

TOWARDS THE STARS

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AUTHOR OF

"THE ETERNAL MASQUERADE," ETC.

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THE curtain rises on the prologue of a mental drama. Of action there is but little, and throughout the leading characters remain unseen.

The stage is undecorated. The senses of the eye are not appealed to, nor does the theme of the play possess a physical allure. But as each scene in this drama of life and death unfolds itself, fresh fields of knowledge will open out, inviting the adventurer into new realms of thought.

The setting is clean. Mephistopheles, disguised as materialism, has been swept into the rubbish heap. His foul miasma has been cast into the lower regions of thought. The mask of invention has been thrown aside; and Truth makes an entry in simplicity and without adornment.

This is no masquerade of life. It is a stupendous reality. It is the exploration of the hidden depths of a colossal Truth.

Though the scenes which are enacted are stranger than any yet conceived, neither illusion nor imagination plays a part.

The words which are spoken by the unseen

characters are none of mine. The philosophy is none of my creation. Therefore, in preservation of my ego, I disclaim responsibility for the words of the play, and as I do not seek for credit I will not accept abuse.

Nor for my observations do I ask for recognition. The theories that I advance are merely the expression of myself. My sole possession is a personality, which, whether an inheritance or creation, is all I can retain.

In the incomprehensible scheme of life the part that one plays is insignificant. All that we can do is to tune ourselves to a sensitive refinement that responds to the delicate vibrations of emotion.

The philosophy of the author is not that of a cloistered ascetic produced in the solitude of dreams. It is the philosophy of a prancing puppet immersed in the effervescent swirl of a fashionable metropolis, before whose eyes there suddenly appeared an immense gulf which involved a leap into the Unknown.

Only in the spaciousness of thought can the magnificence of reality exist. Materialism is death. All those things that are visible and we imagine to be actual are transient and perishable. All that is material in conception is stillborn and abortive.

This frail but devastating materialism has threatened the ruin of our civilization. It is the pitiable exhibition of mankind as an assembly of fools. It is bloody in every sense of the word. Its instinct is that of a primitive animal and it is the enemy of learning and thought.

The counteracting forces of higher intelligences will now protect the foolish herd—which includes peers and peasants—from destroying themselves.

The omnipotent force is spirit. Its irresistibility demands acceptance.

My philosophy will be regarded by fools as insanity. Which argument will be advanced by material leaders in defence of their own disgusting imbecility.

The phases through which mankind must pass are designed by higher powers.

The will to shape his destiny is given to each man. That is the designed democracy of the gods. But when a material decadence threatens his existence, there comes an intervention.

The great scheme of the universe could never have continued on a lie or an illusion.

Look towards the stars and comprehend this planet's insignificance.

If one can leap beyond the gravitations of this earth, then one can fly to unknown spheres of thought.

In moments of soliloquy the action of the drama is suspended, but the construction is upon the solid rock of truth.

Truth is the poignant weapon of the gods.

To realize its potency, let us analyse its quality.

Truth is the one clean pathway to knowledge and to the discovery of lasting beauty.

It is the most devastating of virtues, for it tears from the face of mankind the hypocrisies of the ages.

It is the one magnificent weapon which destroys with a stroke the negligently accepted lies of the gospel of fear designed for subjection, of laws and orders ordained for oppression, of the false reverence of tradition invented to retard progression, and of the ghastly insular patriotism imposed by material fiends to feather their own foul nests.

Truth is the supreme weapon that dares to combat the festering ideals of the past.

View the fields of Europe and you will see deserts in which naked materialism is the stark god, worshipped in rotten principle. To this frightful god the sacrifice of blood and treasure and art and science is offered; and the wild dervish dance of perpetual war is performed before him.

The carnivorous god of materialism is devouring the soul of man.

Materialism is truly the means to an end, but the end is death, for materialism is the blind-alley of life; it is an illusion, for its fruits are rotten before they are gathered.

Does the world in general either accept or desire Truth?

Does not the great majority regard Truth either as a crudity or as an extravagance?

Could any existing government dare to tell its poor, misguided subjects the Truth of its designs and purposes?

Are not all forms of government based on the rule of Fear, and has not that false doctrine exposed its bankruptcy?

Intellect has become suspicious, for Truth exists only as a doctored lie, with which the herd majority is drugged into stupidity.

And it is so that when a great Truth is discovered the news is heralded with scepticism, and weary years must pass before the herd is allowed to become conscious of it.

And if that Truth—though it may be proved and established as a fact beyond argument—is likely to disturb the existing forces of social, religious, and political governments, every subtle effort is used that it may be suppressed.

This is a book of Truth.

Before the first scene in the mental drama opens, my philosophy compels me to express my contempt for the earthly rulers and the ruled.

My words are to the new and virile generation. I despise the decadence of worn-out minds. To them I concede only the spittle of my scorn.

To the unmanacled intelligences I offer a new light.

A new revelation.

A great Truth.

I offer the weapon of the gods.

CHAPTER II

REVELATION

*Introducing Joseph De Wyckoff and George Valiantine—
Why the author detests hymns—The fifth being—
H.D.B. talks to his dead sister—A staggering event—
The realms of the Unknown—The pendulum 'twixt life
and the beyond—"The weight of knowledge is relieved
by the lightness of laughter"—"Heavy seriousness is
the ass's burden"—Spirits.*

June 16, 1923.

In June, 1923, I made my first visit to America. Except for a few acquaintances whom I shed within a week of my arrival, I was free.

The life in New York, Philadelphia and Atlantic City neither impressed nor appealed to me. My purpose here, however, is not to criticize American social life; it is enough for me to say that after I had performed the slight mission I had undertaken, I was glad to accept the invitation of my friend, Mr. Joseph De Wyckoff, to stay at his country residence—Arlena Towers, Ramsey, New Jersey. Ramsey is twenty-five miles from New York, so we were able to motor to and from the city whenever we were inclined.

Arlena Towers is situated high up in the midst of beautiful country. It has two to three hundred acres of delightful pleasure grounds to roam at will, and a private lake where one fished and caught pickerel and bass for breakfast, and a nine hole golf course to keep one fit.

Mr. De Wyckoff is a Russian by birth, and has resided in the United States for over thirty years. He is an intellectual: clever, critical, and shrewd. He has practised in the United States as a barrister and is now blessed with much wealth.

The only other guest was Mr. De Wyckoff's nephew, Mr. Joseph Dasher, a student of twenty years of age.

On the occasions I had met Mr. De Wyckoff in England I knew that he was interested in spiritualism, and I had discussed the subject with him in a casual way at odd times. It was a subject I had never studied, knew nothing about, and I was therefore only mildly interested and in an extremely sceptical way.

One day my friend asked me if I would like to experience a séance? I said yes, really regarding the matter as an amusement.

He wired to a medium, named George Valiantine, to come and stay the week-end at Arlena Towers.

Before dinner on Saturday, June 16, 1923, I had a short chat with Valiantine.

Being a student of character and a natural psychologist, I can form a fairly definite opinion of a person within a few minutes.

I had never met a medium, either pseudo or genuine, and therefore Valiantine interested me, not as one likely to be of any value to me individually, but merely as a type. I judged him to be a very ordinary provincial American, simple and clean in person and mind. He is not able to express himself with any fluency, and is neither well educated nor well read. I detected in him no suspicion of the crafty silences, clever evasions, or misleading effusiveness that denote the charlatan and the crook.

His speaking voice is that of the ordinary range and his accent pleasing, but nevertheless that of the uneducated American. I write this because it has an important bearing upon subsequent happenings.

There were four of us at dinner: De Wyckoff, Joseph Dasher, George Valiantine, and myself. America is now a Prohibition country, but my host's cellar had gained my appreciation. That night, however, we were served with only ice-water. I was slightly annoyed, but I appreciate the forethought

now, since no one can say that my imagination had been stimulated by alcohol.

After dinner we took coffee and chatted on odd subjects—not spiritualism—for half an hour or so. Then we selected a room in which to hold the sitting, or séance, whichever one may care to call it.

The room we chose was a fair-sized dressing-room. It had a large bay window, a door opening into a bathroom—the latter dividing it from my bedroom—and another door which opened into the corridor. It was simply furnished. During the sitting the two doors were locked and a piece of furniture was placed against each. No one could have possibly entered or departed.

Of the four sitters I can vouch for the integrity of myself, of De Wyckoff, and of Joseph Dasher; until this the latter had no knowledge or experience of séances.

De Wyckoff placed a luminous band round each wrist of the medium, so that we could discern any movement in the darkened room.

We sat on chairs in a circle, or perhaps one should say in the four corners of a square, about five feet apart from one another. In the centre were placed two trumpets—aluminium things with luminous ends. The lights were turned off, when the whole affair struck me as being rather idiotic: I wondered at intelligent people submitting to such infantile forms of amusement; I wondered how a brilliant mind like that of my host could be induced to waste his time on such silly exploits.

We sat talking in our ordinary tones on such subjects as occurred to us. But it is a dull business making blind conversation to while away the time, especially with men. Nothing happened. Then we sang songs, as entombed miners might do to speed the hours. We sang "Tipperary," "John Brown's Knapsack," "Clementina," and others just as they occurred to us. We all had rotten voices and mine was the worst of the lot. Then we talked again. Meanwhile I was getting bored stiff, being ultra-cynical at the stupidity of human beings. Outside

there were books I wished to read and good Cognac I desired to drink. The everyday material insanity of life was preferable to this exhibition of imbecility.

Then we sang hymns. That was worse. The intent might be good, but I loathe the miserable music to which they are set. I detest ill-written verses, and my intelligence revolts at sycophantic pleas to a Deity who must surely be offended by such senseless reiterations.

Twenty minutes went by. If the purpose of singing was to achieve a certain passivity and to achieve the atmosphere of communion of thoughts, it did not succeed in my case.

It was fortunate that our expressions could not be seen, for my nose was tilted in scorn and my lip curled in unrestrained contempt.

This was my mental attitude: half-interested in an amused way, then irritated, then contemptuous. There was no acceptance of illusion, no desire for a spell, no turn towards exoticism, nothing but a cold mind on what had so far shown itself to be an exceptionally dull show.

But, without warning or premonition, the phenomenal happened.

There was a sudden, acute silence, and in a flash I sensed the presence of a fifth being in the room. The soft and gentle accents of a woman's voice broke the stillness. I was called by my name, and the voice, which sounded about three feet away on my right, was full of emotion. I maintained my ordinary calm, critical, and observant self. I was not in the slightest degree affected or disturbed. In an ordinary tone I answered: "Yes." My Christian name was repeated twice and there was an emotional break in the voice as if the possessor of it were overjoyed at being able to greet a friend after a long journey.

H.D.B.—Yes, I'm here. What do you want to say to me?

THE VOICE—Oh, I love you! I love you!

The words were charged with electrifying beauty and great tenderness. I have heard the same phrase spoken in ordinary life and declaimed by some of the world's greatest actresses, but never have I heard it expressed with more tender feeling.

My mind travelled back, searching the past to recall the memory of one who might have loved me. I could find no clue.

H.D.B.—Will you please tell me who you are—your name?

THE VOICE—Annie.

Then I understood all. But with that scepticism which is natural when one gets in touch with the inexplicable, I asked for the full name.

THE VOICE—I am Annie, your sister.

Then we talked, not in whispers, but in clear, audible tones, and the notes of our voices were pitched as if we might have been speaking on earth. And that which we said to each other were things of wondrous joy.

Every word was heard by the other three men in the room. None, I am sure, knew anything of my family affairs and *could* not know that I had a sister who had died ten years ago.

When she was on earth, she and I had a peculiar sympathy with each other: a mental understanding not usual between brother and sister. With that restless, irritable, studious, non-accepting mind of mine I could never arrive, in my earlier days, at this plane with any other member of our family.

This understanding between us is inexpressible. In its finer senses it was not always articulate, because articulation was unnecessary. She was a few years older than I, was well read, and she possessed an intellect which developed too quickly to be appreciated by fools.

Her voice on earth was soft and beautifully modulated, and her elocution in public was distinguished. In conversation she was a purist in her choice of words. I have never met any woman who spoke in the same odd way.

When she addressed me, after ten years of silence,

she said sayings in her own characteristic manner. Every syllable was perfectly enunciated and every little peculiarity of intonation was reproduced.

We talked for fifteen minutes, and about such subjects as only she and I could have known.

She told me that for several years she had been trying to get into communication with me, that she was always with me, and that she watched over me and accompanied me on my journeys. She knew of the books that I have written and other things that I have done since she died. She said that when I was alone in my room engaged on my work her spirit was with me and tried to help my thoughts. In discussing my books there was a sweet and delicate timidity in her voice. She said: "When you are writing, I *do* always try to help you."

I asked of her life on the other side and she replied that she was perfectly happy. There was no pain—a wonderful life.

She was overjoyed that she had found a means of speaking to me. We talked so much and in so intimate a strain that presently we both felt that it was hardly courteous to those present to occupy so much of their time in listening to so personal a conversation.

Throughout our talk the note of gladness was uppermost—the grateful gladness of eternity, the magnificent laughter of survival, the surety of supernatural progress, the knowledge of the dawn of the inconceivable.

Before she went I asked her if she would come and talk on the following night; she promised that she would.

We said just "Good night" to each other. And an audible kiss was heard as she went away.

Thus I experienced the most staggering event of my life. Yet from the first moment of recognition it all seemed entirely natural: from the moment of belief the supernatural *became* natural and reasonable. Doubt took flight when faced by an unchallengeable fact and the mind understood in a

flash that what had hitherto appeared to be impossible was possible.

Literary critics have called me a sceptic, a cynic, an iconoclast. And quite rightly so when it is a case of stripping the miserable cloak of lies and tearing the mask of hypocrisy with which the great majority endeavour, in their weakness, to disguise themselves. When hypocrisy thrusts itself before one's notice, one should glance down with supercilious contempt as at an impudent insult offered to intelligence. Prostitution should never dare to presume on virtue.

Truth should be met with a cultured welcome and accorded the reception due to a very occasional but very honoured visitor.

When I met a new and very wonderful truth, as interpreted to me by my sister, I received it with the regard and attention that I felt it should be accorded. Since I did not mortify her by doubtful questioning or pestilential platitudes, I was given in a few minutes the convincing knowledge and proof of the spheres of existence beyond this earth. Despite multitudinous religions, there exists, even in the hearts of those who accept and practise these religions, a very considerable doubt of the survival of life after death. With most persons of intellect that doubt is so great that the only acknowledgment they will make is that some form of after-life may be possible, but that the belief is more likely a figment of the imagination evolved through the fear of death. Living through the years of the most devastating and iniquitous war in the history of the world, watching the effects of an equally devastating and revengeful peace, and seeing tumult hailed as government and enmity fostered as mankind's law, I saw no reason for man's eternal existence. Civilization has become a mockery and humanity a misnomer. To prate of man's superiority to the other species of animal seems an absurdity. Anyway, animals have more intelligence than to exterminate their kind.

That was my mentality at Arlena Towers on that

evening in June. Ice-cold in temperament and determined to fight the fight of life with clean weapons and to protect myself and my own tiny circle, I felt that when the end came, though I would regret leaving those whom I had loved, I would be too proud to hang on to the threads of the faith which had been born in me and had blossomed in the soul of my youth, but had been blasted and destroyed by the hidden rottenness I discovered when my beliefs were put to the test.

My ice-cold critical faculty is of my own creation and was conceived by disillusionment. It is now part of myself and I shall retain it always, both here and probably in the other existence I hope to reach eventually.

This exposition of temperament I give to annihilate any suggestion of emotional sentimentalism in regard to the amazing experiences and great knowledge I have gained during the last few months.

When the account of my experience appeared later in the *London Daily News*, a friend, who is not only one of the greatest English writers, but one of our most helpful intellects, wrote me saying that knowing me he had to accept the truth of what was indicated, and that the only physical explanation he could think of was that it was an extraordinary phenomenon of the subconscious mind.

