

PSYPIONEER JOURNAL

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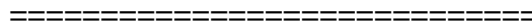
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Psypioneer would like to extend its best wishes to all its readers and contributors for the festive season and the coming New Year



DID CONAN DOYLE HAUNT HIS OLD COTTAGE?



There have been many biographies of Sir Arthur Conan Doyle (1859-1930). Some years ago, reports appeared of strange happenings at one of his former houses. In 1976, Charles Higham published *The Adventures of Conan Doyle*.

In his Epilogue, he reported:—¹

“The strangest footnote of all concerns Bignell House, Bignell Wood, in the New Forest. The present owner of Bignell House, Dr. R. K. McAll, a psychiatrist and former missionary in the Orient, runs it as a private psychiatric clinic, with no more than ten patients in residence at any one time. When he set up the clinic in the 1950’s, he and his family and patients underwent a series of extremely disquieting experiences, and thought at one stage that they would have to leave. It appeared that Conan Doyle was haunting the house restlessly. McAll

hit on the idea of an exorcism, which was carried out late in 1961. He has experienced no repetition of the trouble since that time.

Almost a week after the exorcism was successfully carried out, Dr. McAll’s attention was drawn to an item in the London Daily Mail reporting a statement by Estelle Roberts that she had achieved contact at a séance with Conan Doyle, and received the message that he was greatly distressed at having disturbed people during his lifetime. McAll interpreted this message to mean that Conan Doyle’s spiritual existence was anguished because of his dabblings before death in matters that should not concern mortal man, and

¹ Pages 343-344 “Epilogue: Séances, Mystery, and Murder”

he believes that it was only his exorcism of the house that released Conan Doyle's spirit from its sufferings.

It is difficult to give credence to this view, since Conan Doyle, if he did survive death, would undoubtedly not have been tormented by memories of having brought so many people so much comfort during his lifetime. But McAll is entirely sincere in his belief."

Higham lived in California, and it was Tony Rayns who in his behalf visited the houses of Doyle, and interviewed Dr McAll. The latter soon gave his own story, in his book *Healing the Family Tree*:—²

Some years ago, a family with three boys and two girls went to live in a beautiful Tudor style house in the New Forest. It was built on very old foundations, and a river, complete with two rustic bridges, ran through the garden. There was even a haunted wing. 'No-one can sleep there', they were told. 'It's awful at night.' This was dismissed as so much nonsense by the parents who assumed that bats or owls had been creating a disturbing noise. Indeed, this part of the house was chosen for the children's and visitors' bedrooms.

The family settled in happily, quite discounting tales about the 'hauntings' that they heard from other villagers, from passing gypsies, and even from the postman who would only deliver letters to the box at the gate and refused to come up to the house. Most of the relatives and friends who visited the new house found it a delightful experience and felt a great sense of tranquillity.

However, unaccountable things sometimes happened. Once, a visitor was awakened by a man pulling her arm urgently, another time a nurse heard a voice repeating, 'Please will someone wake up and help me?' Thinking there was someone in distress, she rose and set off down the corridor in the direction of the voice. She was pulled up short when she realized that the voice now came from behind her – she had walked through it! A few months later one of the sons, a stable ten-year-old, cried out in the night as he was awakened by the sliding door of a large wall cupboard in his room being rolled open slowly. One of the daughters was disturbed several times at night by a lot of movement in the corridor outside her room and what she described as 'somebody suffering from flatulence'. Finally, she left out a jar of indigestion tablets with a large notice: 'Next time, try these!'

² (1982), p63-66.

Sometimes the boys or one of their playmates would demand that ‘the old man should be told to go away; he trod on the trains, he’s always shuffling about; he doesn’t knock anything over and he’s very quiet, but he comes through closed doors and windows and appears around corners’. They were matter-of-fact, quite unafraid – it was all just a nuisance. Their father remained sceptical, but one evening, from the boys’ bedroom above the room where he sat reading, came a great deal of noise – of clockwork trains, drawers being opened, feet running across the floor and voices. He rushed upstairs. The bedroom was silent and in darkness. The boys were soundly, peacefully asleep, tucked in as usual. He was shaken. As he passed through the hall on his way downstairs, he was further startled by a sudden loud clang on the chandelier – but no one and nothing that he could see had touched it.

At Christmas time, Elspeth the eldest daughter paid her first visit to the new house. She was a sensible, down-to-earth student who was highly amused by her family’s strange tales. She said her prayers and went confidently to bed, happy to be home. At breakfast next morning, she remarked casually, ‘I had a long talk with your “friend” in the night. I thought it was you, Daddy, wandering about in the attic looking for something, so I sat up intending to come and help you.’ Realizing what she had said, she clapped a hand over her mouth and, with a half-laugh said vehemently, ‘It’s quite true. He was going up and down in the attic above me but I could see him as well. I don’t understand how. He was old and tall, with a moustache and a kind face. He wore a grey suit that was too big and bedroom slippers. He told me his name was Conan Doyle and he called me Elspeth. He said, “I’m sorry I woke you up, I didn’t mean to. I am looking for my diary, it’s red leather with a black elastic band round it. I hid it somewhere and my wife says it must be found for my memoirs. Please help me. I am so happy that a family of children live here now where my children lived. You lie down and go back to sleep. I promise I won’t come again, but if you find my diary please leave it outside the door.” Then he was gone.’

Elspeth was unperturbed by the incident but her family were amazed. Her father went to see the parish priest, a man who had lived in the neighbourhood for many years, and discussed the events with him. The priest told him that Conan Doyle had once lived in his house and was buried in the local churchyard. He said, ‘I have heard so much about the hauntings at your house – now we know who it is. I think he is ashamed of the diary that he kept for many years. You know, Conan Doyle was once a Christian until he began to dabble in the occult in the name of spiritualism. He died aged seventy – in 1930. I will come to your house and pray so that he may be at peace at last.’

Several members of the family gathered in their music room, part of which had been Conan Doyle’s study. The priest prayed an extremely short prayer, unaccompanied by

any rites, and committed the troubled author to the Lord. From that day twenty-one years ago, there have been no further manifestations and the house was at rest. Indeed, villagers commented on the new peacefulness which pervaded the whole area, including the country lanes on dark evenings. A newspaper report commented that, a whole week after this prayer of committal, the lift at the doctor's old surgery in Welbeck Street in London had stopped outside his door, regardless of whatever floor button had been pressed. The Daily Mail reported that 'Madam Roberts, the famous medium who lives in Kent, had at last received a message from Conan Doyle who wished to apologise for having misled so many people during his lifetime.' His diary has never been found."

The story was also told by Martin Booth in his biography of Doyle, "The Doctor, the Detective and Arthur Conan Doyle":—³

In 1925, at Pheneas's suggestion, the Conan Doyles purchase a house in the New Forest. Jean had long expressed a wish to own a quaint, thatched cottage by a stream, and her husband had been fond of the area since his doctoring days in Southsea. Bignell House, on the edge of Bignell Wood at Wittensford near Minstead, built in the reign of George I, fitted the bill exactly. The property was steeped in history and actually consisted of a two-storey cottage beside a Saxon barn. Conan Doyle substantially rebuilt the cottage, joining it on to the barn and installing an electric heating system driven by a generator: an electric pump provided water from a well and nearby stream which ran along the boundary of the garden, in which Jean laid out a miniature golf course and a croquet lawn, adding a number of garden gnomes and statuary to the shrubbery. A wicket gate led directly into the forest.

