

# PSYPIONEER JOURNAL

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# 70<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the passing of Sir Oliver Joseph Lodge

12 June 1851 – 22 August 1940

## Introductory note by Trevor Hamilton:

**From the Radio Times, 25. 7. 2010:**—‘Oliver Lodge is a forgotten figure from the Edwardian era. The unacknowledged inventor of the wireless before Marconi, he was also a dabbler in psychic phenomena and tried desperately to communicate with his dead son Raymond, using séances’.

Much of the above blurb (advertising a Radio 3 drama on Lodge’s efforts to communicate with his deceased son) conveys a completely false impression of Lodge and gives absolutely no hint of the man’s public and private stature, particularly in the first third of the Twentieth Century. I had just come back, coincidentally, from Cambridge, where I had been spending much time immersed in Lodge’s psychical research correspondence, when I read the programme note. It was both irritating and unfair to the memory of a very great man.



True, he is forgotten today, but the dismissive phrase ‘a dabbler in psychic phenomena’ and the emotionally loaded ‘tried desperately to communicate’ imply a lack of depth and balance in this aspect of his work. This was far from the case. His researches into Mrs Piper and Eusapia Palladino were carefully conducted and in both cases he could genuinely feel vindicated by the work of later researchers, previously highly sceptical—Hodgson (Piper), Everard Feilding and colleagues (Palladino).

In addition, he held the Society of Psychical Research together after it suffered the double blow of the loss of Sidgwick and Myers in quick succession. He became the most distinguished and respected communicator of the results of psychical research during his lifetime and wrote extensively on the subject trying to create a coherent metaphysic, based on the ether, which, he felt, made intellectual sense, and was not hostile to Religion or Science. In fact, in 1930, he topped a reader’s poll (along with Shaw, Birkenhead and Churchill), organised by the *Spectator*, as one of Britain’s best brains. He also spoke regularly on the radio, displaying the same qualities of clarity, enthusiasm and conviction that made him such a great lecturer (and incidentally a splendid reader of novels and plays in private to family and friends).

Having waded through many of the literally thousands of letters Lodge wrote and received on psychical research, I was struck by the courtesy, kindness and thoroughness of his responses. He was convinced of survival long before the death of his son in World War One and he did his best to communicate that conviction calmly and sensibly, without evangelizing excessively or forcing his views on others. He was, in fact, as keen to expose fraudulent mediums as Houdini.

He moved in the highest literary, political, scientific and social circles and was in close contact with three Prime Ministers (Balfour, Lloyd George and MacDonald) as well as figures like Bernard Shaw, Conan Doyle, the scientist Arthur Eddington and the clergyman Bishop Barnes. In private, he was kindly if sometimes a little forbidding, and – the acid test of a human being – he treated those employed by him and those not his social equals (in that deferential age) with kindness and respect. The American medium Mrs Piper was very appreciative of the way he looked after her, as were his secretaries Nea Walker and (later) Helen Alvey whom he virtually treated as his own daughters.

Forgotten, maybe, by those sadly, without a historical perspective. But dabbler? Never. He was great in stature (6' 4'), great in his contemporary achievements, and above all, great in his dedication to the cause of psychical research and in his essential humanity.

[Trevor Hamilton is the author of "*Immortal Longings: FWH Myers the Victorian Search for Life after Death*" (2009). Reviewed in *Psypioneer* June 2009<sup>1</sup> Trevor Hamilton is currently writing a book on the Cross-Correspondences].

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## NEW LIGHT ON THE LODGE TEST MESSAGE

**Note by Leslie Price:**—Sir Oliver Lodge, who died in 1940, left a posthumous test more subtle than the kind familiar to survival researchers. A detailed report of the results was published in *JSPR* 38 1955-6. A convenient summary appears in Paul Beard's book "*Survival of Death*" (1966). p.56

Sir Oliver Lodge made it known that his test was concerned with some fact about himself which he had never told to a living soul. Cautiously he added that he would be in no hurry to transmit it after his death. The test was a complicated one; he deposited eleven envelopes with the S.P.R. and five with the London Spiritualist Alliance.\* The Myers envelope had depended upon a single trial; once his envelope had been opened, the test could never be attempted again. The heart of Lodge's message was contained in two identical

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<sup>1</sup> Volume 5, No. 6 pages, 157-161— *Myers is back: - book review – Leslie Price:*—  
<http://woodlandway.org/PDF/PP5.6June09.pdf>

envelopes, one at the S.P.R. and one at the L.S.A.; these would be opened last of all. The contents of the earlier envelopes were to perform a double task; that of giving preliminary hints which might stimulate the memory of the posthumous Lodge if this should prove sluggish, and that of helping to eliminate faulty early messages which might be erroneously claimed as coming from him. At later stages of the experiment some of these hints were made known to sitters and mediums. No medium was able to produce a clear-cut account of what the final envelopes, when opened, were found to describe—a lifelong habit of Lodge's of drumming his fingers in a certain way to follow a musical tune. The best attempt was made by Jordan Gill, a well-known professional medium, and suggested a degree of partial and imperfect apprehension of the contents. As a test, it certainly failed. Its method was criticised by researchers on the grounds that it would be likely to result in attempts which would prove incomplete and would allow room for differences in judgment as to their degree of accuracy, as proved to be the case. The test did not overcome the difficulty that the contents of the final envelopes might be read clairvoyantly. It was also thought that the hints in the earlier envelopes might eventually enable the substance of the final message to be partly guessed, or even rationally inferred.

\* Now known as the College of Psychic Science.<sup>2</sup>

This prompted a letter from Mrs Denise Iredell, the daughter of Muriel Hankey, and later chair of the Survival Joint Research Committee, on which Paul had also served, here reprinted by permission with the addresses deleted.

The presence of Denise at some of the test sittings was not recorded in the JSPR article. But of course as an experienced sitter and transcriber (like her mother who worked at both BCPS and LSA/CPS) she would be a natural addition to the team. (In the same way, one fears, Victorian reporters of séances may have omitted to state which staff were in the house.)

It seems reasonable to suppose that the psychic sensitivity of Denise herself added significantly to the success of the test sittings at which she was present.

Helen Alvey had been secretary to Sir Oliver, and it is fitting that we remember her at the same time as remember Sir Oliver. Trevor Hamilton told *Psypioneer* "Helen Alvey was a hugely loyal custodian of his papers during the war and refused to destroy some of his correspondence when it was suggested she should."

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<sup>2</sup> From 1955; the name changed again in 1970 to The College of Psychic Studies:—  
<http://www.collegeofpsychicstudies.co.uk/>

**The letter from Denise Iredell to Paul Beard follows:**

Putney Heath,  
London, SW15 3SZ.

21st June 1985

Dear Paul,

I am ashamed to admit that I had never looked at your “Survival of Death” until I picked it from my shelves a week or so ago! As I have a mass of other reading on hand I have not had the opportunity to progress far into your book, but look forward to doing so shortly.

What has surprised me is your comment about the Lodge Posthumous Test (p. 56) and that “the best attempt was made Jordan Gill.” As you know, I was present at 50% of the L.S.A. sittings—and, of course was present at the opening of the envelopes after the conclusion of the test sittings. Somewhere I hope I still have a set of the transcripts and I do not remember much of their contents. However, I have three indelible memories, none of which relates to Freddie J.G., although I recall being impressed by some of his work in other tests.

Without doubt, in my opinion, Thirza Smith was most closely in touch with Sir Oliver, and I think my mother shared this view.

