enough to give me.

Mdlle. Celina Bequet was a natural somnambulist from her earliest years. At sixteen or seventeen years of age, while residing with her parents in Paris; she was mesmerised for the first time by Ricard, and three times by him in all. In 1841 she was living in the provinces, and was attacked with a serious illness; having lost the use of her legs, she was confined to her bed for twenty-seven months; afterwards, having lost all hope of relief from medicine, she was mesmerised and put to sleep by her brother; she then prescribed the necessary remedies, and after treatment for six weeks she got out of bed and could walk with the aid of crutches, which she was obliged to use for eleven months. At last, in 1843, she had entirely recovered her health.

In 1845 she went to Paris in search of M. Ricard, and she made the acquaintance of M. Roustan at the house of M. Millet, a mesmerist. She then took, for family considerations, the name of Japhet; and became a professional somnambulist under the control of M. Roustan, and remained in that position till about 1848. She gave, under her assumed name, medical advice under the spiritual direction of her grandfather, who had been a doctor, and also of Hahnemann and of Mesmer, from whom she received a great number of communications. In thus manner in 1846 the doctrine of Reincarnation was given to her by the spirits of her grandfather, St. Theresa, and others. (As the somnambulic powers of Madame Japhet were developed under the mesmeric influence of M. Roustan, it may be well to remark in this place that M. Roustan himself believed in the plurality of terrestrial existences. See Cahagnet's *Sanctuaire au Spiritualisme* - Paris, 1850 - page 164: since dated August 24th, 1848.)

In 1849 Madame d'Abnour, on her return from America, desired to form a circle for spiritual phenomena, of which she had lately been a witness. For this purpose she called upon M. de Guldenstubbe, by whom M. Roustan and Celina Japhet were asked to become members of his spirit-circle. (See the German edition of *Pneumatologie Positive* of the Baron de Guldenstubbe-Stuttgart, 1870-page 87.) This circle was also joined by the Abbé Chatel and the three Demoiselles Bauvrais; it consisted therefore of nine persons. This circle met once a week at the house of Madame Japhet, 46, Rue des Martyrs; afterwards, almost up to the time of the war of 1870, it met twice a week. In 1855 the circle was composed of the following persons: M. Thierry, M. Taillandier, M. Tillman, M. Ramon de la Sagia (since dead), Messrs. Sardou (father and son), Madame Japhet, and M. Roustan, who continued a member of it until about 1864. They began by making a chain, American fashion, in form of a horse-shoe, round Madame Celina, and they obtained spiritual phenomena more or less remarkable; but soon Madame Celina developed as a writing medium, and it was through that channel that the greater part of the communications were obtained.

In 1856 she met M. Denizard Rivail, introduced by M. Victorien Sardou. He correlated the materials by a number of questions, himself arranged the whole in systematic order, and published *The Spirits' Book* without ever mentioning the name of Madame C. Japhet, although three-quarters of this book had been given through her mediumship. The rest was obtained from communications through Madame Bodin, who belonged to another spirit-circle. She is not mentioned except on the last page of the first number of the *Revue Spirite*, where, in consequence of the number of reproaches that were addressed to him, he makes a short mention of her. As he was also attached to an important journal, *L'Univers*, he published his book under the names which he had borne in his two previous existences. One of these names was Allan - a fact revealed to him by Madame Japhet, and the other name of Kardec was revealed to him by the medium Roze.

After the publication of the *Book of Spirits*, of which Kardec did not even present one copy to Madame Japhet, he quitted the circle and arranged another in his own house, M. Roze being the medium. When he thus left he possessed a mass of manuscript which he had carried off from the house of Madame Japhet, and he availed himself of the right of an editor by never giving it back again. To the numerous requests for its return which

were made to him, he contented himself by replying, "Let her go to law with me." These manuscripts were to some extent useful in the compilation of the *Book of Mediums*, of which all the contents, so says Madame Japhet, had been obtained through medial communications.

It would be essential in order to complete this article to review the ideas on pre-existence and on reincarnation which were strongly in vogue in France just before 1850. An abstract of these will be found in the work of M. Pezzani on *The Plurality of Existences*. The works of Cahagnet should also be consulted. As I am now away from my library, it is impossible for me to give the relative points exactly.

In addition to the foregoing, supplementary details bearing upon the origin of *The Book of Spirits*, and the different points connected therewith, can and ought to be obtained from living witnesses to throw light upon the conception and birth of this book, such as Madame Japhet, Mdlle. de Guldenstubbe, M. Sardou, and M. Taillandier. The last continues up to the present time to work with Madame Japhet as a medium; she is still in possession of her somnambulic powers, and continues to give consultations. She sends herself off to sleep by means of objects which have been mesmerised by M. Roustan. I think it a duty on this occasion to testify to the excellence of her lucidity. I consulted her about myself, and she gave me exact information as to a local malady and as to the state of my health in general. Now is it not astonishing that this remarkable person, who has done so much for French Spiritism, should be living entirely unknown for twenty years, and no notice or remark made about her? Instead of being the centre of public attention she is totally ignored; in fact, they have buried her alive! Let us hope that the reparation which is due to her will be made one day. "Spiritualism" might, in this matter, offer a noble example to "Spiritism." *

[* The address of Madame Japhet is Paris, Rue des Enfants Rouges, G.]

Now to return to the question of Reincarnation. I leave it to English critics to draw their deductions from the facts which I unravelled by my researches, incomplete though they be; I will do no more than throw out the following ideas: That the propagation of this doctrine by Kardec was a matter of strong predilection is clear; from the beginning Reincarnation has not been presented as an object of study, but as a dogma. To sustain it he has always had recourse to writing mediums, who, it is well known, pass so easily under the psychological influence of preconceived ideas; and Spiritism has engendered such in profusion; whereas through physical mediums the communications are not only more objective, but always contrary to the doctrine of Reincarnation. Kardec adopted the plan of always disparaging this kind of mediumship, alleging as a pretest its moral inferiority. Thus the experimental method is altogether unknown in Spiritism; for twenty years it has not made the slightest intrinsic progress, and it has remained in total ignorance of Anglo-American Spiritualism! The few French physical mediums who developed their powers in spite of Kardec, were never mentioned by him in the *Revue*; they remained almost unknown to Spiritists, and only because their spirits did not support the doctrine of Reincarnation! Thus Camille Bredif, a very good physical medium, acquired celebrity only in consequence of his visit to St. Petersburg. I do not remember

ever to have seen in the *Revue Spirite* the slightest notice of him, still less any description of manifestations produced in his presence. Knowing the reputation of Mr. Home, Kardec made several overtures to get him upon his side; he had two interviews with him for this purpose, but as Mr. Home told him that the spirits who had communicated through him never endorsed the idea of Reincarnation, he thenceforth ignored him, thereby disregarding the value of the manifestations which were produced in his presence. I have upon this head a letter from Mr. Home, although at the present moment it is not within reach.

In conclusion, it is scarcely necessary to point out that all that I have herein stated does not affect the question of Reincarnation, considered upon its own merits, but only concerns the causes of its origin and of its propagation as Spiritism.

Chateau de Krotofka, Russia, July 24th, 1875

Points of interest noted by Paul Gaunt

The name ALLAN KARDEC to which I referred as a pseudonym in the article heading has various implications.

