

A 1339
X

PERSONAL EXPERIENCE OF THE SUBSCRIBER
AT BOSTON,

From 25th June to 2nd July, 1875.

Having seen in some of the newspapers of the day that the wonderful medium, C. H. Foster, was in Boston and would remain there all the month of June last, I, impelled by an almost irresistible desire to see him, which had been upon me for some time previous, left home (Fredericton) on the morning of the 24th June by rail, and arrived at Boston at 6 o'clock, A. M., on the 25th, and took up my quarters at the Parker House, where Foster had his rooms. Upon enquiring for him I found that he did not generally sleep at the Hotel, but went in the afternoon by train to Salem, where his family resided, and was to be back that morning at 10 o'clock. I had a good wash and change of apparel, and took breakfast at 8 o'clock. At 10 o'clock I enquired of one of the waiters if Foster had arrived. He said he had not, but that he would show me his room, where some persons were already waiting for him. I went in and found a lady there, a stranger, of course, to me, as she also appeared to be to Foster. We sat a few minutes conversing on the subject of our visit, and Foster came in. The lady asked me if I was there by appointment. I said no, but presuming that she was, I got up to retire, when Foster said it would be more satisfactory probably if we sat together. Whereupon the lady expressed her willingness, and we sat up to a table in the middle of the room, when Foster told us to write the names of any persons whom we wished to see on slips of paper, and fold them up as closely as we could, so that he could not see or read them. I wrote twelve names on separate slips of paper, and folded each one four double. The lady had hers already written and folded up. Then Foster told us to throw them in the middle of the table and mix them together, which we did, and it was almost impossible for us to distinguish which belonged to one or the other. Foster sat down with a cigar in his mouth, which was scarcely ever out of his mouth except when he was speaking to us. There was no change

in his appearance or manner, and while talking with us in an easy affable way, he said to one of us, I forget which first, here is so and so, naming a person, to see you, and describing their appearance to the very letter, if you asked him, which I did in several instances. In one case however he described the person before giving me the name. We sat for some time conversing with our respective friends and relatives, the lady seeming quite satisfied with her conversation, sometimes given by Foster speaking to us, and sometimes by written messages and answers, which he wrote on some paper he had before him, tore it off and handed to us. During our sitting, Foster, looking towards me, said, here is your Grandmother Richardson. He had scarcely the words out of his mouth when the lady said, why, that is my grandmother's name, and she asked a great many questions of her, and was quite satisfied with the replies. Foster said, laughingly, I thought she came to you, as she is now standing here between you and me. At this sitting there were present, my father, mother, my two sisters, two brothers, my little son Frank, Mrs. Carter, Mrs. Dorr, one of my old college friends Inglis Haliburton. I do not know how many of the lady's friends were present, but she took up a good deal of the time, and I was so astonished at what had taken place that I could not sufficiently collect my thoughts to ask many questions, yet enough to convince me of the reality of our interview. I asked my sister Sarah whether I was right in giving up the atonement by blood. She replied at once, "you are right; it is entirely wrong." I also said to my father, "what about Westcock?" He said they wished me to buy it again. I then asked if there was any probability of my ever being able to do so, he said influences would be brought to bear by which I would do so, and at a very low figure. I asked father if he would write his name for me. Foster tore off a small slip of paper, and taking it and a pencil, he put his hand under the table close to me, as we were sitting next each other at the table. I heard a sort of scratching as if writing, and in about half a minute Foster handed me the paper with William Botsford written backwards on it, so you had to hold the paper up to the light and read it from the other side of the paper. The William was very like my father's writing, but Botsford was not. I then asked mother if she would write her name. Foster did the