Almost incessantly in the Lodge Test sittings which I attended with Thirza as medium, she drummed her fingers, as if fingering out little tunes. (In fact, her action was most irritating in its repetitions) I do not recall F.J.G. doing this at all, but he may have done so when I was not present.

Several times Thirza seemed to be occupied in her body by Sir Oliver. You, will recall that she was stout and did not seem tall, but where she was allegedly under the control of Sir Oliver and she stood up she seemed taller and ‘different’. The image of her flashed into my mind’s eye when, at a much later date, I visited Brodie Lodge and took a photograph of the portrait of Sir Oliver. I was enormously aware of the sense of Sir Oliver in the seance room on about three occasions, notably when Helen Alvey also attended. On that occasion Thirza (in trance, as always in those sittings) took hold of Miss Alvey in a *fond* paternal manner, saying “My beloved pen.” Not until afterwards did Miss Alvey reveal that Sir Oliver had always privately addressed her as “My pen.” I know this is not evidential from the test point of view, but, having witnessed and experienced it, I can tell you that it gave credence to everything!

Having said that I remembered vividly three things about the Lodge sittings, I had better confess the third, although I am not very proud of it! Quite frankly, I had been getting very fed up with the protracted nature of the experiment and the seemingly

interminable typing. At that time we had a wire recorder, and periodically the wire would snap and coil into a tangled mass, which took ages to untangle. (Fortunately, the tangling did not damage the speech recorded at the sitting.) One afternoon, when I seemed conscious of Sir Oliver's presence in our kitchen, and was on my own, I said aloud: "Oh, Sir Oliver, I beg you, please stop these sittings!" At the very next sitting, he did, and no more were held!

You have, I know, many commitments and no time for extra correspondence, but, if ever you feel you can spare a few moments to let me know what you think of my reaction, I'd be tremendously interested. It may be, of course, that the name Jordan Gill on p. 56 was an error. I know how names can sometimes be substituted accidentally, especially if galley proofs are being chopped up and stuck together again. For instance, I was 99% sure that one envelope was wrongly called in that Lodge test! However, it didn't affect the outcome, and no doubt someone corrected it.

I hope you are keeping reasonably well. The SJRCT plods on, but its workings are as complex as its members!

Yours sincerely,

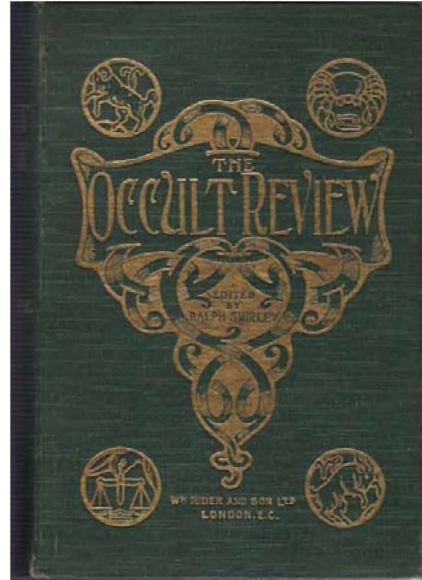
Paul Beard Esq.,

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# THE HONOURABLE RALPH SHIRLEY

30<sup>th</sup> December 1865 – 29<sup>th</sup> December 1946

Born in Oxford, England, educated at Winchester and New College, Oxford University, brother of the eleventh Earl Ferrers and a direct descendant of Robert Devereux, Earl of Essex.<sup>3</sup> Ralph Shirley, in 1905 became the founder editor of *The Occult Review* which he was to edit for the next 21 years. *The Occult Review* set a high standard as a monthly magazine devoted to the “Investigation of Supernormal Phenomena and the Study of Psychological Problems”.



The image that heads this article is the bound cover of Vol. IV July-December 1906. It can be noted on the cover that it was published by William Rider & Son who in 1908 took over the occult publisher—Philip S. Wellby.<sup>4</sup> Rider’s Editorial Director was Shirley and, under his direction, Rider started publishing a collection of esoteric titles.

Later Rider becoming one of the major British publishers of spiritualistic literature, Shirley was associated with Rider from 1892-1925.

*The Occult Review* underwent name changes during its life, 1905–1951. From September 1933 to October 1935 it was titled *The London Forum* (incorporating “*The Occult Review*”). The last monthly issue was October 1935. The issues were then changed to quarterly, starting January 1936 until April 1938 and it was titled *The Occult Review* (incorporating the “*London Forum*”) Then from July 1938 it reverted back to *The Occult Review* with no reference to the *London Forum* and continued as a quarterly. The final two volumes, for 1949-1951, appeared as *Rider’s Review*. *The Occult Review* published an extensive wide range of material. The impressive index for years 1905–1948 is available on line<sup>5</sup> - also available are the various covers between 1905- 1948.<sup>6</sup> The Spring issue 1947, carries the obituary of its founder.

Shirley also edited: *The Horoscope* under the pseudonym Rollo Ireton; he was editor of this publication from 1902-1904, prior to starting *The Occult Review*. Apart from an interest in Astrology, Shirley also showed a keen interest in Astral Projection, in his *Occult Review*

<sup>3</sup> [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Earl\\_Ferrers](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Earl_Ferrers)

<sup>4</sup> Wellby was a contributor to *The Occult Review*

<sup>5</sup> <http://www.austheos.org.au/indices/OCCREV.HTM>

<sup>6</sup> <http://photos.bapho.net/OccultReviews/>

he had published early works by two pioneers in this field; Hugh G. Callaway<sup>7</sup> and Sylvan J Muldoon,<sup>8</sup> Later he published his own contribution:—*The Mystery of the Human Double: The Case for Astral Projection*.<sup>9</sup>

Shirley was vice president of the International Institute for Psychic Investigation (IPI).<sup>10</sup> This was an amalgamation of The British College of Psychic Science (BCPS) and The International Institute for Psychical Research (IIPR). There appears to be very little online information on these Institutions, but we hope to enlarge this shortly.<sup>11</sup>

Web site information also shows that Shirley from 1943 to 1944 was chairman of *LIGHT*, but suffered from failing health and was obliged to retire.<sup>12</sup>

The article that follows gives us some insight into Ralph Shirley and his inspiration for the creation of *The Occult Review*.

Paul J. Gaunt.

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<sup>7</sup> *Astral projection: A record of out-of-the-body experiences* by Oliver Fox (pseudonym of Hugh G Callaway, 1885-1949) Rider 1939. Shirley first published Callaway's early papers on astral projection in *The Occult Review*. E.g., 1920 April p.190—The Pineal Doorway—A Record of Research—Oliver Fox, 1920 May p251—Beyond the Pineal Door—A Record of Research—Oliver Fox etc.

<sup>8</sup> *The Projection of the Astral Body* by, Sylvan J. Muldoon and Hereward Carrington. Published by Rider & Co, London February 1929. [published after Shirley had sold the publishing firm]

<sup>9</sup> Ralph Shirley published 1938.

<sup>10</sup> The British College of Psychic Science (BCPS) was founded in 1920 by Mr. Hewat McKenzie. The International Institute for Psychical Research (IIPR) was founded in 1934 by Mrs. Dawson Scott and others see: Volume 1. No.17 pages 198-207:—*International Institute for Psychical Investigation, by Leslie Price*:—<http://woodlandway.org/PDF/17.PSYPIONEERFoundedbyLesliePrice.pdf>. In December 1938 the International Institute for Psychic Investigation (IPI) was formed by the amalgamation of the above societies.