This theory of the subconscious is always advanced by men who have not experienced this wonderful reality.

There was no possibility of the subconscious arising out of the conversation which took place between my sister and I. Even if the subconscious mind could evolve some form of audible sound beyond oneself that sound would not be audible to any but oneself.

Moreover, at the time I was not thinking of my sister and I had to search the past to recall her voice.

For the sake of the sceptic's mind—and I agree that it is difficult to appreciate such phenomenon as this without actual experience—let me analyse any

possible suggestion of trickery on the part of Valiantine.

Imagination played no part in my experience. Imagination is the idle play of fancy.

My sense of hearing is wonderfully acute. The voice did not come from the medium's mouth or from his direction. Valiantine did not move from his chair, nor did he go into a trance or make any suggestion or play any part in the proceedings from the moment my sister spoke until she had left. He remained quiet, still, and attentive.

Any suggestion of ventriloquism is ridiculous. No man living could imitate the clear and gentle voice which spoke, and, beyond this, no living man could talk in Annie's characteristic way, with her individual enunciation, her own choice of words, and her knowledge of the many things which she and I alone could have known.

When one has arrived at the great turning point of one's philosophy towards life and after life and the whole hitherto incomprehensible scheme of creation, it is natural that the mind should dwell with tenderness on the first few moments of the opening of a new vista of thought, when the gates of intellect are thrown open and the fertile fields of knowledge offer their alluring invitation to the journey of discovery.

But however far our mind may soar or however deep it may probe, with our earthly limitations only the fool would dare to consider himself more than an infant on the threshold of thought, learning the first few letters of the alphabet of the universe.

In this book I will describe my experiences, experiments, and happenings. I do not care whether or not my theories or philosophy are accepted. I am not a missionary.

The one thing that I claim is that my narrative is the truth. I give no embellishments, decorations, or elaborations.

I believe the Truth is the great underlying force existing in the heart of creation. It is time that Truth got a place in the heart of man.

Truth is built upon a solid foundation, and it cannot be stirred into the semblance of phantasy and illusion.

The Truth that was shown to me was erected upon the foundation of adamant fact, impregnable to attack from doubt, and by its spiritual substance impervious to any attempt at material denial.

From the first moment of revelation it ceased to be a question of doubt and became a matter of knowledge. And with the birth of that knowledge my mind was released from the clogs of material philosophy and free to climb towards the realms of the Unknown.

If I have dwelt so long in my analysis of this origin of new thought it is because I value it as a firm stage, suddenly arrived at, which enabled me a few months later to make tremendous mental flights.

After the departure of the spirit of my sister the séance continued for about two hours, during which period five other spirits entered the room and conversed with us. Each spirit was distinct and each spoke with an accent unlike the other.

The voices spoke from various parts of the room. Sometimes they came from close to the ceiling or from an extreme top corner of the room. They *could* not have been produced by any ventriloquial effort of the medium as they were occasionally twenty feet away from him.

If one discussed the question on the basis of ventriloquism, then one would be compelled to take Valiantine as the greatest mimic and the greatest audible actor the world has seen, for there were, on that night, six distinct types of voices, each with dissimilar notes, cadences, and inflections.

But this theory is smashed by the fact that Valiantine spoke simultaneously *with* the spirit voices. His voice and theirs spoke on occasions *at the same time*, as people in conversation sometimes do.

The trumpets were used by only one or two of the spirits. The object of the trumpet is to give

assistance to the sound of an indistinct or whispering voice. Once or twice before the arrival of a spirit the trumpet floated in the air and careered around the room.

The second spirit to arrive was that of a man who had occupied Arlena Towers before De Wyckoff. He announced himself as Arthur Brandise. It was some few years after his death that De Wyckoff purchased the property. The conversation between Brandise and De Wyckoff was easy and fluent and personal.

Brandise said that he was contented and happy in the sphere into which he had passed. Nothing could induce him to wish to return to an earthly life, but, at the same time, he always retained an interest in Arlena Towers and liked to talk of it as it was when his earthly home. He discussed various alterations in the grounds which De Wyckoff had made.

The conversation was only interesting to me from the observer's point of view.

The next spirit to appear—or rather evince himself—was a Canadian Indian, who spoke French and broken English. He announced himself as "Kokum." Kokum is one of the medium's spirit guides.

Kokum's arrival is dramatic. From somewhere near the ceiling comes the most powerful voice I have ever heard, saying: "Kokum here." His great, deep, bass voice possesses the room. It made me laugh! He carried on a conversation with us all. I did not know what to talk to him about. The few remarks I did address him he answered agreeably.

De Wyckoff had met Kokum on previous occasions and knew some of his accomplishments. He asked him to sing and after a little persuasion Kokum assented. He then started to sing "La Paloma."

Never in my life have I heard such a colossal voice. In all seriousness I assert that his voice could have been heard a quarter of a mile away. To me it

possessed no musical quality, but its volume was so aggressive that again I laughed aloud. This annoyed Kokum so much that he stopped singing and said he would not go on as I had jeered at him. He was told that the laughter was only that of surprise at his power, and having soothed his sensitiveness he concluded his song.

After we had thanked him, it occurred to me that such a strong voice must possess a strong force, so I asked him if he could come and touch me.

In a second the fingers of a hand patted me gently on the head.

I have written the description of this incident in a light fashion, as indeed it should be written, since it represents my mood at the time, yet I must record the fact that this colossal voice was inside the room and I am certain there was no one in the room capable of producing it.

Does one meet gods and goddesses on earth or should one expect to meet all gods and goddesses in the next sphere? Does not the pendulum on earth swing between tragedy and farce, and might not the pendulum swing in other spheres between beauty and relaxation? Is it not feasible to imagine that the grades of spirit intelligence may be as varied in degrees as those of earthly intelligence? The spirit goes on learning and developing.

One does not arrive at the heights of knowledge in a flash or even in centuries. We are in our first stage of infancy here and pass to a second stage of infancy on another sphere.

The weight of knowledge is relieved by the lightness of laughter. A complete seriousness can never breed conviction and its sterility denotes its lack of inspiration. On earth a heavy seriousness is the ass's burden, but the wise man carries his humour in the hollow of his hand.

Shortly after Kokum's departure, there arrived one who addressed us in a rich, liquid Irish brogue. This spirit, I was told, had appeared on other occasions at other séances, and was recognized and

greeted by De Wyckoff and Valiantine. His name was Pat O'Brien, and he died at sea some forty-two years ago. He had been working as a carpenter in Chicago and met his death while returning to Ireland.

The conversation between Pat, De Wyckoff and Valiantine was cordial and friendly, with touches of merriment here and there. It was more interesting than a tea party in Mayfair.

I had a chat with him, and De Wyckoff, joining in, said: "I think, O'Brien, that Mr. Bradley is an Irishman, although he does not say so." But the spirit of Pat O'Brien would not take me for an Irishman; in a slightly aggressive tone he remarked: "He's not an Irishman. He is a little Johnny Bull."

I presume he judged me by my physical appearance, since an American interviewer once described me as "a smart little Englishman who looked as if he had scrubbed himself raw." So possibly O'Brien was justified in his opinion, especially as my accent is that of England and in my short talk with him I had not exhibited the Irish gift of brilliant repartee. However, I informed him that my people came from Galway, but that I had been educated in England. This in no way impressed him, and I am not at all sure that he quite believed me.

O'Brien's personality pervaded the room.

After O'Brien had taken his leave there came a spirit which spoke in a shrill, high-pitched voice. This spirit, I was given to understand later, was that of Bert Everett, who was the chief spirit guide and control of the medium. He invariably appears when Valiantine is sitting. Everett was a brother-in-law of Valiantine and had died eighteen years ago. It was through the communications and manifestations of Everett that Valiantine discovered his faculties as a medium.¹

Everett was an exceptionally cheery spirit; and he had a habit of laughing shrilly and good-humouredly

¹ See page 164, Book II.

at the slightest sally. His speech was quick and voluble and at times just lightly personal.

I asked him a few odd questions on the conditions of spirit existence and he answered them clearly and easily, but with very certain assurance.

Everett's philosophy, as far as he had arrived, is as follows. Spirit communication with this earth is given to establish faith in immortality. Thinking is the most important thing in life. Envious and evil thoughts will shrink your atmosphere. A man is literally what he thinks. His character is the complete sum of his thoughts. Hard, mental work and constructive thinking bring successful development and untold blessings. On earth Everett said he was narrow in his religious acceptance: there was so much bigotry in the Christian religions. But he was better and not worse off for having practised religion. Love is the secret of life. Hate is the evil influence. They both create strong vibrations; the one spiritual, the other discordance.

Imprinted on my memory are the last words of Everett as his voice left the room. They were not delivered dramatically, but firmly and convincingly. They were these: "There is only one great reality. *Immortality* is reality."

At the time of Everett's departure we had been sitting for over two hours, but despite the pauses, which were of varied length between the visitations, the time had passed rapidly.

The four of us were talking generally and discussing whether we should end the sitting for the evening when there came some strange, inarticulate sounds: a trumpet moved and then lifted slightly and dropped again. Then a sort of hissing noise came from the uppermost end of it. Eventually it was lifted as if by a considerable effort. Then through it came a hoarse whisper, impossible to hear. Each of us asked who it was that was trying to speak. Very gradually the voice seemed to gain strength and gave a name which to the best of our knowledge none of us knew. By degrees, and

through the trumpet—which, by the way, is used to increase the audibility of indistinct voices, as a megaphone might be at a tennis tournament—we managed to make out that he was the spirit of a Dr. Krauskopf and desired us to convey a message. His guttural voice very slowly acquired strength until it sounded quite loud. He spoke with a deep and somewhat hoarse Jewish accent.

He appeared to be desperately anxious to make us understand him, and his excited anxiety tended to make him the more indistinct. He was so obsessed by his desire to make known his message that his ejaculations were impatient.

It was only by my asking him to spell his name, letter by letter, that we ascertained it.

I asked Joseph Dasher to memorize it with me for after reference. He said that he was the Reverend Dr. Joseph Krauskopf, of 4715, Prilaski Avenue, Philadelphia, and that he had graduated at the Hebrew Seminary of New York City and was the author of numerous books. He had died six days before. (He used the word "died," though mediums, spiritualists, and spirit voices never use the word; they say "passed away" or "passed over." It is significant that the spirit of Dr. Krauskopf unconsciously used the earthly term.) His body, so he told us, was cremated, and his associates and fellow-students had often worried as to whether cremation would affect the life of the spirit. The message he wished us to give to his fellow-associates was: "The spirit survives cremation."

When he was satisfied that we had got his name and his message, he did not tarry or discuss any other subject. He conveyed the impression that he was anxious to get away as quickly as possible, as if he were in a great hurry and had just paused, irritated at the delay, to send a message of importance to his friends.

He left us with a polite sentence of thanks. He said: "I thank you, gentlemen, for the service you will have rendered me in conveying this message to my fellow-students and associates." But

politely as he phrased his thanks, one felt a sense of the aggressive demand of a strong personality more than the courteous request of a cultured soul. His underlying attitude throughout was that of merely making use of a quartette of boy-messengers, which I, at least, resented.

The amazing part, however, was that his departure was so hurried that though he began his sentence of thanks in the middle of the room and by means of the trumpet, half-way up he dropped the trumpet whilst his voice travelled upwards to the extreme right-hand corner of the ceiling and there ended on the pronouncement of the last syllable of his last word.

It was an astoundingly natural and impatient exit—dramatic, urgent, and real. It was so extraordinary that but for the fact that I had spoken to my sister I should have regarded it as an illusion.

After this, it being nearly midnight, we broke up the sitting, turned on the lights, pushed the furniture from the doors, and adjourned to refreshment in another room.

Valiantine was in a perfectly normal condition, as we all were; he had done nothing whatever, except sit with us and talk to the spirits, on occasions, as we did. His faculties are, apparently, unique; he does nothing; he just sits as an instrument to attract communication. He does not act as a receiver, since the voices do not come through his mouth or seldom from his direction. His function simply appears to be that of a passive magnet.

A fool might endeavour to explain it all, but an intelligent mind can only realize the reality of the supernatural.

It was pleasant to eat a sandwich and drink a brandy and soda. It was splendid to feel that a dream was not a dream but an eternity. The unknown characters I had met remained as real when the switch of artificial light brought physical vision back again, but the stronger light of knowledge

shone like a beacon fixed in the adamant rock of truth, inextinguishable, unassailable, unchallengeable. I had talked of things unknown and inexplicable to the living spirit of my sister.

CHAPTER III

THE SECOND VISITATION

The author goes to bed: he muses on the night of revelation and writes his thoughts about death and the hereafter—An unseen presence—The dawn—"She came to me and spoke to me again"—Proving the miraculous—The secret of conception—The whip for human stupidity—"There is no death"—"Spiritualism is not for neurotic weaklings"—A talk in Spanish.

June 17, 1923.

It was well after midnight when I returned to my room. I had been through the experience of a mental revolution, but possessing a philosophical mentality, I was neither excited nor disturbed by it. Having lived through the horrors of war, death had no sting for me, even if it meant the eternal oblivion I had come to expect. Humanity has made such a ghastly mess of itself that one is entitled to jeer at it in scorn, laugh at its cruel corruption and live the entire gamut of life in the enjoyment of one's ego, with occasional diversions towards physical beauty and mental culture with those few men and women one discovers in a desert of fools.

I do not know what fear is. It is an emotion I have not enjoyed. If I were threatened with an excruciating physical torture I should probably feel it, but even then I think my emotion would be anger at such an inconsequent stupidity. As for

mental fear, there is in my mind no channel through which it can run. A mental challenge is simply a welcome stimulant, as rare as caviare in a Bolshevik upheaval. That is what the philosophical intellect discovers on earth. Its scent is ever on the trail of a hollow delusion.

So, if the end of life's wonderful adventure into the realms of earthly illusion was to finish in smoke, let the fires of cremation burn the husk to ashes and fling them to the breeze with a gesture of contempt at the nothingness it had meant.

And as I had no fear of death as an entry into peaceful oblivion, neither had I, on that night of revelation, any fear of death as an entry into a new sphere of after-life, if that was a sphere where we still worked, studied, and progressed towards a higher state of development. It would be the swing of the eternal pendulum—the first feeble swing of youth towards promise and belief, then the fall to earth experience and human disillusion; and then towards the stars, with a new knowledge and perhaps a fresh imagining.

I can sleep at will and at any time. Sleep comes at once to me; in the morning, the afternoon, the evening, at night; at a dull play, at a horrid social dinner, at a frightful political meeting, at a tame night club when I am not dancing. I can sleep with my eyes open and talk, and yet be free to dream. . . .

When I had turned out the electric light and got into bed that night, I cast aside from my mind all thought of what had taken place and composed myself into a mental blank. Within a few seconds, however, I felt a peculiar sensation: I felt a peculiar lightness, as if my body was being lifted from the bed. This I put down to my imagination. But it continued. I argued with myself quite coldly, even calling myself an idiot for conceiving such a thought and making it appear a possibility. But it was a real physical movement and it went on with an added vibration and a more acute sense of pulsating lightness.

Then the bed swayed with a gentle rock; it was being lifted from the floor. I argued coldly with myself about it and for fully five minutes. There was another presence in the room and I knew that it was possible for me to communicate with the Unseen. But for one evening my mind had taken its fill of unrevealed knowledge and it thirsted for no more. I was tired and wanted to rest.

There may have been the faintest tinge of fear in my mind, but weariness was stronger than fear: I turned on the lights.

These movings were not imaginary. I mention them because of the extraordinary reference which was made to them later.

I slept that night with the lights on. I slept peacefully and well and woke up feeling splendidly fit and in good time to turn them off before my early morning tea was brought to me.