same thing again, and handed me the paper, with Sarah Botsford. There was no L. in it, as she used to write her name, and although the Sarah was very like her writing, the Botsford was not so much, both from my recollection and from comparing it with one of her letters since my return home. I forgot to write my sister Eliza's name at first, and whilst Foster was talking with the lady I wrote it and put it amongst the rest. Very soon after Foster said, here comes one calling herself Eliza, and full of love for you, expressing her great delight at seeing you, and wishes to shake hands with you. Foster quickly put out his hand towards me, and I seized it without a moment's hesitation, and shook it most cordially, but it very nearly upset me, as I could not but feel that Eliza was there. It was about 11 o'clock now, and having determined in my own mind to have another interview with him, I walked out into town, and going into a book store, I saw some spirit photographs for sale, and upon enquiring whether the person who took them did not live in New York, the clerk in the store said that he lived here in Boston, but he had been told that he had closed his office for taking photographs. He could not tell me in what part of Boston he lived, so I went back to my hotel, and found from the directory his place of residence, and after dinner I started off to find him out if possible, to get a photograph taken. I found his wife at home, but he was not. I told her I wanted to sit for a photograph. She said he had not taken any lately, as he was very busily engaged in some new discovery for taking copies of etchings by sun light, but she said he had promised a gentleman who had come a long distance to get a photograph, to sit next day at 10 A. M., and if I would come about 9 she had no doubt but that I could have a sitting. I arranged to do so. I had a short conversation with her, and enquired if she knew of any test medium as to minerals. She said that their best test medium had just sailed for Europe, but there was another person, whose name and residence she gave me on a slip of paper, who was very good, and whilst we were talking of this the party himself came in, and she told him she had just given me a reference to him. I then arranged to see him the next day also at 3 o'clock, P. M. It must be remembered here that these people were all strangers to me, and that I had no intention or idea of seeing Mumler before I saw the photograph as mentioned, and

I had only been in Boston about 8 or 10 hours, and had not met an individual whom I knew or that knew me.

Next morning, Saturday, 26th June, I went to Mumler's house as arranged. He met me at the door, and ushering me into a nicely furnished drawing room, said, after passing the compliments of the day, that he would be ready in a few minutes for me. He then brought in a cotton screen, and shut off part of the room, or rather the light from the front windows, and having arranged my head in the standard and the focus of the camera, proceeded to take my photograph in the usual way, except that he appeared to be directed as to the process after he had arranged me entirely by rappings, which seemed to me to come from the floor just beyond the camera, whilst he stood near me. The first trial he said was a failure, and he repeated the process again, and then showed me the negative. Of course I could make nothing of it as to the features, but was strongly impressed that it was my sister Sarah from the peculiarity of her figure, one shoulder being lower than the other, and my thoughts naturally suggested the small face to be that of my little son Frank. I then went into another room with Mrs. Mumler to examine a lock of hair of my wife, as she had told me the day before that she had just come in from visiting a patient as a mesmeric physician, and I determined when I went for the photograph to try her, but did not say so to her until after I had sat for the photograph. She took the lock of hair in her hand, and shortly after she became entranced, and to my utter astonishment, as I was totally unprepared for any such thing, addressed me as nearly as I could remember and take down after I got back to my hotel, as follows: "Friend, O what beautiful spirits are here; they are all far advanced in spirit life. There stands beside you one most beautiful; she has passed away some length of time; she holds in her hand a crown of the most lovely flowers; and there is written something for you about it in large letters," it was in poetry, and I could not remember it; it was to the effect that there was peace and rest where she was, which was for all at last. I asked Mrs. Mumler what her appearance was. She said she resembled me particularly about the mouth.

She then said, "There is another, older spirit, lovely to look upon, who passed away from here somewhat later than the other; she greets you too."

"O here comes a fine old gentleman who had arrived at a very mature age." I asked what his appearance was. "O he is large, glorious looking, a king man; he has the Bible in his hand and open with his finger on the passage 'O death where is thy sting, O grave where is thy victory.' This man in lifetime thought much on this passage, and was a reader of the Bible; he calls your attention to this, as he reads it now in a different light from what he did formerly. He wishes you to understand that there is no death of the spirit; it was only the body which went into the grave. This is his message to you. Here comes another glorious spirit, an aged lady. O how lovely and good natured she looks. She sends a message to you [this was in poetry, and I could not recollect it] setting forth that in all the struggles of life there was an end to trouble, and would be peace and rest at last. There is another spirit present who seems to have died in infancy. O how beautiful!"

I had no hesitation in concluding that these spirits were those of my father, mother, two sisters, and one of my little boys who died in infancy. Mrs. Mumler then opened her hand which held the lock of hair, and said, "I will now see about this person," and went on and described my wife's state and condition, and her peculiar feelings and difficulties wonderfully accurate. I went immediately to my hotel and wrote off the above. I may here say that up to this time neither Mr. or Mrs. Mumler knew my name, where I was from, or the hotel I was stopping at, as I purposely avoided giving them any such information, nor had they asked me.

