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# DUNCAN GASCOYNE RETIRES



The news that Duncan Gascoyne is to retire as chairman of the Arthur Findlay College on 31 March is sad for all students of the pioneers. It was in 1997, on a visit to the Britten Museum with Duncan, that I first saw his remarkable achievements in re-assembling and annotating a wide range of exhibits about Mrs Britten and other pioneers. More than once, we have been honoured to publish in *Psypioneer* the fruits of Duncan's personal research into Emma's life and into early Spiritualist churches.

Not long ago, Duncan and I met in moving circumstances, when he was conducting in Grimsby the funeral of Don Galloway. Don had taken a personal interest in *Psypioneer*, sending on rare material from his personal library over the years. He would be very happy about a concept which emerged from our discussions that day, and which Duncan pursued to fruition—an invitation to Paul Gaunt to visit Stansted and research the SNU pioneers there. Nearly every subsequent issue of *Psypioneer* shows the gracious wisdom of that invitation. We hope to publish more of Duncan's research during his retirement!

L.P

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## LESLIE PRICE CHANGES DIRECTION

Although I began to edit "The Christian Parapsychologist" in 1975 (Michael Perry took over in 1978), it has tended to be the parapsychology aspect that has preoccupied me since. Now however the time has come to focus on the Christian side, and in consequence there will be less psychical research from me, and more scriptural study. So I shall not appear so often in these pages and in others like them across the field, though I continue as *Psypioneer* sub-editor. My last scheduled lecture for the present is to Blavatsky Lodge, London on Thursday evening May 5<sup>th</sup> 2011 6.30for 7pm pm on "Lady Occultists at War.". The ladies in question were Madame Blavatsky, Emma Hardinge Britten and Anna Kingsford, and we hope then to have details of some recent documentary discoveries.

LP.

In last month's issue we published a contribution from Dr. Robert A. Gilbert.<sup>1</sup> Can any of our readers help Dr. Gilbert who now writes:

## The Rev. J.G. Wood (1827 – 1889)

John George Wood was an Anglican priest and one of the most popular and prolific authors on natural history of the Victorian era. But unknown to most of his readers he was also a committed and enthusiastic spiritualist, although reticent about making his interest known to the public. The only biography of Wood, by his son Theodore, omits all reference to this aspect of his life, and the little we know of his spiritualist activities comes from a brief obituary in *Light* and from two chapters in Newton Crosland's autobiography, *Rambles Round My Life* (1889).

I am currently engaged in writing a biographical and critical study of J.G. Wood and I am anxious to discover more about his involvement with Spiritualism in order to gain a better understanding of his beliefs and of their effect upon his life and work. Any information on contributions that he may have made to spiritualist and similar journals, or references to him in such journals, that readers of *Psypioneer* may be able to give me would be of great help. Similarly, I would welcome suggestions and advice as to any archival collections known to readers that may contain letters or other manuscript material by, or relating to J.G. Wood.

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<sup>1</sup> *The Quest of the Golden Dawn: A Cautionary Tale*, pages 47-51:—  
<http://woodlandway.org/PDF/PP7.2February2010.pdf>

# HYDESVILLE 106 YEARS AGO



Exterior View of the Fox House at Hydesville, New York  
Photograph taken by Adelbert Cronise, 1905

In October 2005 I wrote an article “The Mystery of Fox Cottage.”<sup>2</sup> It was focused on the exterior and interior of the old Fox residence for which I attempted to set out a floor plan. Mentioned in that article was a paper read before *The Rochester Historical Society*, on October 29<sup>th</sup> 1925, by Adelbert Cronise.

The paper was entitled “The Beginnings of Modern Spiritualism In and Near Rochester.” Cronise gave a good impartial account of the Hydesville event, which I will not publish as we have previously covered the Hydesville hauntings in various articles.

However, Cronise stated:—<sup>3</sup>

“This is not a paper on Spiritualism. That subject I have never even attempted to investigate. I have simply brought together from many sources some of the records of happenings beginning nearly eighty years ago in which Rochester has an historical interest.”

“It has always been to me an interesting fact that the two great movements, Mormonism and Modern Spiritualism, had their origins in the same locality and at so nearly the same time. Mormon Hill, south from Palmyra, is but a few miles from Hydesville, which is seven miles east from Palmyra. About twenty years after the Smith family was demonstrating at Mormon Hill the Fox family was demonstrating at Hydesville.”

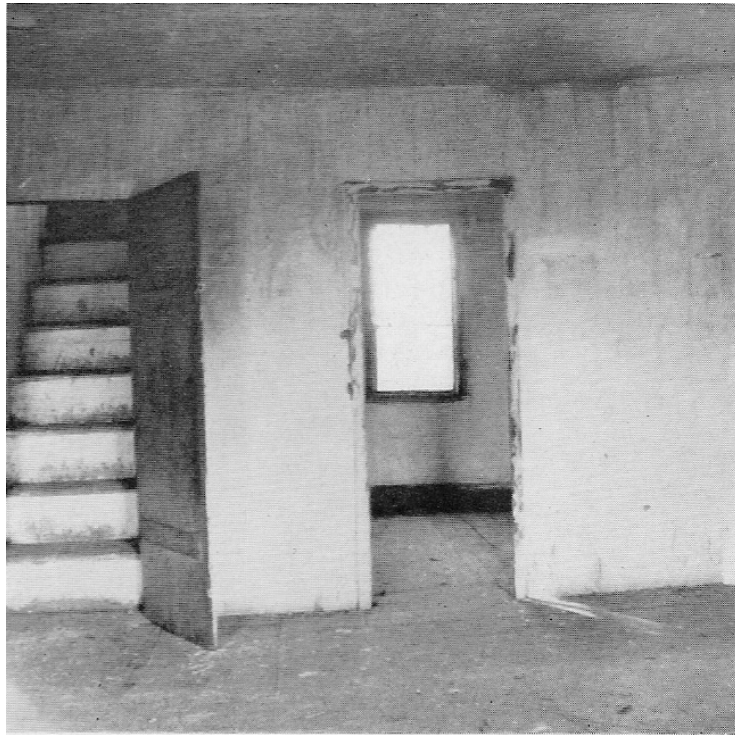
<sup>2</sup> <http://woodlandway.org/PDF/18.PSYPIONEERFoundedbyLesliePrice.pdf>

<sup>3</sup> *The Rochester Historical Society*, Publication Fund Series Volume V: Published by the Society 1926, pages 1-22. (Quotes page 1.) An edited version of his paper can be found in:—*Rappings That Startled the World Facts About the Fox Sisters*, compiled by R.G. Pressing, Dale News, Inc., Lily Dale, New York 1950c.

Cronise continues:—<sup>4</sup>

“The house in which they lived and the blacksmith shop were owned by Dr. Henry Hyde, afterwards by his son, Artemas W. Hyde, and the hamlet in which they were located was called “Hydesville,” and later “Hydeville.” It is about a mile west from Whiting’s Corners on the road from there to Palmyra, and Whiting’s Corners are a half mile north from the Newark Station of the New York Central Railroad. The name “Hydeville” continues, although but few of the houses now remain.

“Some twenty years ago I inspected the Fox house at Hydesville, then vacant, and photographed its exterior and interior. It was a small, story and a half frame house, broadside to the road, and my recollection of it is that one entered directly into the small front room, which had a bedroom to the right; that back of the front room was the kitchen with a pantry to the right, and that between the bedroom and pantry were stairs to attic and to the cellar. The two girls were said to have slept in a trundle bed, kept under the other bed in the daytime trundled out for their use at night. Emma Hardinge, in her “Modern American Spiritualism,” New York, 1870, states that there were “two fair-sized parlors opening into each other, a room, and buttery or pantry, opening into one of the rooms.” This would be calling the kitchen and small living room “parlors.” ”



Interior View of the Fox House at Hydesville, New York  
*Photograph taken by Mr. Adelbert Cronise, 1905*

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<sup>4</sup> Page 3

I have published this account primarily for the two 1905 photographs; especially the rare view of the interior of Fox Cottage while it was still on the original Hydesville site, albeit it is unfortunate that the photograph is limited to only one view. Ten or eleven years later, the house was purchased by Mr. Benjamin Franklin Bartlett and was moved from its location to Lily Dale, New York,<sup>5</sup> where it was re-constructed on the Lily Dale Assembly Grounds. In the mid 1950s<sup>6</sup> the cottage caught fire and was completely destroyed. It should however, not be confused with the replica cottage built on the original Hydesville site some years later which was also destroyed by fire.<sup>7</sup>

Just prior to Adelbert Cronise's visit to Fox Cottage in 1904 reports were published in some American papers that human remains and a peddler's box were found in the cellar. Joe Nickell mentions this in his recent skeptical account of the Hydesville phenomena. "A Skeleton's Tale"<sup>8</sup> Nickell cites Editorial. 1909. *Journal of the American Society for Psychical Research*. Psypioneer quotes this JASPR passage below in a slightly fuller version:—<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> Some references state 1915 as does Adelbert Cronise, others state 1916 e.g., M.E. Cadwallader, who in her "Hydesville in History" 1922, states the cottage was moved during April 1916. On December 5, 1927 Cadwallader placed a marker at the old Hydesville site:—"The Birthplace of MODERN SPIRITUALISM. Upon this site stood the Hydesville Cottage, the home of the Fox Sisters through whose mediumship communication with the Spirit World was established March 31, 1848. THERE IS NO DEATH, THERE ARE NO DEAD." See Psypioneer Vol.5, No.7:—Mrs. M.E. Cadwallader – Paul J. Gaunt, pages 202-211:—<http://woodlandway.org/PDF/PP5.7July09.pdf>

<sup>6</sup> Some information gives the date as: September 12<sup>th</sup>, 1955.