In the above article it is stated by Aksakof that the names Allan & Kardec are Rivail's names of two *previous existences*: -

As he was also attached to an important journal, *L' Univers*, he published his book under the names which he had borne in his two previous existences. One of these names was Allan - a fact revealed to him by Madame Japhet, and the other name of Kardec was revealed to him by the medium Roze.

Translator's Preface⁵ to the *The Spirits' Book* has this to say about his names: -

“To the book in which you will embody our instructions,” continued the communicating intelligences, “you will give, as being our work rather than yours, the title of *Le Livre des Esprits (The Spirits' Book)*; and you will publish it, not under your own name, but under the *pseudonym* of ALLAN KARDEC.⁶ Keep your own name of Rivail for your own books already published; but take and keep the name we have now given you for the book you are about to publish by our order, and, in general, for all the work that you will have to do in the fulfilment of the mission which, as we have already told

⁵ Anna Blackwell 1875

⁶ An old Boston name in his mother's family

you, has been confided to you by Providence, and which will gradually open before you as you proceed in it under our guidance.”⁷

Many of the websites mentioning Kardec state incorrectly that the *The Spirits’ Book* was first published in 1857. In fact, a Revised Edition was issued in 1857.

Although Kardec’s 1856 book is generally referred to as *The Spirits’ Book* it had a preceding co-title heading of ‘*Spiritualist Philosophy*’. In that longer book title, the coupling of ‘Spiritualist’ with the introduction of the new word ‘*Spiritist*’ inevitably caused confusion. Rivail in opening his introduction has this explanation: -

FOR new ideas new words are needed, in order to secure clearness of language by avoiding the confusion inseparable from the employment of the same term for expressing different meanings. The words *spiritual*, *spiritualist*, *spiritualism*, have a definite acceptation; to give them a new one, in order to apply them to the doctrine set forth by spirits, would be to multiply the causes of amphibology, already so numerous. Strictly speaking, *Spiritualism* is the opposite of *Materialism*; every one is a Spiritualist who believes that there is in him something more than matter, but it does not follow that he believes in the existence of spirits, or in their communication with the visible world. Instead, therefore, of the words SPIRITUAL, SPIRITUALISM, we employ, to designate this latter belief, the words SPIRITIST, SPIRITISM, which, by their form, indicate their origin and radical meaning, and have thus the advantage of being perfectly intelligible; and we reserve the words *spiritualism*, *spiritualist*, for the expression of the meaning attached to them by common acceptation. We say, then, that the fundamental principle of the *spiritist theory*, or *Spiritism*, is the relation of the material world with spirits, or the beings of the invisible world; and we designate the adherents of the spiritist theory as *spiritists*.

In a special sense, *The Spirits’ Book* contains the doctrine or theory of *spiritism*; in a general sense, it appertains to the *spiritualist* school, of which it presents one of the phases. It is for this reason that we have inscribed the words *Spiritualist Philosophy* on its title-page.⁸

⁷ Taken from a re-print of *The Spirits’ Book* revised edition originally published in 1857. Free e-book available see: - http://www.spiritandscience.org/lesp_us.pdf

⁸ Ibid., ref. 6

SPIRITUALISM IN THE LIGHT OF THEOSOPHY

by
Countess Constance Wachtmeister

Introductory Note by Psypioneer:

Countess Wachtmeister was one of many Spiritualists who became a Theosophist; indeed her *Reminiscences of H.P. Blavatsky* (1893) are in Adyar T.S. regarded as almost canonical. The Countess is not so highly regarded, however, by Theosophists in the Judge tradition as she was a strong supporter of Annie Besant in the schism of the mid-1890s. She was also taken to task by Edward Maitland, the biographer of Anna Kingsford for her references to AK in the *Reminiscences*.

This lecture is of interest, not only for several incidents of high strangeness which it relates, but also for presenting the theory, once popular among Theosophists, that Modern Spiritualism was founded by the living and not by the dead. (cf Annie Besant on the Yucatan Brotherhood⁹)

Spiritualism in the Light of Theosophy

*A Stenographic Report of a Lecture delivered by Countess Wachtmeister
at the North-Western Spiritualists' Camp Meeting, July 23d, 1897*

It is with much pleasure that I find myself here on this platform, because in days gone by I have been a spiritualist, and have possessed the power of mediumship; I have passed through all the different stages of mediumship, and therefore feel that what I relate to you to-day is said from experience and knowledge, and not from hearsay. I have felt all the joys as well as the sorrows of mediumship, and having passed through these various stages I have entertained the greatest pity for those mediums who have been found out in trickery and fraud, because knowing the laws that govern mediumship, having been amongst mediums of all kinds and descriptions, I understand what are the temptations which lie in their way. When I was a spiritualist my great endeavor was to have a home formed for mediums – a home where they would be able to live in happiness, surrounded by beautiful scenery, exquisite flowers, lovely paintings and soul inspiring music. So that being surrounded by everything that is grand, both in nature and in art, they would then

⁹ <http://www.woodlandway.org/PDF/PP2.7July06.pdf> See also: - From Spiritualism to Theosophy by Francesca Arundale <http://www.woodlandway.org/PDF/2.3%20PSYPIONEERFoundedbyLesliePrice.pdf>

be able to give more satisfactory seances to the public than are being given today, when they are compelled to lead a life amongst all kinds of persons, a promiscuous environment where the magnetism is of a lower order and the vibrations inharmonious. These work upon the medium in a harmful way, his organism being so sensitive that he is like an instrument upon which play all the vibrations around him, each one fluttering against and setting his sensitive organism into commotion, swaying it either for good or for evil, so that perfect harmony and peace are absolutely necessary for mediums. I used my best endeavors to persuade rich persons interested in Spiritualism to form such a home – but selfishness met me on every side. What did they care – they paid their money for their seances, and then what mattered it to them what became of the unfortunate mediums; and so I failed.

HOMES FOR MEDIUMS

But let me put once more this project before you. How wise it would be here in America, where you have such a vast number of Spiritualists that you should entertain this idea and bring this proposition once more before the public. There are many wealthy persons who would perhaps be willing to help if you only placed the plan before them plainly and clearly, and then such a home might be founded – such a retreat formed, so that when you held your seances you would be certain that those seances would be under the best conditions. In San Francisco, several years ago, I mooted this idea to many Spiritualists, and they told me that they were contemplating building a large edifice that was to have various rooms, one for materialization, one for trance-mediumship, and so on; each room would be devoted entirely to one particular kind of mediumship; and it was also decided to have a large organ in the center of the Lyceum, so that during the seances, beautiful and grand music would be filling the air with harmonious melodies. When I passed through San Francisco this spring, I learned that the project was strengthening in the minds of the Spiritualists, and that they hoped soon to erect such an edifice.

Now this is good so far, but not enough, because you want a home for your mediums where they need not live in penury, often wanting a crust of bread, for such conditions actually have I found in my experiences, and it caused me many a pang to see the misery and poverty that surrounded those unfortunate beings; and when I found them tricking at seances and afterwards expostulated with them – this is the answer which they invariably gave me: "Are we to starve? When we give genuine seances so much vitality oozes out of us that during the daytime we are unable to do our work; we spend most of the hours in a sleepy, hazy condition; it is impossible for us to give materializing seances continually without feeling the injurious effect on the physical health, and utter prostration as a consequence." Therefore, if you love your Spiritualism, you should also care for your mediums, making their surroundings pleasant, agreeable, and above all, pure for them, and then would your seances be far more satisfactory than they are to-day.