After dinner I went to see Mr. Vogt, the mineral man, at the hour appointed. I found him at home, and after shewing me his extensive cabinet of minerals from all countries, we went into a private room, and I told him I had some sort of ore which I wished him to look at. I then placed in his hand a piece of stone I took off from my property in Portland. He looked at it and examined it with his glass, saying there was iron and a very slight appearance of silver in it. I then gave him the plan of it, made by the Surveyor who made the division line between my brother and myself. He immediately pointed to the place ^{on} ~~at~~ the ~~place~~ ^{place} where it seemed to him the piece of stone was taken, which was about the very spot that my brother and myself about two years before had picked it up and broken it to

see what it was. He then said he would examine thoroughly, and see me again on Tuesday morning at 9 o'clock, as he was engaged on Monday, if that would suit me. His further description of this property and what it contains, I do not give here, as it has not yet been fully developed. I then put in his hand a piece of stone I broke off from the rocks at my place in Fredericton. Immediately upon looking at it, he said there is no money in that. I said I wanted to know if it would be worth while to work it as a quarry for building stone. He rather discouraged such idea. He then went on to say that this piece of stone was taken from a sort of ravine, shaped something like the letter S, and the place had a rough looking appearance. This was literally true. And I then asked him if he saw any house near it on the hill. He said he did, and gave a description of it, speaking of the two verandahs and two large windows in the end, and a fountain playing before it. He then said, "As I sit here I see a river flowing along in front of me, and it is one of the finest views I ever saw." We then entered into a long conversation about other things, and of some of his travels. (He was a German, intelligent and sharp.) He did not know my name or my country at this time, nor had I mentioned whether I was a married man or not. After some further conversation on general subjects, he said, "I see a lady at your place," and went on to describe my wife, so that I at once recognized her. Then he said, "I see a girl there, a little taller than the other, with dark hair and eyes," and he gave a full and accurate description of her features, and of her disposition, so that I recognized my daughter Fanny. He then said, "I see another girl," describing Kate, and said, "she seems to have had her hair cut not long since, by the way it hangs on her shoulders. He began to talk about something else then, and after a short time I asked him if he saw any one else. "Yes, I see another girl, with lighter hair and eyes than the first, with broader forehead and more pointed chin." And went to describe her so that I could see Helen was the one. "I see a boy about 9 or 10 years of age, with large dreamy eyes, and rather long face," and described my son George. I asked what he was best fitted for in life. He said he could not say, but he seemed to be surrounded with wheels of every kind of machinery. This boy has a wonderful tendency to these things. "I see a

little girl from 4 to 6 years of age; she is dressed in a light dress with a blue sash or belt," describing my youngest daughter Icila. I then asked if there were any more, he said, "there is another boy, older than the one I spoke of," whom I supposed was my son Harry. I asked if there were any more; he said, "yes, there is another little girl, a tender flower," describing Bessie, and at the same time cautioning me as to her liability to have her lungs affected, if allowed to take a severe cold, and told me what to give her if she were so attacked. During this conversation, I several times tried to get him to fix my house in town as the place he saw there, telling him that we were all living there, and not on the hill; he however persisted in saying they were on the hill, and on my return home, I found that they had been all down there, just at the time we were talking in his room, except Harry, who was not there, but young George Allen was with them. I sat talking with Mr. Vogl about 2½ hours, and arranged to see him again on Tuesday, at 9 o'clock, A. M.

Foster was not at the hotel on Saturday nor Sunday, the 26th and 27th June, but on Monday the 28th, I again saw him; his wife or sister, I don't know which, was with him during this sitting. Foster said, "Here is a person who calls himself Henry G. Clopper." I asked Foster to describe his appearance, which he did at once, but as I had never seen Mr. Clopper, I could not judge of the correctness of it, except that it corresponded so far as I could judge with a painting of him, which my wife has. I then asked him if he had a message for his daughter Fannie. Foster took up the pencil immediately and wrote the following, and handed it to me: "I wish you to bear a message of love to my dear daughter, your wife; say to her that I am with her much of the time, and watch over her; I will be near her always, and guard her in the right way.

HENRY G. CLOPPER."

My half brother Murray came, and Foster described his appearance as I remembered him, with the exception of a slight moustache, which I do not recollect. I asked him if he had any message for his daughter Fanny; he said nothing particular, and then said, "she is going to be married." This was news to me, and the consummation will alone convince me. My brother Chipman came, Foster saying, "here comes a very tall person

with a long thin face, with a haggard look, as if he had suffered a good deal; he calls himself Chip, Chip, Chipman." I then said, "Chip, where is your son Edwin?" Foster at once said, "Ed. is alive and well, in California." Foster wrote this answer at the same time, and handed it to me. I will here remark that shortly after this, Edwin, whose name I had included amongst the papers, supposing he was dead, came and confirmed his father's statement, in answer to my enquiry.