<sup>7</sup> "At the original site of the cottage, at 1510 Hydesville Road, in the hamlet of Hydesville, Wayne County, New York, an exact replica of the cottage was constructed on the original stone foundation through the efforts of Mr. John Drummond. A monument donated by Mercy E. Cadwallader of Chicago, Illinois once stood in the front yard. For ten years the monument was stored at the Newark Granite Works prior to being moved to the Mississippi Valley Spiritualist Camp in Clinton, Iowa in 1996 for temporary storage ..." "The cottage again burned beyond repair in mid-1983. At the time, Mr. Drummond, then age eighty-four, was determined to rebuild the cottage, but he passed to spirit before completion." Quoted from N.S.A.C.:—<http://www.nsac.org/FoxPropertyHistory.aspx>

<sup>8</sup> Skeptical Inquirer, Volume 32.4, July-August 2008:—  
[http://www.csicop.org/si/show/skeletons\\_tale\\_the\\_origins\\_of\\_modern\\_spiritualism/](http://www.csicop.org/si/show/skeletons_tale_the_origins_of_modern_spiritualism/)

<sup>9</sup> JASPR March, 1909 page 191. The photograph of the reporter Ann Marsters is taken from:—*Rappings That Startled the World Facts About the Fox Sisters*, page 28 compiled by R.G. Pressing, Dale News, Inc., Lily Dale, New York 1950c.



“A year or more ago a story went the rounds of the newspapers to the effect that a skeleton had been found on the site of the house in which the Fox sisters had lived, confirming the report that a man had been killed there and had afterward made himself manifest through the raps of the Fox sisters. The story did not seem to merit any special attention, but as it has been mentioned in Mr. Carrington’s *“Coming Science,”* with some credence, it may be well to call attention to a personal investigation of the incident by a physician of our acquaintance. He was asked by the editor of the *“Occult Review”* to look into the incident at the time. He reports to us, that he found a number of bones there, but that there were only a few ribs with odds and ends of bones and among them a superabundance of some and a deficiency of others. Among them also were some chicken bones. There was nothing about the premises to indicate that they had been buried there, but might have been put there by boys in sport. He also reports that within a few days past he has learned that a certain person near the place had put the bones there as a practical joke and is now too much ashamed of it to confess it. Whether there is any better foundation for these incidents, than for the original story it is not possible to decide, but it is certain that the probabilities that there is anything more than a casual coincidence or than a trick played on the credulity of the defenders of the Fox sisters are very much shaded.”

Paul J. Gaunt

#### WHERE ROSNA WAS BURIED



The picture above was taken at The Fox Cottage, Lily Dale, N. Y. It shows a reporter from a Chicago newspaper, Ann Marsters, inspecting the basement of the cottage. She is viewing the spot where the body of the peddler, Charles Rosna, was unearthed.

# MISS FOX'S SEANCES TWENTY YEARS AGO.

*To the Editor of the Medium and Daybreak.*<sup>10</sup>

DEAR MR. BURNS,—During a series of pressing events in our town, week after week has passed away since I promised to give you a copy of the card the Fox girls used in their daily public seances as a guide or rules of order to the public. These cards were not given to the incomers to carry away with them, they were placed upon the large table at which they sat for their instruction and use during their stay in the seance-room. There is no date upon the card, neither any address, as it was entirely for home use, I believe. Between 1850 and 1853 I visited the family three times, and on one of those occasions poor Mr. Brown,<sup>11</sup> the husband of the eldest sister, was in a very delicate state of health, and I well remember he felt somewhat revived and cheered by my visit; but ere my next visit he had “passed over,” and was now looking down upon me and the illustrious family to whom I had come again to accord my best respects, and to give, in truth and sincerity, my kind regards. I never called upon them to attend a public seance, but with my spirit-friends I went to visit the family; yet we always were favoured with a superabundance of manifestations accompanying all our intercourse, whether at the breakfast-table or at the seance-table; for I was always invited to be present at the latter, and it was here that the identical card which I now forward to you was given to me by the spirits and by Mrs. Brown.



**CALVIN BROWN**  
**Leah's Second**  
**Husband**

It was on my third visit, however, that I had the most full and pleasant interview with the family. I had travelled from beyond Hartford, Conn., to the, city of New York, and who should I meet but the motherly old lady, the mother of the family; who had arrived the previous evening, and also the eldest of the family, Mr. David Fox, farmer, who had come 150 miles that morning, not having made any pre-announcement of his coming: so that it may be truly said we came together of one accord in the spirit. It is not my intention, nor could I relate to you all that the whole of us talked over together, and the satisfaction that we felt at having met, in one double-sized MEDIUM. Suffice it for the present for me to say we talked over Spiritualism from its minutest beginning, and the sufferings, troubles,

<sup>10</sup> *The Medium and Daybreak*, December 6, 1872 page 485.

<sup>11</sup> Calvin Brown was a long standing friend of the Fox family. On September 10, 1851 Calvin and the eldest sister, Ann Leah (néé Fox) Fish married. Calvin had been in poor health for some years and died on May 4, 1853. The photograph is taken from:—*Rappings That Startled the World Facts About the Fox Sisters*, page 31 compiled by R.G. Pressing, Dale News, Inc., Lily Dale, New York 1950c.



and trials of the friends, down to that time. Of course, I could not but respond with my heartfelt sympathy, my Spiritual experience, find my views of philosophy. You may believe me when I say that Mrs. Emma Hardinge-Britten,<sup>12</sup> in her large work on “American Spiritualism;” has given to history a succinct, but very summary account of the mundane origin and early history of Spiritualism in relation to the labours of the Fox family.—I am, yours fraternally,

D. RICHMOND.

*18, Chapel Street, Darlington, November 3, 1872.*

P.S.—Miss Kate, who is now in England, was then quite youthful, and may not recollect my visits from what I have written, but she could not but know me, as I am not much altered. If you think proper, however, you may publish this my word, or evidence, in favour of that which has been given to history in many forms.

Here is a copy of the card referred to above:—

### ATTENTION

“Is specially called to the ensuing

### “RULES OF ORDER.

“1. All persons present at interviews are expected to observe the order and decorum which should characterise meetings of religious solemnity and importance.

“3. No controversies with reference to the truth or falsity of the communications should be entered into during their continuance.

“3. All persons should follow, without delay or discussion, all directions with reference to conduct, position, &c., as compliance with directions generally ensures satisfactory manifestations, while neglect or refusal usually results in their partial or complete cessation.

“4. When any individual indicated by the spirits is in communication with them, no other person should interfere, as this often occasions discontinuance of the communications.

“5. The ladies in whose presence the manifestations are made will use their best exertions to satisfy all inquiries: but since the manifestations, alike in their commencement, character, and duration are *above their personal control*, they cannot promise that all persons or all inquiries will obtain answers, no manifestations being made except as the spirits will.

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<sup>12</sup> “Unwarranted hyphenation,” see Volume 6, No.11:— *Mrs Britten Nominally Challenged – Leslie Price*, pages 297-298:— <http://woodlandway.org/PDF/PP6.11November2010.pdf>

“6. Entire truthfulness, honesty, and good faith should be observed by all who seek correct responses. Those who resort to tricks and deceptions repel all good influences, and are answered by silly or deceptive spirits, thus making the interviews unprofitable and delusive.

“Admission One Dollar.

“Hours.—From 10 to 12 o’clock a.m., from 3 to 5 p.m., and from 8 to 10 in the evening.

“EXPLANATIONS.

“The raps are always given in the affirmative, and, when the alphabet is repeated, to indicate certain letters for the spelling of words.

“Five raps in quick succession are understood to be a call for the alphabet.

“Continuous light raps for several seconds are produced when an error has been made in the forming of a sentence by the alphabet.

“Visitors should first ascertain what spirit raps to them, then arrange their questions definitely by writing them, and point to them or speak them as they choose; or as may be directed by the spirit.

“When one person is asking questions others at the table should give their attention, and not interrupt the inquirer with idle suggestions, nor disturb by promiscuous conversation.

“Candour; quietness, and harmony are essential for the reception of satisfactory communications.

“Inquirers should direct their questions to the spirits as if they were conversing with them in the body, but expecting that the answers received would be chiefly in monosyllables.”

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# MORE THINGS ABOUT ROBERT BLATCHFORD

The radical journalist Robert Blatchford (1851-1943) published in 1925 a short work *More Things in Heaven and Earth*, (Methuen) about his brief experience of Spiritualism. His wife had died on 19 December 1921, and although a materialist, he had not been able to accept that she was no more. After reading up the subject of Spiritualism, he was fortunate enough to have two successful sittings with Mrs Leonard<sup>13</sup> on 23 September 1923 and 1 June 1924. The book, apparently based on articles, responds to some popular criticisms of Spiritualism, and gives some of the evidence he received.

Blatchford's book was a classic contribution to Spiritualist literature, and it was also mentioned in a significant and neglected paper<sup>14</sup> by Charles Drayton Thomas on the way mediumship worked.

Blatchford was one of the first people to report that words were occasionally spoken in the air at Leonard sittings by the direct voice. As Thomas notes (p.150)

“During Robert Blatchford's” sitting of 12<sup>th</sup> [misprint by Thomas for 1<sup>st</sup> - LP] June, 1924 he asked Feda if his wife had really spoken to him. She said, “It is a thing that does not happen in hundreds of sittings with me.” So it would seem that at this date the D. V. was at its early beginning in Mrs Leonard's sittings. It was then rare and did not much attract my attention; my notes merely record that I could often hear my father's whispers, which Feda repeated aloud.

It is within the last dozen years that the amount of D. V. has so markedly increased. Its frequency varies from sitting to sitting. In one it may be heard only six times, speaking a total of from twelve to fifteen words in all; at another sitting it may be heard as many as twenty-five times, speaking about sixty words. Calculation based on some thirty of the more recent occasions gives an average of eighteen times and twenty-six words.

If the hearing of this voice was a hallucination, it was experienced by some surprising people. Dr Alan Gauld wrote, in his obituary of Professor C.D. Broad in JSPR, June 1971 (p.107). “I vividly remember the rustle of astonishment which went round the room during one of his Perrott Lectures when, after describing Mrs Leonard's ‘independent voice’, he looked up from his notes to remark that he had heard it himself.”

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<sup>13</sup> More information on Mrs. Osborne *Leonard*, use our ‘*Psypioneer Search Engine*’, key word *Leonard* @ [www.woodlandway.org](http://www.woodlandway.org) then *PsyPioneer Journal*.