I awoke to a wonderful June morning, so invigorating in its freshness that the physical side of nature shouted aloud in joy, almost aggressively in contrast with the fine delicacy of the ethereal and spiritual.

On the portico we all met at breakfast—coffee and luscious cantaloups. We hardly referred to the happenings of the night before. We were on the earth and the earth that morning was very good and very young.

After breakfast we talked about the spirit of Dr. Joseph Krauskopf. We turned up the telephone directory, in which we found the name and address as had been given to us. We called the number and were told there was no reply. We tried again at intervals, but without result. In the directory we found that there was another Dr. Krauskopf: Dr. Paul Krauskopf, New York. We telephoned him. We got through, and told him that we had been trying to get to Dr. Joseph Krauskopf of Philadelphia; was he a relative of his? No, he was not a relative, though, of course, he knew of him. He said: "Have you not heard that he died last Monday?"

Dr. Joseph Krauskopf, as we ascertained later,

was a well-known character and the author of a number of books, and announcements of his death had appeared in some of the newspapers, but I had never heard his name before that evening, neither had De Wyckoff, or Mr. Dasher, or Valiantine.

Valiantine and I walked for an hour or so. The impression I gained of him confirmed my first one. He was born in America and had never in his life left that country. He has very little knowledge of the world, and therefore it would have been difficult for him to have "performed" as he had done on the previous night. It was only casually that I led him to talk about himself: his peculiar powers and faculties. As far as I could glean, he is not materialistic in his outlook or mercenary. In his home town he is a manufacturer of razor hones and regularly holds unpaid séances.

If Valiantine succeeded in impressing by trickery, then I take off my hat to him as one who has accomplished before me a feat which the various Prime Ministers of Europe have failed to achieve.

In the afternoon, just before tea-time, De Wyckoff's daughter, Josephine Withstanley—a beautiful, Madonna-like girl, whom I had met in London—and her husband motored in from New York. They both stayed to dinner and were invited to stay on to a séance. This they could not do, on account of a late engagement. I learned that they neither believed or disbelieved in spiritualism, and being young and pleasantly full of life, they were not anxious to prove or disprove any of the mysteries of the after-life.

Being a student, investigator and an experimenter, De Wyckoff wanted to add to the numbers of sitters for verification purposes. Since his daughter and her husband could not stay, he asked me whether I would mind his cook and butler sitting in the circle, as he wished to make an experiment. His cook, a Spanish woman named Anita Ripoll, who knew nothing whatever of spiritualism and had never sat

at a séance, had lost her husband, also a Spaniard, about six months previously. He was not in De Wyckoff's service at the time and he had died of pneumonia.

The butler, Percy Wheatley, was a fine type of an efficient English servant: intelligent, quite well read and educated, perfect in manners, restful in his suggestion of atmosphere, and peculiarly attentive to the slightest need of any guest placed under his care. A sceptic originally, he had been invited to sit at séances on several occasions, and had been convinced by personal results. This I obtained from him later.

At about nine o'clock on the Sunday evening of June 17, 1923, we sat again for a séance at Arlena Towers.

There were six sitters: De Wyckoff, Joseph Dasher, Anita Ripoll, Percy Wheatley, George Valiantine, and myself.

About a quarter of an hour after the lights had been turned off, the spirit of a Dr. Barnett manifested itself. He spoke in a loud voice, and with a Scottish accent. He is one of the control spirits of Valiantine. It is customary to greet the arrival of a spirit as one would greet a friend in life. Dr. Barnett gave one the impression of a kindly, but determined and intelligent man. He was introduced to me by name and I had a talk with him. He said that there were many spirits who wished to get into communication with us and that if we would have patience the guides would do their best to help us. Their great desire to get into touch with us and speak to us was to prove that there was no death, but that spirit and thought lived on.

After he had gone there was a pause of perhaps five minutes, during which we talked.

Frankly, I was wondering, perhaps a little anxiously, whether my sister would appear again. It had all been so real and true, but would such a wonderful thing ever be repeated? Might it not be one of those strange, amazing events that take place only once in a life-time? It was true that just before

she had left me I had asked her to come to me again on this night, and she had promised to do so. But how could one expect to determine time and place with a spirit in another world?

Such were my thoughts, yet I felt that she would come. . . .

She came to me and spoke to me again. In the silence, without a sound or movement, I felt her presence before a word was spoken; there was a peculiar soft, fluttering, indefinable movement. Then she spoke to me, called me by name, and again we talked, talked, talked; quickly, eagerly, wonderfully. Two souls had met again and were in close communion. Her tones were clear and bell-like, her notes were sympathetic and understanding, and were radiant. How can I describe the indescribable? Two souls which understood each other had broken down the barriers of the infinite and had achieved the miraculous.

What did we say to each other? Everything we could think of; and the topics could have been discussed by none but ourselves.

To record such a conversation would be a prostitution of beauty, but there were contained in it proofs in plenty of the supernatural.

Afterwards I said to those who had sat in that room that this conversation was the finest and most beautiful I had ever taken a part in, and all my life I have mixed with artists between whom there is an understanding. It was two minds upon a super plane—two intellects keen in brilliant acceptance.

Fools, who cannot realize anything beyond banality, may snigger at the arrogance of this statement, but I laugh at them, because I know that I was swept upon a plane infinitely beyond their conception.

The poems of life one reserves for oneself; the facts of life one gives to others.

Throughout our talk there was, on her side, a splendid spirit of virility; there was a joyfulness; often her clear voice and delicate laughter rang through the room.

Smilingly she spoke of her coming to my room during the night. This is what she said: "You know I came to your room last night, when you were alone, and I felt that you were *frightened* of me. You must *never* be afraid of me. I love you. I only wanted to try and show you that I was with you."

I told her that I was not really frightened, but that my mind had suddenly received a new philosophy, and that I had felt so mentally weary that I did not feel able to bear any more manifestations, and that after realizing so much in one evening all I desired was rest.

A little later, not in any spirit of doubt, but because I felt that the miraculous should be incontestably proved, I asked her a momentous question concerning her life on earth. It contained a tragic element *which only she could know*. I put it casually, without any suggestion of sentimentality and in such a form that it could convey *nothing* to anyone in the room.

The effect was dramatic. She gave a sob, and in a broken voice she said: "Why, oh, why, do you ask me to talk of that? You know how I suffered. Don't bring the pain of it all back to me. Please! Please!" Her beseeching reproach made me feel a beast for having referred to it. I loathed myself for having succumbed to the temptation of trying a grievous material test in order to prove the fact of after-life.

All the same, here I was given one of the most wonderful proofs possible. That delicate and sensitive soul of my sister was living on, knowing, understanding, and feeling, capable still of the joys and pains of existence, giving me the knowledge of the eternities, whilst in return I had stabbed her with a bitter remembrance.

I just asked her to forgive me.

This was the only passage in which the harmony was disturbed. We talked on and the evidence of her personality was abundant. We talked of my own life as I was living it. I disregarded the others

who were present. I cared nothing for what they thought even when I discussed matters so personal that they might have looked askance at me. I do not lead a conventional life or consider people's opinions about my own fundamental instincts, but I valued her opinion and I wanted her advice and philosophy. She gave them to me. She knew my life and everything I did. She told me very clearly that her knowledge of me was intellectual and not inquisitorial. I did not shirk asking the most intimate questions regarding myself, and the answers were given tenderly and sympathetically and with directness.

There was yet another amazing thing she did, which came as an absolute surprise, for she introduced the subject. She spoke of my elder son Dennis who was a child aged six when she died. She spoke of him now at a public school, and of his character and his sensitive temperament; that often she was with him, watching over him and loving him; how finely he had developed mentally and of certain of his successes. She gave me this message for him: "Tell him from me when next you see him, during the summer holidays, that I am often with him and that through you I send my love to him."

Of those present only De Wyckoff knew that I had a son at a public school. As for Valiantine he knew nothing whatever about me and had not been told whom he was going to meet. Even had he known, he could not have discussed my son with me as my sister had.

To me, of course, it seems ridiculous to emphasize these points, because nobody there could possibly imitate my sister's voice. It would be as logical to expect me to give a vocal imitation of Tetrzzini. Added to that it was utterly impossible for anyone there to possess the intimate and personal knowledge of the subjects which we discussed.

Whilst I was talking to my sister, De Wyckoff engaged Valiantine in conversation, so that my sister's voice and both of theirs were heard simultaneously.

We talked for twenty minutes. It was with regret that we felt we could not trespass farther.

An interruption came quite naturally. Towards the end of our talk, De Wyckoff remarked to Valiantine: "There must be an extraordinary amount of power here for her to be able to talk for so long."

Valiantine replied: "Yes. She has stayed a long time to-night; she has so much to say to him."

At this my sister immediately said to me: "Tell me, Herbert, who is your friend who has been responsible for my meeting you here?"

I replied: "He is Mr. De Wyckoff: would you like to thank him?"

And in a flash, without the faintest suspicion of movement, her voice was ten feet away from me, saying to my host:

"Mr. De Wyckoff, I *do* want to thank you for bringing this great truth to my brother."

De Wyckoff made a polite reply, addressing her as "Miss Bradley." Here I may mention that he, not knowing otherwise, addressed her by her maiden name. Her name, at the time of her death, was Mrs. ——. She said, "Thank you so very, very much." She added: "Is the gentleman in a hurry?" Mr. De Wyckoff replied, in a jocular way: "Would you like to ask him?"

In a fraction of a second her voice was at the other end of the room addressing Valiantine:

"Tell me, sir, am I staying too long to-night?"

His voice joined hers as he answered: "No, no, please stay as long as you wish."

Again she was back with me, picking up the thread of the conversation we had dropped. Soon afterwards she left me with the tenderest of farewells.

Intellectual as we may imagine ourselves in our puny conceit, it is the personal touch that affects and convinces us. Arguments, theories, scientific explanations: what are these but the dematerialization of our highest emotions? What is real and unreal? Is not the real, as we conceive it, cold and hard and dead, and the unreal, fresh and beautiful and splendidly alive? Do we not know the hard

materiality of life and the wonderful realms of the spirit of artistic thought?

Love is the great force and it is the creator of the universe. That is the supreme philosophy and the supreme knowledge.

Embittered by man's prostitution of his powers, I do not think that I should have been convinced or have been induced to re-study the problems of after-life because of physical manifestations or scientific phenomena, however marvellous, which might have been presented to me. It was by the simplest of all forms, that of bringing love to love and soul to soul and mind to mind. That what had been inconceivable was shown to me as the secret of conception and of life here and beyond.

In a day, without seeking it or paying a price in pain for it, I was accorded a glimpse of the Unknown. That glimpse may be swept away as though it were a straw or it may stay as a rock made by God. The future only can show. But since this new knowledge has been born on the foundation of love, the valiant mind must make the journey on the sea of fortune, maintaining its confidence in the buoyant boat of wisdom.

My sister Annie has gone; Kokum is here. The powerful, reverberating voice is in the room. The conversation is general in character, and is not worth recording—even if I remembered it. It is not easy to make conversation with an unknown person. I asked Kokum if he knew the lady who had just been speaking to me, and he said: "Oh, yes, of course I know her. She is a very nice young lady, and everyone on this side likes her."

This remark awoke my curiosity, inasmuch as when my sister died she was nearing middle age and towards the end she suffered intensely. At her death her face was lined and drawn with pain, but when I saw her for the last time, lying still and in peace before being taken to her earthly resting place, her face was that of a girl of eighteen, and on it was a beautiful smile. I know how features change in

death and the strange dignity that often appears, but I have never seen a more miraculous change than this. It was as if the years of pain and torture had failed to mar her beauty of girlhood that death seemed to have returned her—unblemished and untouched. It was not only my eyes which witnessed this; all who saw were astonished.

Kokum went; and a trumpet commenced to move. It was lifted with strange sounds, as if an attempt was being made to articulate something. Then it started to career around the room at a rapid pace, making a loud, buzzing noise, like that of the propeller of an aeroplane. It burred in a circle twice or three times. Presently it moved to a top corner of the room, the burr increasing all the time; from there it came crashing to the floor. It was like an aeroplane crashing.

To the best of my knowledge, there were no mechanical contrivances in the room or on the person of the medium.

Peculiar as this incident was, it alone would never convince me of the *existence* of spirits. The most marvellous physical manifestation possible to conceive would leave me unmoved. However genuine, however uncanny and inconceivable, it would *leave me unimpressed*, for in material or physical exhibitions I can find no mental stimulant. A materialisation, or physical demonstration, of phenomena, if proved beyond doubt, would only *interest me momentarily*. Even if it were a complete evidence of unseen forces and spirit influences, it would influence me but little. It would be too cold and incoherent; there would be no emotion in such a study; one could learn nothing of value. There would be no prospect of mental development, no vision of higher intelligence, no way of achieving a deeper philosophy, no intriguing invitation to adventure on towards a plane of greater knowledge.

Then there came Pat O'Brien, with his Irish brogue, rich in good-humoured conversation and

conveying all those characteristic points in phrasing which go to make a distinctive personality.

The talk was easy and fluent, and proceeded without any hesitation. When one addressed a remark to him, the answer was taken up in a quick Irish manner before the last syllable of the question was completed.

It appeared that O'Brien also acted as one of Valiantine's spirit guides.

O'Brien, having told us that other spirits were waiting to get into touch with us, departed and after a while one of the trumpets was lifted, as if with difficulty, and after two or three attempts it moved around the circle, touching each of us. It is usual to make some remark when touched.

What followed was astounding.

When the trumpet touched Anita Ripoll, she made an exclamation. Then from it came a quick, anxious voice saying: "Anita! Anita!"

"Si! Si!" she answered in agitation. Quickly (in Spanish): "I am here! I am here!"

On top of her words came a voice—pregnant with emotion—also in Spanish: "It is José! José!"

It was the spirit of her husband.

Then followed quickly, volubly—Southern in intensity and expression—a dialogue between husband and wife.

It was conducted in Spanish. I could not follow it, but nobody could fail to understand the feeling. Words tumbled over one another. Sentences joined and overlapped in Latin excitement. Neither husband nor wife, apparently, marvelled at their supernatural meeting. These two souls, who had loved each other and probably had never questioned the certainty of an after-life, accepted it as entirely normal. They knew each other and wasted no time in doubt. They were both comparatively young, she, Anita Ripoll, being a virile woman of about thirty.

They talked about their life on earth, their domestic affairs; his feelings after death, her feelings and life since he had gone.

De Wyckoff followed the conversation word for word, and could not restrain himself from joining in and talking to José.

Presently Anita and her husband drifted into a dialect which De Wyckoff described afterwards as being a mixture of Basque and corrupt Spanish. It transpired that they two in life had always used this dialect of their native village in Southern Spain. Whilst with their employer, they had always spoken to him and been spoken to in Spanish: they were entirely unfamiliar with English, having entered De Wyckoff's employ soon after their arrival in America.

At the séance José, when speaking to De Wyckoff, spoke good Spanish; while speaking to Anita, without a moment's hesitation, he changed into the intimate jargon. He thanked De Wyckoff for keeping Anita in his employ after his—José's—death, and requested him to assist his widow in bringing their two little children from Spain to America. Whilst making this request he alluded to a conversation he had with De Wyckoff in the previous year, in which he had stated that owing to certain new immigration laws, it was very difficult to bring their children from Spain under the law of quotas for the various nationalities.

De Wyckoff asked Ripoll how he had found his way to Arlena Towers. He naïvely replied: "I followed with the crowd."

The dialogue lasted from ten to twelve minutes, during which the two probably exhausted everything their minds could conjure.

"Such a scene could never be stage-managed. It would be impossible.

To produce the scene which took place Anita would have to be a great actress and Valiantine a magnificent actor. And having produced many plays myself, I can say with confidence that they would have had to rehearse the scene for at least three weeks.