<sup>11</sup> <http://www.answers.com/topic/international-institute-for-psychic-investigation>

<sup>12</sup> <http://www.answers.com/topic/ralph-shirley>

# THE STORY OF *THE OCCULT REVIEW*

By Ralph Shirley.

*Psychic Science*<sup>13</sup>

TIMES change and we ourselves change with the changing times. So sang the Latin poet of his own days, and what he said is even more true of ours. The mental outlook of each fresh generation differs ever more and more widely from that of its predecessor. In science, in politics, in religion, the discussions and disputes which caused such heartburnings forty or fifty years ago no longer interest us. We feel, perhaps, almost equally out of sympathy with the champions of either standpoint. They leave us cold, as the phrase goes, because they appear to us to have been merely beating the air. The intellectual outlook of the time has shifted so greatly that the ardour with which the supporters of opposing theories attacked each other in those days seems well-nigh incomprehensible. Each was so sure of his position, and each, as it appears to us now, looked at the issues under discussion from such a narrow and exclusive viewpoint. Even where one party was undoubtedly in the right they seem to us to-day to have been defending truisms which we can hardly conceive of as being otherwise than self-evident. It is a fact, no doubt, that there are parts of the world where intellectual progress "halts on palsied feet," but when we read of the antics of Monkeyville in the daily press we seem to be perusing some record of religious persecution in the Dark Ages. The intellectual mind of to-day can scarcely realize that similar incidents could be paralleled in England even within the last half century, so completely have we turned our backs on the mental strifes that agitated our grandparents. A new generation has arisen with a new outlook upon life. Fresh interests have come to the fore, fresh problems confront us to-day and we are fighting new battles in which we are faced by new foes. The triumphant materialistic science of the Nineteenth Century is an exploded hypothesis in the eyes of the advance guard of the science of to-day, and orthodox Christianity is openly mocked at and ridiculed from within the ramparts of its own citadel of St. Paul's.

In the meantime new movements have come to birth, outside the scope both of religion and science, as hitherto understood, which, while they ignore accepted beliefs and make light of the battle cries and shibboleths of yesterday are breaking fresh ground and boldly advancing upon untrodden ways. Certain of these movements, while making war on stereotyped orthodoxies, would call back the old truths to redress the balance of the new. They would rehabilitate them by explaining them in terms of modern thought and applying them to the needs of the present day. They would, in short, demand recognition in the name of science for truths which science has rejected as superstition. Others would preach old gospels in a new garb or strive to eliminate the evils of our complex modern

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<sup>13</sup> *Psychic Science*—Quarterly Transactions of the British College of Psychic Science (BCPS) Vol. IV. No. 4. January, 1926 pages 252-256.

civilization by a return to a simpler and more healthful, because a more natural, mode of life.

In the forefront of the former class is the attempt to apply scientific methods to the mysterious problems of the Unseen World. Under this heading, in addition to psychical investigation, spiritualism, theosophy, astrology, as well as hypnotism and suggestion, all find a place. Among the latter the so-called New Thought Movement, originally initiated by Prentice Mulford, has claimed an ever-increasing following both in the Old World and the New. Apart from either class, but more nearly akin to the latter, as constituting the essence of religion in its simplest and most elementary form, the cult of the religious mystic, present with us through all the ages, has regained a more prominent position in the world of thought. There has been, as might be expected, little homogeneity among these movements. It would be too much to expect of movements so diverse that they should present a common front to the enemy, whether that enemy take the form of religious or scientific orthodoxy, or that orthodoxy that has been so often the bane of our social life in the person of Mrs. Grundy. It seemed to me, however, on considering the position some twenty-one years ago, that a step in the right direction might be secured if a common platform could be found where all such movements might meet on a footing of equality and where agreement in the essential idea might be stressed rather than differences, however vital, where at least truths unpalatable to the orthodox might be freely voiced and where beliefs rejected in the past on insufficient evidence might have the opportunity to defend themselves without fear or favour.

It was some such notion as this that I had in mind when, in January, 1905, I published the first number of the "Occult Review." I felt, in short, that there was room for a Magazine which committed itself to no sect or party, but yet was willing to offer its pages without prejudice for the expression of the views of all alike. The qualifications I possessed for this project were comprised in my early association with the publishing trade, in what the Psalmist called "the pen of a ready writer," to which practice naturally added an increased facility, in an interest in psychic and occult investigation, in a naturally scientific and indeed rationalistic mental bias and a certain non-committal attitude of mind which made it comparatively easy for me as Editor to sympathize with varied phases of belief and opinion, even when I sympathize not adopt them wholeheartedly as my own. Ever present to my mind was the conviction that I must not use my position as Editor to thrust ideas down my readers' throats, or adopt a polemical attitude, but rather that I should put forward views and opinions supported by the best arguments that could be advanced in their defence, and leave it to my audience to weigh them in their own minds and accept or reject them as their reason dictated. Above all, I desired that such gospel as I preached should always be in the nature of a gospel of sanity, and make appeal by that very quality alike to sceptic and to believer, my view being that there must necessarily be a scientific explanation of all phenomena, however apparently inexplicable, and that the atmosphere of mystery arises purely through the limitations of the scientific knowledge of the present day.

I felt considerable hesitation with regard to the title of the Magazine. To many I realized the very word "occult" had been a stumbling-block, but I was careful to explain that from

my point of view as Editor this word did not connote any sympathy with superstition or mystery-mongering, and least of all any antagonism to science properly so called. Occultism I have been wont to regard as the study of those profound problems with the mere material expression of which science is, generally speaking, concerned. It has been to me, in short, the science of the hidden causes underlying the world of phenomena. Such a definition must necessarily be rather a loose one. There are branches of science pure and simple which are still regarded as falling under the heading of the occult, such, for instance, as astrology. There is no specific reason for terming these "occult" except the fact that they have hitherto been unrecognized by orthodox science. It is not clear otherwise why astrology should be looked upon as any more occult than, for instance, wireless telegraphy. Indeed, the late Dr. Richard Garnett, himself a keen astrologer, always repudiated the word "occult" in this connection, as inapplicable to a verifiable and mathematical science. A similar argument might be advanced in regard to such a study as palmistry, though naturally here mathematical proof is not forthcoming. The word occult is perhaps more properly applied to psychical phenomena, related as they are to another plane than the purely physical, in spite of the fact that many psychical researchers have looked askance at the term as calculated to compromise their position.

After careful consideration I came to the conclusion that it was best to brush aside all such fears and apprehensions, and nail my colours boldly to the mast, leaving the orthodox of whatever camp to take what advantage they would of a word which, as I was well aware, had been too often associated with pseudo-scientific charlatanism. In my view true occultism is the poles asunder from such superstitious folly, and I should regard Goethe rather than Cagliostro as a type of the genuine occultist. The duty of the occult student at the present time seems rather to widen and amplify the scope of science, and to open out further fields of investigation in territories so far imperfectly explored in a genuinely scientific spirit. Thus the occultist bases his philosophy on a far wider conception of evolution than that so ably expounded by Herbert Spencer, Darwin and Huxley. He recognizes that laws of Nature are universal, and not one-sided, and that if evolution is true of the physical form, it must be equally true in the realm of spirit; that to believe in the special creation of human souls at an obviously advanced stage of evolution is every bit as absurd as to accept Biblical legends with regard to the special creation of physical forms at a similarly advanced stage. If the one belief is scientifically untenable, the other must be so likewise. And yet those who accept evolution to-day on the physical plane as opposed to special creation, see nothing incongruous in rejecting the very same principle when applied to the intellectual and spiritual development which is its natural corollary, so curiously illogical is the human mind.