<sup>14</sup> C. Drayton Thomas *A New Hypothesis Concerning Trance Communication*, PSPR May, 1947, Vol. XLVIII, p. 121-163.

Did Blatchford become a Spiritualist, and how convinced was he? Apart from several contributions to symposia and the like, he wrote little subsequently on the subject, and, it seems, did not investigate much further.<sup>15</sup>

We reproduce below his discussion in his autobiography “My Eighty Years” (1931):—<sup>16</sup>

### LIII A CHANGE OF FAITH

In these loosely strung papers I have dealt lightly with some matters which to many readers may seem important, as, for instance, the spread of Socialism, and the origin and growth of the Labour Party. But the early years of the Labour movement, though of interest to students, have not much public appeal. The Labour Party is in being; it has arrived. The public are concerned less with its past than with its future, and that future is in other hands than mine. And if this book seems to be more of a love-story than a life, that is because to me love has always been the more vital and beautiful part of life.

Many years ago I was talking with W. T. Stead, and when I made some remark about the purpose of sex, he answered: “Sex is the true Sinai.” That was to me a cryptic saying and I put my idea in my own way: “I mean that love and marriage are not a convenience or an experiment: they are a fulfilment.” Stead agreed heartily. Well, to those who are neither covetous nor ambitious a happy union is the most precious gift of fortune. For me fame, title, power and wealth would be dust in the balance against the gold of a woman’s love. I suppose that a man who wants to be a millionaire, or a film star, or a prime minister, or a king, is glad when he feels the coveted prize within his grip; but I should think he would soon be bored. Who would be a king, to be waited upon, dressed and undressed, saluted, trumpeted, toadied to and spied upon and be graciously pleased by the inescapable persecution? I should regard the lot of a healthy tramp on the high roads as preferable. Who would these fardels bear without a twin soul to cherish and delight him? How many successful men who have led loveless lives would wish to be born again to the mean worry and anxious labour they have suffered under and defeated? But when I have spoken to grey-haired widowed husbands of a future life their eyes have sparkled and I have not

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<sup>15</sup> Blatchford (Robert), *The Secrets of Life and Love*, in *Where are the Dead?* London, Toronto, Melbourne and Sydney, 1928. A symposium contributed to by Sir A. Keith, Sir O. Lodge, A. Bennett, Right Rev. E. A. Knox, G. K. Chesterton, J. Huxley, H. Townsend, H. R. L. Sheppard, H. Belloc, H. Walpole, R. J. Campbell, H. J. Spooner, J. P. Arendzen, Sir A. C. Doyle, G. H. Birmingham, J. A. Spender, T. R. Williams, Lady Southwark, R. Blatchford, T. R. Glover, R. Lynd, E. S. Waterhouse.

Blatchford (Robert), *Preface to Purchas* (T. A. R.), *The Spiritual Adventures of a Business Man*. Foreword by Sir A. C. Doyle, London 1929.

Blatchford (R.), *My Testimony*, in *Life after Death according to Christianity and Spiritualism*. By Bishop Welldon, Sir O. Lodge, Rev. F. W. Norwood, H. W. Robinson, Rev. G. V. Owen, Rev. C. D. Thomas, R. Blatchford, Rev. F. C. Spurr. Introduction by the Bishop of London. Edited by Sir J. Marchant. London, etc. 1925.

<sup>16</sup> *My Eighty Years*, by Robert Blatchford, Cassell, 1931, p. 260-266.

needed telling of their secret hope. As I have put it: "If there is another life I will seek my sweet friend and marry her again."

And that brings me to another subject, more attractive and arresting than any political issue: the subject of spiritualism. I had been all my life a materialist. I believed that the mind is the man and that the brain is the mind and that without matter there is nothing, and believing that I did not believe in a future life. Dust we are and into dust we return was my first faith. But I was interested in the question of a future life. I wanted to know. And one day W. T. Stead invited me to lunch and talked to me of spiritualism. I was intrigued and astonished, and I came away much perplexed. I could not doubt Stead's sincerity, nor his sanity, nor his verity; and I could not believe the things he had told me. But I did make one tentative experiment.

He said if I sat at my desk alone and laid the point of a pencil lightly on paper it would result in automatic writing. We had sat into the dusk of the evening, and when I reached our Fleet Street office it was in darkness and closed. I let myself in, went to my room and did as I had been told. But the pencil never moved. I waited there in the dark for some time and then began to speak aloud to my dead friends. There was no answer, and it dawned upon me that the situation was becoming creepy. So I went home and talked to my wife about it and she said she did not believe in spirits or a future life. And at that we left it. But I was still curious. I could not dismiss the earnestness of W. T. Stead.

It was the subdivision of the atom which first shook my complacent materialism. An atom which is a kind of minute solar system seemed an unstable foothold for a philosophy. I looked up the atom in the works of leading men of science. Flammarion said that "matter and energy become one." Oliver Lodge said: "It now appears that an atom may break up into electric charges, and these again may some day be found capable of resolving themselves into pristine ether." My idea of matter was some substantial, unchangeable substance: a material. But an atom which breaks up into electric charges and then resolves into pristine ether seems to be guilty of conduct unbecoming a material entity. How could I remain a materialist when deprived of material? I had to get back to Pythagoras, who said: "The visible universe is composed of invisible elements." If a leaden bullet is composed of electric charges, may not a human spirit be composed of something equally intangible—or tangible? I found myself as Carlyle put it, "standing on the bosom of nothing." That was in 1920, when I was just turned sixty-nine.

In the following year, on the 19th of December, 1921, my wife died. The dear girl had a happy death. She never knew she was dying and she had no pain. She just fell asleep. The last time I saw her she was sleeping quietly, and she looked like a pretty child. There was a slight flush on her cheeks and one little white hand lay out on the green counterpane: "like an April daisy on the grass." That was at midnight, and she died at six the next morning. I had gone to bed, for I was exhausted with watching. For the last week or more she would not let me out of her room by night or day.

When I got up on the morning of her death I found to my surprise that I did not believe she was dead. My materialism notwithstanding, I felt that my wife was alive. My daughters, who held the same materialistic views, shared my feeling. We could not believe that she was not. Perhaps it was because we had been so devoted to her, because she had so filled our lives. I began to ask myself if perhaps the spiritualists were right. I did what Lady Warwick did when the Socialist idea came to her. I read all the best spiritualist books I could get hold of. I read and thought steadily for a couple of years and then I wrote some articles in the *Sunday Chronicle* protesting against the harsh criticism and cheap ridicule to which spiritualists were subjected. Still, I was not convinced. I was only puzzled. The books had affected me as W. T. Stead's talk had affected me. I told myself that all those gifted and honourable men and women could not be dupes or knaves. And—if they were right?

Then Mr. T. A. R. Purchas, Chairman of the Johannesburg Water Board, wrote and told me of his remarkable psychic experiences, and I wrote to him saying if he could get in touch with an African soldier killed in France perhaps he could find my wife who died in England. And within a few weeks, if the evidence was credible, he found her. But I was not yet convinced. I was only puzzled.

Shortly afterwards, Mr. and Mrs. Hewat McKenzie of the National Psychic College called on me at my home in Horsham, and after some talk suggested that I should have a sitting with Mrs. Osborne Leonard, who was, they said, one of the best living mediums. I accepted, and Mr. McKenzie undertook to arrange the meeting. So, one Sunday in September 1923, Mr. McKenzie met me at Victoria and drove me out to Mrs. Leonard's house in Barnet.

I was introduced as Mr. Roberts. Mr. McKenzie and Mr. Leonard went off in the car, and Mrs. Leonard and I were left alone in the house. The room was an ordinary small suburban parlour, with a long bay-window looking on the road and a door opening into the hall. Mrs. Leonard drew the thick curtains and we sat down. I sat about a yard from her, on her left front. I could have touched her with my hand. The room was not in complete darkness. After a few minutes I could have read a book or written a letter. The features of the medium were clearly visible.

I was deeply interested, but not at all excited. I was watchful, rather sceptical; but not hostile. I had an open mind, but was not in a credulous mood. While Mrs. Leonard was falling asleep I was asking myself: "Is this a trance, or sleep? Why should she go to sleep?" But I liked the lady. She looked tranquil and good. My mental attitude can be gathered from something I wrote four days prior to the sitting, to an old friend in Manchester. "I go to London on Sunday to see the medium. I'll let you know what happens. I have little faith. I don't at all expect to get any solid evidence; but I have promised to go." That does not suggest emotion or credulity.



After a few minutes the control, Feda, spoke. She said: "There is a lady here to see you. She calls you by a name beginning with B. Not the long name, the short name." I was not expecting that. But I thought perhaps the medium knew I was Robert Blatchford and not Mr. Roberts.

The next message did not mean much to me at the time. It was a statement of fact which had to be proved. And it was proved.

Then Feda said something which made me sit up and take notice: "She is trying to put her hand in your breast pocket. She says she is pleased you have that in your pocket; but the little one is gone a long way."

I had a pocket wallet in which I carry two of my wife's portraits. One is a carte size and was taken just before we married; the other a small snapshot taken in 1915. The small one was not in my pocket at the time I sat with Mrs. Leonard. It was in South Africa. How could Mrs. Leonard, or Feda, know that? I began to think hard.

The sitting lasted ninety minutes and I got many messages, all so correct that I could not explain them away, but I need not repeat them here. I have given them in my book *More Things in Heaven and Earth*. One incident, though, I must not pass over.

Feda had just made a remark when, from a few feet distant from the medium, my wife's own voice spoke directly to me. She said, in eager anxious tone: "Bob, I'm here. I am with you, Bob." Before I could recover my presence of mind Feda spoke again and I lost the chance to reply. Did I imagine my wife had spoken? She had been dead nearly two years and I had never since heard or expected to hear her voice. This incident, crowning all the other messages, broke down my scepticism. I left for home convinced that I had been in communication with my wife. Another sitting, in the following June, confirmed the impression. I need not say how the conviction helped me to gain my serenity. I should be very unhappy if I were convinced that the splendid hope was a delusion.