Both Conan Doyle and Jean used the house as a quiet retreat until August 1929, when sparks from the kitchen fire set light to the thatch. The whole family was in residence at the time and fled into the study to rescue what they could. Fortunately, all Conan Doyle's manuscripts were delivered from the flames; but the building was gutted. A few days later, he published a letter in the Southern Daily Echo, thanking all those who had assisted in helping to save what belongings they could from the house, including the one or two who 'showed a disposition to remove the goods even further'. Despite the disaster, he kept his sense of humour and immediately issued a commission to have the house rebuilt, but he was never to stay in it again.

On account of the Conan Doyles' spiritualism, Bignell House was long regarded with suspicion by the locals who, by and large, assiduously avoided it. In 1960, new owners – both of them also University of Edinburgh-trained doctors, the father of one of them having coincidentally been a contemporary and acquaintance of Conan Doyle when a

³ (1997), p342-3

student – discovered the house to be haunted. Noises were heard in the attic and the figure of a tall, old man with a moustache was seen in the house: it was clearly recognisable as Conan Doyle. The ghost said it was searching for a diary bound in red leather and held by a black elastic band. In the summer of 1961, an exorcism service was held and the haunting ceased. Shortly afterwards, it was discovered from a Doyle relative that Conan Doyle had indeed kept a secret diary bound in red leather which had gone missing.”

In his acknowledgments Booth included Dr McAll, and cited *Healing the Family Tree* in his bibliography. More recently, Dr Roger Straughan contributed an article to a research group, the Conan Doyle Establishment. We are grateful for permission from him to reprint this below:

STRANGE DOINGS IN BIGNELL WOOD

Roger Straughan

Last year I was driving through the New Forest on my way back home from a conference at Bournemouth. The conference had been organised by the Churches’ Fellowship for Psychical and Spiritual Studies, which I belong to, and I had given a paper at it in which I quoted at one point from Conan Doyle. There had been a bookstall at the conference and I had noticed several books on it by Kenneth McAll. I knew quite a lot about Kenneth McAll and had already read his best-known book, Healing the Family Tree. He was a doctor and psychiatrist, who had worked as a missionary in China, and had developed a method of treating disturbed patients by a form of Christian exorcism. But what made him doubly interesting to me was that he had lived and practised for many years at Bignell Wood, Conan Doyle’s New Forest retreat. He had not welcomed Doylean visitors, I had heard, and was no longer alive. As an evangelical Christian, he had been critical of spiritualism, but in his book he gives an account of an apparent apparition of Conan Doyle, looking for a diary, though for some reason McAll didn’t admit in the book that the incident had involved his own daughter and had occurred at Bignell Wood, as described by Martin Booth in The Doctor, the Detective and Arthur Conan Doyle, p.343.

All this was in my mind as I drove through the New Forest, and I decided to break my journey by stopping near Bignell Wood. I had done this on previous occasions when I had been in the area, and so could sympathise with Phillip Bergem, who described in last year’s Research File how one has to risk one’s life to negotiate the narrow but busy road which passes the front entrance. Like Phillip, I had also previously trespassed on the driveway to try to get a view of the house. Phillip’s article had given me another idea, however, as he mentioned a footpath into the wood which led to the back of the house. Nothing seemed clearly marked, but I made my way with some difficulty around

what was the outside perimeter of the grounds, and suddenly came out into a clearing with the house immediately in front of me.

One could see directly into the garden, where a family barbecue lunch party was going on, only a few yards away from me, with children and dogs playing on the lawn. Feeling rather embarrassed, I tried to drink in the details of this idyllic setting without appearing too intrusive, but that was not easy as I was somewhat spellbound by the scene and the unexpected closeness of the house. As I was moving away, a lady detached herself from the barbecue party, came over to the gate and asked if she could help me. I apologised for my apparent noseyness and explained that I was a Conan Doyle addict. She immediately invited me into the garden and started showing me around, pointing out an arbour and a seat where Conan Doyle was supposed to have worked. To establish my credentials a little more, I mentioned that I knew of Kenneth McAll and his work. 'Oh yes – my father!' was the reply. Suddenly the penny dropped and I stared incredulously at my companion. 'It was you!' I blurted out. She looked understandably puzzled, no doubt thinking that she had invited an idiot into her garden. I quickly explained about the ghost story. 'Ah yes, that was me!' she said. The afternoon was becoming more and more unreal. Here was I standing in Conan Doyle's former garden, talking to the lady who was supposed to have conversed with his apparition here.

I asked her if she would mind repeating her experience to me, as my obsessions included not only Conan Doyle but also psychological research. She said that she was quite happy to do so. I wished I had a tape recorder handy, but as soon as I left Bignell Wood I wrote down her words as accurately as I could, so the following is close to being a verbatim account:

'I was nineteen,' she said. 'I was asleep in my bedroom up there.' (She pointed to a first-floor window, overlooking the garden.) 'I was awakened by the sound of footsteps. I said, "If it's you, Mr Conan Doyle, please tell me what you want so that we can help you." I had a mental impression of an old man with a moustache. He said how happy he was that the house was now occupied by a happy family, as his own family had always been happy there. He was looking for a red leather notebook with an elastic band round it, as his wife wanted him to complete his memoirs. If it was found, could it be left outside the front door and it would be collected. My father (Kenneth McAll) hunted high and low, but found nothing.'

After relating this experience, the lady, whose name was⁴ took me into the house and showed me round the homely rooms on the ground floor – it was obviously still a much-loved family house, but she told me that it was about to be put on the market as it was no longer suitable for her elderly mother. Finally she presented me with a beautifully produced and illustrated book, The Moon Looks Down, by Frances and Kenneth McAll, which told the story of her parents' and her own imprisonment in Japanese internment camps during the War. Quite overwhelmed by this generous hospitality and not wanting to intrude any further on the family gathering, I reluctantly took my leave of Bignell Wood, and made my way back through the Forest to my car, still in a state of bemusement.

Later I reflected upon what (she) had told me and compared it with Martin Booth's account, which he seems to have presented too crudely and without the convincing details I had heard. Booth claimed that 'the figure of a tall, old man with a moustache was seen in the house' (p.343), but (she) had told me that she had a 'mental impression' – a significant difference. The words she used suggested to me that she was, or had been, psychically sensitive, and so able to 'pick up' such impressions of personalities and their words, which would not have been evident to others. This process always requires a certain amount of subjective interpretation, but that does not mean that the experience is purely imaginary.

The incident raises all kinds of fascinating psychical questions, but these are probably not as fascinating to most Establishment members as they are to me! I will not indulge in lengthy speculation here, but will simply list a few of these questions which may be of interest to Doyleans. The sceptic will of course 'explain' the whole business as the imaginary creation of a teenage girl, well aware that she was living in the former house of spiritualism's most famous convert, though this does not accord with the sober, undramatic account I had been given by the lady I had met. If one is prepared to accept that such experiences do occur (and there are huge amounts of evidence that suggest that they do), an open-minded Doylean might wonder:

1).—Was this evidence of the surviving personality of Conan Doyle, or simply a sort of psychic 're-run' of his former occupancy of the house, as seems to be the case with many so-called 'hauntings'? Conan Doyle had himself written of the possibility of a record of a past event being recorded by the shedding of a 'thought form'.⁵

⁴ We are deleting the name in *Psypioneer* to protect privacy, but we note that it differs from the Christian name given in Dr McAll's book.