What may be termed Comparative Religion fell within the scope of the subject-matter of the "Occult Review," and in this connection considerable space was devoted from time to time to the problem of Christian Origins, the evolution of the "Logos" idea, the question of the authenticity of the Gospel narratives and kindred matters. Pen portraits of celebrated occultists and mystics were attempted, and to these I attached considerable importance as a useful part of the Magazine, though I am afraid the portrait gallery was far from complete when I found it necessary to resign my position as Editor.

With these ideas still in a somewhat nebulous condition in my mind I gradually gathered around myself a group of people interested in the subject-matter of the Magazine in one or more of its various aspects. Dr. Hereward Carrington, of New York, was a contributor almost from the beginning; so was Reginald Span, full of his own and of other people's psychic experiences in many different parts of the world. In those early days Andrew Lang would contribute an occasional article in his wonderful calligraphy; so would Miss Goodrich Freer (afterwards Mrs. Spoer), the well-known authoress and expert in crystal-gazing. Arthur Edward Waite, with his monumental learning on mysticism and alchemy, and author of more than forty erudite tomes, was on the staff from the first, and later on took charge of the section dealing with Periodical Literature.

Among those who were generous with their encouragement and appreciation were the late Professor A. R. Wallace and also Sir William Barrett—now no more among us on this plane; also Mrs. Campbell Praed, the novelist, and author of *Nyria* and *The Body of His Desire*, who, I think, took in the Magazine from the first. The Austrian physician, Dr. Franz Hartmann, voicing Theosophy on the philosophical side, was also a very regular and helpful contributor. Another friend and writer of occasional learned articles who has not long since passed away was J.W. Brodie-Innes, brimful of Scottish romance and an authority second to none on witchcraft and witch trials, a brilliant raconteur too and the author of *The Devil's Mistress*, and a number of other tales of mystery. W. H. Chesson too was early associated with the Magazine, principally as a critical reviewer, whose literary knowledge always filled me with amazement, and whose first wife, the talented Nora Chesson, contributed both articles and verses while the "Review" was still a rather anemic bantling. As chemical expert and mathematician, student of alchemy and authority on Swedenborg, Stanley Redgrove was an invaluable addition to the regular contributors; an article from his pen was seldom absent from the editorial drawer waiting its opportunity to see the light. Meredith Starr too, student of the mysteries of Occultism, and no mean poet to boot, assisted both in prose and verse. Among the poets who contributed should be named Miss Eva Gore Booth, author of some of the most beautiful of modern verse; Miss Eva Martin, Mrs. G. M. Hort and other authors of volumes of verse of various kinds.

Miss E. K. Harper, who linked up with the late Mr. W. T. Stead on the one hand and with Lady Archibald Campbell on the other, was a constant contributor—mainly of reviews, but also of an occasional article. Lady Archibald too wrote of her knowledge of Irish folklore and her fairy faith. Needless to say I had other valued contributors—too numerous to mention, William Kingsland, the idealistic philosopher, and Loftus Hare, with the critical pen, coming in rather late in the day. So that the help of many friends in many different paths of life went to the making of the Magazine. I should not omit the assistance rendered me by H. J. Strutton, as Sub-Editor, without whose sympathetic assistance my task, immersed as I was throughout in quite alien business activities, would have proved far more onerous than it did, and who is himself now carrying on the enterprise.

No one, I suppose, can be more sensible than its Editor of the defects and shortcomings from which the "Occult Review" suffered; but I think I may claim that it

has at least partially achieved its aim of raising the standard of Occult and Psychic investigation to a higher level and of drawing together the more intellectual spirits interested in the subjects with which it has dealt, by affording a common platform on which they could write for the furtherance of a movement which is yet destined to play a leading part in evolving to a higher and more spiritual level the humanity of our Twentieth Century world.

To my deep regret, no farewell message from myself to my readers appeared on the occasion of my retirement; the message, already written and set up in type, being vetoed by the Publishers for reasons which I confess I find still incomprehensible. I would, however, express the hope that at least some good augury may be drawn from this involuntary discourtesy on my part, and that on another day and in another way the old relationship between editor and reader may be again renewed and that after all it may be a case of “au revoir and not good-bye.”

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## **CONAN DOYLE RETURN MATERIAL INCREASED BY 150%**

We reported in *Psypioneer* January 2010 that new papers had been found about the postmortem return of Sir Arthur Conan Doyle through the medium Grace Cooke (GEC).

Copies of the 8 new letters from the Polaires have now been obtained by Garth Willey from the Harry Ransom Center, some being by the Polaire envoy M. Bhotiva, and some in fact by the Chief of the Order. All are typed in excellent English. Leslie Price visited the White Eagle Lodge in London on 13 August and discussed progress in studying the new material with Colum Hayward, historian of the Lodge. [All the material is legally protected by both the Harry Ransom Center and the original authors.]

Colum, who has produced a revised chronology of all the new material, calculated that the discoveries in Texas had so far increased the documentary evidence in the case by 150%. The main outlines had not been altered, but it was now possible to see more clearly how the sittings presented problems for both Lady Doyle and the Polaires.

L.P.

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# 80<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY OF THE PASSING OF ACD

Addendum note by Garth Willey

In the introductory notes to last month's *Psypioneer* commemoration of the passing of Sir Arthur Conan Doyle <sup>14</sup> I noted that the words "Knight, patriot, physician and man of letters" had been added to ACD's new headstone when he and Jean Conan Doyle's graves had been moved from the Windlesham grounds to the 13<sup>th</sup> century Norman church at Minstead.

Synchronistically, perhaps, by our 'friendly powers that be' except that it was a couple of weeks late albeit I had been offered it at least a month previously, I was lent a magazine containing what my helpful friend had termed "an interesting article about ACD."

The magazine was *This England*, Vol. 38, # 2, Summer 2005 and the article was titled *The Hampshire Home of Arthur Conan Doyle*, by Ann Priest. It provided an overview of Sir Arthur's early adulthood as a GP in Southsea, near Portsmouth, his return to Hampshire in 1925 when he bought his country retreat Bignell Wood on the outskirts of Minstead, the various locations in Hampshire which he utilised as scenes of action in *Sherlock Holmes* and various other short stories and novels,<sup>15</sup> and details of the eventual re-interment of ACD's body under a great oak tree in a quiet corner of a churchyard in Minstead in 1955.

The article records that the graveyard is at the Church of All Saints and the exact layout and the words on ACD's granite cross and tombstone are:

Steel True, Blade Straight  
Arthur Conan Doyle  
Knight  
Patriot, Physician & Man of Letters.  
22 May 1859 – 7 July 1930

Thus the date of death was also added as well as the extra words, and an ampersand was used rather than the word 'and' as I reported in the July edition of *Psypioneer*.

The *This England* article includes some lovely photos – but, rather than chase up permission to use them here, the name of the church soon revealed a website<sup>16</sup> with photos and yet a little more information:

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<sup>14</sup> <http://www.woodlandway.org/PDF/PP6.7.July2010..pdf>

<sup>15</sup> *The White Company*, 1891 and the *Sherlock Holmes* stories *Silver Blaze* 1892, *The Adventure of the Copper Beeches*, 1892 and *His Last Bow*, 1917 – and the fact that *Sherlock Holmes* himself was described as 'a Hampshire man by birth' in *A Study in Scarlet*, 1887 and the character Dr John Watson was based on a Southsea acquaintance of ACD's and, indeed, Dr Watson was said to have spent time at the Royal Victoria Hospital in Netley whilst going through "the course prescribed for surgeons in the army."