PERSONAL EXPERIENCE

When mediumship first burst upon me, it came like a wonderful revelation, and I felt as if a divine inspiration had overshadowed me, so that I must go out into the world and proclaim this grand mystery to all who would listen to it. But before doing so, I felt that it was my duty to investigate and to know thoroughly what I was talking about. I gave up two years of my life entirely to the study, living, as I tell you, in the vicinity of the best mediums; traveling from country to country, so that I should gather together the experiences of different nationalities and thus discover if they coincided one with the other. I studied and read all on the subject that was to be found, for I considered that if Spiritualism could be demonstrated before the world as having no dross within it, and that it was a pure philosophy, then would I consecrate my life to it. Now how did I investigate? By very simple, but effectual, methods. I engaged a medium for a certain number of seances, say 10 or 12, paying him highly, so that he would give his services entirely to me during this series of seances. Then the group of persons around me were in perfect sympathy with the medium and myself, and no stranger was ever admitted, as it was necessary to keep the conditions of perfect harmony and not permit any other kind of magnetism to penetrate where the best sort of manifestations were desired. The results were extraordinary, and I will describe to you one seance, to show you what it is possible to obtain if proper conditions are adhered to.

MATERIALIZATION EXPLAINED

My test rules were the following: Pieces of paper sealed with my own seal across the doors, cupboards and windows, so that nobody could enter from without, and a box of matches in my pocket ready to be lighted at any moment. At this seance the medium lay on a sofa with a curtain before him, a gas-jet burning in the room with pale tissue paper before it, but every object clearly visible to the eye. After hearing the medium give a few sighs, the entity appeared and seated himself on a chair by my side for 20 minutes, as seen by the clock. I then with my scissors cut off a piece of his robe and watched it in my hand gradually fade away, and then as it vanished the entity remarked "that is a part of the vitality of the medium," and as he went on explaining how mediums lose their vitality at every physical seance, I looked earnestly in his eyes to catch every word he said. I suddenly saw those eyes disappear, and that was the only thing which proved – to me that the entity sitting near me was not a human being, for every time I gazed intently into those eyes, they seemed to vanish and only cavities remained; how, indeed, could they be materialized when we know that the eyes are the windows of the Soul? The entity now retreated, saying, "I am going to produce for you what has rarely been done at any seance. I will bring the medium into this room so that you may touch and feel him, and thus certify to the world the truth of materialization." He then disappeared behind the screen, and that tall figure brought out in his arms the medium who looked like a skeleton, all of the clothes hanging from him, so that taking his hand the flesh fell down in bags; then the entity spoke: "I have drawn the vitality from the medium. If you were suddenly to try to arouse him he would die, because I should not have time to restore the magnetism into his system." The medium was indeed a pitiable object, wrinkled and loose skin hanging about the skeleton form, all the vitality out of him. Looking then at the

entity, I asked him whether the whole of his body was materialized, and he replied: "It is not – the brain is empty – that is the case in nearly all materializations, the brain is a cavity, because were we to take the particles from the brain the medium would become insane. Therefore, we have to be most careful not to attempt to materialize the brain, but instead cover the brain either with a semblance of hair, or with some kind of headgear."

Finally the entity observed, "I must now put back the vitality of the medium or he will die," and then disappearing, the vitality was restored to the medium, who, when fully awake, was unconscious of what had occurred during his trance state, only felt himself thoroughly exhausted. I have also learned much in regard to materialization which probably may interest you. When a materialization has to be built up, it is usually the etheric body of the medium which serves as a basis; then electrical particles are drawn from the air and gathered together and placed on the etheric body. Then magnetism is drawn out of both the medium and the sitters, and with the magnetism the electrical particles are woven on to the etheric body. That makes a vehicle into which any entity steps, and as he enters, that vehicle being chameleon-like in nature and entirely plastic, he can shape it into any form he pleases and model the features he desires to produce.

Then again, the pictures so often shown at seances are manipulated in much the same way – the electrical particles are woven together – are coated with the magnetism of medium and sitter, and then on that surface is projected a likeness of any friend whom the sitters wish to see, the astral counterpart of that friend being portrayed in the aura of the sitter, or else the actual entity being present and lending himself to the operation.

Once, in the course of my investigations, I developed a medium for materialization. I was in Paris at the time, and I was asked, by one of the first mediums of to-day in that city, if I would hold a seance with her, for she had received a communication telling her that I had the power to develop her. Now her whole soul longed for such manifestation, for they had not a single medium with materializing capacity in Paris, and so she implored me to accede to her wish. I sat with her, and the very first evening, as I clasped her hand in mine, we being entirely alone, her hands became cold and clammy, and gazing upwards she said to me, "Look!" I turned to the corner of the room, and there I saw gradually growing a materialization. It was transparent, and afterward, when the medium showed the picture of her sister, I recognized it as the portrait of her relative. The medium then fell into a dead trance, and I, striking a light, watched this strange figure gradually fade away. I left Paris the next day, but the medium was opened for materialization, and afterwards when I read the French papers, I was amused to find that the medium was holding seances with many entities coming out around her.

The reason I have told you this is because I wish to explain to you that such seances can be held under test conditions. I made the medium solemnly promise that she would always keep to the conditions which I imposed upon her, namely, that she should sit in the center of the circle covered with drapery, so that her form would be invisible, a faint light in the room sufficient to render every object clear and distinct, with the visitors seated around her at a distance, thus no possible fraud could take place, for all

materializations would come only within the circle, and she would be safe from all temptation to impose on the public fraudulent manifestations.

Having pursued my investigations to the end of these two years, I came to the conclusion that mediumship for me was not desirable for the following reason:

I did not care to make myself passive, thus permitting entities of the other side to take possession of my body. I was never unconscious, so that during the whole time that I passed through these various stages of mediumship, I was as conscious as I am at the present moment.

But I reasoned thus: All the experiences given by these mediums (and I must have visited over fifty) are different, each experience seems to conflict with others of its kind, I can nowhere discover a law which binds the whole together, therefore it is impossible that this can be the whole of the truth; it is only a fragment – a very imperfect one – of a vast philosophy. There must be something beyond it. I knew well that what I received was genuine, but at the same time there was no coherence or coordinate system in Spiritualism; there was not a philosophy that could be placed before the world with such a coherence of thought that it would be accepted really by intelligent people.

RESULTS OF INVESTIGATIONS

What Spiritualism has most gloriously achieved is the showing to mankind that there is a state after death, a life beyond the physical and material plane, that intelligences are able to work the finer forces of nature and also that astral bodies are able to communicate with the living. You are able to draw your dead back again into consciousness on this plane; but is that wise, or is that right? You who do not think it desirable to go down into the slums or into the prisons to help to elevate the moral tone of the degraded people you can find in those conditions, will yet willingly accept visits from those same degraded entities, if they only come from the other side! There is a sort of unwholesome fascination about it. As one lady said to me – a lady of title in London who held her private seances: "Oh, such fun to-day! Why, we had that man (who has hanged last week), who had committed those horrible crimes; he came and we had such fun making him confess the details of his guilt." This revolted me! Such were not the grand thoughts which should inspire Spiritualists. I felt that such wonderful influx of power had been thrown down into Spiritualism that it should rise into something grander and wider, into something more noble; that all that kind of amusement should be discarded; that all those promiscuous seances, where you bring in every kind of person, every kind of magnetism, every sort of vibration and condition, should be put on one side; that laws should pervade the whole; that all Spiritualists should adhere to those laws, so that every kind of seance should be given under law; then there would be a possibility of having some kind of order and coherence. But traveling about from one country to another, as I did, I found that curiosity and amusement seemed to be the prevailing object and only basis for the study and manifestation of Spiritualism.