⁵ *The Edge of the Unknown*, 1930, p.51

2).—Was it likely that Conan Doyle would get psychically ‘stuck’ in this way, unable to move on spiritually, given his deep understanding of such matters and other alleged communications from him (see my article in last year’s Research File, ‘Windlesham and the “Return” of Arthur Conan Doyle’), which suggest that he had in fact made much spiritual progress after his death?

3).—What are we to make of the lost red notebook, which was apparently verified by a member of the Doyle family? Do any Establishment members know any more about this? Was Conan Doyle in fact working on further memoirs at the time of his death, and would his wife have been encouraging him to do so?

4).—What about the following theory? The ‘apparition’ was perhaps of the ‘psychic tape-recording’ kind, repeating Conan Doyle’s concerns after the fire at Bignell Wood in 1929, when some of his papers may well have gone missing, and these impressions were picked up by (the daughter). The only problem with this is that it doesn’t really account for the reported ‘words’ of Conan Doyle about the happy family home, which seem entirely characteristic of him. It may also be significant that there was nothing sinister or threatening about the personality of the ‘apparition’ described, who seems to have been benevolent and courteous.

There can no clear-cut answers here, and it would be good to hear comments (sceptical or otherwise!) from readers of the File. For my part, I shall not forget my experiences at Bignell Wood, and understand what Conan Doyle meant when he wrote, ‘If anyone craves for adventure, he will find it in psychic work.’

—§—

Some papers of the medium mentioned, Estelle Roberts, were donated to the Britten Museum, and they include an undated handwritten letter sent to her by Dr McAll, seeking information about the diary. Adrian had apparently rejected the idea of ACD seeking such a diary, but Mary the eldest daughter had allegedly accepted it. It is not known if Mrs Roberts replied.

Let us now take stock as here we have a case which can offend at least three parties.

The sceptic can say that the previous ownership of the house would have been known to the McAll family, who would have interpreted strange events, including a dream, in the light of the ACD connection.

Spiritualists can be offended too. Conan Doyle was not earthbound, they would assert. Indeed Estelle heard from him at his memorial service. The medium Grace Cooke, who had not known him, received an important series of messages from him, which was seminal for the White Eagle Lodge. Conan Doyle would have been the last person to have become earthbound. He still appears as a communicator.

Protestant Christians would not accept the post-mortem presence of ACD at the cottage either. They might well agree that evil spirits can cause disturbances at houses formerly used for psychic activities. Michael Harper, for example, reported (in his book *Spiritual Warfare*) such a case afflicting a minister's family; a former incumbent had been a well-known Spiritualist.⁶As for Dr McAll, they might suggest that in his years as a missionary in China, he became influenced by pagan concepts.

As is well-known, at the Reformation, the Protestant churches rejected prayers for the dead and the developed medieval view of purgatory. So far as Britain was concerned, the general acceptance of prayers for the dead was hastened by the slaughter of the First World War. In recent decades, the spread of the ministry of deliverance has changed many who (like Dr McAll) had a Protestant background. It will be appreciated that exorcism forms only a small part of this. In the case of Dr McAll, prayer and the service of Holy Communion were normally used to help in cases of psychic disturbance.

Dr Straughan set out the possibilities well in his analysis above. Readers can form their own conclusions about the Bignell ghost!

LESLIE PRICE

Mr Stainton Moses

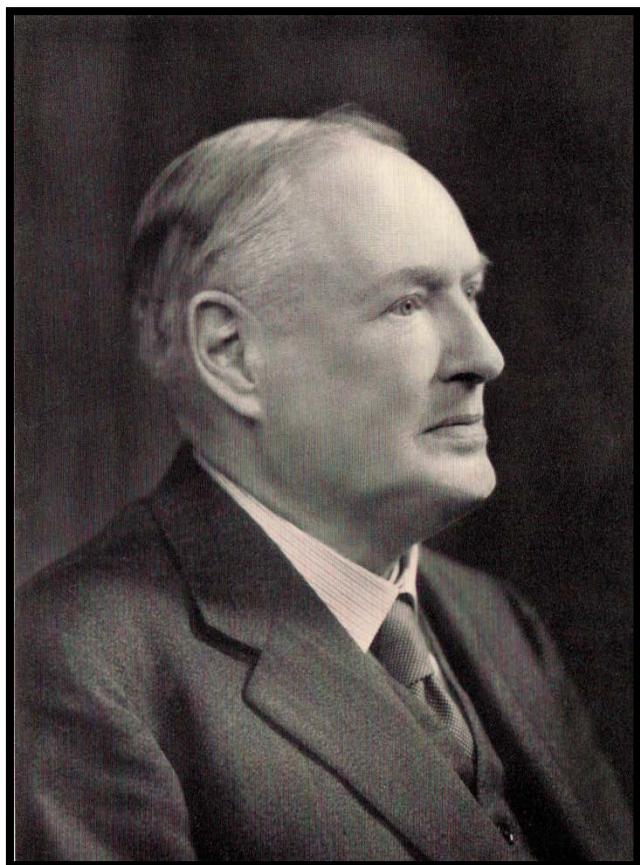
We are sorry that for reasons of space it has not been possible to resume our series of chapters from Mr Trethewy's book this month. However, we are pleased to announce that the recent SPR lecture "The Secret Life of Stainton Moses" is to appear in LIGHT in two parts next year.

LP.

⁶ Through the kindness of Canon Harper, I was able to correspond with this minister. LP.

JOHN CAMPBELL SLOAN

1869-1951



The name John Sloan became synonymous with James Arthur Findlay,⁷ whom he met on September 20th, 1918, maintaining their relationship up until the time of Sloan's death in May 1951, at the age 82. Sloan's mediumship was important to Findlay both on a personal level, and as the medium he strongly featured in some of his books, starting in September 1931 in *On the Edge of the Etheric*. His last book during Sloan's lifetime, *Where Two Worlds Meet*, gives a verbatim record of a series of nineteen séances given by Sloan between April 11th 1942 – July 10th 1945, and was published in the year of the medium's death. Findlay would later write *The Way of Life*, 1953, and *Looking Back*, his Autobiography in 1955.

Sloan's death is given as May 1951 and it is interesting to note Findlay's dedication of, *Where Two Worlds Meet* to Sloan – he dates the book's foreword as July 1951, but appears to give no mention of Sloan's death.

In the *Journal of the Society for Psychical*

Research's (JSPR), book review by W. H. Salter,⁸ it is stated Sloan died in May, while the book was being printed.

John Sloan to my knowledge was never accused of deception, or involved in any form of scandal during his fifty years of mediumship. Findlay's first séance with Sloan was at the Glasgow Society for Psychical Research, Findlay himself being one of the founders and at this time Vice-President. Later, Findlay suggested the Society for Psychical Research (SPR) should test Sloan and offered to pay the expenses, but on unacceptable terms. In *Psypioneer* 2005, Leslie Price covered this more fully and corrected a reference by Professor David Fontana written without reference to Mr Salter's review.⁹

⁷ Photograph of James Arthur Findlay (1883-1964) age 55.

⁸ JSPR:—*Journal of the Society for Psychical Research*, Reviews November, 1952, page 730.