<sup>16</sup> <http://www.southernlife.org.uk/minchur.htm>

- The re-interment took place in secrecy at 5:00a.m. on a July, 1955 morning, the name(s) of the occupant(s) of the grave only being revealed when an interim stone bearing the initials A.C.D. appeared. The Minstead Church website explains the reason for secrecy: All Saints Church is C of E and it had taken some negotiation to permit the burial; and then only on the proviso that it was on the far boundary of the church grounds;
- The Minstead Church website also states that ACD was “buried in an upright position being a devoted spiritualist” in the garden of his Crowborough home; but that “The couple were laid, horizontally this time, to rest in a double grave early one morning in a double lead casket.”

Now, the Psypioneer team knows nothing of upright burial being common amongst “devoted spiritualists.” So it is probably a misinformed writer for the Minstead graveyard who glibly wrote of it. And irrespective of the proclivities of “devoted spiritualists,” whether it was even true of ACD’s Crowborough burial is open to conjecture. If any readers can shed any light on either of these matters then we’d be glad to hear from you.

**And would you believe, an Addendum to this Addendum!**

On August 1<sup>st</sup>, I bought via AbeBooks an ACD first edition from a UK bookseller, Arabella’s Beautiful Books in East Sussex. On learning that I was a Doylean, they said they had a few small bonus items that I might appreciate: “Yes, please!”

On receipt on 24<sup>th</sup> August imagine my pleasant surprise when one of the items was the appended photo of the Minstead gravestone! (Another was a beautiful copy of ACD’s handwritten Last Will; and a third was a copy of a 1924 cheque written by ACD payable to the LSA – both items for possible later publication in Psypioneer.) The gravestone is in relatively pristine condition – by contrast to the photo on the Minstead website – and the photo must have been taken soon after it was laid.



So called ‘inexplicable synchronicity’ indeed! I leave it to readers’ imagination and/or understanding of the power of those in the spirit world as to how firstly, the This England magazine and, secondly, these items came into my hands in such a timely – albeit a month late – manner!

GW

# WILLIAM VOLCKMAN

*Part two of three*

[**Note by Paul J. Gaunt:**—In the last issue,<sup>17</sup> I concluded with:—“William Harrison after publishing Volckman’s initial letter, in his newspaper *The Spiritualist*, refused to publish more. Volckman turned to James Burns for help in publishing his side of the events. Burns agreed, and covered the story in two issues, starting in the *Medium and Daybreak* on January 16<sup>th</sup> 1874<sup>18</sup> under the heading “My Ghost Experiences”—Part 1, The Struggling “Ghost” and concluding in the next issue.” The first part is published below – and the second will follow in our next issue.]

The accompanying photograph is taken from *Psychic Science* Vol. XIII April 1934 to January, 1935 page 25.

## MY GHOST EXPERIENCES.

BY WILLIAM VOLCKMAN.

PART I.—THE STRUGGLING  
“GHOST.”<sup>19</sup>

Many personal friends, and others interested, have urged upon me the duty of making public my recent “Ghost” experiences, which, in the form of certain charges against me, have received in *The Spiritualist* ex-parte statement and treatment.

My compliance is not without reluctance; for it seems to me that the statements just referred to (ex-parte though they be), if but reasonably considered, are in themselves a sufficient vindication of my procedure in relation to the “Ghost” which appeared through the



PLATE I. COPY OF ORIGINAL PHOTOGRAPH TAKEN BY SIR WILLIAM CROOKES.  
MADE BY MISS KATE COOK FOR F. W. HAYES.  
KATIE KING

<sup>17</sup> See *Psypioneer* Volume 6, No.7 paged 185-195—*William Volckman* by Paul J. Gaunt:—<http://woodlandway.org/PDF/PP6.7.July2010.pdf>

<sup>18</sup> Pages:—37-39.

<sup>19</sup> The original eccentric sub-headings of Mr Volckman or his editor have been retained

“mediumship” of Miss Florence Cook while she remained, as alleged, tied and sealed in her cabinet. However, that both sides may have a hearing, I present my own record of the case, and would merely, by way of preface, acknowledge my obligation to my “friends the enemy” for the public report upon which they have ventured. Without such report I should have been deprived of much corroboration; a corroboration the more important seeing that it is volunteered by my antagonists, who must receive back in good part some of the “raps” they have endeavoured to inflict upon me, and not object to my attempt at “turning the tables” upon them.

### THE CHARGE AGAINST ME

is preferred in the following report, now reprinted verbatim from *The Spiritualist* of Dec. 12th, 1873, entitled

#### “GROSS OUTRAGE AT A SPIRIT CIRCLE.

“LAST Tuesday night there was a seance at Mr. Cook’s. Among the guests present were the Earl of Caithness (who is not a Spiritualist), Lady Caithness, and the Count El Conde<sup>20</sup> de Medina Pomár, of 46, Portland-place, W.; Mr. Charles Blackburn, Parkfield, Didsbury, near Manchester; Mr. Henry M. Dunphy, barrister-at-law, Essex-court, Temple, E.C.; Mr. J. C. Luxmoore, J.P., 16, Gloucester-square, Hyde-park, W.; Mrs. A. Corner, and Mr. E. E. Corner (ship’s first officer), St. Thomas’s-square, Hackney; Mr. H. Bielfeld,<sup>21</sup> 208, Euston-road; Mr. G. R. Tapp, 18, Queen Margaret’s-grove, Islington; Mr. W. H. Harrison, Wilmin-villa, Herne-hill; Mr. and Mrs. Cook and children; and the person who committed the outrage described in the following document:

“This evening at Miss Cook’s seance, during the appearance of what purported to be the spirit ‘Katie,’ a man, named Volckman, rose up, grasped her round the waist with both arms, and tried to throw her down with his feet. Mr. Tapp and Mr. Corner seized the man who thus broke the conditions which we were all admitted on the understanding we would keep. ‘Katie’ instantly extricated herself from his clutches, and aided by Mr. Luxmoore, was in a moment back in the cabinet. After a delay of about five minutes, during which Katie gave earnest instructions to the sitters, the cabinet was opened and Miss Cook found in black dress, and boots, with the tape tightly round her waist, as at the beginning of the seance, the knot sealed as at first with the Signet-ring of the Earl of Caithness, and sewn underneath the seal with thread, as it had been sewn before the seance by Mr. Luxmoore. The tape and seal are now in the possession of the Earl of Caithness. Before the seance the cabinet was searched by the strangers present, and after it by Lady Caithness and others. Lady Caithness and Mrs. Corner, who never lost sight of Miss Cook from the moment the cabinet was opened, subsequently led the medium to her bedroom after she had recovered from the severe shock, and searched her. She had her boots and black dress on, and no white drapery, and nothing but her ordinary dress. There was nothing in her pockets. Her

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<sup>20</sup> [*Medium and Daybreak*] Is it intended to count the “Count” twice over?