In after reflection I can see that these two séances

held in my friend's house were exceptional and marvellous in their results. Communication with the spirit world seemed almost as easy as telephoning one's bookmaker, and much more profitable, and less irritating in results. Knowing nothing then of the difficulties of spiritualism, of how one has to work, persevere and plough through fields of disappointment, I realize now, after months of study, how peculiarly fortunate I was to discover such irrefutable evidence on the threshold of my adventure.

Thought, intellect, personality, individuality, emotion, affection, and memory, all these survive after the physical body is dead. These are the eternal vibrations of the spirit.

It is stupid and arrogant to imagine that one can command or organize spiritual manifestations at will, as an exhibition or entertainment for blasé cynics or vulgar probers or neurotic weaklings. Are the spirits of a higher sphere to be regarded as inferior slaves at the beck and call of the unworthy?

Is there a man so foolish that he thinks he has arrived at the pinnacle of knowledge? If so, let him open his eyes and look around this world of ours, and then into his soul and endeavour to find himself.

After the wonderful scene between the two Spanish peasants, there was an anti-climax.

One had come to expect clearness, coherence, intelligence, and materialization.

There came two spirits which failed to make us understand.

One made a distressing endeavour to arrive at articulateness, but achieved no positive result. All we could glean from his husky voice was that its name was Jago, or Jacob, but it was impossible to translate from the weak sounds. The trumpet was dropped.

The next voice was that of Christofò Angelo, or it sounded like that. He also failed to find a personal recognition amongst us. Christofò Angelo sang a few stanzas of an Italian song to us, as if to assist our memories. But none of us could place

him or arrive at any coherent communication of value or interest.

After these two had left us there came the spirit of a little girl. She talked in a sweet, childish voice and her sentences were interjected with happy, childish laughter. Her name was Honey, and she was the niece of Percy Wheatley. She had been a cripple—one leg being useless—and had died when at the age of five some few years ago. She hovered around Wheatley most of the time and talked charmingly to him, with occasional quaint remarks to others. She said that life was splendid where she was, that she was growing up and learning, that she was so glad she was no longer a cripple.

Wheatley was sitting next to me on my left. Her voice came so close to him, that the impression given was that she was sitting on his knee. He talked to her gently, as one would to a child, and with that tenderness which showed the sincere affection he felt for her. They believed each other.

I thought I saw quite close to Wheatley her tiny spirit form. It was silvery, misty and delicate in outline, and appeared to be resting on Wheatley's knee. I saw it seeming to descend and to be playing about on the floor, and from the floor her voice continued talking to him. The voice rose again to his knee.

The form I put down to my imagination. I broke in on the conversation and asked whether anyone could see anything in the room. They all said "No" except Wheatley, who said: "I can see, and have seen for some time, a small childish form in light." I asked him to go on talking to her and tell me when she moved. This he did and each time I saw the form in the exact place he indicated. The others declared they saw nothing.

Afterwards, when speaking to Wheatley alone, he told me that his niece had appeared to him before and that he had talked to her on two or three occasions. His scepticism had been beaten by this personal proof which stood beyond all argument.

A while later there appeared the spirit of Mrs. Bryans, an elderly lady with a gentle, quavering voice. She was a very near relative of De Wyckoff, and she wished to talk only to him. She addressed him by an unusual abbreviation of his Christian name, which only she in life had used. Her conversation was of an exceptional personal character and of exceptional psychological interest. In no circumstances would I indicate the trend of it, even if I were given full permission to do so in the interests of psychical research.

All I shall say is that the conversation between De Wyckoff and Mrs. Bryans was impressively evidential of the existence of life after death.

Just before the end, there came Bert Everett, the chief guide and celestial teacher of Valiantine. He spoke in the same high-pitched voice as previously, and again, on occasions, the same shrill laughter echoed through the room. He is, apparently, delighted with his present sphere of existence and cannot restrain himself from laughing at the narrownesses of earthly life. He philosophized in a simple and lucid manner. A simple mind on earth, confined in his views, he had broadened and developed to an infinitely larger conception of the scheme of things. He was happy in his condition of gradual progress towards a complete realization. He talked of the value of natural laws as opposed to man-made laws. And he stressed in particular the principle of developing one's individuality on earth as a means of preparation for the mental and spiritual life in spheres beyond.

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The sitting ended at midnight after a duration of three hours. As the lights were turned on and we filed out from the room, it was as if we were leaving a theatre after a strange and wonderful play of realism had been performed; a play in which each character had flitted across the stage, perfectly drawn and clearly defined, yet each touching some human chord compelling our belief and kindling understanding. We were the shades and they the eternal

realities. On that darkened stage we had seen a vision of the infinite truth.

It was all real. Invention only interposed when the switch of the light brought us back to earth, blinding our eyes to the eternal verities.

CHAPTER IV

PLUNGING BACKWARDS

The minor key of truth—A friendly phantom visitor—Vulgarity on the sea—Where art perishes—The critic deploras dullness, coma and cocktails—The author's new philosophy—Fraudulent mediums—The "Daily News" interviews the author—"The shingled heads of Ciro's"—Going ahead.

June 19, 1923.

ARTIFICIAL creation, imaginative essaying, fictional sentiment, political satirism, vicious irritation, philosophical meandering: all are major keys in which the writer may compose his literary melodies. The minor key of Truth is music only to the few. To the many Truth is but the note of discord.

After that second dramatic séance had ended we sat for a while discussing the events before retiring to rest. We compared notes.

It was pleasant to go to bed with fresh dreams in prospect. I turned out the lights and healthily tired, composed myself for sleep. Within one minute there was an actual manifestation of another presence. I felt no fear, but I was too tired to encourage any further communication, and so the friendly phantom visitor left me to my peace. A second later I was soundly sleeping.

The next morning De Wyckoff and I motored into New York where we stayed the night, and on the

Tuesday morning he bade me farewell on the deck of the *Mauretania*, which was to take me home.

It was a strange journey. My mind was full—so full that the discomfort and confinement of the boat seemed stupidly insignificant. Vulgarity abounds and exhibits itself more on the isolation of the sea than on the broadness of the land. All my travelling in America, all the six days steaming homewards register in my mind nothing as compared with the two evenings I spent with the spirits of an unknown world.

To the artist, life should be nothing more than a dream. Directly he descends to the horrid businesses of existence he is overcome with the nausea in which his art may perish.

On the boat I met several acquaintances, but I did not talk to any of them of my strange experiences. One does not expect to find intelligence from minds which are in a perpetual condition of coma and cocktails.

They were a peculiarly unamusing crowd of passengers, mostly consisting of office boys obsessed by the extraordinary miasma that they had actually succeeded in "getting on." One man saved me from oppressive boredom—a jolly-humoured sportsman, seconded by a cultured snob, who was endeavouring to forget his racial handicap.

The women were dull and sickly, and most of them danced abominably. From them only one note of interest was struck, and that was when an operatic singer—a contralto—asked me when discussing American literature, whether I had read the works of Joseph Krauskopf, who had died a few days before. She was an admirer of his books. It seemed weird eulogizing a man with whom I had conversed six days after his death.

This boredom, however, gave me an opportunity of adjusting my mind to a new philosophy or religion.

At Arlena Towers twelve different spirits had talked to us. Each was distinct in individuality. There was no similarity in their voices, their accents, their

phrasing, their manner of speaking, or the subjects of their conversations. They were of both sexes, and the voices were characteristic and entirely different from each other.

The results obtained were phenomenal, and there is no human explanation for what took place. Accepting, as we must by the facts, this evidence of the materialization of supernatural forces, it is conceivable that the sensitiveness and perhaps the latent psychical faculties of some of those who had sat in the room, added to those possessed by the medium, created the right atmosphere for manifestations and audible communications. It is only proper to appreciate that atmospheric conditions and mentality must be considered as imperative to spirit communication, which surely is the most delicate of all vibrations.

Conditions and atmosphere must play a considerable part and are far more important factors than we understand.

In America the subject of spiritualism is more discussed in the Press than in England. During the latter part of my stay and after my return, it interested me to read some of the sceptical comments. One long article I read was by Houdini. It was not convincingly written or clearly argued, but in it he made the statement that he could produce the same effects and illusions as those produced by any professional medium. Such a statement is utterly absurd. . . .

This sudden adventure into the Unknown diverted my mind into a new channel, and compelled me to go experimenting and studying.

There appears to be two masses of stupid influences that it will be necessary to plunge through, the credulous mass and the incredulous mass. Of the two I have more contempt for the credulous, who are swayed by straws, whilst the thick heads of the incredulous do offer the attacked some emotion in resistance.

In the initial stages of the study of psychic phenomena one is dependent upon the services of a medium. Direct spirit communication, as a rule, can be obtained only by this means. The function

of the medium is not easy to determine or define. His, or her, presence, or occult faculties, apparently act as an instrument possessing vibrations through which communication is rendered possible and sound can be heard, movements felt, and visions seen. The only simile that can be made is to liken the medium in one sphere to a wireless apparatus in one's home whereby one may listen to music from Paris. And often the medium is just as inanimate, as far as perceptible action is concerned, as the wireless instrument on the wall or table.

Direct voice mediums are exceptionally rare. Such mediums do nothing at all. They do not open their mouths, and the voice may appear in any part of the room in which you are sitting. Other mediums go into a trance, and the voices come from their lips. Others produce only physical phenomena, such as the moving of articles. There are several other forms which I will describe later.

It is obvious that most of these forms can be imitated by charlatans, and there are undoubtedly many fraudulent mediums just as there are many genuine mediums. This fact applies to every profession, for human nature has not yet arrived at sublimity.

Spiritualism rests on a delicate silken thread. In the secret places of the mind there exists the great desire for its acceptance, but the desire is so sensitive that the slightest breath of suspicion can destroy its spell.

It is all ethereal and the knowledge as yet is elusive. The opinion of the mass, who has given the subject just a passing thought, is so easily formulated and so loosely determined. When a charlatan medium is discovered, it is concluded that all mediums are charlatans and all spiritualism is a fraud.

Within a week or two of my arrival in England I saw in several of the London newspapers extracts from some remarkable messages obtained by automatic writing through the mediumship of Mrs. Hester Travers Smith. These messages were said

to have come from Oscar Wilde. His name was written automatically before the messages were given, and the signature was extraordinarily like that of Wilde.

I was interested. From whatever source these came they were intensely amusing. And the man who is serious enough to quarrel with amusement is a curmudgeon. The quotations that I read impressed me as being Wildeish in style and thought. Some folk were much inclined to accept them as genuine, but were timid of committing themselves; others exhibited their natural dullness in their own negative expressions. One almost famous playwright, who has never written a witty line in his life, did not think the writings showed any "sign of wit." They appeared to me to be peculiarly quick, with a prodigal expenditure of brightness. However, the writings created a mild sensation and the *Daily News*, on July 27, 1923, devoted a leading article to the subject. Whether genuine or not, the writer declared, the phrasing of the messages was clever. He went on to say that the difficulty with spiritualism was that so far only stupid or comparatively unintelligent communications had been reported to have been received.

Although I had no intention of making any public statement at this early stage, I felt that it was only right to correct this impression. I rang up the news-editor, and he sent a reporter to see me, with the result that in the course of a column article, the following appeared :

"If you knew Mr. H. Dennis Bradley, you would be as surprised as I was when I heard that he, of all people, had received messages from the dead. Wit, sceptic, and cynic as anyone can discover who reads his 'Not For Fools' or 'The Eternal Masquerade'—to say nothing of the writings which made him famous during the war—Mr. Bradley is not the sort of man who readily believes anything, or is at all easily deceived. All his life he has been a questioner and a challenger.

It is therefore all the more astonishing that recently he had an experience which he describes as the most staggering of his career—so staggering that it has changed his whole attitude to life. From being very doubtful of survival after death he has become entirely confident of it."

Since then I have avoided being drawn out on the subject in public. Invitations to lecture by literary societies and spiritualistic gatherings I have refused. These distractions impede my work, and lecturing is merely the audible illustration of the ego in retrospect.

This elusive dream of the spiritual world fascinates. There is no escape, even if material attractions endeavour to seduce one. One strives to drag the alluring shadow down to earthly reality. It is the attempt at the impossible, and intuitively one feels the torturous doubts that will be met on the way.

I was given an introduction to Mrs. Barbara McKenzie of the British College of Psychical Science: a charming woman, refined, intellectual, and exuding an atmosphere of restfulness.

She assured me that she would do everything in her power to assist me, but that the great difficulty in England was the scarcity of mediums.

So I decided to explore and often in a barren desert. But I never lost heart, for the experience was infinitely more alluring than being bored to tears by the shingled heads at Ciro's.

We have witnessed the gigantic material progress of England, with its marvellous civilization which has arrived at the majestic pinnacle of success, represented by two million unemployed, and which by its wise philosophy and magnificent organization has succeeded in piling up an insignificant national debt—a legacy that will be bequeathed to the innocent sons of decadent fathers.

Sick of this dastardly hypocrisy I plunged fearlessly ahead: and if the wisdom of the knowledge I gleaned

is merely a mental intoxication to the wise, I shall be grateful.

To wheresoever my exploits might lead, I decided that the adventure must be made.

This I promise: whatever my new experiences may be, they will be narrated faithfully, and whatever my impressions may be, they will represent my idea of the Truth—irrespective of wives, mistresses, sons, daughters, governments, religious laws, or any other of the comical conventions that try to rule the individual thought.

CHAPTER V

PHYSICAL MANIFESTATIONS

The student makes a prophecy—Mr. Evan Powell—The medium who was tied to his chair—Physical phenomena—A negative sitting—Inferior spirit intelligence—A wretched incident.

July, 1923.

I HAD imagined on my return to England that it would be a perfectly simple matter for me to study spiritualism and make experiments by attending séances. That, I believe, is the general impression of the public. It was quite a shock to discover that this was not the case. Comparatively few séances are held at all in England, because there are very few reliable mediums, hence it is extremely difficult to obtain a sitting. This disposes of the argument that it is a money-making game, for if it were it would be more exploited. I have met many persons who desire to study spiritualism, but can find no means by which they can be afforded actual demonstration. Although spirit manifestation has doubtless existed throughout the ages, the study appears to have been so thwarted that it is still in its infancy and I am convinced that

only the fringe has been touched. In England only the first few sparks of knowledge have been kindled, but before the twentieth century has ended we may have arrived at a blaze of understanding.

In addition to the people who have an earnest desire to search for truth, there is the supercilious person who is generous enough to concede that if a séance can be arranged for him on, say, Thursday fortnight, after dinner, he will be willing to attend, so long as it is guaranteed that he shall have a chat with his cousin Kate, who was quite a dear, you know, and he feels he'd like to hear how things are going on with her up above.

This is, of course, a sheer nonsensical attitude, but it is typical. It is impossible to know what will happen at a séance, if anything will happen at all.

It was through the kind offices of Mrs. McKenzie that I was enabled to make my first English experiments.

The first did not impress me in the slightest degree.

It was held in London and the medium was Mr. Evan Powell. There were ten other persons present, none of whom I had met before; nor had I previously met Mr. Powell.

I was introduced to the assembly and to the medium as "Mr. Dennis."

The medium was tied to his chair and tightly bound hand and foot with ropes, so that he could not move. This, I am given to understand, is the usual procedure in some test cases and is done to counteract the suggestion of fraud. However necessary this may be, I felt a sense of irritation at this painful discomfort being imposed on a human being who was assumed to be the means through which spirit communication could be achieved. It seemed to me to strike a note of crudity and wanton childishness and savoured of a conjuror's entertainment. Were I a spirit on another plane, I should be inclined to view these proceedings with contempt and certainly disdain to manifest my presence.

I felt then what I feel now, that the attitude of

suspicion and distrust is the greatest handicap to progress.

Behind the medium was a curtained cabinet, in which there stood a small table with some flowers on it and a white luminous disc about nine inches square. The lights were turned off and we sat in the dark, holding one another's hands. Some hymns were sung, in which I could not join on account of my wretched voice and the lack of a modern musical education.