And yet—does it not seem too good to be true? Oh, believe me, I cannot shake nor ignore the evidence. My doubt is quite illogical and therefore quite human. And—we shall all know some day—perhaps. Old people love to look back, they say. It may be because they have much to look back upon. But if the promise of the soul's reawakening holds good, there is a larger joy in looking forward. To our next meeting then?"

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In 1951, Laurence Thompson published a biography of Blatchford, who had been an old friend of his father, A. M. Thompson. He was able to draw on many letters to Thompson senior and to others, but made only a perfunctory mention of Spiritualism:—<sup>17</sup>

“In September 1923 he fluttered the dovescotes again. “Author of *God and My Neighbour* Is Converted To Spiritualism”, said the headlines. He had received messages purporting to come from Sally. “I am quite satisfied that I was with Sally”, he wrote to Thompson, “and I feel very happy about it. Sally said, ‘You talk to me in your room at night. I don’t mean only in your thoughts but in words.’ That is true. And she said, ‘I am not satisfied about your dreams. I am trying to influence you so that when you wake in the morning you will remember you have been with me in the night.’ Now, I always want to dream about my wife but I do not very often and when I do I seldom get near to her or keep her for more than a moment.”

There were other messages over the years. Some were foolish, but some were not foolish. Facts were facts, and had to be investigated. So he investigated them. He was never quite converted, though he wanted to be. “My position is quite illogical, and therefore quite humanly natural”, he wrote to Thompson shortly before his death. “I can’t deny the significance of the evidence and yet I can’t overcome the feeling that it is too good to be true.” ”

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Strictly speaking, the sittings with Mrs Leonard might not have impressed the sceptic. Let us set out the sequence of events.

Mrs Blatchford dies.

Robert reads the psychic literature.

18 May 1922 Blatchford daughter receives letter from friend saying Mrs Blatchford had communicated in direct voice circle via Evan Powell. (Blatchford p.82). Incidentally Feda later alluded to this Southampton communication.

Robert writes articles about Spiritualist literature, and himself rejects some of the criticisms of it.

At this point Robert undoubtedly became a talking point among Spiritualists, to add to his general fame as a journalist.

Mr Purchas of South Africa writes to Robert about his experiences, and at Robert’s request, gets messages from Mrs Blatchford in his circle.

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<sup>17</sup> *Robert Blatchford: Portrait of an Englishman* by Laurence Thompson. Victor Gollancz, 1951 p.231.

Hewat McKenzie contacts Robert in Spring 1923, and comes to see him, promising to arrange for a sitting with Mrs Leonard and taking him there, where he is introduced under a pseudonym.

However the sceptic may suspect that HM's security was not watertight, or even that the medium recognised the sitter, who had written about Spiritualism sympathetically in the papers. The pseudonym "Mr Roberts" was close to his real name.

Perhaps it is such considerations that caused the SPR not to review the Blatchford book, even though he had briefly become an SPR member in 1924. The book was however added to the SPR library.

Nevertheless, despite its organisational and evidential faults, Blatchford's book remains valuable for its insights into successful mediumship. It is also one of the best love stories in psychic literature, and it may well be that the mutual love of the Blatchfords enhanced the evidence.

It seems likely that more information about Blatchford's psychic quest can be found from his papers. Manchester City Archives told me in March 2011 that they had checked their catalogues and identified two significant collections of Blatchford letters.<sup>18</sup>

## LESLIE PRICE

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<sup>18</sup> GB127.MS f 920.5 B26

Robert Peel Glanville Blatchford (1851-1943), Journalist Author and Socialist: Autograph Letters to William Palmer, 1912-1936

GB127.MS f 920.5 B27

Robert Peel Glanville Blatchford (1851-1943), Journalist Author and Socialist: Autograph Letters to Alexander M. Thompson & Miscellaneous Letters, 1885-1943. Vol 1: 1885-1909, Vol 2: 1910-1927, Vol 3: 1928-1937, Vol 4: 1938-1943, Misc: 1909-1943

Includes letters to the son of Alexander M. Thompson, Laurence Thompson.

**Upholding Psychical Research in Front of Psychologists:  
An Excerpt from a Paper by Charles Richet at the Fifth International  
Congress of Psychology (Rome, 1905)**

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Over the years there have been many critiques of psychical research by psychologists. A prominent one was G. Stanley Hall's (1844-1924) review of the work of the Society for Psychical Research (SPR) in the first volume of the *American Journal of Psychology*, a journal he founded. Regarding telepathy Hall (1887) argued that it lacked "everything approaching proof save to amateurs and speculative psychologists . . . ." (p. 146). Many other psychologists were equally skeptical for a variety of reasons (e.g., Hansen & Lehmann, 1895; Jastrow, 1889; Troland, 1914), a topic discussed in the literature about the history of the field.<sup>2</sup> However, and this is relevant here, there have also been some defences of psychical research whose authors have taken their arguments to psychological forums.

Examples of this include William James' (1842 -1910) papers in the American journal *Psychological Review* (e.g., James, 1896; see also Alvarado, 2009), and the efforts of others in various psychology journals such as *L'année psychologique* (Maxwell, 1907) and the *Journal of Abnormal Psychology* (Carrington, 1915). Another example that is the topic of this article is the efforts of French physiologist Charles Richet (1850-1935) at the international congresses of psychology. In this paper I reprint excerpts from one of Richet's congress presentations in 1905.

### **Richet and Psychical Research**

By the time Richet published the paper, excerpts of which I am reprinting here, he had not won the Nobel Prize for his work on anaphylaxis that was later conferred to him in 1913 (Tan & Yamanuha, 2010). But he had already distinguished himself in many ways. In addition to his appointment to the Faculté de Médecine in Paris, and his editorship of the *Revue scientifique*, he was known for research in physiological topics. Throughout his life Richet published on a variety of topics, among them eugenics, history, literature, psychology, and world peace (Wolf, 1993). He was also prominent in psychical research, as can be seen in his influential and widely cited studies of what we would refer to today as ESP (for his early work see Richet, 1884, 1888, 1889).<sup>3</sup>

Some of Richet's main efforts to develop psychical research inside psychology were connected to the international congresses of psychology. The main discussions of psychic phenomena in the congresses took place in the meetings held between 1889 and 1900, and to some extent in 1905.<sup>4</sup>

The first international congress of psychology took place in Paris in 1889 (Alvarado, 2006; Nicolas & Meunier, 2002). The planning was done by the Société de Psychologie Physiologique, of which Richet was a prominent member. Richet acted as Secretary of the congress and was apparently involved in many aspects of its organization. One of the main ones was the inclusion of psychical research as part of the program. Philosopher Henry Sidgwick (1838-1900), who was then the President of the SPR, documented Richet's actions on behalf of psychical research in an entry of his journal dated March 25, 1892: "Prof. Richet, our friend and colleague in S.P.R. matters, got up a 'Congress of Physiological Psychology' in Paris and asked us to come to it. We came out of simple friendship; but when we arrived we found that the ingenious Richet designed to bring the SPR to glory at this Congress. And this, to some degree, came about" (A. Sidgwick & E.M. Sidgwick, 1906, p. 515).

There was some psychical research in the congress (Alvarado, 2006), particularly discussions about veridical hallucinations (*Statistique des Hallucinations*, 1890). Richet said in a paper presenting an overview of the work discussed at the congress that the use of the word veridical meant that the hallucinatory experiences were "related to a real fact unknown to the person having the hallucination" (Richet, 1890, p. 33). Referring to the concept of telepathy evident in the work of the SPR (Gurney, Myers & Podmore, 1886), and in the discussions at the congress, Richet argued that such a concept would be "one of the greatest discoveries of the times" (*Statistique des Hallucinations*, 1890, p. 153).<sup>5</sup>

Topics related to psychical research were also discussed in later congresses, particularly in the 1900 congress held at Paris (Janet, 1901) at which many attendants rebelled against the presence of psychic phenomena in the program. Richet wrote two papers about the future of psychology for the 1892 and 1905 congresses in which he included the study of psychic phenomena (Richet, 1892, 1906a). Both papers represent defences of the importance of psychology and calls for more research on the subject, something that was not part of mainstream in psychology.

### **Richet's Paper**

The paper reprinted here was published in the proceedings of the 1905 congress (De Sanctis, 1906), which took place in Rome, but was not read at the conference. The paper appeared in the congress proceedings (Richet, 1906a) and it was also published in English in the *Annals of Psychological Science* (Richet, 1906b), from which I have taken an excerpt appearing below.

During this same year Richet published several papers about psychic phenomena such as his famous address as President of the Society for Psychical Research entitled "La Métapsychique" (Richet, 1905b), and articles dealing with xenoglossy and materialization phenomena (Richet, 1905a, 1905c).

Recollecting the earlier congresses, Richet stated that he believed psychology was a field bringing together a variety of approaches. His point in the address was to speculate on the future of psychology. He argued that "when we speak of the Future of Psychology, it

must be understood that we refer not to the prediction of events that will happen; but that we counsel a certain general direction to be pursued in our researches, in order to realise important and valuable conquests” (Richet, 1906b, p. 202). He warned us that we should not see any part of science as closed because “it often happens that such or such a scientific question may appear to be completely settled whilst in reality it is only imperfectly understood and destined to undergo entire transformation” (p. 202). Furthermore, he believed that each science could affect another, something particularly true in the case of psychology. In the paper he focused on two areas, “the relations of the mind and the body, in other words, physiological psychology” and “the aspect of psychology known as occult, which I have called *metapsychical*, and which ought to be given a place in classical psychology” (p. 203).

### Richet on “Occult Psychology”

The following is taken from Richet’s (1906b, pp. 210-216) paper.

Occult psychology is, in my opinion, the field in which we may expect to meet with the most productive surprises . . . .

To begin with, I should like to rid myself of this troublesome term *occult*; because occult means hidden, secret, unknown. All the sciences began by being occult: there is, therefore, no such thing as occult psychology, and I prefer to use the word *metapsychic*, for which I have a paternal partiality.<sup>6</sup>

It seems to me that we should make a great mistake if we neglected the initial processes of metapsychism; because it is easy to foresee that in a few years it will have conquered for itself a right to the light of day. It will have its methods, its demonstrations, its classical treatises,<sup>7</sup> by means of which it will doubtless, like its predecessors, bar the way to new sciences not yet visible on the horizon.