URNS TO OCCULTISM

From Spiritualism I turned to Occultism, and there I found that there was a method of developing the faculties which would enable any person to reach to the planes where the departed dwell. As I advanced in my studies, I found them so intensely interesting that I determined to give up Spiritualism, simply for the reason that I could get nothing more out of it. I had had test seances for the very highest spiritual knowledge, but these seances proved to be a kind of repetition of what was in the minds of the sitters. Though I tried in every possible way to get a coherent philosophy, I failed entirely to do so.

To banish my mediumship, I had to develop my will-power. Therefore I began, willing at every animate and inanimate object, until I had developed my will-power to that extent that I was able to close the door of mediumship, and from that time have never had a single phase of mediumship, because having once fastened that door I have kept it tightly closed.

I then began trying what effect this will power would have at seances. I visited one where little tables were scattered in the room, with people seated around them. It was a public room in Paris. An old man was talking to his son who had been dead for three years, and since that death the old man had received weekly communications from his boy. I went up to that table, directed my will power between him and his son and the table stopped; the old man was bewildered, he could not understand why his son should be silent, and at last the tears rolled slowly down his cheeks. I moved away. The table was still. The thought then came to me, "What right have I to stand between that man and his son? What right have I to impose my will upon another human being?" Then I removed my will-power, and in a few moments the table was running along merrily, and the old man was happy once more.

When alone, I pondered over this great problem and came to the conclusion that I was acting wrongly; that no human being has the right to exercise will-power over another human being. I looked upon it as a crime, and from that day dropped the physical will-power.

COMES TO THEOSOPHY

Later on, I came into Theosophy. A perusal of *Isis Unveiled* showed me that in that volume were many of the ideas which I had formulated during my investigation of Spiritualism. I joined the Theosophical Society in the hope of gaining knowledge, the same motive which had prompted me when I joined the Spiritualists. Then I began the same process of investigation in Theosophy, and soon I discovered that there was another kind of will-power, a spiritual will-power; that was the right kind of power to possess. And how is it to be obtained? Through selfabnegation, through denying yourself in all ways, through unselfishness and, lastly, through the killing out of desires, for every desire is a bond which binds you to earth. Imagine each desire as a hook, each hook fastened on to the things you long for, each hook attached to some worldly object. On every hook is a chain which winds around you binding you down to earth. With every desire that you can

overcome that hook unfastens, the chain loosens, drops from you and then does the spiritual force surge up. Therefore, every desire that you can overcome for earthly things, every hook that you can unfasten, liberates the spiritual power within you.

Later on, the origin and the purpose of the great Spiritualistic movement was explained to me. I learned why Spiritualism had come into the world.

THE WHEREFORE OF SPIRITUALISM

A group of Atlantean Adepts, who had brought with them the traditions of that older period of time and the knowledge of Occultism, as practiced in those early days, seeing how the world was rushing down into materialism with rapid strides, noticing how, as persons were developing their intellectual powers, the churches gradually lost their hold upon them, and so having nothing to cling to they were drifting down into materialism, the Lodge determined to stop this terrible downward course; and a spiritual influx was thrown down here into America, and then began the Rochester manifestations, these Adepts being living men, great souls from Atlantis incarnated into the bodies of North American Indians. It was they who brought forward this grand movement of Spiritualism.

But unfortunately Spiritualism has nowhere followed altogether the course it was intended to develop, because their object was that Spiritualism through its phenomena should show to the world that there is a life after death; that there are forces in existence finer and more subtle than the material forces; that there are other planes besides this physical plane. Thus far it has succeeded; but it was the intention also of these Adepts to pour out through Spiritualism the vast philosophy of the Wisdom Religion, and in this the failure comes. Why? Because the people were so delighted with the phenomena, so taken with the novelty of the manifestations, that they all rushed into phenomena at once; they wanted nothing more. They were able to communicate with their dearly beloved – what then did they care for philosophy?

And so these Adepts, finding the impossibility of turning the minds of people into more serious channels, quietly receded from the movement; but there is still the chance of making the conditions favorable so that these Adepts who were at the head of your Spiritualistic Society would return to you. They are glorious beings, advanced Adepts, but living in the human body. Why then should you not develop your mediumistic powers according to law, so that you might become instruments for these Adepts for work in your own country? Every medium has some of the inner faculties awakened, but every medium, more or less, is an irresponsible being, because not understanding the laws he does not know how to produce phenomena at will. No medium can enter on to the other planes with perfect knowledge of all the conditions of those planes – a little glimpse does not reveal all of that inner world's conditions. No medium has the power of entering on to the other planes with full intelligence, helping those that have gone beyond on the actual planes in which they find themselves; this requires the perfect knowledge.

WHITE LODGE IN THE HIMALAYAS

Later on, in 1875, a messenger appeared from the great White Lodge in the Himalayas: H. P. Blavatsky, the disciple of the Masters, was sent by those great teachers to stem the tide that was rushing towards materialism; she turned, as you will remember, first to the Spiritualists, hoping to get a certain number around her to listen to the grand philosophy which it was her duty to spread all over the world, but disappointment was the result, phenomena proved too attractive. The Theosophical Society was formed in New York in 1875, and H. P. Blavatsky gathered around from all sides those who were willing to listen to the grand truths which she had to expound. H. P. B. said to all those pupils who came to learn of her the inner truths of Occultism: "Never accept anything because I tell you it is true, but take what I tell you as a hypothesis on which to work; follow on the lines I will give to you, and then gradually you will be able to find for yourselves that what I tell you is true." Those pupils have gone on year after year, following the directions thus given to them, and, just as water dropping on to a stone will by degrees wear that stone away, so have these pupils been able by unwearied attention to develop all these wonderful psychical faculties with knowledge, so that now to-day, at any moment, they can enter on to the astral or heavenly planes – they can meet their comrades, can converse with them, as also with the souls of those who have passed through death and, returning to the earth, can translate that knowledge on to the physical brain. These persons can bring their different experiences together, and finding that they corroborate one another, they thus place before the public testimony that is worthy of consideration.

SPIRITUALISM AND THEOSOPHY

Now the difference between Spiritualism and Theosophy is, that in your Spiritualism you try to draw your loved ones down on to the physical plane of our existence, whereas, we in Theosophy endeavor to draw ourselves upwards on to both the astral and spiritual planes. You think that you benefit your friends by bringing them back to earthly conditions; we maintain that as the law of Evolution is continual progression, it is harmful to retard the progress of those who have left this earth by inducing them to return, because every manifestation here causes them to imbibe a certain amount of magnetic vitality which prevents their astral bodies from disintegrating as quickly as they otherwise would; and so Spiritualism retards instead of helping the loved ones.