<sup>21</sup> *Psypioneer* Volume 6, No.7 pages 171-177: *Henry Bielfeld (1802 – 1892) – Paul J. Gaunt: —*  
<http://woodlandway.org/PDF/PP6.7.July2010.pdf>

under garments were coloured wadded winter clothing. We all regard the act of the man as a gross outrage, and think the results redound greatly to the credit of Miss Cook.

“CAITHNESS.  
MARIE CAITHNESS.  
EL CONDE DE MEDINA POMAR.  
CHARLES BLACKBURN.  
AMELIA CORNER.

J. C. LUXMOORE  
HENRY M. DUNPHY.  
HENRY BIELFELD.  
EDWARD ELGIE CORNER.  
GEORGE ROBERT TAPP.  
WILLIAM H. HARRISON.

“Dec. 9th, 1873.”

The high breeding and good taste of this report are only equalled by its incompleteness and simplicity. Notwithstanding the refined and aristocratic halo conferred by signatures representing Scottish and Spanish nobility, notwithstanding its endorsement by newspaper editors, a barrister-at-law, and a justice of the peace, Mr. Harrison (editor of *The Spiritualist*) appears to have been uneasily conscious of its deficiency. Taking advantage then of his official capacity and of his presence at the seance he appends further details, to which the silence of his fellow sitters gives assent.

He says:—

“After Katie ceased to speak, moans were heard coming from her medium, who soon afterwards began to shriek, and to cry out about ‘burning’ pains. Mrs. Cook then began to faint and the children to cry, the little brother of the medium expressing the fear that ‘Florrie would die.’ The cabinet was then opened, and, after the tapes had been examined and removed, the ladies took the suffering medium under their care. Before this, Mr. Corner, assisted by Mr. Tapp, walked the person who committed the deed upstairs, and, after waiting to learn whether the medium were alive or dead, they let him go. His nose had been scratched in the brief scuffle. We do not know whether he is a Spiritualist or not, but in his public utterances he has said much about seances at which he has recently been present at the house of his friends Mr. and Mrs. Guppy.”

But this is not all. The Justice of the peace appears to have passed an uneasy night of it in excogitating this report, and must have “got up early” the next morning (Wednesday) to supplement it by a letter as follows: —

*“To the Editor of ‘The Spiritualist.’*

“SIR,—It has occurred to me that there is a slight omission in the account drawn up last night, and signed by all present, recording what took place at Miss Cook’s seance. I, before the seance commenced, stated, as I usually do, the conditions necessary, but as a further precaution, mentioned that any infringement of them, especially taking hold of Katie, would be highly dangerous to the medium and perhaps fatal. The individual who committed the outrage gave his assent to the condition; but, notwithstanding this promise, acted as named in the account above alluded to. The object of his conduct is but too clear, *i.e.*, to prove Miss Cook an impostor; but I can tell him, and all others who would so

misbehave themselves, that Miss Cook's honesty and integrity have been too long established and certified to by too great a cloud of witnesses, to be in the least danger of being injured in the minds of any right-thinking persons by such dastardly transactions. If I had time I could write much more, but will now only refer your readers to the severe test Miss Cook has submitted to, even to being tied down by the hair of her head, as recorded in *the Spiritualist*. J. C. LUXMOORE.

"16, Gloucester Square, W., Dec. 10th, 1873."

When I state that Mr. Luxmoore "got up early" on the Wednesday morning, to furnish the above letter, I write advisedly. For the following week my own reply of but twenty lines—although delivered at the editor's office before noon on the Wednesday—was excluded from publication, on the ground that

"Only a very little matter, which must reach the office by first post on Wednesdays, can, as a general rule, be published the same week." (*Vide Spiritualis*, Jan. 2nd.)

Harsh inferences have been drawn, to my regret, in regard to this editorial suppression:—some indeed having remarked that my brief letter could not be classed as "a very little matter," and that it was altogether too big an affair to be allowed publication on its own merits, or before a council of war had been held. Its appearance in the subsequent number of the journal garnished with an adverse commentary gives, I admit, some slight warrant to these ill-natured suggestions. But none the less *I* favour the "early rising" theory, and feel convinced that if the justice of the peace will continue "getting up early" in the morning he will solve not only the Ghost mystery, but be able to unloose the knots and seals of many another question.

In order that the impartiality of the Editor, as between rival correspondents, may be placed on a basis as sound as his good taste, I now direct attention to the *reluctant* manner in which Mr. Harrison introduces and publishes

#### MY REPLY.

"The following letter (says the editor on Dec. 26th) has been sent us by the perpetrator of the outrage at Mr. Cook's house. As he tries to exculpate himself by throwing not a little dirt at an innocent person, *in strict justice his communication ought not to be published, and he should be made to confine his remarks to himself.*"<sup>22</sup> Nevertheless, here is his letter:—

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<sup>22</sup> The italics are mine.—W.V.

*'To the Editor of "The Spiritualist."*

'SIR,—In the report which appears in your journal of a *séance* lately held at Mr. Cook's, I am accused of seizing the ghost, thereby breaking the conditions by which the members of the circle were bound.

'In reply I have to state, that having for forty minutes carefully observed and scrutinised the face, features, gestures, size, style, and peculiarities of utterance of the so-called spirit, the conviction irresistibly forced itself upon me that *no ghost*, but the medium, Miss Florence Cook, herself, was before the circle. I perceived also an occasional tip-toeing by the young lady as if to alter her stature, and was much struck by the utter puerility of her remarks throughout the *séance*. I am confirmed in my conviction, as above stated, by the facts that the *struggling* ghost had to be forcibly extricated from my grasp, and afterwards to be "aided" into her cabinet by a Justice of the Peace.

'I may add that no third-parties had any knowledge of my invitation to, or presence at, the *séance* in question.

WM. VOLCKMAN.

'Dec. 16th, 1873.

"Mr. Corner and Mr. Tapp, who seized Volckman, state that they did not touch 'Katie,' but grasped the aggressor by the neck chiefly. This probably made him let go, and 'Katie' was back in the cabinet in an instant—Mr. Luxmoore's letter describes under what conditions. The whole proceeding only occupied a few seconds.

"The writer of the foregoing letter implies in his remarks that the outrage was not a predetermined thing. But it so happens that his uneasy looks and his abrupt remarks had been the subject of comment in the early part of the evening; he was himself told of his unusual manner. He afterwards broke the conditions on which he was admitted. The Earl of Caithness, though no Spiritualist, strictly adhered to the conditions."

Although I, "the person," "the man," "Volckman," have not been accorded the advantage of scanning the letters of the Justice *previous* to their publication, it would seem that some such privilege has been extended to him, in reference to my letters;—unless indeed the Justice is *clairvoyant* or writes under spirit impression. Be that as it may, the editor concludes the foregoing article by calling attention to a further "letter from Mr. Luxmoore on the subject,"—who thus relieves himself:—