What occurred in relation to somnambulism should never be forgotten:

It had been observed as early as 1780 that a peculiar physiological and psychological condition called animal magnetism or somnambulism can be produced by diverse methods. But official science, in spite of innumerable facts, demonstrations, records, books, journals, in spite of public opinion—which is sometimes more enlightened than science—refused to admit its reality until 1875. At that time, when I was still a young student, I had the good fortune of being able to prove (and that in a way which to me seems definite) that the phenomenon of induced somnambulism belongs to the class of phenomena which are indisputable, and classical, so that now no one doubts its reality.<sup>8</sup>

It is possible that a similar reaction may occur with regard to metapsychical phenomena; because some facts are established and others are reported by so many different observers from all parts of the world that it is difficult to suppose



that all this is but a colossal illusion, or, if the alternative is preferred, a colossal and universal mystification.

Certainly the numerous observers who tell us of haunted houses, of phantoms, of levitations, of predictions, of healing by the laying on of hands, of transmutations of matter, of *apports*, and other strange manifestations, are not all accurate and attentive observers. They are sometimes more credulous than critical; their faith is stronger than their reasoning power; and they test, rather severely, the patience of those who try to sift out the truth from the medley which is supplied to them. Nevertheless it would be unfair to entirely refuse to credit them, on the pretext that their opinions are not the opinions of official savants. William Crookes, Russel Wallace, Zollner, Lombroso, are not mere ciphers, and I imagine that the greater number of us would be legitimately proud to be as well equipped, scientifically, as the least of these. It is not that I bow to authority or that I wish to re-echo the maxim which has so often retarded science: *Magister dixit*. But, indeed, neither William Crookes, nor Russel Wallace, nor Zollner, nor Lombroso, deserve to be set aside as unworthy to be included in the narrow circle of real savants.

Professor Wundt, however, is not of this opinion: a few years ago he protested with considerable energy against experiments made with sickly, neurotic patients; miserable experiments, he called them, from which men claim to draw conclusions touching immense, universal nature.<sup>9</sup>

"There are two worlds," he writes ironically, "a great universal world governed by the laws discovered by Copernicus, Galileo, Newton and Helmholtz: and another little world composed of a few fanciful and hysterical young girls, which has reactions of quite a different order. Well! my choice is made, I prefer the great world to the small one."

Professor Wundt might be justified in so expressing himself, if he had succeeded in discovering an actual contradiction between these two worlds; but the learned psychologist may reassure himself. Two true facts do not contradict each other, and if there appears to be contradiction, it is the result of our ignorance. If phantoms and predictions are proved to be realities, that will in no degree whatsoever diminish the truth of the law of attraction; if telepathy is established, the laws that govern the oscillations of a pendulum will remain the same. Has the discovery of radium, which has added so greatly to our knowledge of the nature of matter, affected in any degree the teachings of chemistry concerning the combinations of iodine and iron?

The little worlds which Professor Wundt treats with aristocratic disdain are not to be so much disdained. A fragment of magnetic stone which attracts iron is a very minute world which seems at variance with all other known matter. Nevertheless, how great have been the discoveries of which this little piece of

metal has been instrumental! We owe the discovery of electricity entirely to this  
....

For my part, I do not consider this disdainful attitude as justifiable, and I believe that the facts of metapsychism, if they are true, ought to be loyally and methodically studied without hostility or favour—*sine ira ac studio*.

We need not enquire whether the facts are in agreement [apparently] with facts already known, but whether they are genuine. Neither is it of importance to consider whether they concern a small or a great world, but whether they are true or false. This is the essential question; and the only way of forming an opinion on this question is to study it.

Now it is not possible, without absurd presumption, to decide on the truth or falsehood of a matter except after experiment. This is, in my humble opinion, one of the roads to be followed by the psychology of the future; for this route will be a fertile one. It will reveal to us unexpected horizons; vast regions, which were closed to us, will be opened.

I am quite aware of the strange character of these facts. But we must not allow ourselves to be scared by this strangeness. The duty of a savant lies precisely in this, that he should not let himself be dazzled by the science of the past, and that he should anticipate the science of the future. For if we consult the history of the sciences we shall see that every discovery, at its *debut*, has been treated, according to the times, as error or folly or crime.

And this was inevitable; because, characteristically, a discovery is always unforeseen, unexpected, novel; it runs counter to current opinion; it is not in accordance with classical, official teaching. If it were otherwise it would not be a discovery.

Also, as soon as it is announced it is opposed by thousands of gainsayers. Even when it is very obvious it is not accepted; and long discussions, supplemented by constantly repeated proofs, are necessary before it is admitted: because it is with difficulty that we bring ourselves to recognise the fact that we have hitherto lived in ignorance, and maintained errors.

We cannot conceive that there will come a day when all our science will appear childish and ridiculous. Our ancestors, the savants of the seventeenth century, were not fools, yet they had no notion of things which now are regarded as elementary. A school-boy of 15 years of age is to-day ten times more learned than Galileo, Newton and Lavoisier all put together. Are we to conclude, therefore, that Galileo, Newton and Lavoisier were fools? How could they possibly have known about photography, electro-dynamism, the theory of microbes, and the telephone?

True, it is supposed that the progress of science will find its limit; and that there are no *essentially* new phenomena to be discovered. But this supposition seems to me puerile, and I prefer to think that the future is richer in discoveries to be made than the past in discoveries already made . . . .

And in truth, if we look a little deeply into the questions, we shall see at once that our science—the science of which we are so proud—has not yet furnished us with an explanation of the things that it claims to know. The phenomena which we observe, and of which we think we have discovered the laws, are not understood by us; and the laws are not laws but general *conditions*.

What surprises us and seems absurd is not the phenomenon which we do not understand—for we do not understand anything about anything—but the phenomenon to which we are unaccustomed. A fact seems probably true because we have often witnessed it, and not at all because we have understood it; for none of the phenomena of nature are understood by us. We are not surprised to see a stone fall; for we are used to it. Nevertheless, although we can express in a formula the conditions of gravitation, we have not the slightest idea of its mechanism and its cause.

All facts—facts of psychology as well as the facts of the other sciences—may be classified in two groups: (1°) Those which are habitual; (2°) those which are rare and exceptional. The day will come when the exceptional facts will attract the interest of researchers as much as the ordinary facts.

I could easily give you many curious accounts concerning metapsychical phenomena. But I must not take advantage of your patience. All the more because it is incumbent upon us to be very cautious in the *affirmation* of new truths.

The duty of science is (1°) to be very daring—boundlessly audacious—in forming hypotheses; (2°) to be very cautious—inexorably cautious—in affirmation.

I think I am acting in conformity with these equally important principles when, on the one hand, I recommend you not to neglect the study of metapsychical phenomena: because it seems to me that the future of psychology is linked with discovery in that realm; and, on the other hand, I urge those who devote their efforts to this study to cultivate prudence and patience.

## Concluding Remarks

Richet continued to be puzzled about the nature of metapsychic phenomena until the end of his life. But he was hopeful. This is evident in his *Traité de métapsychique* (1922) in which, like in the 1906 paper excerpted here, he continued to put his hope for metapsychics in future developments. In *Souvenirs d'un physiologist* Richet (1933b) referred to metapsychics as a discipline in an early stage of development, but stated: "I am convinced it is the science of the future" (p. 156). He felt that this science was the great hope of humanity (Richet, 1933a), and wrote in a book published the year he died that psychic phenomena, which he referred to as the inhabitual, "will have a place in science ... A new moral ideal will be the consequence, but not the basis of this new science" (Richet, 1935, p. 103).

Richet's essay represents a courageous attempt to defend psychical research in an important psychological forum, and a skeptical one at that. Unfortunately like other defenders of psychical research Richet's efforts were not successful in integrating the study of psychic phenomena with psychology. The two disciplines remain in an uneasy relationship to one another even today.

## Notes

1. I wish to thank Nancy L. Zingrone for useful editorial suggestions to improve this paper.
2. Some examples are the publications of Alvarado (2009), Coon (1992), Le Maléfian (1995), Mauskopf and McVaugh (1980), and Monroe (2008).
3. Regarding Richet's psychical research see my papers (Alvarado (2008a, 2008b, 2008c, 2010b) and the writings of Brower (2010), Edelman (2007), Magalhães (2007), and Monroe (2008). The best known of Richet's later works was his influential *Traité de métapsychique* (Richet, 1922), which I have recently reviewed (Alvarado, 2010b).
4. I have conducted research on the presence of psychical research in the 1889-1905 congresses that I hope to publish soon. The congresses have been discussed by many writers (e.g., Pieron, 1954; Sava, 2010). In my articles I have focused on psychical research and hypnosis in the first (1889) congress (Alvarado, 2006, 2010a).
5. There were many discussions in some of the congresses (e.g., *Statistique des Hallucinations*, 1890; Sidgwick, 1892) of what later became known as the Census of Hallucinations (Sidgwick et al., 1894).
6. Richet presented the word in his 1905 Presidential Address to the Society for Psychical research (Richet, 1905b). In a footnote of the published paper (p. 13) he acknowledged that the term had been used before.

7. There were comprehensive treatises of psychical research in later years, as seen in Richet's (1922) own work, and in the works of Moser (1935) and Sudre (1926). But Richet's prediction that psychic phenomena "will have conquered for itself a right to the light of day" in a few years was not fulfilled.

8. In this year Richet published a paper important for the history of hypnosis in France (Richet, 1875). On this paper see Estingoy and Ardiet (2005).

9. Carroy and Schmidgen (2006, p. 200) suggest that Wundt was defensive regarding psychological research using hypnosis because he may have felt that his own approach to psychology could be marginalized. On Wundt's negative attitude towards hypnotic experimentation and psychic phenomena see his short book (Wundt, 1892/2000) and other writings (e.g., Marshall & Went, 1980).