After a while the medium went into a trance, making some strange, gurgling noises which were very distressing and aroused one's sympathy.

He then spoke to the assembly as Black Hawk, and was greeted as such by many of them. Black Hawk is the medium's spirit guide and speaks through his lips. But the voice and accent were in no way distinct from Mr. Powell's, except that he spoke, to a certain extent, in pigeon-English.

He addressed me several times as "Mr. Dennis," which was distinctly unconvincing.

No spirits appeared, but there was what is termed physical phenomena and manifestations. The table lifted itself, apparently of its own accord, from behind the drawn curtains of the cabinet and deposited itself in the centre of the room. The flowers came out and wafted about the room, touching me and others once or twice on the knees and face. The medium's disc also appeared and floated about. The table moved about considerably and becoming excited eventually fell over.

That was practically all that happened. The weather was extremely warm at the time, and in the humid atmosphere it was by no means an ideal way of spending a hot afternoon. One is apt to feel slightly irritable at the necessity of holding very warm hands for any considerable time.

I do not wish to criticize Mr. Powell, as I was informed that the temperature of the room and conditions were against him. My impression is that Mr. Powell is quite genuine, but physical phenomena

do not appeal to me. If in broad daylight the table in my room suddenly became demonstrative and climbed to the ceiling and hung on its hind legs it would leave me unamused.

If I had not previously arrived at any mental or intellectual plane of communications I should not have considered it worth while to devote any further time to this study. The sitting with Mr. Powell was, to my mind, entirely negative. At the same time, I do realize that it is absurd to expect results on every occasion. Mediums have only certain powers and these powers are varied; nor can they call them up at will. Nor do I think one can expect spirits to be always waiting upon our convenience.

The plain facts of this experience, which I regard as proving nothing at all, merely show that a physical demonstration of some kind was exhibited. If it were proved by scientists to have occurred without human aid, perhaps it might be assumed to have some evidential interest. But even then it would fail to stimulate my mind. Once one has accepted the certainty of life after death, there is no mental development to be gained by witnessing physical phenomena. This one could only judge as the manifestations of inferior spirit intelligences. Yet, strangely enough, so many persons appear to be more impressed by physical phenomena than by mental phenomena. Perhaps that is why in the initial stages the first few crude signs are unduly regarded.

Since I have read some of the literature on spiritualism it is nauseating to discover the disgusting manner in which the subject is handled by certain writers.

In one book pages are devoted to a séance held in the office of a London newspaper, which séance was attended by many well-known people, and all that happened was the fact that a pair of braces were deposited on the knees of one of the sitters. And on this wretched incident was based a controversy as to whether spiritualism was true or false. Such exhibitions are retrogressive, and are a degradation to the

very thought of spirit. In comparison with this Mr. Powell's séance, unaffected and unimpressive as it was, was a pantomime *par excellence*.

Spiritualism will inevitably sweep beyond these sort of performances. We must seek the higher altitudes before we can hope to arrive at inspiration.

And the influence of the spirit, which is beyond our conception, is the secret of inspiration and of genius.

CHAPTER VI

INTO THE UNKNOWN WORLD AGAIN

Feda speaks to the author, who also speaks to the spirit of W.A.—W.A. talks about his life on the spirit plane—"Changing places does not matter"—W.A. recalls a journey his spirit made to the earth—The author is advised about his habits of life—"Old people grow younger"—Sir Edward Marshall Hall calls on the author—Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's degrading argument—On those who cast out knowledge—The wife who wants to forget.

August 28, 1923.

IN most material matters a determined will is capable of controlling its own destiny, but in spiritual matters we humans seem to be but will-o'-the-wisps controlled by higher forces.

Circumstance appears to have been kind to me in the development of my studies and in the many opportunities to experiment that have been generously afforded me. Appointments were secured for me with most of the English mediums through whom Sir Oliver Lodge obtained so much of the valuable evidence and interesting information published in his book "*Raymond*."

As readers of "*Raymond*" know, the medium

who figures throughout with most prominence is Mrs. Osborne Leonard. She has acted for Sir Oliver Lodge and members of his family for the last eight years, and is regarded as one of the most remarkable mediums in England.

An appointment was made for me at her Cottage in Hertfordshire on the morning of August 28, 1923. At this time I had not read "Raymond," therefore I had no idea of the form her mediumship took.

On this occasion I was accompanied by my wife, who, though interested in psychic research, had never attended a séance. The appointment with Mrs. Leonard was not made in our names, and she knew nothing whatever about us.

Mrs. Leonard impressed me by her quiet, unperturbed manner and gentle speaking voice. A woman, I should imagine, in the thirties, she has clear, honest eyes, is open in countenance, direct and confident in her address, and entirely unassuming and unaffected.

The sitting took place in the drawing-room. There were present only Mrs. Leonard, my wife, and myself. The curtains were drawn over the windows, but a certain amount of daylight came into the room.

Being told that I wished to take notes, Mrs. Leonard turned on a small red shaded lamp which was placed on a low table in front of me. My wife sat on my left and the medium quite close to her, but facing us both, so that we were in a position to observe every expression on her face and her movements.

Mrs. Leonard told us that she was controlled by a spirit called "Fedá," a young girl who spoke through her mouth. Within a few minutes she went into a trance and Fedá began to speak.

The voice was entirely different from that of Mrs. Leonard's; it was that of a girl who has not reached the age of puberty.

The following is practically a verbatim account:

FEDA (*addressing H.D.B.*)—For the last few years many of the spirits have endeavoured to get into communication with you, not through any physical

medium but through your mind, and this they wish you to develop. They advise you when working on your books to sit alone. They do not want you to attempt to go into a trance. You must not be controlled, because this will not be good for the work you have in hand. For scientific knowledge, however, they wish you to feel the magnetism of their presence when you are at work. They suggest that you continue to put down your thoughts just as they occur to you. An Eastern spirit, that of a man who was born over a thousand years ago, is always with you when you are writing. Some day he will show himself to you. He is one of the chief forces and will have something to do with a new and wonderful work. You are born to guide.

After a short time there came the spirit of W.A.¹ and he spoke through Fedá, who said that he had passed over suddenly and with a chokiness in the throat. She described him as being straight of figure, with a longish face—not oval, wide lips, straight nose—slightly broad at the nostrils, brown eyebrows meeting over the top of the nose, and square forehead.

W.A. (*speaking through Fedá*)—I was known by the nickname of "B."² I am in a photograph snapped with others out-of-doors. You will be seeing it again soon.³ I was not expecting to pass over and was surprised when it happened so suddenly. During my time on earth I did not believe in life after death. It was not that I did not wish to, but my mind had not grasped it. There was an important birthday near the time that I was passing over. Do you remember this? There is a very important link in your pocket⁴ between you and me. Will you

¹ A near relative of my wife's, who died on December 31, 1922. It is not possible to disclose W.A.'s name on account of family objections.

² That is correct and further evidence of identification.

³ The snapshot is in my study at Dorincourt, our house at Kingston Vale, Surrey.

⁴ Fedá said that W.A. was looking into my breast pocket and trying to indicate something.

please look afterwards to see? ¹ We are all interested in your literary work and I am trying to help you.

He then referred to James on the other side and to the spirit of a boy who had passed over young and who had developed in the spirit world.

W.A.—The spirits want your literary work direct from you rather than from mediums. My existence in the spirit world is full of life, knowledge, and vitality. I am so glad that I can still be of use. I do not want to be half-baked. The spirit world is not mysterious, but quite natural. It is only a step forward; another room. I was disappointed at first when I left the earth, but I am quite happy now. Tell them all that I can *run*.² Whilst I was on earth I felt so much more power than I could ever bring out. Towards the end of my life I was absolutely tired out and when the end came I was glad to be gone. I have met Charlie.³ I am working with a machine which gave me a certain amount of pleasure on earth and which I find very useful. This work has helped me considerably, as in some way it fits in with odd rules and laws over here.

FEDA—I see a picture of W.A. with a machine which has a sort of grinding wheel. It was taken in a kind of out-building somewhere away from the house and in the open.⁴

W.A.—It was a good thing that I passed over, but

¹ I did not regard this as of any importance until driving away from the sitting, as I knew that I had only my note-case in my pocket, and I did not associate this with W.A.'s remark. However, after the sitting I had occasion to look into the case and found in it two letters. One concerned the appointment that had been made for me by a third party with Mrs. Leonard, and the other referred to reports that appeared in the *Daily News* and *Daily Express* about my spiritualistic experience in America.

² W.A. suffered from a weak heart and was unable to play tennis, dance, or take any undue exercise, and he seems to be overjoyed that he can now take complete physical exercise.

³ Not traced.

⁴ When he was on earth, W.A. had a plant in a room in an out-building for ivory turning, which was a hobby of his.

at first I was sorry at having had to finish the things I was engaged upon on earth so early. It is so splendid to feel well. I am trying to look after a certain old lady who is not well on earth. Give her my love. Tell her that I saw her looking at a little book and two sheets of paper with some writing on them two days ago.¹ She was thinking strongly of me. There is something written in the book; also something to do with one and five or five and one.² There is a younger lady on earth in whom I am much interested and who possesses good psychic powers. Two letters of her name are "m" and "a" and there are two versions of this name.³ She feels my presence occasionally and once I think she almost saw me. I feel that she knows and senses me when I am near her. Will you tell those who knew me that changing places does not matter; I can find anybody in Timbuctoo. I was glad to find houses when I passed over, and trees and the open air. On earth I lived in the country, where there is a garden. The garden is not all the way round the house, but nearly all the way round. A not very high house—two storied. The place is near the house "S."⁴ Will you search in your pocket by-and-by for the link and when you find it, will you sing out? It pleases me when you talk about me, but I do not like being spoken of as having died. I am very happy and would not like to come back. It is wonderful not to feel ill. The limitation of illness is so awful. Fear is so limiting. Now, I am free of all that and confident of the

¹ Sunday, August 26, 1923.

² It was ascertained later that Mrs. H., of whom he was speaking, was on Sunday reading the Prayer Book, that she had two letters of W.A.'s in front of her, and that she had been weeping because of his death. She had also been reading a cutting from a newspaper dealing with spiritualism (she is not a spiritualist) dated August 1, and the number of the house in which she resided is five. All this was ascertained from her before she was told of this sitting.

³ I presume that he was spelling my wife's name, which is Mabel. On earth he called her "Mabs."

⁴ This describes his residence on earth.

ALRIGHTNESS¹ of things. One feels it all the time. I was not punished for not knowing of life after death because my mind could not grasp it. When I passed over I did not suffer at the end. My body was alive after my spirit had passed. Just before the end I was smelling something I did not like.² It was awful and it worried me so much that I was glad when I had gone. I was numb towards the end, but not in pain. Had I lived I would not have got better. Now I am reconciled and happy. An aunt has helped me very much here. She passed over before I was born—very many years ago. She was then very young, but is now grown up. I did not know her when she introduced herself to me. Before I passed over I had been making plans to go away on a trip and I had bought things specially for it. Letters reached the house just after I had passed over, speaking about my proposed journey, and some things suggesting I was going to live, and it seemed painful to people on earth. I would like to have stopped the letters from coming.³ My fall⁴ stayed in my mind. I do not think about it now, but I thought a lot about it then.

Here a question was asked him by Mrs. Bradley.

FEDA—He is very obstinate and refuses to leave the subject he is discussing to answer the question.

W.A.—Yes, I know I am obstinate and in that way perhaps I have not improved. I am also still rather impatient in some matters. When on earth I worried about my eyes and thought they would go wrong. Now I do not wear glasses.⁵ My eyes were not really so bad, but their condition got on my nerves and I became afraid that I would lose my

¹ This word was spoken with emphasis.

² Ether was administered to him several hours before he died.

³ W.A. had arranged to go to the South of France, and some new clothes, etc., arrived for him the day after he died, and also letters referring to his proposed trip.

⁴ While playing a game of tennis in the autumn of 1922, he fell in a fainting fit on account of his heart.

⁵ He wore glasses while on earth.

sight. Do you remember how I was teased about my hair on top? Now I am perfectly respectable and have got a good "thatch." I was disappointed that you did not speak to me at another sitting.¹

MRS. BRADLEY—Would you like to get into touch with — and —² and would you like them to come to a séance?

W.A.—I would like them to come and will you explain to them all that I have said to you?³ I always feel at home with you two. You sense me and feel me, and I am often with you and I have heard you speak of me, which pleases me. I have been trying to rap in the bedroom, and would like to make a code: two for "yes" and one for "no." When either of you wish to speak to me will you please think only of one thing? I will knock near the top of the wardrobe. Once I tried to open the door about a dozen times. I wonder if you heard me moving about? On one occasion I tried to wake Mabel up by opening the door of the room in which she was sleeping, and then I thought how stupid I had been as she might have thought I was a burglar.⁴ If you hear me rap you must not glare at the place from which the sound comes. There is no need for any concentration; it is a matter for subtle vibration, and the spirits cannot do anything without very subtle vibrations. I will come to you at Dorincourt and hope to be able to do something there. When my spirit comes to earth I shall bring vibrations through

¹ Probably one of the sittings which took place in America.

² Two very near relatives of W.A.'s.

³ This was done. But the message was sceptically received and was neither welcomed nor accepted.

⁴ Shortly after W.A.'s death, Mrs. Bradley was sleeping in W.A.'s house in the next room to that in which his body lay. In the middle of the night, the door of her room suddenly burst open. She rose and shut it carefully. A little later it burst open a second time. She shut it again, shook it firmly to make sure the catch was secure, and feeling nervous, left the lights turned on. But the door again burst open; this time with the lights full on. It was only with difficulty that she summoned sufficient courage to shut it for the third time.

my own dimensions. (To H.D.B.) When I get through I will be able to help you. I shall be able to speak to you again later on.

W.A. (*answering a question from H.D.B.*)—I shall communicate with you in the light; it is easier to work in the dark, but I like a little light. Incidentally, it is easier to work wireless in the dark—eliminates certain vibrations. I would rather practise with a little light so that we might get used to it and dodge the wrong vibrations. I want you to go on with your work and enlighten other people. Do not study every day. You are on the right track and your work is not for a few but for the whole world—to give the people something to hang on to. I remember so well how difficult it was for us on earth to be quite, quite sure of an after-life. (To Mrs. Bradley) Do you remember when you spilt the stuff on the table and jumped? The table at R— G—¹ was magnetized. While on earth I was very sensitive. This was both good and bad for me. People hurt me and got on my nerves; lots of folk did not understand me. You are very sensitive, Herbert,² but in a different way. You have a great deal of power³ and will be able to help a great number of people. Do you ever feel a little breeze about you when writing? Will you watch for this the next time you are working? On one occasion I brought you some flowers, but was only able to connect the scent through the sense of smell. I will bring the flower scent again soon. I am now looking after you, and although you do not know it, I receive your thoughts, but when you speak I get them clearer. Please speak to me sometimes. I had a bad cough on earth, but I have now lost it.⁴ I am studying science. In addition, I have other work, helping people who have passed over, especially those who did not know before that there is an after-life. I have also visited other spheres; at present I am on the

¹ Correct name given.

² H.D.B.

³ Probably psychic power.

⁴ A cough towards the end strained W.A.'s heart severely.

third sphere. It is similar to earth, only here it is more beautiful. I have visited higher spheres, but they are less personal. In the third sphere families live together in a quiet home life. It may take a spirit thousands of years to get beyond this sphere. There is an Indian spirit¹ giving you a great deal of power. Indeed, there are several spirits trying to help you in your work. After a time you will know which spirit is going to communicate with you before you sit down. The spirits know that you have been very unsettled lately over material matters, and they are going to help you to adjust these affairs. They know that you felt you had better not start on the new literary work you had in mind, because of the material things which you had not done, and this was the reason you could not make any definite plans.²

H.D.B.—Do the spirits desire any particular form of literary work from me, and will the writing of dramatic comedies, etc., affect my personality?