I was not so much startled at this, because I had in my interview with Vogl been told by him that certain persons whom I knew to be alive, were standing near me, and he described them so accurately, that I could readily conclude who they were. This would rather confirm the doctrine, that the spirits of persons, when in sleep or abnormal condition, has possession of the body, can leave the body, and are not confined to space. This question however, I do not pretend to express an opinion upon.

I then asked "Chip." if he would send a message to "Knox." Foster immediately wrote off the following and handed to me: "Tell brother 'Knox,' that I am near to him at all times, and would assure him of my presence. CHIP." He used to call the doctor "John Knox." Foster then said, "Here comes a person you don't know; he calls himself Jeremiah, and says that he is your great, great, great grandfather." I asked him in what country he had lived; he said Scotland. I did not ask him any more questions then, but the next time I sat I put his name among my papers. Brother Hazen came again, and I asked Foster to describe his appearance, which he did most accurately, particularly his face and figure. He told me that I would again own Westcock, and buy it back. Foster here observed to me, "Westcock seems to have been formerly owned by you." I said yes, but I had sold it. Inglis Haliburton came again, and told me he died and was buried at sea. An intimate college friend, Trimmingham came, and said he was drowned going from Halifax to Bermuda. I asked the name of the vessel and Captain. Foster at once said the Euclid, Captain Bates. Foster at the same time wrote the name of the Captain and vessel on a piece of paper, and handed to me; it looked something like "Eclid" but he called it Euclid. I then asked how it happened; he said, "in a gale the vessel broke up and all were lost." I have written

to Halifax to see if this was the case. LeBaron Drury came; he said he was drowned on a voyage to China. This was contrary to my ideas, from what I had heard of his supposed death. My sister Eliza came again, and I asked her if she remembered our visit to Nova Scotia. Foster replied at once, "yes," and then told me who was with us; viz., Sarah, Edwin, and the Doctor. I did not at that time think the Doctor was there, nor do I now recollect it, but am strongly of the opinion that he was in Scotland at the time. I asked her if she had ever spoken audibly to me since she left this earth; she said, "yes once." I asked what it was. She said, "George." In the winter of 1848, on my way from Boston, I slept all night at Woodstock, and early in the morning whilst lying in bed waiting for a fire to be made on in my room, I heard distinctly some person call me, apparently at the foot of my bed, and thought at the time it was her voice, and a short time after this I told my wife of it. Sarah came again, and I asked her if she were at the photographers with me last week; she said "yes." I asked "did you show yourself?" she said "yes." "Did any one else?" "yes, Frank." "How was he standing?" "By my side leaning over your shoulder." I had not at this time seen the photograph, but only the negative, as I have stated above.

The afternoon of this day, I went again to Mumler's, to see if my photographs were finished, but finding they were not, I determined to sit again, and see what I could get, and arranged for next morning, 29th June, at 9 o'clock; and according to appointment went there, but found that the water pipes in the house had burst, and would not be repaired for an hour or so. I then went to Vogl's and got his conclusions as to the Portland property, which when fully developed, I will have attached to this statement. After I got through here, I returned to Mumler's, where the workmen were just clearing out, and in a few minutes I sat again, and proceeding in the same way as before, the negative showed a female figure standing behind me; which, from the peculiar slope of her shoulder, struck me as my mother. The photograph from this negative I could not wait for, and it was forwarded to me by mail the following week. I recognize my mother's looks in it, and so have two or three of her old friends here, but some of my brothers do not see the likeness. After I got through with this sitting, I told

Mrs. Mumler that I wanted her to be entranced for me again, leading her to suppose it was in reference to the lock of hair she had examined the day before. I asked for a piece of paper and pencil, and when she was entranced, I asked if there were any of those spirits present who were here before. She replied at once as follows, and I took the words down as she spoke them, requesting her to stop at times, when she spoke too quickly for me to write them:

“There are a great many spirits here. I see again the old gentleman, beautiful and glorious, just what he wished to be before throwing off the material body, and all earth's old divinity. A passage in the Bible seems to cling to him fearfully, and he says while on earth he was always trying to ferret out, but it was a question he could not solve then, for he could not find its conditions. After throwing off the material body, the great Book of Life was opened to him, and he says to you live the life you are now living, for you are surely on the right track, for there is no sting of death, death can't affect the soul, neither can the grave hold it, for even Christ broke asunder the chains of death, and led his captive in triumph, and may they not all who pass through the same change then lead death captive. In coming back we wander over thorns of opposition, we only wish for your doors to be opened, to come in to aid and guide you in your journeyings through life. Mortals should know that when the present shall have faded from their view, another, more beautiful shall arise, and its light shall illumine the whole earth. And that is what is spiritualism, and none shall ask then, know ye of these things, believe ye in them, for all shall believe in the one grand religion that is coming down from God the author of all. You believe it in its childhood to-day, the coming generation will believe it in its manhood, the miracles of to-day shall be understood, more glorious truths, more tangible revelations shall be given, and the sons and daughters shall see that God is with them, and the return of the spirits will unseal the great mysteries of the past.”