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# The Beginnings of Full Form Materialisations in England

## HERNE'S AND WILLIAMS CONTINUED:—<sup>19</sup>

By September 1872 they had decided to limit the number attending a séance<sup>20</sup> at their rooms in Holborn to twelve persons, at a fee of 5s. per person, referring to the payment as a donation. Out of the twelve sitters per séance, only two strangers would be admitted; the public séances were held on Monday, Thursday, and Saturday evenings at 8.00pm (Saturday being for Spiritualists only)

In August 1872 Herne and Williams<sup>21</sup> were invited to The Hague;<sup>22</sup> leaving on October 1<sup>st</sup>, their tour was reported in the pages of *Medium and Daybreak*. On their return from the Netherlands after two or three weeks, Herne and Williams made their way to South Wales. Around June 1873, they ended their partnership, and continued independently. Charles Williams continued giving public séances at 61, Lambs Conduit Street, Holborn, W. C. London.<sup>23</sup> Frank Herne returned to James Burns' Spiritual Institution and continued his weekly public and private séances. Many of Herne's séance reports were impressive, for example the below quote as taken from a lengthy report,<sup>24</sup> comes from a private séance held on Tuesday May 18, 1875, with Stainton Moses present:

“... In due course the curtains opened, and a, figure appeared, at first indistinctly and hesitatingly, but being warmly saluted by the sitters, it ventured about six feet from the curtains, close to the upper part of the circle, when it was seen to be an old man, apparently an Arab or Hindoo, with long grey beard, and white drapery around the head, over which was worn a large shawl or loose flowing cloak, extending down to the ground. This outer garment parted wholly in front, and the naked limbs could be seen from the toes to above the knee. The

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<sup>19</sup> January 2011, Vol, 7 No.1:—*The Beginnings of Full Form Materialisations in England*, pages 19-30:—<http://woodlandway.org/PDF/PP7.1January2011.pdf>

<sup>20</sup> Their séance room was becoming too crowded, affecting the quality of the phenomena.

<sup>21</sup> On September 10<sup>th</sup> 1878, during a séance on another trip to The Hague, Charles Williams with another British non-professional medium Mr. A. Rita were allegedly exposed. On Rita was found, a reddish-grey, nearly new beard, muslin etc. On Williams was found, a black beard (very old, dirty, and used) with many more items needed for his spirit—John King. This was reported by William Harrison in the *Spiritualist* entitled “Exposure of Imposture”. In *Spiritual Notes* (BNAS) for October 1878, support was offered to Charles Williams. This will be covered once we reach this later period.

<sup>22</sup> Spiritualism was introduced to Holland by Mr. J. N. T. Marthese, with Daniel Home laying the mediumistic foundations circa 1858. See *Psypioneer* Vol.2, No.12:—*Early Spiritualism in Holland by Elise Van Calcar (1822-1904)*, pages 277-279:—<http://woodlandway.org/PDF/PP2.12December06.pdf>

<sup>23</sup> I have only researched this up to the late 1870's.

<sup>24</sup> *Medium and Daybreak*, May 21, 1875, pages 322-333.

spirit again retired, but when he came back he threw his cloak open with both hands, when he was seen to be clothed in white trousers and an upper garment, all in one piece; tightly fitting the body.

When the material of which these were composed was felt, it was close in texture, smooth in surface, having apparently considerable substance, similar to that known as “duck.” “M. A.” (Oxon), who was present, received the greater portion of the attentions of this figure. It sat down on the floor in the Oriental fashion, and turned up the face right under the gaslight, so that those near could see the features quite distinctly. During one of its various appearances it stood up, and allowed “M. A.” (Oxon) to stand up beside it, when it appeared that it was about three inches taller than that gentleman, or about, five feet ten inches.”

[At the end of this article we will publish some of Stainton Moses (M. A. Oxon) notes on Herne and Williams]

Almost a month later, at Herne’s usual Monday séances at the Spiritual Institution on June 14<sup>th</sup>, the Petty family from Newcastle were in London. It had been previously arranged that Mr. Petty,<sup>25</sup> Junior would sit in the cabinet with Frank Herne. Also in attendance was a guest of Mr. and Mrs. Burns, a Mr. St. George Stock who was investigating spiritual phenomena. Below is a quote from another lengthy report:—<sup>26</sup>

“... The curtains again parted, and “Peter,” or the form, was again showing himself standing as before behind Mr. Herne’s chair. This was visible enough from my side of the room, and I am told also, from the other, but, as I have said, only faintly. Mrs. Burns spoke some encouraging words to “Peter” to show himself well, remarking that she had been asleep all the while, and wanted to see something now, and asked “Peter”<sup>27</sup> if she might draw the curtain more to the side, when “Peter” answered, in that melancholy tone he sometimes assumes, “Yes, Amy, do what you like.” Mrs. Burns was in the act of so drawing aside the curtain when in an instant a person sitting at the lower end of the room near the window, rushed out from his seat, turned the gas fully on, and advancing to the curtain, exclaimed, “The medium is pulling the curtain aside.” But what did he see? He saw Mr. Herne sitting quietly in his chair clothed in his usual dress. He cannot deny it.

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<sup>25</sup> The Petty family were from Newcastle, the mediumistic side of the family I believe were, Mrs. Petty and her sons Willie and Joseph aged seventeen and fourteen respectively [in 1875]. The chief spirits who manifested through them were ‘Emma’, a child, Mrs. Petty’s control, and ‘Chico’ Willie’s guide. Chico was introduced sometimes as “John King’s” wife’s father. Mention of the Petty brothers can be found in *Psypioneer* Vol. 6, No.11, pages 303-305:—*Could Psychical Research have started in Russia?* – Leslie Price:—<http://woodlandway.org/PDF/PP6.11November2010.pdf>

<sup>26</sup> *Medium and Daybreak*, June 18, 1875, pages 390-391.

<sup>27</sup> Peter it was claimed was “a spirit who aids John King and calls him the “boss,” an Americanism for master or employer.” *Medium and Daybreak*, August 8, 1873 page 347.

The confusion which followed may readily be imagined. A rush was made to prevent this person doing further mischief. Many were the reproaches that were indignantly and deservedly heaped upon him as the word “imposture” came from his lips. The sudden bursting in of a full gaslight upon Mr. Herne had clearly seriously affected him, certainly for the time being. He rushed forward convulsively, but was conducted to the sofa, when in agony he kept exclaiming, “Oh, my heart!” And if, under these circumstances, he called this man “a villain and would-be murderer” it was excusable enough. That person was Mr. St. George Stock. We feel it right to all mediums and to conscientious investigators thus to publish the name of any individual who so ruthlessly violates the established and well-known conditions of spirit-circles, but in this instance especially, for there were other Violations.”

Mr. St. George Stock, gave a detailed reply published in the *Medium and Daybreak* again this was a lengthy letter so only room for a quote:—<sup>28</sup>

“... What my powers of observation enabled me to see amounts roughly to this:—Two figures, clothed in white, a little one just the size of young Petty, which was introduced sometimes as “Chico,” “John King’s” wife’s father, and sometimes under other characters, and a big one strongly recalling the figure of Mr. Herne, which I believe purported to be “Peter.” These two figures peered round and peeped between the curtains, the little one always keeping near Mr. Petty, to whom, no doubt, it had an affinity. At times they advanced a little way out into the room, and occasionally varied the proceedings by kicking up their heels on retiring. Meanwhile the spectators were engaged in declaring that they saw the mediums beside these figures. [...]

Then the curtain was drawn up, and I heard it declared that the spirit-form was beside Mr. Herne. I gazed intently forward and saw Mr. Herne leaning out of his chair with his hand on the curtain—“only that, and nothing more.” In a moment of infatuation I jumped up, turned on the gas, and advanced into the inner room, where I found the medium wide awake, exactly in the position I have described. The rush of indignant spectators that followed prevented me “from doing farther mischief,” that is, from collecting my wits sufficiently to propose that the mediums should be searched. I believe I owe it to Mrs. Burns’s interposition that I am now alive to tell this tale, for certainly the company manifested the most laudable desire to tear me limb from limb.”

Although Mr. St. George Stock apologises to the Burns, he remained unrepentant as to Herne’s honesty and reputation as a genuine medium:

It is matter of history that Herne, after his split with Williams, deliberately exposed his own knavery, giving mock seances, in which he dressed up in masks to play ghost, and exhibited the performance of tying and untying himself

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<sup>28</sup> *Medium and Daybreak*, June 25, 1875, pages 411-412.

before Spiritualists of position in London, who are ready to vouch for the truth of this statement.

He continued in his letter to Burns:

After that person [Herne] had succeeded in ruining himself when he meant to ruin his partner, you, knowing as others know, that, despite all, he was possessed of genuine powers, were unwilling that such mediumship should be lost, and opened the doors of your institution to him. It was a benevolent act, and it would be hard indeed if in return for it, you were to be burdened with the awful responsibility of guaranteeing all Mr. Herne's manifestations.

Clearly more research is needed to establish at what point and why this famous and successful partnership was dissolved. Without too much speculation, it is possible it stemmed from the Hudson affair with Herne taking the sharp end of the allegations and Williams suggesting the ending of the partnership. It's interesting to note in *Spiritual Notes*,<sup>29</sup> two adverts published in 1878. Although they are not working together, it shows Herne is using Lamb's Conduit, or maybe he never left and their split was more amicable:

**MR. C. E. WILLIAMS,  
61, LAMB'S CONDUIT STREET, W.C.**

At home daily from 12 till 5. On Monday, Thursday,  
and Saturday evenings from 8 o'clock for reception of  
friends.

Address as above.

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**Mr. F. G. HERNE & Mrs. BASSETT-HERNE**  
hold SEANCES Tuesdays and Fridays, at 3 p.m.;  
Sundays and Wednesdays, at 8 p.m., at 61, Lamb's  
Conduit Street.

Mr. F. G. Herne at home daily from 12 till 4.

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<sup>29</sup> Volume 1, No.1, page 14.