⁹ See *Psypioneer* Volume 1, No.9:—*SPR declined to investigate voice medium*, pages 94-95:—

http://www.woodlandway.org/PDF/Leslie_Price_PP9.pdf

See also *Psypioneer* Volume 1, No.19:—*Notes by the way – SPR Council attacked again – Leslie Price*, pages 250-251:—<http://www.woodlandway.org/PDF/19.PSYPIONEERFoundedbyLesliePrice.pdf>

Below is a short quote from the report of the SPR Annual General Meeting regarding this proposal by Findlay, published in April 1931, page 55:

“Mr Findlay said that in his opinion the Society threw away useful opportunities for investigation. About eight years ago, having had sittings in Glasgow with Sloane, whom he regarded as a medium above all suspicion, he had offered to the Society to bring Sloane to London at his own expense for investigation, provided that the Society would engage Sloane as caretaker.¹⁰ The Society had however—he thought unreasonably—refused on the ground that it was undesirable to allow a medium free run of the premises at all hours of day or night. ...”

Below is a rare report on John Sloan’s mediumship in London at the British College of Psychic Science (BCPS), taken from their Quarterly Transactions and published in their journal *Psychic Science* in 1924:—¹¹

A SCOTCH MATERIALIZING AND VOICE MEDIUM

By Mrs Hewat McKenzie

THE name of John Sloan has long been familiar in the city of Glasgow as a physical medium of a very high order. Associated with his wife,¹² he provided in his own home for many years remarkable manifestations of psychic power which comforted and edified both Spiritualists and those who came from scientific or curious motives.

His work had always a peculiar personal quality which gave it a unique charm, and it was also remarkably varied. To provide solace to the mourner by evidence of survival, to ease physical pain, and to interest the sceptic by psycho-physical manifestations so that further investigation might follow, lay equally within his great gift.

Mr. McKenzie and myself became acquainted with Mr. Sloan before the war years, through an introduction from Mr. Peter Galloway, a stalwart of Glasgow Spiritualism.¹³ He told us remarkable stories of personal experiences with Sloan, consisting of the production, even in good light, of “apports,” mainly small carved ivory figures; one particularly large “apport,” prized by Mr. Galloway being a model “catamaran,” or native boat. This rather unique phase had passed before we made the acquaintance of the medium, but Sloan often

¹⁰ JSPR mis-spells Sloan.

¹¹ *Psychic Science* Vol. III.—No.1. April, 1924 pages 31-40.

¹² John Sloan’s wife’s name, given on some websites, was Agnes.

¹³ Peter Galloway played a significant part in the history of the Glasgow Association of Spiritualists. Galloway was its president from 1916 until his death on February 6th 1923. See *Psypioneer* Volume 7, No.10:—*The Glasgow Association of Spiritualists – Paul J. Gaunt & Historical Notes (Glasgow Association of Spiritualists) – The Two Worlds*, pages 317-324:—<http://www.woodlandway.org/PDF/PP7.10October2011.pdf>

spoke of it in later years, and regretted the fact that when some of his circle, in order to secure voice phenomena, had encouraged the dark séance, the “apport” manifestation, possible with a fair degree of light, had ceased. The fact has been frequently noticed in physical mediumship, that new conditions or the demand for a new phase of manifestation, seems to shut out or attenuate certain intelligent forces, and tends to draw others capable of ministering to the new desire. This is a fact worthy of serious attention by all investigators of limited experience, as much harm may be done in the frustration of normal modes of development proper to each medium.

During the war we saw Sloan again and found him rather depressed and tired with the over-large circles, mostly composed of bereaved persons, who, hearing of a means of consolation, flocked through Mr. Galloway’s introduction to the séances. Later he gave up such circles altogether and sat with a group of friends who introduced strangers only occasionally. What part Mrs. Sloan played in the manifestations except as a supporting medium is not clear, but she had certainly psychic power of her own, although the only frequent manifestation of this in the circle was through the control of the “Flower Girl, Nell,” who invariably brought a spray of scent, and plentifully besprinkled the sitters.

At all times Mr. and Mrs. Sloan were averse from receiving money or gifts for their mediumship,¹⁴ hardly even allowing the members of the circle to pay for the wear and tear of the home and furnishings occasioned by the constant visitors.

EARLY SIGNS OF MEDIUMSHIP

Sloan has told me that while a boy in his father’s home in Ayrshire, psychic experiences were quite common, and that they occurred in the most spontaneous way, no one being in the least afraid of them. When he and his brother retired to bed in an old four-poster, and drew the curtains, knocks and movements of the clothes and curtains at once occurred, and the boys would ask questions and receive answers from the “bogeys,” as they named the intelligences, for the benefit of the family. No one to his knowledge thought of associating them with the spirits of the departed. When later he came to Glasgow to work, and having passed through some earnest years of association with the Salvation Army to a chance acquaintance with Spiritualism, he realized that he had caught up again with his childhood’s experiences under another name and with an enrichment of which he had little dreamed, and from thenceforth he became an ardent attendant on the philosophy of the subject and began the development of his own powers.

Private individuals may have records of the many remarkable séances that took place in the Glasgow home, but little has been put into print regarding Sloan’s work.

¹⁴ James (Hewat) McKenzie founder of the “British College of Psychic Science” (BCPS) considered:—“He [McKenzie] told me [Horace Leaf] that he regarded John C. Sloan, the Glasgow physical medium, as about the best of them. Sloan’s drawback seems to have been his objection to receiving monetary rewards for his mediumistic work. This made him “a bit of a nuisance”, because, I suppose, one could not give him instructions. ”*Psypioneer* Volume 6, No.3:— Horace Leaf, pages 66-67:—<http://www.woodlandway.org/PDF/PP6.3March2010.pdf>

Having a great regard for his honesty of purpose, and for the quality of his gift, we had long desired to secure his services at the College either temporarily or permanently, but the daily work of a storekeeper in which he was engaged seemed to leave no time or energy for a journey from home.

In 1922, however, through business and family adjustments he expressed a desire to come south, if suitable occupation could be found.¹⁵ His Glasgow friends naturally wished to keep him there, but his home conditions made a change desirable, and a position being found for him, he came to London in the spring of 1923. This arrangement, however, greatly to the regret of his friends, did not prove a happy one either for himself or for those who brought him to London, and after a stay of two months he returned to Glasgow, not, however, to settle down again so far as can be gathered. During his short stay in London many College members and others were privileged to share in his séances, and one and all heartily appreciated their pleasant and interesting general character and the remarkable manifestations which, under good conditions, were uniformly obtained, in spite of the medium's mental distress during this period. Mr. Malcolm Bird,¹⁶ the Associate Editor of "The Scientific American," since famous for its series of articles on psychic investigation, visited England about this time, and his very first séance was held at the College with Mr. Sloan. Later he made this the subject of his first report on psychic matters, a most favourable one, in his journal of May, 1923, and subsequently embodied it in his book; "My Psychic Adventures."

I will quote at this juncture from Mr. Bird's report, who was at the moment only a keen onlooker, prepared to be interested or otherwise. "The medium turned out to be a short, stoop-shouldered Scot, quite taciturn, with a fairly noticeable burr in his speech. He would grade fairly low in education and general intelligence. . . . and my best judgment would be that both in diction and subject matter much of the communicated material of the séances would be quite beyond the normal ability of the medium."

This may pass for a superficial journalistic estimate, but better acquaintance with Sloan showed that the taciturnity passed under warming influences. "Dour" in the Scotch sense he undoubtedly was, but he had mixed extensively with some of the ablest business men in Glasgow, and had heard the subject discussed intelligently from every point of view. He had his own considered views upon it, and, by the way, was an excellent penman and a good grammarian, abilities usually associated with some degree of education.