W.A.—Write anything. The spirits are practising on you and using natural power. After a while they will give you a scientific explanation of life on this side. While you have been asleep you have often come and have seen the other side, but you cannot remember doing so. One day you will remember, and you will take glimpses of it back with you.

FEDA—There is a lady past middle age at the back of W.A. She helps him in his home.

W.A. (*answering a question of Mrs. Bradley's*)—I do not eat or sleep. The lady behind me attached herself to me and she looks after me. She tidies up. I think I am tidy enough, but she does not. I like to sit on a chair or lie down on a couch. I have a good home, and this lady (an aunt) keeps it and rearranges the furniture for me. In addition to this she helps in the children's centre. I am going to help to keep your nerves right, Herbert, and to keep depression away.

¹ This statement has come to me from several entirely different sources of communication.

² Instead of the work I had in mind, I took to writing this book.

H.D.B.—Will you give me some advice about my habits in life.

W.A.—It would be wise for you to go on exactly as you have been going on. Your life has value, and it is not advisable to change your habits and appear as a crank. Remain as a natural human being, one who is not peculiar in any way. Don't grow long hair and take to nuts. Through you I want to help people—ordinary people.

H.D.B.—Should I go on drinking champagne?

W.A.—Yes. It makes no difference, but mediums should not. (A few seconds pause.) Up here there are several animals. One of the great things we are trying to do is to stop vivisection on earth. That practice prevents us from helping you more. It creates a horrible vibration which we cannot get past. We are doing our utmost to try and suppress it. We have done something already and will do much more. Animals, such as tigers and snakes, etc., are not on this sphere. They all go to an animal kingdom and are there redrawn upon for physical life on earth.¹ Animals capable of love and loyalty live with us on this plane. I was glad to see dogs, and I have two cats which have adopted me. There was probably some link between me and them when on earth; perhaps in my earlier days. I do not care for the cats particularly, but they insisted on coming to live with me. Nobody here eats or kills animals. Children grow up to maturity and old people grow younger. There is no DETERIORATION² here. We attain a certain perfection and go on attaining more. It is always light, as bright as sunshine, but one does not see the sun as a round ball. I am studying the science of this light. There are many things I cannot understand; it is always wonderfully light. In the near future you shall gain knowledge on earth beyond anything you have dreamt of. Later on, I will communicate with

¹ An interesting theory.

² This word was not caught clearly at first and was then repeated loudly, not by Feda or through the medium, but in W.A.'s own voice, and the voice came from space.

you on scientific problems, Herbert, and occasionally I may use words I do not understand, but you must write them down. I am leading a wonderful life, and have not lost any of the things of value that I possessed on earth. In this sphere we are near the reservoir of life. On earth one has to eat and drink to supplement it. Promise me, Herbert and Mabel, that you will get into direct communication with me again. It is advisable not to talk to me for more than half an hour at a time and not more than twice a week. Go on with your studies, Herbert, and never lose patience.

The sitting then ended, having lasted two hours; one sensed a presence leaving the room, and after a few minutes Mrs. Leonard came out of the trance.

My wife was astounded. Not only did she recognize the personality of the spirit of W.A., to whom she was closely attached, in the first few seconds, but proof after proof was given throughout the conversation. She described it as an experience beyond the conception of the imagination.

There was not one pause. I was writing as quickly as I could the whole time, until my hand got tired. If much of that which appears is in the personal strain, I do not feel that it should be disturbed. I have abbreviated the matter only to the cutting out of certain repetitions which inevitably occur in conversations.

Presuming Mrs. Leonard knew much about us, she could never have invented the proofs of identity known only to my wife and myself. So far as evidence of the truth of spirit communication is concerned, this sitting was remarkable, for the identity of W.A. was established by personal references. In addition to this, several times from space came the actual voice of W.A.

It should also be recorded that before arriving at Mrs. Leonard's neither of us had any conception of what was likely to take place, and neither of us imagined that we were going to get into touch with W.A.

It was amazing to visit a medium through whom phenomenal results were being achieved, and yet be advised in her presence not to go to mediums. On several occasions this advice has been given to me by other mediums, and each time the same indication has been given that the greatest development can be achieved by me alone in direct mind communication.

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So far as the general public is concerned, there appears to me to be little prospect of it being able to obtain much personal demonstration for a while. There are such an infinitesimal few mediums of any account, and without personal experience spirit communication is very difficult to believe in. This is quite understandable, for a written description cannot convey the supernatural effect.

I believe that Mrs. Leonard is perfectly genuine. When I asked her after the sitting had ended if she could give me another appointment, she told me that she was booked up until the end of the following January. Much of her time is given to bereaved people who are seeking the consolation of communication with the souls of their loved ones. This is very praiseworthy, but I was seeking neither consolation nor exploiting sentimentality. I was engaged on the study of a subject in which there is hidden somewhere the solution of the problem of the universe. If it is to be found it will never be found by sentimentalists. I do not regard spiritism as a weakness. I regard it as a god-like strength.

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A month or so later I read of Mr. Robert Blatchford's experience with Mrs. Leonard, to whom he referred as "Mrs. Tranquil," in the *Sunday Herald*.

Mr. Blatchford had been extremely sceptical before, and at his first sitting he at once got into communication with his dead wife, conversed with her, and was given unquestionable evidence of her identity. He wrote two very clearly expressed and convincing

full-page articles relating to what had taken place.

Just before the publication of the second article Sir Arthur Conan Doyle made to the Press a statement, in the course of which he said that three outstanding public characters had recently acknowledged spiritualism: Sir Edward Marshall Hall, Mr. Robert Blatchford, myself.

The *Sunday Herald* disturbed my afternoon sleep by asking me on the telephone whether Sir Arthur's statement in reference to my having talked with the spirit of my dead sister was true. I said it was true, and I was asked if I had received any further evidence. I said that I had, but that it would not be published for some months.

THE REPORTER—Are you going to write a book on the subject?

I replied that it was possible I might. He was so determined that he even endeavoured to determine my purpose.

THE REPORTER—Then I suppose you will write the book in order to make people believe?

H.D.B.—I don't care a damn whether people believe or disbelieve. I am not a missionary.

With that I slammed the receiver down and went to sleep again.

The next day Sir Edward Marshall Hall came in to see me. I have known him for years but had never discussed spiritualism with him. The peculiar humbug of it struck us both. "Hello, Bradley, I did not know you were in it," he cried. And, as a matter of fact, neither of us knew of the other's views until we both saw them stated in the Press. We had an extremely interesting chat in which Sir Edward told me much more than I told him.

I feel impelled to refer to Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's statement already referred to. I have the utmost respect for Sir Arthur as a sincere and honest man who has done most valuable work for the advancement of spiritualism. He has promulgated it, of course, much more as a creed than a science; much more as a communal religion than as an aid to human develop-

ment. With these ideas I have no quarrel, even though I may not agree with them. But the highest spiritual sense should be so far beyond fear that it should disdain the usage of the mental weapons of fear.

Physically and mentally the spirit, the mind, and the personality become impotent, warped and negatived when governed or obsessed by the thought of fear.

In the article in question Sir Arthur theorized on how spiritualism might affect humanity. He asks: "How could a young man walk into a house of ill-fame, if he knew that the spirit of his dead mother was walking by his side?"

Now that is intended to propound the decadent doctrine of the rule of fear.

It is a degrading argument, not only for the son, but for his mother's spirit which would surely possess the delicacy of oblivion to such scenes. This is dragging spiritualism down to a disgusting and inartistic level of thought. The spirit is the possession of a higher understanding, not an enchantment to the sordidness of the earth.

There is another attitude towards spiritualism which is infuriating to the intelligent mind. It is the attitude of those who despite exceptional personal proofs which have been offered to them, deliberately refuse to believe and cast out knowledge as if it were an evil thing. Some have been known to lie in regard to known facts in order that their determination not to accept anything beyond their understanding should not be dislodged.

One case was related to me by a brilliant psychologist.

A few years ago an intimate friend of his died, leaving a young, attractive widow. About a year later he and a friend attended a séance, at which they got into touch with the spirit of the dead friend and had a long conversation with him. During the talk one of them asked him whether he would like his wife to attend a séance and talk to him. This was assented to. Afterwards the psychologist, analysing

the situation, said: "Of course we must tell her, but she is a materialist. *Watch her face!* She will hate it."

That is what happened. She resented it, pleaded illness, said it would upset her, implied that she did not believe. Anything rather than make an attempt to get into communication with her dead husband. She even did not want to hear the extraordinary message that had been obtained from him. Relations heard of it and they also were aggressively antagonistic to the scheme.

The matter was dropped at once. But why should she be ill because her husband might tell her that his spirit was still alive and able to send her wonderful tidings of a greater life? Did she prefer to think that all that was left of him were a few worm-eaten bones in a graveyard? Was that her philosophy or her desire? Or was it, perhaps, a sense of puny fear tinged with the thought that her husband might not approve of late hours and giddy dancing partners at the Grafton Galleries?

These remarks are recalled by Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's doctrine: the obsession of fear—the fear that her husband might be watching her actions. So on with the dance of life and to hell with the thought of eternity!

This miserable conception of the immortal spirit is frightful and wrong. To imagine that its function is to pry upon our sordid lusts is the thought of a miserable mind! If a spirit deigns to glance upon the pranks of human frailty, it is only to smile in tolerance. The artistic conception of the existence of the spirit in a higher plane is that it is rendered oblivious to crudity and is not likely to explore the cesspools of a vile imagination.

Spiritualism must be taken as a stupendous actuality, or rejected as an absorbing vacuum.

CHAPTER VII

CHAOS, FANTASY AND INVENTION

A chapter for the sceptic—Disjointed incoherence—Belle: a dark face but a white spirit—A big man from the East—The author is chillily amused—A talk about impressions—The investigator laughs and suggests a stimulant brewed in the cup of invention—With all his laughter, gloom falls upon the searcher of the Truth—Moonstone does not impress this sitter, and the reasons why.

October 4, 1923.

HERE is a chapter in which the sceptic may revel to his heart's delight. There is contained in it the experiences from which nothing of value or even of passing interest was obtained, but since this book is an unbiased narrative of psychical investigation it is necessary to record the dull and chaotic passages as well as those which prove phenomenal or inexplicable. It will serve as an illustration of the disappointments which are inevitably met with by all students of this subject.

An appointment was made for me on the afternoon of October 4, 1923, with Mrs. Brittain, a clairvoyant medium, at her house in London. Sir Arthur Conan Doyle has sat with Mrs. Brittain on several occasions, and although some of his sittings were unsuccessful, he relates certain incidents that happened at others which he regards as evidence of her powers. He sent to her several people, who have had successful results, and he expresses a firm belief in her.

Sir Oliver Lodge sat with her, but describes the sitting as not very successful, although he says that he obtained a few evidential points.

This was the first time I had met Mrs. Brittain, and I do not think she knew anything^{ist.}, whatever

about me. I took with me a Miss A., an extremely intelligent young lady, who is herself a clairvoyant on occasions and may even possess mediumistic faculties without knowing it.

The sitting was between Mrs. Brittain and myself, Miss A. sitting on one side.

The medium did not go into a trance, but just sat opposite and facing me. She floundered about, gave descriptions of all sorts of people she saw around me. She tried many sorts of Christian names, male and female, none of which I knew. This continued for some time, and frankly the whole string of messages, descriptions, names, etc., was a disjointed incoherence. It would have been ludicrous, but for the really pathetic way in which Mrs. Brittain appeared to strive to hit upon something of account. Eventually the attempt was given up.

Afterwards Miss A. said that one or two of the descriptions and names given coincided with persons known to her. This, however, I must regard as very flimsy evidence and I must dismiss the sitting as a complete failure.

Mrs. Brittain seemed genuinely distressed that the results had been so poor. I felt almost as sorry for her as I did for my wasted afternoon.

I thought it fair to Mrs. Brittain to give her another sitting, and one was arranged for the morning of October 10, 1923.

I went alone and the procedure was varied, inasmuch as Mrs. Brittain almost immediately went into a trance and said that she was controlled by a spirit called "Belle," who is her guide. Although Belle was supposed to be speaking throughout and the voice used was much higher pitched than that of Mrs. Brittain, it could easily have been assumed by anyone. Belle described herself as not an Indian but a Sengalese. She said she had a dark face but a white spirit. The boys there had taught her English.

BELLE—I see standing by your side a man: not a relative, age about forty-five. He has greyish hair,

a fine forehead, and nice eyes. He suffered a good deal before he passed away. He was a very busy and an active man. He was very restless and moved about while talking. He was decided in his views. Something took all the life and strength away from him before passing. He had a great interest in you, mostly from the point of view of work. He wants to give you inspiration. He was a materialist on earth and had not considered the life after death problem, because he was not interested in it.¹ He says that you can attract spirits by your work. There are lots of people who are going to try and help you. They will come one at a time, but you have to look up the facts for yourself. There are great numbers of them all collected together to make a strong, powerful battery so that they can get through to you by direct communications without you having the trouble to go to mediums. They say you are a medium yourself, not in the eyes or ears but in consciousness—inspiration. I know that you often try to write and nothing comes.² Your body is there but the spirit is away. A big man has appeared on the scene. He is a spirit from the East and passed out in the East. He is guiding you. He has great wisdom and helps to teach people philosophy. Feda has asked Raymond to help you to direct communication: also Paul Kennedy, a friend of Raymond's. They are in the Summerland sphere. Paul's mother is living on earth. Will you ask the medium for her address as Feda and Belle sent you to her.³ The big man from the East is here again. He is a wonderful prophet.

H.D.B. (*to the Easterner*)—What sphere are you on?

¹ A very fair description of a dead friend.

² Quite true. But most temperamental writers are like that until they control their moods.

³ This reference is to Raymond Lodge, Paul Kennedy and Mrs. Kennedy, all of whom figure in Sir Oliver Lodge's book "Raymond." I met Mrs. Kennedy later, a charming woman with whom I had an exceptionally interesting talk.

THE EASTERNER—Get your facts before your spheres.

BELLE—The big man will reach you in your work to inspire you. But you must work things out for yourself. You should be able to liven up the dead world. You will be used as an instrument. The world is an infant school; the preparation for the next standard. Childishness dies. In your work the spirits will make you like a star to clear away the blindness of the world. They will fit in with your opportunity. There are one thousand ready and eager to send messages. The big man will keep the door of your mind from any obsessing or disgusting spirits, and only admit the best. He will see that the channel is left open for the few. You can have guides of your own choosing. There are two things, religion and science. Religion is sentiment, tenderness, emotion, and affection; science is cold and hard. Science is male and female and positive and negative.

Here the sitting with Mrs. Brittain ended. It was certainly more interesting than the first, but, of course, it has no evidential value. The ordinary flights of the imagination could account for everything that was said.

My impression of Mrs. Brittain is that she is kindly and honest. It is likely that she possesses psychic gifts which vary considerably in power. On each occasion she appeared to me to be anxious and weary.

The next medium with whom I sat was Mr. A. Vout Peters.

Sir Oliver Lodge expresses a very high opinion of Mr. Peter's mediumistic powers. The record of his sittings, and those of other members of Sir Oliver's family, figure in "Raymond" and occupy a considerable portion of the book. Sir Oliver, in fact, says that "on the whole he thinks that Peters has done as well as any other medium, especially as the abstention from supplying him normally with any identifying information was strict." That

may be so, and Sir Oliver is by far the clearest judge in such a matter, but I am of opinion that the Mrs. Osborne Leonard sittings that he records were infinitely more intriguing, and that the impersonal and descriptive matter was more alluring and of greater evidential value.

I called on Mr. Vout Peters on the morning of October 24, 1923.