Another point which is worthy of future investigation is that later, in December 1875 Herne was attacked or seized during a séance at Liverpool:<sup>30</sup>

## THE ASSAULT ON MR. HERNE

In consequence of the injuries sustained at Liverpool, Mr. Herne is still unable to leave his bed. One side of his body is literally black and blue with the bruises he has received. If ever there was a case for legal interference this is one. The victim of a vile conspiracy, no charge whatever can be brought against Mr. Herne. The phenomena were unmistakably genuine, and he was collared while in a deep trance, and while a manifestation was in view, which could not be explained away by any possible theory of trickery.

We warmly urge the prosecution of the offenders. Unless the Spiritualists of Liverpool take this matter in hand with clue alacrity, we shall be bound to consider them unworthy the confidence of mediums, and fit objects of ridicule by the unprincipled crew who try to annoy them. We are willing to devote our space and our influence to this matter, and shall take an initiatory step by declaring a Subscription List open, headed by the Editor of the *MEDIUM* with a sum of £5.5s. Immediate action should be taken, and the proper legal agents selected to carry the matter through, and to visit with condign punishment the offenders. If money be necessary, surely any amount may be forthcoming to vindicate the rights of a servant of the spirits who has been most vilely abused while in a helpless state, and while under spirit-influence. Those who will not stand up for righteousness and justice on behalf of the injured, cannot expect this blessing of heaven to attend them in their own career. We hope to receive an immediate and universal response to this appeal.

In 1878, or maybe a little earlier, Herne entered another partnership by marrying a celebrated physical medium better known for many years as Mrs. Bassett. Together they held regular public and private séances at Burns' Institution and visited the provinces.

Frank Herne died on December 8<sup>th</sup> 1887. His name with his professional partner had dominated the Spiritualist press in the 1870's. Surprisingly on his death a very small obituary appeared in the *Medium and Daybreak*, with no obituary notice in *The Two Worlds*:

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<sup>30</sup> *Medium and Daybreak*, December 31, 1875, page 838. We can also note this in Trevor H. Hall's *The Spiritualists*, published by Gerald Duckworth, London 1962 (U.K.), footnote 2, page 12 we find some reference to this:— In an article "Another fiasco in Liverpool" (S., 31 December, 1875, p. 328) Harrison reported that a group of devout sitters at the Spiritual Centre in Russell Street, Liverpool, had engaged Herne for six seances, and that the alleged spirit "John King" had been discovered to be Herne, with his scarf wrapped round his head to simulate a turban. The disgusted spiritualists described the occurrence as "imposture of the grossest kind", whilst Harrison said it was his "painful duty to record another miserable fiasco".



## OBITUARY—FRANK HERNE, MEDIUM

*Medium and Daybreak*:—<sup>31</sup>

A letter from Mr. H. B. Havers intimates that this well-known medium, who has been ailing very much for some time, passed away in a quiet sleep at 9.30, on Thursday night, Dec, 8. Mr. Havers, who has known him many years, showed him every kindness, sitting up with him to the last, and was with him when he passed away.

We have many times witnessed the most remarkable manifestations through this medium; but he was very sensitive to conditions. The records of the Movement for the last twenty years, afford much corroborative testimony.

Mr. J. J. Vango writes on Dec. 11: "The doctor says he died of a broken heart." The funeral took place at West Ham Cemetery, on Tuesday.

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We can note in the obituary the absence of Herne's wife Catherine,<sup>32</sup> and assume all was not well with the marriage. We can find the short answer in a lecture given by James Burns in 1892:—<sup>33</sup>

"... To illustrate that which I have observed in so many instances, namely, that those who marry physical mediums either lose health or leave their partners, be they of either sex. In some instances the other partner may have the constitution to bear up, but the cases are numerous of separations and deaths. The late Mrs. Herne saw four husbands in the grave, and she even separated from Mr. Herne before his death. Why is this? Because the drain of vitality made upon the resources of a physical medium in full work, so exhausts the system that such a medium robs the partner in life, husband or wife as the case may be. A medium can give far more sittings if thus supplied than if left entirely to his or her own resources".

Some details and descriptions of the Herne and Williams séances can be found in:—*Experiences in Spiritualism: A Record of Extraordinary Phenomena Witnessed Through the Most Powerful Mediums* by Catherine Berry.<sup>34</sup>

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<sup>31</sup> *Medium and Daybreak*, December 16, 1887, page 791.

<sup>32</sup> Catherine Herne died age 60 in October 1891. Her memorial service was front page news in the *Medium and Daybreak*. James Burns was the principal speaker at the Workman's Hall, West Ham Lane, Stratford, on Sunday October 25, 1891.

<sup>33</sup> *The Medium and Daybreak*, September 16, 1892. Front page:—*In Memoriam Kate fox Jencken*: "M.A. Oxon."

All unreferenced material is sourced from original adverts and programmes etc., as printed in the likes of *The Medium* and *Daybreak*, *The Spiritualist*, etc.

## Stainton Moses on Hearne and Williams:

Stainton Moses' private séance records began on April 2nd, 1872.<sup>35</sup> Séances held by Dr. Stanhope T. Speer, M.D., (Dr.S) and Stainton Moses with Charles Williams commenced on May 30th, 1872. Moses recorded some thirty sittings with this medium in the period 1872-1876.<sup>36</sup> Some of the earlier recorded sittings with Williams were joint séances with Frank Herne. In 1892 Moses published in *Light* under his editorship, 'Records of Private Seances from Notes Taken at the Time of Each Sitting'<sup>37</sup>; these covered the earlier séances of Dr.S.

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<sup>34</sup> Reprinted by Kessinger Publishing Legacy Reprints; probably the best price would be at [abebooks.com:http://www.abebooks.com/servlet/SearchResults?sts=t&tn=Experiences+in+Spiritualism%3A+A+Record+of+Extraordinary+Phenomena+Witnessed+Through+the+Most+Powerful+Mediums&x=77&y=21](http://www.abebooks.com/servlet/SearchResults?sts=t&tn=Experiences+in+Spiritualism%3A+A+Record+of+Extraordinary+Phenomena+Witnessed+Through+the+Most+Powerful+Mediums&x=77&y=21)

<sup>35</sup> *Light*, January 23, 1892, page 43 (First séance with Lottie Fowler recorded in "Spirit Identity" appendix V)

<sup>36</sup> *Light*, Spring 1964 (Volume LXXXIV No. 3456) page 41.

<sup>37</sup> At the beginning of this three part series, Moses states in *Light* January 16, 1892 pages 31-32:—"For some years I have cherished the hope that I might be able to arrange in an orderly manner the particulars of séances held at the house of the late Dr. Stanhope Speer, 13, Alexandra-road, South Hampstead records of which were regularly kept by Mrs. Speer and myself, and, less completely, by Dr. Speer himself. Ill-health and lack of time in the midst of constantly pressing engagements have prevented my doing what I had planned. Nor does the future hold out much hope of leisure which will suffice for the purpose. I can, however, place on record the notes made by Mrs. Speer, with such personal comments as may occur to me, selecting, if need be, from a voluminous mass what will be sufficient to give a general idea of what took place in this small circle to which very few friends at rare intervals were permitted access.

My own notes are less copious than those which I propose to publish, for the reason that I was frequently entranced, especially when the more remarkable phenomena were in process. They were, however, very regularly written when the events of the séance were fresh in my memory; and in some cases, they supplement, by accounts of my own sensations and clairvoyant observation, what these records contain. The writer of these latter, I may observe, was not affected by trance or other sensations which would interfere with her powers of observation. Dr. Speer, in even a marked degree, was impervious to psychical influence.

I shall not repeat names. It will be sufficient to indicate Dr. S. and Mrs. S. as the usual sitters, and myself, the psychic or medium through whom all manifestations were made, except on the very rare occasions when a public medium was introduced, by my initials S.M. The various communicators all assumed names, avowedly pseudonymous, though we were informed of the identity so disguised. These I shall designate by initials—M. or D. or R., &c., as the case may be—grounding (at present) no argument as to identity on what I print. My own comments will be added as occasion requires, either in the text or in footnotes, with my initials appended.

The early part of the record will be given *in extenso*. As it goes on it may be necessary, or at least advisable, to condense, so as to avoid useless repetition. But in no case will any other than verbal alteration be made in the text of the record, except for the purpose indicated. It is obvious that phenomena must recur over and over again when sittings were held so frequently, and that to repeat records of these on every occasion would be useless and tiresome.

When names that I have no authority to print are mentioned in the record initials will be used. With this introduction I proceed to give the record as it stands in the note-books which have been placed in my hands. W. STAINTON-MOSES (Editor of "LIGHT.").

and Moses: May 30th, - July 27, 1872, seven sittings in total. These appeared in *Light* in two parts Jan. 23 and Feb. 6, 1892.

Below I quote the last sitting in this series:—<sup>38</sup>

July 27th. Usual séance at Herne and Williams'. Dr. S. unable to go seven present. John King greeted us soon, and requested me to take charge of the circle. I did so, and was told to isolate the mediums and tie them up. I got some window-cord and lashed them hand and foot to their chairs and to each other. I did this so firmly that after the séance was concluded it was found that the cord had cut deeply into the hands and feet of both mediums, who were sitting exactly as I placed them, far from the spot where Katie's manifestation occurred. They were in a corner of the room, tied as I have described, and I pushed the heavy table in front of them, so that they were completely shut in. On the opposite side of the table the circle was seated. I closed and locked the door, keeping the key. Katie soon showed herself over the table, to which we all went close, summoned one by one, so as to see her. We were told to place our hands over our mouths, so that the breath might not dissipate the apparition, which was much more ethereal than those to which we have since been accustomed. I looked twice into the face from a distance of some six inches. On the first occasion I saw an indistinct luminous haze surrounding a small female face of great beauty. On the second occasion I saw the face even more plainly, every feature clearly defined, and the colour of the eyes quite distinctly visible. The face was illumined by a pair of phosphorescent hands moved backwards and forwards in front of it, as one passes a candle before a picture in order to see it in a dark room. From the fingers streamed long phosphorescent streaks, smoky and leaving a quite perceptible odour, which was even more marked when phosphorescent stars, accompanied by sounds such as might be made by the snapping of fingers, were thrown about the room. I have a very vivid remembrance—which is quickened by reading my notes made at the time—of