Mr. Bird's report continues to speak with respect of the conditions of the Sloan séance conditions which it may be said characterize every general séance held at the College. After a word of appreciation or the kind of people he met, he says: "There was no emotion whatever at this séance from beginning to end. There was no mystery or other hocus-pocus about it. There was music, presumably to get the medium into trance, and later, darkness to keep him in that condition. Apart from that it was just an ordinary meeting and conversation between

¹⁵ About this time Findlay tried to find employment for him at the SPR as a caretaker, as previously quoted.

¹⁶ Brief overview of Malcolm Bird:—<http://www.survivalafterdeath.info/researchers/bird.htm>

friends. The most amazing feature of the whole performance was the informality of it. One is accustomed to think of a séance as an event where people sit in the dark with bated breath waiting for something to happen: where silence reigns, broken by singing and sobbing till the voice comes. At this sitting there was nothing resembling silence. Everybody chatted away gaily with his neighbours with the “control” and with the “communicators.” If we may for a moment adopt the view-point of the other sitters, the sitting was simply an informal gathering of a number of friends, some of whom happened to be dead. The voices of the ‘communicators’ participated on a footing of absolute equality with the flesh and blood guests.”

So we taught an American Editor how very natural such communication may be, and this he confirmed on other occasions at the College, with Sloan, Evan Powell and the Crewe Circle.¹⁷ Since then Mr. Bird has conducted many investigations in Europe and in America, but probably at none has he experienced so much genuine interest and happiness as in his first experience with John Sloan. Whether if Sloan should enter for the “Scientific American” prize, offered for the demonstration of physical mediumship, and found himself in the presence of Houdini, Prince, Carrington and the others, he could be used to produce the wonders given in the happy séance room at the College I cannot say. Perhaps he too would be bowled out, and the fair delicate flower of his mediumship withered in the cutting mental atmosphere consciously and unconsciously provided by some persons.

Warmth, homeliness and ease of mind are as necessary to a sensitive as love to a child, before he can release the soul forces or etheric body on which mediumship depends. The psychology of the medium is always the key to genuine phenomena.

At this séance Mr. Bird controlled the medium’s hand on one side, to his full satisfaction, while another well-known sitter controlled the other. This was Sloan’s invariable rule, at any time his hands could be held while the manifestations went on, and no discomfort or hindrance seemed to result. Some personal messages convinced Mr. Bird (who was unknown in the circle) of telepathic power on the part of the medium. Voices were heard from the trumpet while both hands of the medium were held by one of the circle. Lights of various kinds appeared quite apart from the medium; the trumpet travelled about the heads of the sitters, caressingly and with unflinching accuracy, this precision being a feature of the best physical mediumship.

LUMINOUS PHENOMENA

The luminous phenomena at Sloan’s sittings impressed all sitters and are worthy of some special notice. Sloan’s chief “control” is an Indian—“White Feather” or “Whitey,” who belongs, so he tells us, to the “Crow” tribe. He always spoke through the medium’s mouth, never through the trumpet, in this respect resembling Evan Powell’s¹⁸ “Black Hawk,” and

¹⁷ Crewe Circle: See following details at the end of this article.

¹⁸ For Evan John Powell (1881-1958) see *Psypioneer*: Volume 7, No.7:—*Sir Arthur Conan Doyle and Evan Powell – Paul J. Gaunt & Evan Powell’s Mediumship – Leslie Curnow*, pages 219-227:—

<http://www.woodlandway.org/PDF/PP7.7July2011.pdf>

Volume 7, No.8:—*Evan Powell the Welsh Physical Medium – Psychic Science*, pages 235-242:—

Ada Besinnet's¹⁹ "Black Cloud." "Whitey" spoke in a shrill voice, managed the circles with sense and dignity, and unless very difficult conditions prevailed, he kept the other "controls" and the "communicators" in good order. He was often most scathing in his remarks to those who could not manage the trumpet, advising them to "Go away and learn better." His particular work was the care of his "Old Box," as he jocularly called his medium, and many were the complaints as to the waywardness and perversity and stubbornness of the said "Box" on personal and séance matters regarding which "Whitey" held a different opinion. Sloan usually played himself into a semi-trance condition at the organ, and then took his place in the circle while soft singing continued. In a short time a light, bluish and clear, would be seen approaching the medium from his left, usually seen about two to three feet above and away from him. A grunt would follow and "Whitey" had arrived. Mr. Bird describes "Whitey's" light as "six to eight inches across, flat and semicircular; it rose diagonally from the medium's head and floated off and up. For a second or two it retained its original brilliance and then faded fairly fast." Often I have noticed the light approaching and said to myself "'Whitey' is here," while the medium still talked in his normal manner. A second later he was under control, and the light, seen by many in the circle at the same moment disappeared in his neighbourhood, while his hands were held. At the close of the séance, "Whitey's" light left the medium in the same way, and he was himself again. Sloan is the only medium with whom I have noticed this phenomenon so distinctly. With Kluski, lights were seen about the medium almost at once, and with Miss Basinet, lights were in evidence often before she became entranced, but with Sloan it seemed that these lights were more distinctly accompanied by an invisible materialization of some sort, as Dr. Gustave Geley has claimed in some of his valuable reports on physical mediumship.

Phosphorescent appearances were frequent during the séance. Sometimes the medium would rise from his chair and go to one and another in the circle and, taking both their hands in both of his, would proceed to give them a clairvoyant description or speak to them of their health. If the latter, he would magnetize them with his hands which, in the process, seemed to emit light of a phosphorescent nature visible to all. At other times a light would move around him while both hands were held. It never looked like a flame or filament. On other occasions the light seemed to move across and around the circle, and even get outside it, while the medium was held.

On one occasion while my daughter held both his hands, she and Miss A—, beside her, saw a luminous ring above the medium, rays of light streaming from it. This approached Miss A—at her request, and she felt what appeared to be several folds of softest material falling over her face; my daughter also, a moment later, felt the fabric fall gently on the top of her head; and on many other occasions this light, from which some soft material seemed to be suspended, was seen. It seemed to be carried around the circle by invisible hands, often brushing the faces of the sitters. On one occasion I felt this with my hand in a leisurely manner for no chain was formed by the sitters in these circles. It did not draw

<http://www.woodlandway.org/PDF/PP7.8August2011.pdf>

Volume 7, No.10:—*Evan John Powell and Sherlock Holmes – Paul J. Gaunt & Last of a Great Line (Evan Powell) – Psychic News*, pages 327-335:— <http://www.woodlandway.org/PDF/PP7.10October2011.pdf>

¹⁹ For Ada Maud Besinnet Roche (1890-1936) see *Psypioneer: Volume 6, No.3:—The Implications of Ada – Leslie Price and Paul J. Gaunt*, pages 61-81:—<http://www.woodlandway.org/PDF/PP6.3March2010.pdf>

away, and it seemed to be composed of some fine but not too soft material, rather of the texture of fine linen than of muslin. Sometimes a sitter would be asked to look carefully into the luminous drapery, and a face would be seen within it. On several occasions a face was plainly discerned, but never clearly enough for recognition. The lights manifested were thus of three kinds; the bright definite light of "Whitey," the luminosity in the drapery, and the luminosity from the hands. A number of perfectly definite records affirm the presence of all three, whilst the medium was carefully controlled, thus showing the independence of these lights.