*'To the Editor of "The Spiritualist."*

"SIR,—From the observations I have heard, it appears to me that there is, at least in some portion of the public mind, a misapprehension of the part I took when the figure purporting to be 'Katie' was grasped at Miss Cook's seance. I must first say that I do not believe that the time occupied, from the moment the figure was grasped until it was in the cabinet, was more than six seconds, as the moment I saw what was taking place, I sprung from my chair, caught the figure in my arm, and put it—or I might almost say threw it—

into the cabinet. I was prepared for much resistance, as I thought there would be a great struggle to get it away from the person clasping it, but to my great surprise there appeared to me to be no resistance, and very much less weight than if it had been Miss Cook, who, I am informed, weighs about 8st. 5lb. I am told the notion has been formed by those supposing it to be Miss Cook, that she was too exhausted from the struggle to get back to the cabinet. This, however, could not be the case, for if there were any struggle, it did not last, as I have said, more than six seconds. I, knowing from experience in mesmerism the danger the medium was in, had but one object, that was, to get the figure back to her medium with the least possible delay. People seem to forget that Miss Cook is *not a public* medium, and that persons are admitted to her seance as a favour, all being required to give their word, and abide by the conditions which I lay down before the seance begins; and, according to my views of honour, are as much bound to adhere to those conditions as they would be bound to tell the truth when examined on oath; it is no excuse their specially pleading that they believe there is imposition. If they thought that, why earnestly beg to come? Why give presents, and then say they had bought themselves into Mr. Cook's house? One would almost be induced to think that breaking a solemn promise at a spiritual seance is quite a different thing from doing so under any other circumstances. What may be the standard of morality of those holding such an opinion I leave your readers to judge. Some imagine that if 'Katie' is a spirit she should not have required assistance to get out of the grasp of any one taking hold of her, but they forget that, even if a spirit, she is clothed in a natural form, and subject to what I term, for want of a better word, the inconveniences of materialisation.

"I am fully aware that by writing in this style I subject myself to ridicule, and to be considered either a fool or an impostor, but having gone through this and even more when promulgating the truth of mesmerism—some twenty-five years since—that gives me not one moment's pain. It has been in one way or another the lot of such men as Harvey (the discoverer of the circulation of the blood), Jenner (the discoverer of vaccination), Elliotson (who was one of the first to use the stethoscope), and many others. I, a *mere pigmy* when contrasted with such names, ought perhaps to consider it an honour to undergo the same treatment. I must, however, hold hard, as I find I am writing far too much about self.

"One correspondent, in another journal, says:—'This letter is not written in any carping or cavilling spirit, and must not be taken to imply doubt in the honesty of the medium, for I hold that it is quite impossible for any unbiassed person to read the numerous accounts of the seances held by Miss Cook without arriving at the conclusion that she is a real and genuine medium. Such, at any rate, I emphatically hold her to be; but in the light of reports like the above, every excuse must be made for the action taken by the gentleman—a leading member of the Dialectical Society—who committed what Miss Cook's friends have termed a 'gross outrage,' but for which they themselves alone are to blame, on account of the way in which these seances have apparently been conducted.' I quite admit that Miss Cook's friends were to blame, but my reason for saying this, and the writer's above quoted, may be different. The error was ever admitting the person into the seance. I long resisted, but allowed my better judgment to be overruled. I promise never to do so again."

It will be noticed that the sense of uneasiness characterising the original report and commentary pervades also this letter. Not only does the worthy justice cheerfully anticipate a martyrdom of ridicule, and the reputation of “impostor” or “fool,” but he appears to have *again* “got up early in the morning” in order to revise the above production,—hence much of its wisdom will be found in its tail. Says Mr. Luxmoore in conclusion:—

“On reperusal I find I have omitted one especial reason for my so hastily getting the figure back into the cabinet—it is that both ‘Katie’ herself, when communicating with us, and also Mrs. Tappan, in answer to a question after a lecture, have stated that grasping and retaining the figure from her medium, while that medium is entranced, would be attended with *great danger*, so that to my mind the safety of the medium was *paramount* to *all other considerations*. My own mesmeric experience with very sensitive clairvoyants is perfectly in accordance with this view (see *Zoist*, Vol. iv., page 517. Mrs. Bird's case, written by me).  
J. C. LUXMOORE.

“16, Gloster-square, 20th Dec., 1873.”

So far from any sufficient answer to my brief letter, in all this there is really little more than the *bare reassertion* that I “broke the conditions,” and on this subject I am contrasted with “My Lord” of Caithness, who is put forward as a sort of model “good boy” for “strictly” adhering to the conditions “though no Spiritualist.” While I hope his lordship fully appreciates this patronage, I too would *reassert* that the question of breaking conditions is the question of Ghost or *no* Ghost (which the sitters have met only by avoidance); and from this point of view I have no hesitation in saying that my grasping the so-called “Spirit” was no more a departure from conditions, than would have been the Noble Earl’s performance of a Highland Reel with “Katie” the Ghost of the evening, had he so minded.

Leaving the broad question of “conditions,” and several other points, for after consideration, I for the moment confine attention to the Ghost or no Ghost dispute, and to the nature of the “Struggle.” Here we are met at once with the significant fact that the Ghost party themselves, “*give up the Ghost*” in the very first sentence of their report. From the moment of my committal of “the deed” no longer is there any assertion of a bonâ fide unequivocal “Spirit,” but only of an “*appearance of what purported to be the spirit ‘Katie.’*” The same cautiousness is displayed even ten days later; for in the report of *another* séance (page 478 of *The Spiritualist*) The term “Spirit” is not applied to “Katie” at all, but the amazement of the sitters is centered in her clothes:—

“Wherever the white robes came from, it is certain they did not get into the seance room by any method known to any living mortal.”

The energetic Justice is not behindhand in thus “giving up the Ghost,” which he talks of as “the figure”!

“I sprang from my chair.” says the magistrate, “caught the figure in my arm, and put it—or I might almost say threw it—into the cabinet,”

Here indeed is an “outrage.” What, only a figure! not even a pretty figure; why, gentle reader, thus to describe a lady “wrong-fully” is, as Shakespeare’s Dogberry would say,

“Flat burglary, as ever was committed,”

and may lead in time if unchecked to “insulting the North Pole.”

But the full value of this sudden and remarkable cautiousness of designation will be better measured on a fair consideration of

### MY TEST,

which was a threefold one. First there was my observation for forty minutes of “the figure purporting to be “Katie””:—secondly, the pressure and retention of her hand by mine:—and thirdly, the grasping round the waist complained of as an “outrage,” “a deed,” and a “transaction.” When I was satisfied, as far as attentive scrutiny could satisfy me, that “the appearance” was none other than that of the medium herself, I bethought myself of a remark made to me by Mr. Cook, her father, to the effect “that a visitor had once been permitted to squeeze the arm of the Ghost, and in so doing his hand literally passed through its wrist.” Such an experience, I may add parenthetically, is by no means an uncommon one amongst Spiritualists and investigators, many of whom have informed me of the difficulty they have found in grasping a so-called spirit hand, or of retaining it when gasped. Something indeed of this kind has happened to myself, at dark circles however, when, under I believe good test conditions, I have felt hands which I have found very difficult to clutch, and literally impossible to retain. As evidence on this point Mr. Wm. Crookes’s article on “phenomena called Spiritual” may be quoted—vide *Quarterly Journal of Science*, January 1874, page 88—where, speaking of phenomena which took place in the light, he states:

“I have retained one of these hands in my own, firmly resolved not to let it escape. There was no struggle or effort made to get loose, but it gradually seemed to resolve itself into vapour, and faded in that manner from my grasp.”

Here then was a further test, if the opportunity for applying it should occur,—as fortunately it did. Would “Katie,” I mentally asked “make me an offer of her hand?” Would that hand dissolve in mine according to orthodox ghostly fashion? Let the sequel tell.

“Katie,” assured (as she told us) of the harmonious character of the circle, deigned to take some of us by the hand. My turn came; and by no means to my surprise I found that her Ghost-ship could *not* release her fingers from my hold. Apprehending the situation, she quickly made a step backwards towards her cabinet, endeavoring to tug away her hand. But, not to be thus evaded, I with *equal* promptness “rose up and grasped her with both arms round the waist,” when commenced that

## WRESTLING WITH THE ANGEL

which is now immortalised in the columns of *The Spiritualist*, and which completed my test.