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<sup>38</sup> *Light*, February 6, 1892 page 64-65. Moses concludes:—I have now reached a halting place. The summer vacation was at hand, and we were all leaving town to meet by the seaside. I have compiled my narrative from copious notes written immediately after each sitting, occupying 114 closely written 8vo. pages in my first book of records. My experience of public seances will now give place to records, at the proper times of phenomena in our private circle. I have thought it well to show the kind of preparation I had for what was to come after. I had by this time gained considerable experience, and had developed a good deal of latent mediumship which was ready to break out when circumstances called it forth. Dr. S. was greatly interested in the physical phenomena, and no more. He began the investigation as a pure Materialist, and his experience, while it convinced him of the action of abnormal force, and even of the reality of the spiritual beings with whom we were brought in contact, did not really affect his materialistic tone of mind to any great extent. Practically he remained a Materialist to the end, and, when phenomena ceased on my higher development, the ease with which the spiritual side of his experience was abandoned, while his hold on the reality of the phenomena never varied, showed how little of the spiritual there was in his Spiritualism. Mrs. S., on the contrary, had little interest in the physical phenomena while spirit-teaching sank deep into her mind and excised a profound influence on her beliefs. She was always a thorough Spiritualist, in the highest and best sense of the word. For myself I am pretty well known, and hold firmly the beliefs that I evolved in such sort and by such means as I have described.

the extreme beauty of the face of Katie King the elder. I have seldom, perhaps never, seen its equal. Though her daughter, Katie the younger, was very beautiful, I unhesitatingly give the palm to her mother. It was a face that once seen would not be forgotten. The eyes sparkled with all the vivacity of healthful life. The features were perfectly formed. The lips moved as the conversation went on. I could see the white teeth, and once (though not at this séance) I put my finger between them, and they closed on me with a firm pressure, while my finger rested on the tongue. It was a head in all respects perfectly made: yet it was resting with only a partly materialised bust on a table where it was physically impossible to find a place for the rest of the body. I passed my hand between the bust and table and can testify that there was no body there in the place where the body ought to be. In all my subsequent experience I have not had anything that made on me a more permanent impression.

These were again re-published in *Light* (Spring) 1964;<sup>39</sup> and were followed in the next three quarterly journals (Summer, Autumn and Winter) with further unpublished accounts of subsequent sittings with Williams and Herne recorded in Stainton Moses' notebooks. Moses, in the early sittings recorded impressive séances with Williams some of which included Frank Herne as we can note above.

**Wednesday, Sept 25<sup>th</sup> [1872] Moses records:—<sup>40</sup>**

Mr. Dixon's Studio 112 Albany Street N.W. Present Mr. Williams, Mr. Herne and a child 5 years old who is a good rapping and seeing Medium, Miss Dixon, Mr. Dixon Jr. and Self, and Mr. Dixon Sr.

It was agreed that we should sit for spirit-photographs. A screen was arranged some 2 feet from the wall. Over this was thrown a green felt carpet, and behind it was placed a chair for the mediums. The results were as follows.

- 1) I sat alone. Mediums behind the screen. Result nil.
- 2) Ditto.
- 3) Mr. Williams and Self sat. Mr. Herne, child, and Miss Dixon behind the screen. Result a flash apparent between Mr. W. and self.
- 4) Sitters: Mr. Herne, child, and self. The result was a completely blank plate, no forms being visible.
- 5) Same sitters. No particular results except that the plate, on being developed, was found to be blurred. I was asked if I had moved, and was perfectly certain that I had not done so. Mr. Dixon, on examining the plate, said that the focus was wrong. On preparing the camera for the next plate a piece of card was found fixed in the lens. This was not there, of course, when the last plate was taken, but it would have caused the appearance noted in No. 4. Mr. H. and I are both sure that no such piece of card was there when the plate was exposed, or

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<sup>39</sup> *Light* Spring 1964 (Volume LXXXIV No. 3456) pages 41-49

<sup>40</sup> *Light* Summer 1964 (Volume LXXXIV No. 3457) pages 73-78

we must have seen it. "Peter" proclaimed that it was a piece of his work. The curious point is that the insertion of such a bit of card could be likely to disarrange the focus of the camera, and cause the appearance manifested in No. 5. I have little doubt myself that the paper or card was not in front of the lens when plate No. 4 was exposed. I was looking almost directly at the Camera, and it could scarcely have escaped my eye.

6) Messrs H. and W. and Miss Dixon sat. I and the child, as Mediums, behind the screen. The result was a haze round Mr. Herne's head. In the negative it appears like a halo. Mr. W. is hazy, he having been entranced.

7) Messrs H. and W. and Miss D. Over Mr. H. between him and Miss D. is a head and figure like the form of Katie. Over Mr. Williams is a plain male figure, which John claimed as his own.

8) H. and W. and self. A very distinct halo and form over Mr. W. and a slight form over me.

These impressions are put down from notes made on the spot, and will be amended when I see the proofs.

I omitted to say that I was entranced for a short time after sitting for No. 3.

John and Peter both spoke in the Cabinet and Developing-room. I watched the process of development throughout.

The additional notes made after Mr. Moses had seen the proofs are:

5 A flash by my head. Photo good.

6 Photo bad. Distinct cloud round H. and W.'s head.

7 Plate injured. Veiled figure between Herne and Miss D.

8 Curious. Sitters blurred and not clear: all partially entranced.

A Figure over W. Something over me. A head between me and H. and a spirit hand on H's face.

Moses goes on to describe subsequent events on the same day:

After this I went with Williams to get some dinner. Whilst we sat at table, the table lifted and tilted. When we got to Lambs Conduit Street, we went into the room behind the shop. Whilst there the table played some extraordinary antics. I was thrown out of my chair; and the table apparently chased Williams into a corner.

Mr. Sherwood and friend arrived for a private seance, Mr. Andrews and myself being admitted to strengthen the power. [...]

[After some phenomena]

... I heard a stealthy footstep on the floor, and presently a hand rested on my head and played with my hair. Shortly after I heard the door open and close softly. I also heard footsteps going up the stairs outside and presently a heavy thump on the floor above us. I struck a light, after remonstrance from Peter, and Herne was missing. On looking for him he was found, apparently in trance, on the floor of the room above. Whilst we were talking in the front room a voice - Peter's—was heard thro' the folding doors, and we found Herne back again in his place, in trance. He professed afterwards to be unaware that he had ever left the room. He certainly did so, but I am told by authorities on the subject that, when once a medium has been under spirit influence, they obtain power to guide them as they will and that it is by no means impossible that Herne may have left the room in trance, and have been brought back in the same condition. I am unable to say as to this point. But 9 men out of 10 would have arrived at the conclusion that Herne left the room for the purpose of making us imagine that he had been transported into the room above. The matter impressed me so forcibly that I put (hypothetically) the case to H. and W. afterwards, told them that, for their own credits' sake, they should always insist on being tied, and said plainly that enough had been done that night—I did not say how—to ruin them and their cause.

Moses notes on this date:—"I have seen nothing before that could be construed into trickery. This apparently bears imposture on its face. But it may be, I hope it is, only apparent".

Below I quote from *Light*; due to space I am unable to publish the séances these conclusions are drawn from but the gist of these comments is self explanatory:

Friday Oct. 4<sup>th</sup> [1872]. After long consideration and conversation with Mr. Dixon, I cannot but think that I have discovered traces of trickery in H. and W.

My suspicions were first aroused by discovering Herne on Wednesday Sep. 25th stealthily leaving the room. The explanation afterwards given that it was arranged by the spirits did not remove my suspicions. That theory — viz, that, when once a man has been under spirit influence, he is not responsible for his acts—will cover anything in the world.

Moreover I now believe that the voice in Mr. D's Studio was produced by ventriloquism. I am morally certain that the raps, said to be by John King, were made by Herne's nails on the back of my chair. I further believe that the lens was stopped up with card by unfair means.

I further believe that Williams moved the table whilst we were at dinner on the evening of the 27th at the Pantheon Restaurant, Oxford Street, and afterwards in the lower room at Lambs Conduit Street.

I believe also that Williams was cognisant of Herne's leaving the room in the Evg.

Furthermore, on Thursday 28th Mr. Dixon's son saw (in a glass<sup>41</sup> which he had placed so as to reflect Herne's figure when standing for his portrait, Herne deliberately take a hdkf. from his pocket and wave it behind the sitter so as to produce a white haze over her head. Both H. and W. have always refused to allow anyone to look at them. They have insisted on this as a sine qua non. Consequently room for deception was given. Mr. D's son defeated this by placing a glass so as to trace Herne's plan.

I believe that all the so-called spirit photographs were produced by the manipulation of H. or W. or both. In all cases their hands—or one of them were left free.

An attempt by Mr. D., his son and self to imitate spirit photos by waving a hdkf. proved very successful.

On all these grounds I believe deceit has been exercised.

I must wait and watch. All these things are very shocking to one's faith: were it not for my own experience I verily think I should believe in nothing. But I am bound to say that the largest allowance for deception will not account for very much that I have seen at Lambs Conduit Street. There is still much that is inexplicable on any theory of deceit. But one does not know where to draw the line and if the Spirits induce H. and W. to do such things unconsciously, then I don't want to deal with such spirits.

Two more sittings in which Herne and Williams functioned as joint mediums are described by Moses. His suspicions by this time seem to have become quite allayed.

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In the next issue we will continue with Charles Williams and John King the well known spirit guide/control, who it is alleged worked through many of the early mediums.

Paul J. Gaunt.

**Psypioneer Note:**—Unfortunately due to the size of the articles in this issue, we have had to miss out our regular series: Forgotten Pioneers of the S.N.U. This will be continued in the next issue.

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<sup>41</sup> In the MS no bracket closes the parenthesis. The date here should be "Wednesday 25<sup>th</sup>" (see page 74). Similarly, the date in line 5 above should no doubt be "25<sup>th</sup>" instead of "27<sup>th</sup>" (see p.75).

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See:—Stewart Alexander's book review, *Stewart Alexander's Journey* by Leslie Price Psypioneer Volume 6, No.11 pages 294-296:—  
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Paul J. Gaunt

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