One gets sick of subterfuge and anonymity. It is offensive to one's temperament to continue appearing as "Mr. Alias" and sneak into a house like a thief in the day. This appointment was made for "Mr. Bradley," and it is quite possible that Mr. Peters knew which particular Bradley the fortune or misfortune of birth had made me.

Mr. Peters ushered me into his abode with the air of a mystic. But the manners of the mystic are not easily acquired. The quality is to impress with the suggestion of poetry, beauty, and musical wisdom, like my friend Rabindranath Tagore, but that impression is sensitive and delicate, and in his eye is the humour of knowledge and the smile of simplicity. Tagore exudes the mystery of all things, yet when one is with him one can relax in humorous content.

Perhaps my mood was out of tune with that of Mr. Peters, and yet I went there with a free, open, receptive, and an entirely sympathetic mind. In two seconds I could only feel chillily amused. It is unfortunate at times to realize that the study of stage productions has left one so hypercritical that the ill-studied affectations of life should so offend.

If one has a delicate sufficiency of food and drink, a pleasant warmth and comfortable shelter, what else is there to live and thrive upon except one's impressions? Impressions create emotions and emotion is life.

I cannot resist my impressions; they are more real to me than any material thing. Formed in an artistic shape they may live far longer than the structure of bricks in which I dwell.

It is quite probable that Mr. Vout Peters possesses genuine psychic powers. It is also quite probable that his powers are not always functioning; they may at times be very forceful and at other times very weak. But on the occasion of my visit his powers were in a state of coma and required the strong stimulant which is brewed in the cup of invention.

We occupied a small and somewhat fusty room, which, I was told, was kept specially for sittings. No meals were ever eaten in it, nor was smoking allowed to pollute the atmosphere. After a few words of pseudo-wisdom he asked for some personal article of mine. I handed him my wrist watch, which he held fervently in one hand whilst passing the other over his forehead as if seeking some message of inspiration.

He gave the following reading, but I did not even nibble at the bait of flattery he offered.

MR. PETERS—Remarkable life. Takes life deeply. Have made your own way and are responsible for your own success. You have no use for theories. Always yourself. You grasp things all round and all points of view. Popular: you love to give pleasure. Your religion is curious. Not fanatical. You do not regard beliefs. You only regard those things that help and lift humanity. You have thrown off the orthodox. Your religion is to do the proper thing and live it. Trouble has entered your life during the last year and made of it darkness, but soon there will be light. You now view things from a new aspect and deeper strata.¹

In a letter Mr. Peters had asked me to bring him some article which had belonged to a departed person. Such an article I gave him and he proceeded to describe the owner of it:

MR. PETERS—Active. Quick. Energetic and full of life and power. Medium height. Face a little long; forehead high. Lips full; hands rather small. Progressive. Loving disposition. . . . I feel a tremendous pain which cramps me.

¹ Absurd! No trouble of any moment has entered my life.

Mr. Peters wriggled about and made some very disturbing grimaces. He asked me to hold his hand, which I did with reluctance as I felt sure he would soon recover from his very unfortunate and entirely unimpressive attack.

MR. PETERS—I feel a pain in my chest and can't breathe or think. It makes my hands useless. The pain comes from my back and runs down my legs. The pain is sudden and I did not expect it. I want to speak but can't.

Followed a period of unconsciousness.

MR. PETERS—I can't do what I wanted to. I tried to hold out, but cannot. Your friend was looking forward to something very different to death; expecting brightness; then there was separation breaking up the whole of his life. He did try to come back before. You are not the only person he wants to come back to. There is a photograph—since he had passed over and with it comes a sense of dissatisfaction. He was impatient. He wanted to do more than he had done. His character was not too sympathetic to strangers. Kept people at a distance. Could only give out when he knew them—now and again. Clever in conception of things. The pain came suddenly without any preliminary. Very happy; moving quickly. Sense of gaiety and brightness. Bothered by delays. Last three years crowded very much. Able to do quite a lot in them. Period of death in the midst of happiness. Many people not far from him when he passed out. Sense of tragedy. Open air. Nothing soft—stupid—effeminate. Wholesome, clever. Doing things with his hands. Screwing up something; adjusting.

Mr. Peters described the awful pain, and he gave so many gasps that one began to feel quite sympathetic towards the painfulness of his profession.

MR. PETERS—His chest felt all squeezed up and he could not use himself. Dying. Felt pain to a tremendous extent. His body was very sensitive. Not religious. No sense of fear. Difficult to

adapt himself to the conditions when he had passed over at first.

The paroxysms of Mr. Vout Peters left my heart entirely unmoved and his descriptions elicited no response from me, for although much of it could be made to fit, it was so elastic that it could fit a thousand persons.

He described an old man in whom I had not the faintest interest. Really he bored me so much that I thought I should catch one of his spasms.

There came an old lady. The description of her was a masterpiece of lucidity. "Nose, not large. Small mouth. Eyes dark grey or lightish brown." Sherlock Holmes, after a long study, might discover that a "nose, not large" might also indicate "nose, not small" and therefore deduce that although its shape was not precisely defined it was obvious that it was unquestionably "a nose." The shape of the mouth was charmingly diplomatic, for who would be so indelicate as to refer to a "large-mouthed lady"? The colour of the eyes was delightfully comprehensive, and it must be conceded that although the colour might be grey or brown, it is positive that it was not green.

This particular old lady "had been ill and just before the end she had suffered intense pain" (which pain, I was happy to say, was not physically demonstrated this time) and strangely enough "she had been in bed a good while." Unfortunately the majority of us who were not blasted into eternity by the war or have been dispatched by a motor-omnibus can seldom escape being ill and suffering pain towards the end of our lives, so one may be absolutely certain that this is the authentic account of the passing of this sweet, variegated lady. Nor can one doubt the assertion that "she had been in bed a good while." Humans spend at least a quarter of their lives in bed. Bed is a necessary and even a pleasant oblivion, and since this lady spent a "good while" in it, she evidently led a restful and blameless life.

I was quite sad that I could not recognize her. I may, of course, have met her casually somewhere, probably at a fancy dress ball, where in the changeful colour of the lights she appeared as a chameleon.

Most people are rich in a wonderful and assorted collection of deceased relatives. I am not. I come of a long-lived Irish family. At the time of writing, my father is alive and virile and is nearing the age of ninety. His grandmother was born in 1740 and died at 104. Of relatives I can remember only the death of my sister and an aged uncle, so the field is narrowed for any chance shot from clairvoyants.

After a few pleasantries on the October chill I took my departure from Mr. Vout Peters, but not wishing to be hasty in my investigations I arranged with him for a further appointment.

For the second sitting Mr. Peters suggested we should try the twilight, so about four p.m., on November 8, I again invaded his spiritual apartment.

Conditions, of course, are in the lap of the gods, and this time the inspirations of Mr. Peters took a pleasantly varied form.

No time was wasted on psychometry. He just asked me for some article of mine to hold, and knowing the tenderness he had exhibited before, I gave him the same wrist-watch. This he caressed with great ecstasy.

Almost immediately he indicated by odd noises and gestures that he was going into a trance. He announced: "Moonstone is here." I had read that Moonstone was his guide.

Moonstone talks in a sort of broken English accent, the sort of broken English the village blacksmith would use if attempting to play D'Artagnon. To say plainly, Moonstone is a careless sort of chap in the matter of accent; sometimes he speaks in broken French and sometimes in broken Bloomsbury, but more often than not he borrows an accent which unquestionably belongs to Mr. Peters.

Moonstone is a nice, affable type of character, but

he has a habit of being personal. He insists on describing me. It has taken me so long to know myself that this repetition of second-hand descriptions is apt to become offensive. If I had to endure much more of it I should certainly become sick of myself, which is the worst tragedy that I can conceive.

MOONSTONE—Life is not easy; hard and difficult. Experienced fighting. Fighting prejudice. You look thirty-three. (Thou flatterest me, oh Moonstone!) Sure of yourself; not afraid of people. Discreet—hits hard. Not afraid. Loving and affectionate on the right side. (Why on only one side?) Tremendously strong willed. Difficult to retain, later on, what you had. (This evidently refers to Income Tax.) Fight next two years with reference to work. Good phraseology. Something new—hundreds going out. Mediumistic yourself. Patches of inspiration. Wonderful manner. Can hit and hit with truth. Going to alter; grow differently. Redress. Touch heart of humanity. (Moonstone had been reading "Not For Fools.")

Moonstone supplies a long description of a nondescript "elderly lady" with a "nose not large." She is "not tall" and is "rather tender and conventional." Although this dear lady "would think me a dear boy," on earth she was always afraid of what I would say. Strange to relate she "suffered much before passing away."

Then another really old lady, who "had a portrait taken forty years ago." She has a "long face and a full skirt." Her name was "Mary Ann" and in the portrait "she stands near a table" and wears a "locket or a brooch."

Then a soldier: a "happy character. Not tall, with hair of fairish brown and nose that was fairly long." He, poor soul, had "lived much in the body" and "had suffered a lot." Whether this was because he had lived much in the body is not explained, although it is comforting to know that his fortitude must have been influenced by his "happy character." Strangely enough, although "his lips

are a little full and his hands are long and broad; he is not religious." This is rather sad. "He was ill or wounded, got the better of that and then went out very suddenly." There was "stomach trouble again or else he was shot or operated upon." Of the two evils I think that I should prefer to be shot.

Although he was "not fat or thin" he was "a little bothered about his affairs." There was "turmoil after his death." He was "not fat and not thin"; in fact, as I could not help remarking at the time, he did not appear to be any blasted thing. My analysis, however, was immediately disturbed by the statement that "he was quick and active and fond of horses and animals."

Next the description of a young woman "between twenty-five and forty." (Splendid diplomacy!) She also "was quick and active," and although she was "loving without sentiment she suffered a lot from her stomach and chest." Despite these afflictions, however, she knows that "something had not fructified in my life" and that although "few love me for myself alone, she is one who does!" She says that I have "experienced great difficulties and a period of bad luck. There is a disagreeable side in my life." (Incidentally I refused to encourage these optimistic indelicacies.) She, being an adventuress when on earth, is in a portrait.

H.D.B.—Can you describe the portrait?

Ignoring my question, Moonstone goes into music and geography. He suggests that she is a "sister or a cousin," but my fair impression is that she was one of my great-great-grandmothers of whom, unauthentically, I am given to understand I possess a minimum eight.

Then: someone who "fell from a horse and hurt his leg. Something binds us together." (It was lucky he broke his leg and not his neck.)

Hereabouts Mr. Vout Peters, or Moonstone, is attempting a very bad French accent. He sees a scene at a hospital. "The beds are not very high."

MOONSTONE—Do you ever visit a hospital?

H.D.B.—No, no, no. Fate has never required me to.

MOONSTONE—I see a man. Some game he plays. It is with a ball and he is excellent.

H.D.B. (*in mental soliloquy*)—A game. And with a ball. How wonderfully unique!

We are perforced to leave this character who is "lissom in back with sleeves turned up on beautiful arms."

But Moonstone discovers another character called "Dick." I am disappointed not to find him to be my dear old collie dog of that name, but instead a "man of forty, who may have been older." The description of this man is startlingly graphic. He is "not very tall and his face is a little round and is rather clean shaven." (I give the precise words used, and succumb to the illusiveness of the "rather clean.") He is "very active, but couldn't work very much, because he has been forbidden to do so." (Possibly some departed member of the Bricklayers' Union.) He displayed tremendous strenuous activity in his life, had strong friendships and suffered from a pain in his chest.

All these quotations in their damnable inverted commas are placed, with slight abbreviations, in the order they were slung out.

To continue on this character: "The end came quickly." He was "not sure of life after death" but "he was tidy and neat in his dress, and very clean in finger-nails."

So the description went on. Then, almost aggressively, I was asked in Vout Peters's English:

MOONSTONE—Do you place him?

H.D.B. (*with the agony of boredom*)—Not precisely, my dear Moonstone.

On went Moonstone. The illusive martyr had "suffered in his feet and the deadness of his hands and feet. . . . He was a man's man and so busy that he had not time to live. He sends his regards to Bill. On earth he lived in a house with a garden of flowers."

Presently it was gratifying to observe Mr. Vout Peters emerge from his powerful trance and, having been entirely unconscious of what had happened, he inquired bemusedly whether any words of value had fallen from Moonstone's lips.

I answered that Moonstone and I had enjoyed an illuminating discussion on the tranquillity of air and the figments of mind.

Before my departure I told Mr. Peters that I was writing a book on psychic problems. As it was necessary to record my experience I asked him whether he would in justice to himself like a further sitting. He declined the opportunity I offered with a profusion of excuses.

I do not accept this sort of nonsense. Mr. Vout Peters may have faculties of a kind, which appear to function with weak intellects. They may flicker at times, and occasionally blaze.

Those faculties were non-existent with me, and Mr. Peters appeared to be seeking aid from imagination and his creations seemed miserable figments without the semblance of reality.

The phantoms might elicit some response from mourning sentimentalists into whom so often credulity creeps, whispering some furtive welcome to invention. But to the student credulity must be regarded as some fecund plant choking the garden of knowledge.

The result of my sitting was negative. It was as if chaos was exhibiting its impotent capers and fantasy was dancing in laughter to some unseductive tune, whilst all the time invention was grinning like a death's head at the orgy, waiting to make a further discord at their grave.

So through the mire one ploughs, exploring all the noisome by-ways on the road of mental adventure—through a jungle of suffocating weeds and a morass of cloying sentimentality, until one arrives at some plane of freedom where one stands alone in the security of the god inside oneself.

CHAPTER VIII

THE LITTLE DEVIL DOUBT

An essay on man and a word about the arcadia of the smug—A mental bomb-shell—The second cable—A warning against falling into the pit-fall of stupidity—The philosopher reviews his mentality.

November, 1923.

THERE are times when the egohood of knowledge is surging within the soul of man and seeks expression by battering itself against the wall of human stupidity. Then finding the assault of no avail, a crestfallen retreat is made in silent loneliness or the wounds are licked to health in preparation to renew the fray.

Whatever the conceit of man may be, unless he realizes the infinitesimal extent of his powers he has not advanced one foot beyond the territory of the multitude of fools.

With all our struttings and our assumption of arrogance, we know just a miserable fraction of the great scheme of the universe. We are beset by our emotion and are blown this way and that as shuttle-cocks in the storm of life. Life is movement and stillness is death, and however philosophical we may assume ourselves to be, thought and emotion swing to and fro. We reach the heights of the imaginary apex and fall to the depths of doubt. Thus, see-saw; up, down.

For the wise man there are only joy and pain. Happiness is the slothful arcadia of the smug. The artist instinctively detests the miserable neutrality of happiness: he can revel in his joy and autocratically extract refinement from his pain. That is human achievement and illustrates its limitations. The best of us possesses only a glimmer of intelligence, and

this is confined within our bodily husk. And this husk we imagine to be of supreme importance, and we persuade ourselves that it is the sum total of attraction, until the inevitable decay sets in and shatters this illusion. . . .

It was during November, 1923, that a mental bomb-shell was dropped and, exploding before my eyes, left me bewildered but unscathed.

In my psychic studies up to this date, I had learned a lot. From the philosophical standpoint my experiences in automatic writing (which are recorded in Book III) had been of value to me. From the personal standpoint, which is more dramatic and assumedly evidential, I was still dependent upon two evidences of the direct voice—the communications of my sister, and the communications of W.A.

These three phenomenal experiences alone should be sufficient to convince the average intellect of the certainty of the existence of life after death, but the appetite of the mind is voracious and requires constant sustenance.

Two persons intimately connected with me have died during the last ten years and both had communicated with me.

However, after being for five months immersed in the intricacies of this colossal problem of the establishment of the certainty of after-life and the continued development of personality, I suddenly awakened to the fact that I had never, since my American experience, received any further message from my sister. The silence, although logically understandable and explicable, was disturbing.