TOUCHES AND PHYSICAL PHENOMENA

I find frequent references in the records to "touches," and have also experienced these. The trumpet, placed in the middle of the circle, seemed to be often used to produce these, which were unailing in their accuracy, and were often reported on the backs of the chairs of the sitters while the medium was held by some sitter on the other side of the circle. Occasionally the trumpet would rise in the air if the conditions were good, and a noise would be heard exactly like that of a flying machine. The familiar misfire of the engine, and its subsequent stop when it fell to the ground was most realistic. It seemed to move on a central pivot with perfect direction—this whilst the medium was held. It was as if the trumpet was being carried around the circle at a tremendous rate. On another occasion it was laid gently on the shoulder of a good observer at right angles to her body. She gently drew her hand along it to the wide end and found nothing there in the shape of a support, although it was quite impossible that it could rest in that position, without falling unless some means of support were provided. A second later it was removed from her shoulder. The medium was some distance from her.

Sloan was entirely alone at these séances. The circles were composed of members of the College, or their friends, and were in charge of Mr. Hewat McKenzie or myself, or of some responsible member of the Council who furnished reports.

VOICES, ETC

At the first séance with Sloan at the College a voice came near me, giving the name of "George" (pseudonym). I responded that I knew several of that name; and it answered "George Rose. I am sorry I did not look into this subject as you advised me before I passed on."

I certainly had an uncle of this name, gone fifteen years at least and known to no one in the circle but my husband and myself, and quite unknown to the medium. A few months before his passing, Mr. McKenzie told him something of his experiences, and advised him to look into it, but he had many business cares, and we saw him no more, so that the message and the name were harmonious with the circumstances. Why should he regret after all these years that he had not looked into the matter? Did he find that his widow, who does not interest herself in the subject, was, for the lack of knowledge of the realities of communication, cut off in a measure from his support and direct ministrations?

The voice seemed to be in the trumpet, and fairly on a level with my face, but I could not say that I recognized the tones, although it was a perfectly clear and natural voice. On other occasions the speaking would apparently be close to the floor. The trumpet would seemingly with difficulty be raised but an inch or two, and dropped again. One regular visitor, called "Jock Thampson," could apparently use the trumpet when no one else could, and was the humorist of the party, giving us tongue-twisting phrases, and assuring us continually that "We're a' Jock Thampson's bairns." "Whitey" appeared to have a grudge against this helper, and was, figuratively speaking, continually "shooing" him off. Some "communicators" could apparently use the medium's own mouth better than the trumpet, and some curious effects were produced, when the medium holding a sitter's hands in both his own—would give clairvoyance—and behind him on the floor through the trumpet would come the second half of the sentence—completing or adding to the information while the medium stood motionless. The voices varied in quality from the deepest bass to the gentle tones of women or children's voices, but except in the case of a voice which one evening claimed to be that of Mr. Galloway, who was very well known to the medium—and which did certainly seem to bear a very strong resemblance to that of Mr. Galloway, whom I had known very well—I could not say that the voices were recognized.

APPORTS

I find in many of the séance records a note that the "Flower Girl," believed to be Mrs. Sloan's "control," spoke, and that her presence was the signal for a shower of scent. The invariable method of this manifestation was as follows:

A given sitter was asked to hold the medium's two hands close together, with her own, and another sitter to spread a handkerchief upon them, and control his arms. Then it seemed, as if from above, a small shower of scent of very ordinary variety descended upon the handkerchief ; and all round the circle drops or spray would be felt, as if a spray had been used.

No previous or subsequent examination of this medium was attempted, as he offered such excellent conditions of personal control. Since the "apports" were spontaneous and unexpected, we could only make a note of them for record.

On one occasion he was restless and asked to be allowed to go to the organ again, just outside the circle. A vase of long-stemmed narcissi and bluebells stood upon it. After playing a little, the "control" said he would bring some of the flowers into the circle. The medium came back to the circle, and gave his hands to a sitter to hold, and some of the long-stemmed flowers were pushed slowly through her hands, quite unbroken. The way in which they were inserted was unique, and seemingly impossible with both hands held.

APPORT OF CIGARS

On several occasions cigars were produced in the circle. Both the medium's hands and feet were controlled by two sitters, and the "control" said that a cigar had been brought into

the small end of the trumpet. A sitter was told to put out his hand and take it—finding it there as directed.

Two other cigars were received in the same way; one male sitter having one dropped into his hands. But these happenings, though interesting to the sitters, cannot be claimed as carrying any particular evidence; but in so far as they happened with a medium who was known formerly to have this power, they should be noted, in view of any group having further opportunities of sitting with Sloan.

No record of this medium's work would be complete without mention of the "Director"—who seemed to be the power behind "Whitey"—or rather, who took control of the messages and evidence that came through. He was a gracious personality, and as soon as his presence was announced a calmness and steadiness came upon the medium and the circle, which was very noticeable.

His philosophy was deep and wise, and he often spoke in the séances, giving guidance and direction, or gave answers to questions. Mr. Bird says of him: "The next voice was that of the 'Director,' from the other side. He spoke in very cultured tones, far beyond the medium's normal powers. He offered a very well worded prayer and blessing."

The "Director" always closed the séances, and those who had the privilege of being present often at Sloan's séances felt that the evening was not complete unless his benediction had been given.

THE MEDIUM'S POWER OF DIAGNOSING DISEASE

"Whitey" claimed that the diagnosis of disease was undertaken by another "control"—"a medicine man." I have a record from our editor, Mr. Bligh Bond,²⁰ of a séance at which he was present, when the medium under control came to him, in the circle. "He asked me to lean back and stretch out my left arm. He assisted in unbuttoning my coat, and removed from my waistcoat pocket the fountain pen and pencil which I carry in the left breast pocket. He tapped me repeatedly on left breast, exactly on the spot which was hit by a cart shaft some time previously—a circumstance quite unknown to the medium. With much energy and many grunts and queer sounds, he proceeded to rub this spot, also certain places under my shoulder and down my side, and then massaged my arm. In answer to my question as to what he found amiss, he said 'Displacement.' He indicated that the area affected included my shoulder and back, and asked if I did not have pain in a place he touched by the shoulder-blades. I acknowledged that I had. In the course of rubbing up and down over my heart, several sitters noticed a light. I was also able, by looking down, to see this, and I observed not once, but repeatedly, that *the whole* of his hand was luminous, whilst the motion continued. I could at one time distinctly see the shape of the back of the hand. It was not a spot, but the whole hand was faintly luminous."

²⁰ Editor from the start of *Psychic Science* April 1922, who held the office until October, 1926; he was followed by Stanley de Brath, who resigned for reasons of health in April, 1936, when the Editorship was assumed by Mrs. Hewat McKenzie.

A date was given in connection with this accident, but this was not quite correct.

On one occasion the medium took the hands of an experienced sitter to give him a treatment, stating that he was not in a good state of health. The sitter felt he was going to faint if the grasp continued, and the “control” let go, saying his power was too strong for the sitter, who immediately recovered when his hands were dropped.

Many other sitters had similar experiences, and sometimes diagnosis was even given for relatives unknown to the medium, for whom the sitter seemed to serve as a link.

CLAIRVOYANCE

At every séance, many personal messages, and evidential matter regarding those who had passed over were given, the medium often rising and standing in contact with the person addressed. These were usually fully identified, but sometimes they would miss fire, and the “control” would seem to be at a complete loss and would return to his chair to be reinforced by “Whitey.” Sometimes the voice from the trumpet would proceed with the evidence and establish it.

This production of evidence was really Sloan’s great and outstanding work, and it was for this, far more than for the physical manifestations, that his mediumship was valued by the bulk of the sitters. The human heart has always its need while those interested in the scientific aspect are but few in comparison, and unsatisfying as sitters to the emotional nature of the medium, which seems to flow out naturally to the soul in need of comfort.