Now, what is the work of these disciples of the Great Masters of Theosophy, who are thus able to enter on to these various planes at will? Their work and their privilege is to receive the souls of the dead. There is not one single soul that passes from this life that is not welcomed on the other side by living men and women. These souls look upon them as angels because they see them in their astral or spiritual bodies, but they are the living men and women of to-day; and they show those souls how to progress; they show them their true conditions; they comfort them and help them to reach on to higher planes. In *Lucifer*, the English journal of our Society, you will find an interesting article on this subject, called "Invisible Helpers," by Mr. Leadbeater; also in his books, *The Astral Planes and Devachan*, he gives you a detailed description of these higher planes. Would

it not be desirable for you to develop your psychic gifts in this way? If you could only develop your psychic faculties so that you had the command of them, then you would know that what you gave out to the world was correct and true. And then again, would it not be a wonderful privilege to help your loved ones on the other side?

On the physical plane, as I have already told you, go into your prisons, go into your slums, and help people while in their physical bodies; but if you want to help your friends in their astral bodies, then meet them on their own plane and render them there the services and help which you cannot give them here.

THE FOUR BODIES IN MAN

Theosophy teaches much that is interesting in regard to the four bodies in man, namely, the physical, the astral, the mental and the spiritual bodies. Now the physical body should be held as a holy temple for the one who wants to develop psychically. The body should be kept cleanly in every way, bathing should be a daily practice, so as to keep the pores of the skin perfectly pure and fresh. Then again, the matter of food is of great importance, because, as you build up your physical body with various atoms, so does it become either gross or ethereal. If you eat the grosser foods, such as flesh meats, then you build up your body with the grosser particles, and thus make it less susceptible to the higher influences. The great importance of this is that the astral body is built up and fed on the astral emanations of the food you take. Therefore, if animal flesh is consumed, the astral body is fed with the psychic emanations of the animals. All animals have passions, such as jealousy, anger, etc, and you draw into your own astral body those particular elements, it being the body of desire. The astral body contains all our emotions both for good and for evil. Therefore we should try not to augment the evil by assimilating into it the passions of the animal kingdom; instead, we should turn to the finer foods of nature so that purer emanations should help in the building of this ethereal body. Fruits are the best, and everything on which the sun shines, because the sun has a wonderfully vitalizing effect, so that those who are eager for the purest and best development should eat only fruit and nuts.

But this is only the first and primitive stage. The mental and moral have also to be developed; and how is the mental body to be built? The only process is through the thinking faculty. You build up this body exactly in accordance with your thoughts; so that if your thoughts are very trifling and only occupied with the every-day gossip of the world or trivial occupations, you build up a very imperfect mental body. Daily should you meditate and concentrate; daily should you set your mind on some noble ideal or virtue; and then, by slow degrees, will you be able to turn the current of your thoughts from trivialities and nonsense to higher themes and nobler conceptions of virtue. You may read a hundred books in a year and yet know nothing of what is contained in those books – it is only what you really assimilate which becomes your own. So it is far better to read only one good book and to have imbibed the essence of all that is noble and elevating within it, than to skim over many books leaving the jewels within them untouched.

Then the spiritual body, how does that grow? By every thought of devotion., every thought of worship, so that every aspiration towards the divine is augmenting the joy and blessing which will be experienced in the heavenly state; for the more a man longs for the spiritual while on earth, the more happiness awaits him on the other side. Theosophy has much to teach because it lays down plain rules to be followed in every-day life; it also explains how you should develop your faculties with understanding, and then it places before you the possibility of developing your inner psychic powers so that you may gain control over them.

I have spoken to you to-day with my heartfelt wishes that some of these words – of mine may find a responsive chord within your hearts, so that you will realize the truth of what I am telling you.

LIVING ADEPTS GUIDING SPIRITUALISM

When I learned that the Adepts who started the Spiritualistic movement were living men, a kind of revelation and explanation of certain experiences of my own came to me, proving to me that some phases of the movement were really guided by Adepts living in the physical body. In Europe I heard that there was a group of Spiritualists who obtained wonderful manifestations. They were seven in number, and these people had given up their lives entirely to Spiritualism; they no longer cared for the pleasures of the world – they cared only for the work in which they were engaged. I went to the house with a certain hesitation, not knowing how I, a total stranger, should be received when I asked them to admit me into their circle. What was my astonishment then when they welcomed me cordially, saying, "We have been expecting you!" On inquiring how this could be, they replied, "We are a band of people who belong to circles of seven all over the world."

The Head of our Society is a living man in America. We do not know him personally, but friends have met him in his physical body, and he has control over all these circles situated in different countries. He is aware of all that takes place in each circle, and directs the work to be done; each circle sits at the same hour, with thoughts and minds centered on the particular work in hand." They then informed me that in their own circle a member was able to leave his own body at will, and in his astral would visit another circle, take possession of the medium, and then would give teachings to that circle, so that the medium, instead of being controlled by a departed entity, was being used by a living man. This circle fell into disgrace, having abused power confided to them, and a telegram at once received from America ordered all meetings to be closed, and manifestations to cease. They were terribly despondent; having given up the pleasures of the world, their life seemed just a blank, and the trial was a severe one. They determined to sit all the same, thinking that perhaps the Head in America would not know; but it was useless – they could not obtain a single rap. One day another telegram arrived, saying, "A lady will call on you, give her everything, communications opened."

You may imagine the joy with which they received me. I came; I sat with them, and the manifestations were simply marvelous. I remained with them for a week. They

wanted me to join their band, but I said "No; my object is to study Spiritualism, and I can join nothing until I have finished that work."

They then offered to communicate with me at a distance, and I agreed, thinking it would be interesting. They then said, "Would you like Jonathan to visit you; he is the one whom the Head in America always uses when he wants to perform any great physical manifestation." In my innocence I replied, "Yes."

SOME OCCULT EXPERIENCES

I left them; I went to Switzerland, and, suddenly, in the middle of the night, I awoke hearing voices talk to me. I got up, wrote down what was said, and then afterwards, through letters verified that what I had heard was actually correct. One day a most awful experience came to me. I was in a Hotel about to retire to rest, when suddenly I heard a voice like the rumbling of thunder, and in a moment every piece of furniture was turned around. The noise was fearful, and the thought came to me – people in the Hotel will be alarmed. What shall I do? I exclaimed, "Jonathan, is it you?" and a deep rumbling "Yes" was the answer. I begged him with all my heart to go away. I heard steps coming up the stairs. I locked my door, but it was of no use. The door was opened and the Hotel-keeper came in: "What have you been doing with this furniture?" "Oh," I replied, "when I come to a Hotel I always like to change the furniture in my room. I hope it did not disturb you?" He looked at me and said, "Are your arms so strong?" "Oh, yes," I replied, "well developed muscles." He left me with these words: "I hope you will not move any more furniture, or we shall have to come again." I locked my door quickly, and I whispered to myself, if it comes again I shall be put into a lunatic asylum." I retired to rest, but did not sleep so afraid was I that Jonathan would return, and early the next morning I paid my bill and went away.