“O that this too solid flesh would melt.”

Let me here observe that the Ghost partisans are wrong in stating that I “tried to throw her (‘the appearance’) down with my feet.” My only object was *gently* to hold the Angel in my arms, until it should melt away, or until all present might be as convinced as myself that the “angelic visitant” was Miss Florence Cook. Although in the “fall of Angels” I would not willingly bear a part, the statement that “I tried” *a fall* is of importance, as showing that a struggle *really* took place. That struggle I assert to be the determined effort of the Angel or Woman (the terms, sympathetic reader, I regard as synonymous) to get back to her cabinet, as to a haven of safety, and originated in no *violence* of action by me.

The vigorous interference of Mr. Corner the “ship’s officer” and Mr. Tapp at this point is scarcely allowed by the editor of the *Spiritualist* to be a “forcible extrication” of the so-called Ghost,—although some have impertinently characterised such intervention as “officious,”—ruffianly,—bullying &c. But when I state that those muscular *preventers* of investigation brought me down heavily to the ground, at considerable damage to my neck, elbow, and knee, when I add that the “Ghost” thus assisted, instead of dissolving, tore hair from my beard (an appendage in which I somewhat pride myself), I think my letter of Dec. 16th was no overstatement of the encounter.

The heroic Luxmoore (I beg pardon, “*Mister*” Luxmoore,—let us say *Mr.* or die), the valiant *Mr.* Luxmoore, finding I was being well cared for, now interposed, cutting that “figure” alike for springiness and gallantry he has so graphically described. Although I do not quite agree with the spirited Magistrate in all his inferences, yet I wish to do so where possible, and in particular would endorse his opinion that there was no exhaustion to speak of manifested by the “figure,”—the “appearance,”—“Katie,”—the medium,—or the “Ghost”—as the reader may please. If my evidence as a principle in this encounter may be permitted, I would urge, for weighty reasons that the “Ghost” was well able to take care of itself and required no assistance whatever. In this fact is the solution of that *weightlessness* for which the imaginative Justice contends.

Bent upon sifting the evidence with magisterial accuracy, Mr. Luxmoore has ascertained that Miss Cook “weighs about 8st. 5lbs.”—the Ghost being to his “great surprise” of “very much less weight.” But here the Justice as a collator and weigher of evidence hardly does himself justice, not even “Justices’ justice,” for in his known natural modesty he well nigh overlooks his own respectable proportions. Indeed in his excessive humility he goes so far in one place as to allude to himself as “a *mere pigmy*.” Now such self-depreciation (praiseworthy though it be) must not be allowed to pass. He of course could not say it of himself, but others may have the gratification of stating, that the Justice is really a great man:—above the average height,—broad and muscular

in build,—grave in demeanour,—expressive in countenance,—altogether a man of undoubted weight:—say 17 stone.

Now given it particularly lively Ghost—a Ghost actuated by the one purpose of getting home to her cabinet,—given the determined assistance of an active and intelligent officer, seconded by the lithe, tall, and agile Mr. Tapp, and “aided” by a powerfully built and springy magistrate,—given all the consequent excitement and such stimulating shouts as “you’ll kill the medium!!”—(no one said Ghost)—given the fact that “the figure” had *but* three or four feet of space to bound over to regain her cabinet, and I think that *the Ghost’s “weight” had better not be raised*, much less assumed, all elements considered. For under excitement so fanatical, weights cannot be so accurately estimated as Mr. Luxmoore would have us suppose. Even weak men—*mere pigmies*—are able when excited to exert a force to which 8st. 5lbs. would be as nothing. And the powerful Justice may not now plead a total freedom from excitement. His judicial calmness and powers of observation are belied by his own statement. For after informing us all about the *springing*,—the *catching*,—and the *throwing* he was impelled to by “what was taking place” he proceeds only eight lines further down to treat the struggle as something quite hypothetical:—

“if there were any struggle,”

is now the doubting phrase in which he continues his lucid remarks and supports his thrilling argument. This haziness may perhaps however be accounted for. Surely, it is but one “*mesmeric*” phenomenon the more for the experienced Justice. If, when he emerges from his “*trance condition*,” he would like conclusive evidence as to the “struggle,” I can refer him to the medical gentleman who examined and noted my bruises;—should the Justice not obtain that information meanwhile, by the exercise of his undoubted clairvoyant powers.

Before dismissing the question of weight, I must, to complete the evidence, allude to my own bulk and height. The reader will excuse the egotistical details I am obliged to infuse into my narration. Mr. Harrison says I “should be made” to confine my remarks to myself. No compulsion, however, is required to induce me to supply any items of importance to this discussion; on the contrary, I am happy to volunteer relevant testimony even at the expense of my own constitutional sensitiveness. My present weight then is 11st. 0lb. 14oz. in my clothes.— (I fancy I must have lost quite “a pound of flesh” lately. Is this owing to Mr. Harrison?) My height is 5 feet 6 $\frac{5}{8}$  inches in my boots,— (fashionable heels). In bulk and inches I am less than either of the three Ghost champions, one or both particulars considered. This will perhaps account for the fact that I am not able to ‘throw Ghosts about’ with the dexterity confessed to by the Justice, or to ‘spring’ and ‘catch’ with his agility; and will in a measure explain why the “much resistance” for which he “was prepared” was not forthcoming from me under such circumstances of superior weight.

As further evidence of a struggle I may not omit to mention the two blunt scratches which for a few days after the event adorned my nose—a somewhat prominent feature, friends, of Grecian order. How I came by these marks of conflict I will not pretend to state

with absolute certainty. But, reader, “remember the poor Ghost” is a young, impulsive woman, and, although some “three hundred years old,” may not have *quite* forgotten the use of nails in emergency.

Having now depicted the circumstances with enough of detail to substantiate the fact of an actual and determined struggle on the part of the Angel, having shown that she was in *no melting mood*, it but remains for me to notice the manner in which she and I parted company:—

“It may be for years, it may be for ever.”

But for the intervention accorded and admitted by her Ghost-ship’s friends, I am confident I should have had no difficulty in retaining the Celestial being in my arms—for any reasonable length of time—and so have brought about a general recognition, had that been cared for. But being as it were so suddenly and unexpectedly sat upon, I lost my hold, whereupon “aided by Mr. Luxmoore” the Angel regained her cabinet with a bound (no “gliding,” mind)—and the last I saw of her she was in the act of hurriedly closing the

### CURTAIN

Students of psychology inform us—that in moments of peril the mind with lightning rapidity is enabled to take a comprehensive view of past life and all its events.—I had regained my feet. But pinioned by stalwart arms, and the object of angry cries and fierce gesticulation—the thought flashed through my brain “no one knows of my invitation to, or presence at, this eventful seance,”—when, O horror!!—O despair!!—O “OUTRAGE” OF OUTRAGES!!

### THE GAS WAS EXTINGUISHED.

Postscript—Knowing something of the “tortures of suspense” and being naturally of kindly disposition, it is real pleasure to me to be able to spare the readers any unnecessary *harass on* (this is not a pun) the above

“Deed of darkness.”

To this end I hope that friends will take the cheerfulest possible view of the fact that my narration is

*To be continued.*

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Paul J. Gaunt

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