Some curious episodes happened occasionally. An amateur psychic sat in the circle, quite unknown to the medium, but “Whitey” immediately made friends with a “control”—another Indian—who seemed to be the “guide” of this sitter. “Whitey” announced the name of this “guide,” who had not got to the length of speaking English, and the conversation seemed to be carried on with hisses and confused guttural sounds—to the amusement of the other sitters. The sitter then received some good advice from “Whitey” as to his psychic development, and was addressed by his two Christian names—quite unknown to any one at the College, but always used by his deceased mother. Appropriate advice on his business affairs was also given. In the whole series of twelve séances this incident was not repeated.

It will be seen from the above brief account that in the person of this humble Scotsman of seemingly very average intelligence and ability in ordinary life, were concentrated a group of psychic gifts which may be regarded as among the very finest of their class.

The lights, materialization of drapery, the independent touches, and independent voices, the “apports,” were—if the sitters were satisfied with the conditions of control, and John Sloan’s sitters were so satisfied—physical phenomena of a high order, and as if this was not enough for one human being to carry, there were also the mental phenomena of trance and trance speaking, of clairvoyance, clairaudience, the “X-ray” diagnosis or disease, and the healing touch.

Surely this should be a happy man, we say. But the gifts imply a sensitiveness which becomes at times a real pain to its possessor, sometimes distorting his five-sense life, and making him morose, suspicious and taciturn. Under “control,” Sloan seemed to be a greater and sweeter man than when out of it, and those who have profited from his gift, thank him for the cheerful willingness with which he has borne his heavy burden for so many years, and hope that some day he will be strong enough to resume it.

A sensitive registers upon himself every emotion of his sitter, and during the heavy war years, Sloan’s sitters could be numbered by hundreds. He literally “bore their griefs,” but had also the joy of the heartfelt thanks of those who, through his powers, knew that for them “death had lost its sting, and the grave its victory.”

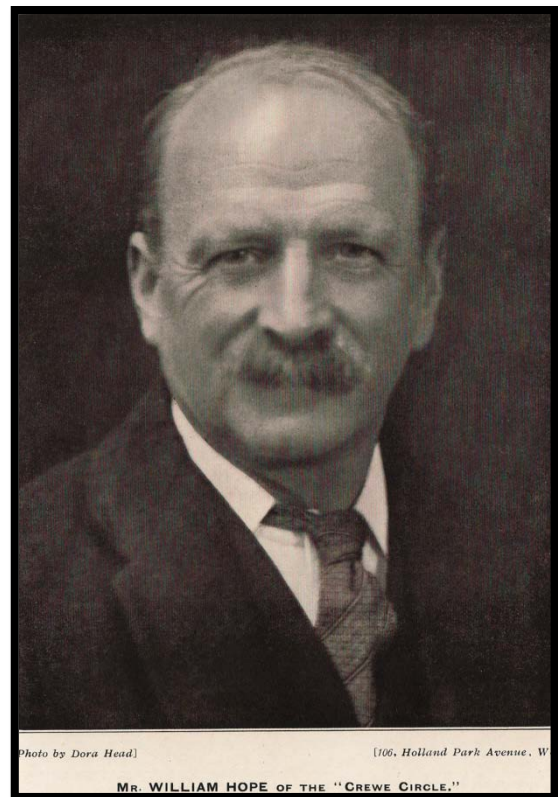
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Re Footnote 17:

CREWE CIRCLE

It appears William (Billy) Hope’s²¹ spirit photography started around 1905, with the help of Mr Buxton the organist at the Spiritualist hall at Crewe. A circle was formed for the purpose of developing spirit photographs, and this group would become known as the “Crewe Circle” with William Hope as its leader although later he would move to London. When Archdeacon Thomas Colley joined the circle, their work became public. It was the Venerable Archdeacon,²² who helped develop the superlative gift of spirit photographer William Hope. Colley reorganised what became the famous Crewe circle, named after the Cheshire town where the medium lived, (as did his helper Mrs. Buxton). Colley gave Hope his first stand camera.

We can note that some website searches show Archdeacon Thomas Colley, as an “Archbishop,” as does the following link which gives a selection of William Hope’s Psychic/Spirit photographs: “unearthed in a Lancashire second-hand and antiquarian bookshop by one of the Museum’s curators.”²³



²¹ Photograph of William Hope taken from *Psychic Science*, Vol. III. April, 1924, to January, 1925. Page 242.

²² *Gale Encyclopedia of Occultism & Parapsychology: Thomas Colley* :—
<http://www.answers.com/topic/thomas-colley>

²³ RiPA:—*Research into Paranormal Anomalistics*:—<http://www.ripaonline.co.uk/famous-folk/william-hope-s-spirit-pictures>

The Society for Psychical Research Journal (JSPR) published Harry Price's accusation of plate substitution by William Hope in May 1922, *Psypioneer* February 2006.²⁴ Prior to this there were some early concerns involving Archdeacon Thomas Colley:

“The first controversy about Hope and his psychic photographs arose in 1908 in connection with Colley's first sitting. He recognized his mother in the psychic “extra.” Hope thought it was more like a picture he had copied two years earlier. A Mrs. Spencer, of Nantwich, recognized her grandmother in the image. Hope informed Colley of his mistake. Colley said it was madness to think that a man did not know his own mother and advertised in the Leamington paper asking all who remembered his mother to meet him at the rectory. Eighteen persons selected the photograph from a group of several others and testified in writing that the picture was a portrait of the late Mrs. Colley, who had never been photographed.”²⁵

This is explained more fully some years later in the *Two Worlds*, who then ran a column in their weekly journal called *The Open Court*. Under this heading contributions were inserted for the purpose of discussion. In the July 17th 1914, issue pages 356-357 we can note the following:

The Open Court

RE CREWE CIRCLE

SIR,—Recently a belated charge of alleged fraud has been brought forward, relating to some photographs which were obtained by Archdeacon Colley in the year 1908 through the mediumship of the Crewe Circle. This sensational but unwarrantable announcement has now found an able seconder in your correspondent, Mr. E. Spencer, who sums up his qualification of the position by naively acknowledging that he “does not understand photography in the least.” Yet he presumes to criticise, and does not hesitate to impute fraud to entirely worthy and honest people. Such is Mr. Spencer's gratitude to the unpaid mediums who, giving of their time and vitality, enabled his wife's relative to manifest from the other side. It is well that many others show their appreciation of similar favours received in a different fashion.

Having for over fifteen years carefully studied the subject of spirit photography, and carried out many hundreds of experiments, both in this country and in America, I deliberately express the opinion that the photographs in question were *perfectly genuine productions*.

The plates were supplied by Archdeacon Colley, marked by him, placed by him in his own slide, in his own camera, and after exposure were at once developed the rev. gentleman, as *he afterwards stated in print*.

²⁴ Volume 2, No.2:—*Is there hope for Hope? – Leslie Price, Afterthoughts on “Hope” debate – Barbara McKenzie & Concerning Mrs. Deane – F.W. Warrick*, pages 35-46:—
<http://www.woodlandway.org/PDF/2.2%20PSYPIONEERFoundedbyLesliePrice.pdf>

²⁵ *Gale Encyclopedia of Occultism & Parapsychology: William Hope*:—
<http://www.answers.com/topic/william-hope>

The two spirit faces he immediately announced were those of his father and mother. That it was his father there is little doubt, as he subsequently published a photograph taken shortly before the old gentleman passed on, and the likeness is good. That he was mistaken in supposing that the female face was that of his mother is certain, and shows the danger of attempting identify any spirit visitor when there is no earthly portrait available for comparison. In this case it was the more dangerous by reason of fifty years having elapsed since the lady had entered the spirit world.