Now this corroborates the idea that your Society has been controlled by living Adepts. Again to prove to you how Occult Societies can be guided by living men. When I was in Germany I heard of a certain group of men and women, also seven in number (always strange that number seven), who were determined to sit for Spiritualistic manifestations, to develop into mediums; but the very first night they were informed that such was not to be their object; they were to develop their faculties, so that they would be able with knowledge to enter on all planes at will, and then they would be able in Germany to bring forward the Theosophical teachings, because the Germans, who are so proud of their philosophers and of their past records of philosophy, would be unwilling to accept Theosophy from England. Therefore the great Adepts of the White Lodge sent one of their messengers to that group of men and women, who could neither read nor write, with the exception of one boy who acted as scribe, and, by slow degrees, they developed the marvelous powers within them.

On acquainting Madame Blavatsky with these facts, she replied "I know those people; there is an Adept in Nuremburg who is developing them." She then begged me to go to Kempton, the town where they were living and verify for myself how wonderful were their great gifts and knowledge; also H. P. Blavatsky prophesied "that in time those men

will have royal personages as their pupils." This prediction, I have been told, has come true. The men and women who once lived in a factory have to-day a hundred pupils to whom they teach the laws of Occultism, such as we have it in our Theosophical Society, only they give out in Western terms that which has been given to us in Eastern phraseology. Thus is it proved, beyond a doubt, that living Adepts are controlling Occult Societies all over the world; but the great White Lodge of the Adepts in the Himalayas is the grand goal to which all, one day, will reach; and every true Adept looks with reverence and love to those divine Teachers and Helpers of humanity. Therefore, let each one, in whatever Society he may find himself, try to develop the powers that are lying latent within himself, so that as they blossom out into activity, he may work for the service of mankind, not only on this plane but on other and finer planes of being.

C. W.

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THE WORK OF Mrs HENRY SIDGWICK A PIONEER OF THE S.P.R

Taken from LIGHT August 6, 1936 page 501

Introductory Note by Psypioneer:

Mrs Sidgwick was not a popular name among Spiritualists. This was because of her skepticism about physical mediumship, of which an early sign was in the dispute about Eglinton in 1886 which led to the withdrawal of some Spiritualists from the SPR, and a century of cold war. Nevertheless, she was perhaps the most influential woman ever in psychical research, about whom everyone should know.

THE major part of the June [1936] number of the *Proceedings* of the S.P.R., was taken up by an admirable paper on the work of Mrs. Henry Sidgwick, by Miss Alice Johnson. The biography has been dealt with by others; but no one could have been better fitted to deal with the actual work of this remarkable woman than Miss Johnson, who for so many years worked, as her secretary, for and with Mrs. Sidgwick.

In her early youth, Miss Balfour (as, Mrs. Sidgwick then was) took a keen interest not only in science, but also in mathematics. "She once remarked to me," says Miss Johnson, "that mathematics especially appealed to her because she thought a future life would be much more worth living if it included intellectual pursuits; and I imagine the abstract nature of pure mathematics seemed to her especially adapted to a disembodied existence."

In 1874, Henry Sidgwick, who had been experimenting in Psychical Research at Cambridge, arranged for a series of sittings with friends in London; and it was on coming to join this circle at the house of her brother A. J. Balfour (afterwards first Earl of Balfour), that Miss Balfour, then still under thirty, showed at once her marked aptitude for investigation. "She, brought to it the indefatigable patience and perseverance that such work requires; she was a keen observer and ingenious in devising simple and effective tests . . . She had the same preference, for the simplest kind of apparatus for whatever work she was engaged in; although interested in all mechanical devices, she was never tempted to become so far interested in perfecting them as to lose sight of the ends they were intended to serve."

After her marriage to Henry Sidgwick in 1876, Mrs. Sidgwick became a whole-hearted co-operator in his work, fully sharing his opinion as to the inadvisability of experimenting with fraudulent Mediums- "Not because," to quote Mr. Sidgwick, "I hold that evidence involving trickery *cannot* be raised to a pitch that would exclude its possibility . . . but because an extended experience has led me to regard the chance of its being so raised as too slight to counterbalance the palpable evil of encouraging an immoral trade."

To this Miss Johnson adds: "I lay stress on the point, because I think the attitude of the Sidgwicks on it has often been misunderstood. They never maintained that because a Medium had cheated once, none of his performances could be genuine. But they condemned the tacit encouragement given to fraudulent Mediums, who know that no exposure would prevent their continuing to drive a profitable trade; and the consequent discouragement of honest amateurs."

In 1882, the S.P.R. was founded, with Henry Sidgwick as its first President, and much work was done by both husband and wife. They took a large share in preparing *Phantasms of the Living*, by Myers, Gurney and Podmore: "they corresponded with informants, interviewed witnesses, and were consulted at every stage by the authors. Mrs. Sidgwick also spent much time and labour over the proof-reading."

The first important paper in the *Proceedings* published under her own name was in 1885, *Phantasms of the Dead*, consisting of about 370 narratives (chosen out of a much larger number) mostly of apparitions. In it Mrs. Sidgwick observes that: "No single case, however remarkable, could prove conclusively the agency of the dead; only the *cumulative effect* of much good evidence could justify belief in it."

She was an indefatigable worker. In 1886, she wrote a comprehensive history of Spiritualism for the Ninth Edition of the *Encyclopædia Britannica*; and when, in 1888, Gurney died, a fresh burden was laid on those who valued and wished to preserve his work. Henry Sidgwick was made Editor of both the S.P.R. *Proceedings* and the S.P.R. *Journal*, which meant "that Mrs. Sidgwick did practically all the work," making herself responsible for all the proof-reading.

Her next important piece of work was a series of experiments in thought-transference carried out in Brighton, about which Miss Johnson writes: "As her assistant in this series, I was impressed by her unwearying patience through a long sequence of tedious experiments; she never seemed to relax her efforts, and never seemed bored. She treated all the persons concerned with the utmost consideration—one might almost say respect—as if they were human beings, not mere subjects for experiment; and they all became much attached to her and liked to talk to her in the intervals about their own affairs. I remarked how different was the atmosphere on a few occasions when one or other of her helpers was in charge."

"Then came a great change. In 1892, Miss Clough, first Principal of Newnham College, died. Mrs. Sidgwick had for many years been a Member of the Council, and now, by the earnest and unanimous desire of the Council, she and Mr. Sidgwick consented to give up their own home., in order that she might become Principal of Newnham—which office she held until 1910. "I fear," wrote her husband at the time, "that she may not now find time for the work of the S.P.R., for which I think her uniquely fitted—much more fitted than I am. If it turns out that she must sacrifice some of this work, I shall have to take her place; but my intellect will be an inferior substitute for this work." Her Secretary too expressed her doubts, and was told "Well, if you ever find me getting slack about the S.P.R., you must pull me up." But such fears were needless. Her unusual powers of concentration enabled her to work concurrently for the College and for the S. P. R. "Very few of those associated with her in either had any adequate realisation—many, I think, were entirely ignorant—of her interest in the other. This was partly due to her constant tendency to talk to people about *their* affairs, not her own, and her habit of appearing at liberty to attend to anything brought before her."

Writings, investigations, statistical calculations for the *Proceedings* continued, Sir Oliver Lodge, Myers and Richet had been experimenting with Eusapia Paladino, and in 1894, when this Medium was brought to Cambridge, Mr. and Mrs. Sidgwick found time to bring to bear on these experiments all their knowledge and rare powers of observation. "Every educated person," remarks Miss Johnson, in this connection, "assumes the fallibility of human observation and human memory; but it is not easy to make full allowance for it till one has discovered by practical experience how far one's own fallibility goes in both respects." In the end, Mr. and Mrs. Myers, the Sidgwicks and Miss Johnson were convinced of fraud; though Myers and Sir Oliver Lodge retained their belief in the earlier series.