“O here comes another spirit; O how beautiful!” I asked if it was the same, she said, “yes, the same that came a few days ago, she is shaking what seems a thin tissue paper, with golden letters. O how brilliant they are! yes, these are the words:

'There are minutes in youth when the spirit receives
 Whole volumes of thought on its unwritten leaves,
 When the folds of the heart in a moment enclose,
 Like the innermost leaves of the heart of the rose.
 These moments to mortals are like dew to the flowers,
 They brighten and freshen like April sun showers.
 O if ever in life one feels that he's blest,
 'Tis when he hears from his loved ones and knows they're at rest.'

Mrs. Mumler then said, "yes, for well might you feel blessed, when they come back to give you instruction, for when the spirit has been so bound down with old theology and its fetters burst and let you free, it is really like being let out from a dungeon into the ———— and heat of sunlight."

She then said, "may the mantle of the angels be thrown around you, may you be guarded and directed in your footsteps, and may you be borne safely to your journey's end, with crumbs of comfort to the many sufferings you meet on the way." I saw nothing more of them until the next afternoon, when I went and got the photographs first taken.

On Wednesday, the 30th June, I again saw Foster, and held conversations with several persons. LeBaron Drury came again, and I asked him what port he sailed from for China. Foster at once said, "New Orleans." I then asked the name of the vessel. Foster said he did not give it. I asked how it happened; he said "the ship foundered at sea, and all were lost." My friend Trimmingham came again, and I asked him if he recollected an expression we used to laugh over at our meals, in our rooms at college. Foster told me to write it down and fold it up. I did so, and he then said he did not recollect it. I was rather disappointed at this, but upon reflection, remembered that it was another college chum, Mr. Clinch, from Newfoundland, with whom I used to laugh over it. I then asked, "did Dr. Cochran expel you or me from college?" "You," was the prompt reply. This fact I could not deny, and Foster laughed heartily at it. My father came again, and I asked him if he could not send a message to the Doctor, to convince him that his spirit could return to earth again. Foster immediately wrote off the following and handed to me: "It is my desire that the Doctor should investigate this beautiful truth, he will be benefitted by it." I then asked him if I should sell my Portland property. Foster wrote off the following reply and hand-

ed it to me: "I should advise you to sell part of the Portland property, and buy Westcock. Your Father,

WILLIAM BOTTSFORD."

It is remarkable that when Foster wrote the name he spelt it with two t's, but when it was written under the table in both cases the name was spelled properly.

Jeremiah Botsford came again, and I asked him in what part of Scotland he had lived; he said, "near Edinburgh." I asked what was his occupation; he said, "a Doctor." I neglected to ask, as I should have done, what the name of the place was, &c. Sarah came again, and I asked her if she were again with me at the photographers. She said, "yes." "Was any one with her?" She said, "yes, mother, and you got a good picture." I then asked her if she were with me at Vogl's. She said, "yes." I asked if the delineations he made of the Portland property were correct. She said, "yes." I then asked if what he said of the corner of the lot was right. "Yes, and it was valuable." I asked her whose watch and chain this was, (looking down at mine.) Foster at once said, "father's." I asked if he had any peculiar way of taking hold of it. He said, "yes, he twisted it with his thumb and finger, and moved the band up and down on it." This was literally true, but some of my unbelieving friends will say that Foster read this from my mind altogether. It may be so, but under all the circumstances surrounding my experience with Foster *I doubt it*, as he certainly could not have acquired from the same source the information as to Trimmingham, Drury, Edwin, and Haliburton. This was Wednesday morning, and having got my first photograph I left next morning for home.

I have given as correct an account of what occurred during all this time, as I could make by immediately writing down every thing on my return to my hotel. I held no communication or conversation with any one as to what I was doing. I do not pretend to explain these matters; but I well know that most of my readers will attempt to explain it all rather than admit that the spirits of the departed can return to earth, and will rather believe me crazy or under some malign delusion; but all this will not disturb the full and quiet belief of my own mind as to the truth of this doctrine. GEO. BOTSFORD.

FREDERICTON, July 24, 1875.