Some time later Mr. Hope, one of the mediums, discovered, and at once most straightforwardly pointed out to Archdeacon Colley, that the portrait was not that of Mrs. Colley, but of a Mrs. Spencer, whose portrait Mr. Hope had copied some time previously. It is greatly to be regretted that the Archdeacon would not acknowledge his very pardonable error, but persisted in declaring the portrait to be that of his mother. Probably the two ladies were much alike, and the old-fashioned way of doing up the hair made the resemblance more complete. It does not appear to have been noticed that apparently the same face (or is it Mrs. Colley? but in a slightly different pose, and wearing a necklet) appeared on a plate with fifteen other spirit visitors, including Mr. Everitt and the father of Mr. Colley. I do not know whether this was before or after the one in question, in which Mrs. Spencer only too faithfully reproduced the appearance of her last earth portrait, *but with the addition of a psychic aureole around the head*, so that it is quite incorrect for a statement to have been publicly made that “it was absolutely identical in every particular.”

There have been many instances where the spirit people, anxious to establish their identity, have refreshed their memories by reference to a photograph or picture taken previous to their transition, and then built up a replica of the same, thereby innocently bringing trouble and unfounded suspicion upon the unfortunate medium. I have a number of examples in my collection, but perhaps the most interesting are four which I took in my own home, using three cameras simultaneously. They were of *materialised* spirits who manifested through a non-professional medium, a friend of mine. Neither of the four were recognised at the time.

Subsequently the faces were identified by friends, and it was discovered that in each case a former photograph had been used as a model, and by some means unknown to us the features were carefully reproduced. Of course, the forms were enveloped in spirit drapery, and were alive and animated. In one case a daughter wrote from Glasgow, “It is exactly like the last photograph my mother had taken. Please let me have one; it will be very precious to me.” This experience proved to the sitters who were present that mere reproductions of a portrait was no evidence whatever of fraud; in fact, this was pointed out some twenty years ago by Mr. J. Traill Taylor, the celebrated photographic expert. It is well to explain that other spirit friends who also manifested, wiser and more considerate, made some slight changes in either their position or dress, so that while the features were similar, the portraits were quite different to any before taken.

The Cause of Spiritualism, perhaps more than any other, has had to suffer from unjust, ignorant and malicious charges of fraud, and sadly too frequently these have been made inside the camp by those whose experience of our wonderful phenomena should have made more receptive, more careful, and more sympathetic.—Yours, etc., H. BLACKWELL.

XMAS QUIZ

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We include below our usual quiz, for which the answers should appear in the January 2013 issue. Each question relates to a month in sequence, thus the answer to first question is in the January 2012 issue, and so on.

- 1).– Who was Charles B. Rosemond?
- 2).– Who found the treatment of Modern Spiritualism by modern history writers to be infuriating in ten ways?
- 3).– Where was the Spirit House?
- 4).– Who was Julia
- 5).– Is it true that Mrs Duncan was never tested with infra red?
- 6).– What was the identity of Mentor, a guide of Stainton Moses who specialised in physical phenomena?
- 7).– Whom did Sir Arthur and Lady Conan Doyle represent when leading a delegation to the Home office in 1930 about the law on mediumship?
- 8).– Which young medium spoke up at the Liverpool conference of 1873 in favour of a national organisation – and lived to see it?
- 9).– Who might have had “ a fatal weakness, it was his unshakable belief in his own infallibility. Again and again, he staked his entire reputation on the vaguest hunches, dreams and assumptions, which often caused harm, even ruin, to innocent bystanders.”
- 10).– Which noted healer admitted in 1870 to being sometimes controlled by Jesus?
- 11).– Why did Emma Hardinge Britten return to the public platform in Britain in September 1881?
- 12).– Who found that the mediumship of John Sloan had always a peculiar personal quality which gave it a unique charm, but admitted that under control Sloan seemed to be a greater and sweeter man than when out of it?

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BOOKS WE HAVE REVIEWED

If you have any problems locating a copy we can contact the author

An Extraordinary Journey:—The Memoirs of a Physical Medium, by Stewart Alexander, published by Saturday Night Press Publications, England, 2010. Paperback ISBN:—978-0-9557050-6-9., available at Amazon. Psypioneer review, by Leslie Price pages 294-296:—<http://woodlandway.org/PDF/PP6.11November2010.pdf>

Helen Duncan The Mystery Show Trial, by Robert Hartley published by H Pr (Publishing), London 2007. Paperback ISBN:—978-0-9553420-8-0. Psypioneer review, by Paul J. Gaunt pages 244-247:—<http://www.woodlandway.org/PDF/PP3.11November07..pdf>

Aquarian Evangelist: The Age of Aquarius as It Dawned in the Mind of Levi Dowling, by John Benedict Buescher Theosophical History Volume XI available at:— then—Occasional Papers. Psypioneer references by Leslie Price page 7:—<http://woodlandway.org/PDF/PP4.1January08.pdf>

Dead Men’s Embers, by Gerald O’Hara, published by Saturday Night Press Publications, England 2006. Large Paperback ISBN:—978-0-9514534-6-9., available at Amazon. Psypioneer review, by Leslie Price pages 1-2:—<http://www.woodlandway.org/PDF/PP3.1January07..pdf>

Mrs Miller’s Gift’ - a Celebration of 75 Years of the Edinburgh College of Parapsychology formerly Edinburgh Psychic College & Library, by Gerald O’Hara & Ann Harrison, published by Saturday Night Press Publications, England 2007. Paperback ISBN: 978-0-951-4534-9-0., available at Amazon. Psypioneer review, by Paul J. Gaunt pages 1-4:—<http://www.woodlandway.org/PDF/PP4.1January08..pdf>

Mrs Miller’s Gift CD:—Helen Duncan Séance, Ernest Oaten and Harry Edwards, Written and produced by Gerald O’Hara B.Sc. Psypioneer review, by Paul J. Gaunt pages 106-107:—<http://woodlandway.org/PDF/PP5.4April09.pdf>

The Indescribable Phenomena – The Life and Mysteries of Anna Eva Fay, by Barry H. Wiley published by Hermetic Press, Inc., Seattle Washington 2005. ISBN: 0-945296-50-9., available at:—http://www.hermeticpress.com/product_info.php?products_id=45Psypioneer references by Leslie Price pages 39-42:—<http://www.woodlandway.org/PDF/PP5.2February09.pdf>

Immortal Longings – FWH Myers and the Victorian Search for Life After Death, by Trevor Hamilton published by Imprint Academic in Exeter, U.K (also VA, U.S.A) 2009. ISBN: 9-781845- 401238 H.B, 9-781845-402488 PB, available at Amazon. Psypioneer review, by Leslie Price pages 157-148:—<http://woodlandway.org/PDF/PP5.6June09.pdf>

Talking to the Dead – Kate and Maggie Fox and the Rise of Spiritualism, by Barbara Weisberg published by HarperSanFrancisco New York 2004. Hardback ISBN: 0-06-056667-1., available at Amazon. Psypioneer review, by Paul J. Gaunt pages 9-10:—http://woodlandway.org/PDF/Leslie_Price_PP2.pdf

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