Later on, it was the American Medium, Mrs. Piper, whose trance work was being investigated, and this lady stayed for some time in the home of Mr. and Mrs. Sidgwick.

Many of the "Piper Reports" in the *Proceedings* were written by Mrs. Sidgwick, in the midst of all her work for the College. "She studied the details, both published and unpublished, with extreme care, and herself attended many of the sittings . . . She accepted the conclusions of most of the investigators that there was no evidence of fraud; but, with her habitual caution, she thought that so tremendous a conclusion as proof of communication with the dead could be based on the study, however prolonged, of a single medium"

The year 1900 brought the great tragedy of Henry Sidgwick's death, and, with her usual courage, Mrs. Sidgwick not only carried on her own work, but devoted herself to completing as far as possible her husband's literary schemes. She brought out new editions of his works, a volume of his *Miscellaneous Essays*, and also wrote a *Memoir of him*. Automatic writing, cross-correspondence and book tests likewise engaged her close attention, we are told; until one is tempted to wonder whether she ever allowed herself any time for sleep.

In 1907, she undertook the office of Hon. Secretary of the S.P.R., which she retained till 1932.

For two years, 1908 and 1909, she was President; but she could only be induced to give one Presidential address, "for her forte lay rather in the detailed examination and digestion of a mass of material than in a general survey of a wide miscellaneous field.

Her literary output was prodigious. She was constantly writing in reply to and confutation of the criticisms of Psychological Research in one of its many branches made by foreign or American scientists; and she published an important *Contribution to the Study of the Psychology of Mrs. Piper's Trance Phenomena*, which occupies the whole of Vol. XXVIII. of the *Proceedings*.

Finally, in 1918, Miss Radcliffe-Hall and Lady Troubridge drew Mrs. Sidgwick's attention to the work of Mrs. Osborne Leonard, with the result that in 1921 she published *An Examination of Book-Tests obtained in Sittings with Mrs. Leonard*." Mrs. Sidgwick analysed about 532 cases, some of which are cited in full. On the whole, she considered they afforded a *prima facie* case for clairvoyance, with a suggested close connection between telepathy and clairvoyance; e.g., "If telepathy (from the sitter) operates in the finding of the book, and the perception of its surroundings, it might facilitate the clairvoyant perception (by Feda) of the inside of the book which sometimes follows."

Meanwhile, new editions of standard works were being prepared, elaborate statistics were being worked out, and regular papers being written and made ready for publication. Especially was this being done on the subject of Telepathy, and 1924-when the writer was already 79 years of age-produced her "*Report on Further Experiments in Thought Transference carried out by Professor Murray*."

"In 1932, the year of the Society's Jubilee, Mrs. Sidgwick was elected by the Council President of Honour. It was then that she wrote the *History of the S.P.R.*; and its concluding sentence, that, upon the evidence before her, she herself was 'a firm believer both in survival and in the reality of communication between the living and the dead ' must be fresh in the memory of all of us.

"As long as her strength permitted, she went up to London for S.P.R. meetings, and wrote occasional book-reviews and minor articles. She read zealously all the Society's publications, as well as any important new book on psychical subjects . . . and studied carefully the proofs of articles for the *Proceedings* . . . Her continued openness to new conceptions was remarkable. She used to say, 'If this is so, we may have to revise our ideas ' . . . There are, one hopes, many people of whom one could say the same, but not, I think, many who, like her, are always looking out eagerly for new facts-whatever they may lead to-whose intellectual curiosity remains insatiable up to the end of so long a life. She died on February 10th, 1936, within a month of her ninety-first birthday.

"Yet it must not be supposed that the essence of her nature was pure intellect. She valued human beings far more than ideas, or even than the causes for which she would spend herself. Her own standard seemed above the reach of ordinary mortals, but she had an infinite tolerance and charity for other people's weaknesses, and a most generous appreciation of their capacities and achievements."

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Victoria Helen McCrae Duncan (née MacFarlane)

November 25th 1897 – 6th December 1956

In our previous issue, *Helen Duncan, 1895, 1897 or 1898 – 1956*¹⁰ we asked which year Helen Duncan was born? - and noted the wide variety of dates given in different sources. We are indebted to Dr Malcolm Gaskill¹¹ for providing us with what we trust will prove the definitive evidence- a copy of Mrs Duncan's birth certificate. He also offered a tip to help remember the year- it was 1897, the year of Queen Victoria's Jubilee, and Helen's other name was Victoria.



1861-1965

Extract of an entry in a REGISTER of BIRTHS

Registration of Births, Deaths and Marriages (Scotland) Act 1965

204700

No.	1 Name and surname	2 When and where born	3 Sex	4 Name, surname, and rank or profession of father, Name, and maiden surname of mother Date and place of marriage	5 Signature and qualification of informant, and residence, if out of the house in which the birth occurred	6 When and where registered and signature of registrar
44	Victoria Helen McCrae Macfarlane	1897, November Twenty-Fifth 3 1/2 pm. a.m. 9th Mair Street Callander	F.	Archibald Macfarlane Slater Isabella Macfarlane m.s. Kattray 1890 - November 14 th Perth	Isabella Macfarlane Mother	1897, December 15 th At Callander Robert Fulton Registrar.

The above particulars are extracted from a Register of Births for the Parish of Callander
in the County of Perth
Given under the Seal of the General Register Office, New Register House, Edinburgh, on 5 April 2000

The above particulars incorporate any subsequent corrections or amendments to the original entry made with the authority of the Registrar General.

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This extract is evidence of an event recorded in a register of births. It is NOT evidence of the identity of the person presenting it.

RXB6(C)
1/2000

¹⁰ Page 242: - <http://woodlandway.org/PDF/PP4.10October08..pdf>

¹¹ Author of "Hellish Nell - Last of Britain's Witches", Fourth Estate, London 2001

THE ORIGINS OF “LIGHT”

It is not necessary to emphasise the importance of LIGHT in our area of studies. It is the oldest psychic journal anywhere in the world, with a consistently high standard of journalism. Nevertheless its history has not been much explored. Only recently, for example, has it been realised how much it was helped by the generosity of Sir Arthur Conan Doyle.

The newspaper was brought to birth by the genius of Edmund Dawson Rogers, who soon after conceived the SPR, and was then a founder of the LSA. He gave this account in “Life And Experiences of Edmund Dawson Rogers reprint from Light (1910c) p.44 -45”, looking back at the problems of the British National Association of Spiritualists

The fact was that a great mistake had been made in appointing so large a Council; it numbered about fifty. The Association was broken up in consequence, and was merged into a society which was called ‘The Central Association of Spiritualists,’ but the discouragement of the recent collapse was too great, and after a short time this society also was disbanded. During the heated discussions which had taken place in the Council of the British National Association, it was felt that the ‘Spiritualist’ - the journal which was regarded as the organ of the Association - had not fairly represented it.

In consequence of the dissatisfaction about the reports given in the ‘Spiritualist,’ a gentleman temporarily in London, Mr. J. G. Meugens, of Calcutta, whose name will be remembered in connection with his very wonderful experiences with Mr. Eglinton, suggested to me that a new paper should be started, to be the organ of the British National Association. I at once communicated with a number of friends throughout the country, and with their assistance ‘Light’ was started on January 8th, 1881. The ‘Spiritualist’ soon afterwards disappeared.

I had from the first the business control of ‘Light,’ but Mr. J. S Farmer was for a time the editor, and after him Mr. Stainton Moses (‘M.A., Oxon.’). Mr. Stainton Moses died in September, 1892, and Mr. W. Paice, M.A., took the editorship. He, however, also died shortly- afterwards, and so the conduct of the paper fell into my hands altogether.

Exactly who edited LIGHT in the early days remains obscure, and Dr Eric Dingwall contributed an article “ Light and the Farmer Mystery” to JSPR in the paper’s centenary year of 1981 to try to clarify the role of John Stephen Farmer.

It is also puzzling that Rogers makes no mention of a small monthly publication “Spiritual Notes” which BNAS paid to publish its news in the years just before LIGHT was launched. In the final, December 1880 issue, “Spiritual Notes” commented (p.100).

“LIGHT”-A NEW WEEKLY JOURNAL IN THE INTERESTS OF SPIRITUALISM

We announce in another page the completion of arrangements for the establishment of a new journal to be published weekly, under the title of "LIGHT," and which will be devoted to the furtherance of the cause whose interests we ourselves have, to the best of our ability, consistently striven to promote. That "LIGHT" will do our work far more efficiently than we have been able to do, we cannot for a moment doubt, and therefore no alternative is left to us but to acknowledge that our own mission is at an end, and to quietly retire. With this issue SPIRITUAL NOTES will cease.

When in July, 1878, we commenced the work which we have carried on to the present time, our object was to assist somewhat in giving a higher tone to Spiritualistic Journalism than that which had hitherto characterised it in this country, and to sustain the movement by fair and impartial reports of its proceedings. We do not pretend that in these purposes we have fully succeeded. But, at least, we have tried, and have no consciousness of having ever been swayed by special favouritism on the one hand or by bigotry and intolerance on the other. The reward of our favours has been found in the valued friendships we have formed, and in the very kind and generous spirit in which our efforts have been supported. For these we shall ever be grateful.

Our own work being done we recommend "LIGHT" to our readers in the fullest confidence that it will render such service to the cause of Spiritualism as no monthly journal could possibly perform. It will be able to give all the intelligence connected with the movement fully and promptly; and it will possess an advantage which SPIRITUAL NOTES never had, in the fact that it will have money, influence, and literary talent at its back.

Our closing words are an expression of hearty wishes for the success of "LIGHT," and of a hope that every one of our readers will at once secure shares in the new company, and obtain as many subscribers as possible for the new paper. If well started success will be certain!

It may be that the author of this editorial farewell was Rogers himself. "Spiritual Notes" also carried in the December 1880 issue (p.95) an advertisement for shares in the new company which would publish LIGHT.

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It is also believed that a very moderate investment of Capital in the manner which will be proposed, will not only be attended with most advantageous results in regard to the objects aimed at, but will afford a good, pecuniary return to the Shareholders.

The Immediate Object will be the starting and Sustaining of a Weekly Journal, to be entitled "LIGHT"; devoted primarily to the collecting and recording of the facts and phenomena of Spiritualism and the exposition of the Philosophy of Life and Mind; and secondarily to the discussion of such allied topics as are now occupying the attention of men of advanced thought.

The Directors are gratified with the promises of support which have already been given them, and are prepared to receive applications for the few remaining Shares of the first issue.

No contracts have hitherto been entered into by or on behalf of the Company.

The Memorandum, and Articles of Association may be seen and copies obtained at the Offices of the Company.

Forms of Application for Shares may be obtained from Mr. E. T. Bennett, The Mansion, Richmond, London.



Elsewhere it was stated in the same issue of "Spiritual Notes":

LIGHT:

A JOURNAL DEVOTED TO THE HIGHEST INTERESTS OF HUMANITY BOTH HERE
AND HEREAFTER.

Will be published on January 8th, 1881,
BY THE
Eclectic Publishing Company, Limited,

The FIRST NUMBER of a NEW WEEKLY JOURNAL
under the above TITLE

There is a large class of people who believe in a world which they call "the present," and who assert that no knowledge of any other is attainable.

There is another large class of people who believe also in a world they call "the next," and who also assert that no other knowledge of it is attainable than that which has been handed down to them.

There is yet another class of people-usually known as "Spiritualists "-who believe in the existence of facts and phenomena, accessible to those who will seek for them, demonstrating the existence of another world than the present, and who believe that, on the basis of these facts, a science and a philosophy may be built up furnishing a key to the problems of Life and Mind, and uniting both these worlds in one harmonious whole.

A pressing necessity exists for the establishment of a high-toned and impartial Weekly Journal, devoted primarily to the collecting and recording of these facts and to the exposition of this philosophy, and, secondarily, to the fair discussion of such other allied topics as are now occupying the attention of men of advanced thought.

These subjects have not yet found a representative in the Press of that literary excellence which their rapid growth among the most intelligent classes of the community imperatively demands. "LIGHT" will aim at supplying this defect.

For the Editorial Department of the new Journal, and for the supply of original matter, the assistance of experienced journalists and of many of the ablest writers connected with Spiritualism has been secured. In the Intelligence Department the news will be full and complete. In both departments special care will be taken that the paper shall be conducted on the strictest principles of an honourable impartiality, recognising heartily as co-workers all who are striving to demonstrate the reality and importance of the truths

to which it is devoted, and all who are endeavouring, in any way, to further the highest interests of Humanity here and hereafter.

LIGHT

Will be published weekly, on Saturdays, commencing on January 8th, 1881, and will consist of Twelve Pages, fo. fcp., good paper and clear type.

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Although we leave this question for the moment, readers will want to know what became of the Eclectic Publishing Company, and how it came about that ownership of LIGHT passed to the LSA..

Please note that due to Psypioneer's library refurbishment the disruption has held up the concluding part of: - Mr. Fred. Evans arrival at Brisbane which will be published in the New Year.

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'Six Lectures on Theology and Nature' By Emma Hardinge first published in 1860. **Re-Published by Psypioneer** @ £14.95 + pp. ISBN: 978-0-9556539-0-2

See Psypioneer 3.6 issue: - <http://www.woodlandway.org/PDF/PP3.6June07..pdf>

'Magical Spiritualism - a warning address given in 1878 to mark thirty years of Modern Spiritualism', Andrew Jackson Davis. Published May 2000 by Psychic Pioneer Publications, this is a small booklet 7pp £2.00 incl. U.K., postage (please add 20% for airmail).

'The Mystery of Stainton Moses an address given in 1992 on the centenary of his death' Leslie Price Published December 1999 by Psychic Pioneer Publications, this is a small booklet 8pp £2.50 Inc U.K., postage (please add 20% for airmail).

'Occultism and Spiritualism – a book review by, Stainton Moses originally published under the pseudonym M.A. (Oxon). Published 1999 by Psychic Pioneer Publications, this is a small booklet 10pp £2.50 Inc U.K., postage (please add 20% for airmail).

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Paul J. Gaunt