I had waded through every available channel of pseudo-mediums, many of whom had proved only their capacity as poor inventors.

Despite these disappointments, in my heart I felt that nothing could disturb my discoveries in America nor my talk with W.A.

For myself I required no further proofs of survival, but so far as the uninitiated, unimaginative, and sceptical public was concerned I felt that my experiences at this stage were not sufficient to

carry conviction. Link after link would have to be forged in the stretch of evidence before the average man, with his limited sense of comprehension, could be brought to a condition in which he would be compelled to realize and accept a new, magnificent, and supernatural Truth.

Meanwhile I had heard from my friend De Wyckoff that he was coming to England early in December, and that he intended to bring George Valiantine with him in order that we might pursue our psychical researches.

Then something happened. It was a cable from New York. Here it is :

“ Disregard my letter have discovered Valiantine in undeniable instance conscious fraud.

“ DE WYCKOFF.”

For a few moments the shock was bewildering. The message was cold and deliberate, and it was characteristic of Joseph De Wyckoff in his hatred of deceit. That something of considerable moment had been discovered was only too obvious, and I was compelled to respect the judgment of so scrupulous an investigator.

But howsoever I viewed it, the cable left me in the air. Day after day I had concentrated on the study of the greatest of all problems, and gradually I thought I was arriving at something. I had completed half of this book.

Strangely enough, I felt stimulated. The play on my emotions attracted me. The gods were generous in providing food for thought. De Wyckoff is a wise man and suddenly tells me that Valiantine is a fraud. Within a few seconds of the reading of his cable my mind flew round the circle of conclusions. What had been discovered I could not know, but I knew something to be true : my experiences at Arlena Towers. None of these phenomena could be explained by human logic. But assuming that by some mysterious means it became possible to explain or produce the manifestations of the other spirits

that had appeared, nobody—neither De Wyckoff nor Valiantine, nor even God—could shake my knowledge that *for thirty-five minutes I had talked on personal matters—matters unknown to anyone but ourselves—with the discarnate but living spirit of my sister: her voice, her personality, her spirit, her soul.*

And so, having digested the cable, with the unshakable knowledge I shall carry to my grave I laughed the little devil doubt to hell.

But I remained material enough to imagine that De Wyckoff's cable, giving full accord to its wording, would smash this book of mine.

I am conscious of my shortcomings, one of which is that I am a miserable failure as a liar, and have to write Truth in sheer aggression. So there was no other decision left to me but to record all the incidents that occurred, however damnatory they might appear to my philosophy, which is the silken thought of this work.

My logic at this stage could arrive only at obvious and rigid conclusions, which were almost cubist in their determined lines. The form, at that moment, would certainly be criticized thus: De Wyckoff wise; Valiantine a fraud; myself mad.

But even if the definitions were switched at will according to taste, whichever appellation was applied to me would not affect my individual judgment.

Again: three times in my life had brilliant stars illuminated my pathway to the knowledge of eternity. The pathway was clear and simple and straight and certain. Yet, with our poor intellects, at times we become weary on this journey through life, and being human we fall into the pitfall of stupidity.

I was so certain of it all and marvelled in wonderment at this great scheme of creation which never dies but ever develops as it passes on into eternity.

When one has arrived at the security—at the certainty of after-life, when stones are flung even from the catapults of one's friends, one slinks bruised and injured into the solace of one's own self, seeking that particle of God which one knows to exist in the soul of every man. . . .

A second anonymous appointment had been arranged for me with Mrs. Osborne Leonard on November 28. In my mood I wondered if this would prove retrogressive. Or would it merely consist of repetition? This would so disturb me that I should prefer a negative silence.

And here is a coincidence: Joseph and Minerva De Wyckoff, husband and wife, were sailing for England on the day that I and my wife visited Mrs. Leonard.

I remarked to my wife: "It will now be all the more interesting to observe if anything transpires."

I spoke somewhat flamboyantly, half as a challenge to fate and half as a desire for evidence.

And so, tired but mentally critical, expecting nothing, and in the mood even to enjoy discomfiture, we motored into Hertfordshire.

There are worlds without end, just as human life is without end. What does anything matter so long as one realizes this and endeavours to develop one's personality.

But little devil doubt combats the great god of belief.

CHAPTER IX

THE AMAZING EVIDENCE OF ETERNAL LIFE

A symbol: the journey of mind through life—Feda, W.A., and an elderly gentleman—W.A. on his life after passing out—My sister Annie confirms the Arlena Towers evidence—Floating down through the thought-stream—The spirit power—The end of a remarkable sitting—The author's views on after-life—Life is a shadow of existence—A great evidential séance—The comic philosophy of Upper Suburbia.

November 27, 1923.

THERE are so many days in life through which one just drifts. We sleep and dream and awake, we clothe ourselves and eat, and we endure the routine of the day; insignificant incidents occur which call up a faint smile or a feeble irritation; but when the end comes we feel that the day might not have been, that the passage of time is lost in oblivion.

I am grateful for the days that are complete and full, when every faculty is alive. Movement surges and events take place, life and thought take meaning and progress. The mind leaps over the chasm of stupidity and, alighting on some higher crest, surveys the struggling humans in the morass with a finer understanding. . . .

On the morning of November 27, 1923, there was a thick white frost in the south of England, and at Kingston Hill the white mist was so dense that travelling threatened to be difficult.

My wife and I left by car to keep our appointment with Mrs. Osborne Leonard. Passing through the western part of London the fog was black and depressed one's nerves, but as we approached Hertfordshire the veil was lifted and we drove into brilliant sunshine. The transformation was startling, and the countryside was covered with a thick white frost, every blade of grass and every twig on the trees glistening with silver.

The scene was magnificent and the short journey through the fog into the sunlight seemed symbolic of the journey of the mind through life. . . .

The appointment had been made by a friend and Mrs. Leonard had still no knowledge of our identities.

My wife sat next to Mrs. Leonard and I at a small table at which I took notes of everything that transpired. Mrs. Leonard went into a trance and within a minute or two Feda spoke to us.

FEDA—Good morning. Your sister is here and also W.A. They send you their love and say that they have been with you both almost daily since the last time you were here. They have been impressing you, but they have not been able to manifest themselves.

W.A.—I am not speaking for myself only; I am speaking for others too. I have got a good deal through to you on the mental side. We find we can impress your mind to quite a remarkable degree. (*To H.D.B.*) There is something we are preparing for you.

FEDA—Your sister is bending over you, as if urging your arm to write. We are all urging your mind too and there are lots of ways in which they are trying to help you. One job concerns some short papers, not long continued essays, but such as one could read through in an hour or two. They have seen you getting a lot of papers together and putting them in a book. This book is a mixture. Several subjects are woven into it and it has something to do with spiritualism. It is giving a new light and it is not written on the old lines. The book hovers between two points of view and we are forcing you to be definite, but we do want the subject treated impartially.¹

W.A.—That is how the subject should be treated; we are so tired of "wobblers."

¹ This is a remarkable analysis of this book on which I am engaged, and of my mental attitude towards it.

FEDA—There is an elderly gentleman with W.A. and your sister is pointing at him.

ELDERLY GENTLEMAN—I have been helping you and I think I have had a good deal to do with your impressions.

W.A.—I was present at an interview a little time ago when you went round to see one man particularly. You were talking about psychic matters and giving your own view, you were also drawing up a kind of programme for the future; not to be used immediately. We don't want you to commit yourself too much. You must be careful. We will help—it is a big subject and very interesting. There are just now looming round you so many things that will probably be very important during the next few months. Don't bind yourself to non-essentials. You have so much to do and you can feel it. Unexpected things will happen. You must leave your time free for eventualities.

ELDERLY GENTLEMAN—I am M.J.B. I would not be close to you but for the work you are doing. W.A. has been trying to help Old A.¹ but he does not think he can do anything further as Old A. is rather pig-headed, but we all like him.

W.A.—I fancy that I am an authority on this subject. Old A. does not very easily take to new ideas. He is used to his own way of looking at things and he does not take other people's views. I don't think it possible, Herbert, that you can do anything further with him. Anyhow you had better leave it as you have a good deal to get on with yourself.² I am glad I got through last time. I particularly wanted to come. I was waiting for you both. Harry is with me and we are very friendly

¹ This was extraordinary, as the full surname came out pat. He is always referred to as "Old A.," and is a very near relative of W.A.

² After W.A. had first communicated with me I saw Old A. and related to him what had happened. Old A. was sceptical and said he could not believe in spiritualism or mediums. He also added that "the knowledge of any such communications would disturb his family and probably make them ill." This interview was strictly private.

—Harry F. I am helping you with your literary work, and I am going to help you with speaking. You have got to do it. A big opportunity is coming before long.¹ The guides are getting ready. One of your guides is James, the professor. There is a link between you and him. He can help from two points of view—the psychic and the intellectual. When on earth the professor wrote—and wrote wonderfully. At first lighter stuff, and then he discarded this form and went in for more serious work.² You have got to do the two. Go on with the work you are doing. We are impressing the more serious points. You should go on your own line; don't drop one for the other. Public speaking will come in a different way. At present your tongue and brain do not co-operate as quickly as your hand and brain. You can't quite get it out, but I will help you. I suppose you are thinking W.A. was not very brilliant in that way. I used to gulp and swallow it a dozen times. Inarticulation is because the mind is diverted. When in the company of a few people you can be very impressive, Herbert. You have let yourself in for public speaking now. Forget you don't like it—just let it rip. I am going to make you forget the personalities and the individualities of the audience. Whilst you are conscious of them it suffocates you; you must think you are talking to chairs and tables. I shall be able to remove the temporary state of paralysis.³ Don't attempt any extempore business at present. Get ready what you think you will say; learn something to start with, and when you feel your feet you

¹ Just previous to this sitting I had been approached to lecture to the members of two societies. Both these offers were refused by me.

² The indication is that this is Professor William James (Psychology) of Harvard. He died in 1910, and he was the brother of Henry James, the writer, who was a keen student of Psychical Research.

³ I have done a certain amount of lecturing, and this is an extremely clear analysis of my feelings. I detest lecturing, although it has been forced upon me on several occasions.

will not want to sit down. An opportunity is coming soon. I shall be there, and I promise you we will not let you down. Then you will go ahead and enjoy it.

Here W.A. said that he had tried another photograph at the Cenotaph, and it was not a bad likeness of him.

W.A.—I was told about it by Mr. Stead. I am in the right hand side of the photograph—not very low down. Get it and look at it through a glass.¹ Your sister and I are great pals, but her condition is different to mine: she has become more spiritualized. Everyone is rather struck by her. She is a very beautiful spirit and very spiritual. I do not know that I should strike you in that way. I came over right in the middle of material things. It was a break off. Perhaps it has been much better and more normal for me that I should pick up the life over here and go on helping other people. I am not quite in the same position as I left on earth, but it is easier to help when one presents oneself in an ordinary normal way. It is much happier here than on earth. There is confidence here; quite a different feeling to that on earth. I would not like to come back. One feels so assured that everything will be all right. (To H.D.B.) Even you have your panicky times—everybody does on earth; those who think. There are times when you are not quite sure of anything. I had them, although I was not a deep thinker. You have thought and analysed more than I did. I was more fond of practical things. I was always winding things up and talking about speeds. Here one never feels uncertain. Everything is working towards good. Your sister helps with the

¹ On the day following my wife obtained a copy of the photograph taken in the open air at the time of the two-minute silence on Armistice Day, November 11, 1923, by Mrs. Deane and Estelle Stead. This photograph showed about fifty spirit heads. It was reproduced in several newspapers, including the *Sunday Herald*, of November 18, which paper also published a long article on the phenomena. To the astonishment of my wife and myself there in the position described is a head, which under the microscope reveals a remarkable likeness of W.A.

children. It was a good thing she passed over, because if she had lived she would have had such miserable health.¹ She has developed. She looks pretty and young. I look the same as I did on earth. Some people who pass over look younger, get back their vigour. I find it splendid to feel so strong. I am glad there are things I can do with my strength as well as with my mind. I wanted to do things with my hands and I found I could make and build, and it was great relief. I know Kingsley. He is a young man. He told me that you are going to see his father soon, and wanted me to remember that. He added that "he feels that I shall have something to do with him in the future—quite soon."² I want to get into touch with you both at home.

MRS. BRADLEY—How can we get in touch?

There followed a slight discussion between W.A. and Feda. W.A. suggested the Ouija Board and Feda the table. They both agreed that they could get a lot through with regular opportunities.

W.A. (to M.E.B.)—It is my duty to help you two. Try and see if you can get some messages through and keep in the shaded light. I feel strongly that I shall surprise you. When I do don't be tempted to do it too long. Never longer than half an hour and twice a week. Once or twice I have tried to get through to you, but could not get sufficient power. There is power, but I can't get hold of it. There is a man I tried to get through with, but the power was too spread out.

H.D.B. (suddenly to Feda)—Will you please ask W.A. or my sister if either was present at Arlena Towers.³

W.A.—I was there and your sister too. There are

¹ See page 30.

² This probably refers to Kingsley, the son of Sir Arthur Conan Doyle. At the time of writing I had not met Sir Arthur.

³ This question had an immense importance and was put exactly in this form, so that it could convey nothing to any intelligence which did not know the reason of the reference.

strange conditions there and different from anything tried before.

ANNIE—There is very great power—physical and mental. I am afraid it is interfering with someone's condition.

FEDA—Your sister is moving her hand about as if trying to trace something and can't do it. There is something you do not understand. You have been worried about it. It upsets your calculations and appears to be taking the wind out of your sails.¹

ANNIE—At Arlena Towers there was wonderful power.

H.D.B.—Do you remember what took place there?

ANNIE—Of course I remember. I talked to you and I was so pleased. I spoke to you. I was talking to you in the same way that W.A. talks to you, saying that I should be helping you and encouraging you in your work. I told you that I had been wanting to get into communication with you and that I had known for some time you would come into this sphere of thought. Do you remember my thanking someone for bringing you there?²

Here Feda said that Annie did a little jump.

W.A.—We meant to bring you in somehow, even if we had to drag you in by the scruff of your neck.

ANNIE—I was so pleased that I got quite excited. Do you know that at Arlena Towers once I thought I was going to break down?³ Did you know that when I was there I wanted to put my arms round you? Did you sense that? It was so extraordinary for me to be able to speak to you again. At Arlena Towers I felt the best power.

H.D.B.—This is a very important point, because since that sitting a cable has been received from De Wyckoff, saying: "Valiantine has been discovered in an undeniable instance of conscious fraud."

ANNIE—I have not had enough experience of him

¹ Probably she was referring to my mental attitude on the receipt of De Wyckoff's cable.

² See page 29.

³ When I referred to a certain incident in her life she nearly broke down. See page 27.

to know much about him, but I know that he was genuine then.

W.A.—You do agree that there is a psychical power and that through conditions that power in words or action is brought on to your side. When it is turned into something you can see and feel and hear it is no longer quite so much under our control. The medium in that case may sometimes be impelled or impressed by his subconscious knowledge of what we want to do or want to say. Well, he may be impelled quite unconsciously to do something himself. That is to carry into action what we want to do. I often think of it as floating down the thought-stream instead of resisting.

ANNIE—In the short experience we had of Valiantine we think he is a wonderful medium and other people on this side think so too.

H.D.B.—Valiantine was coming to this country, but owing to this discovery Mr. De Wyckoff is not bringing him.

W.A.—Isn't he coming then?

H.D.B.—No.

ANNIE—It is a pity!

W.A.—It is a pity. You could have made conditions so that he could not defraud. With physical phenomena it is so easy to make it look like undeniable fraud. Later on I will explain a great deal to you. I would like to get hold of him. With sympathetic conditions he would be powerless to introduce any make-ups.

ANNIE—I was at Arlena Towers. I had a face which you could almost feel. I was almost afraid at the time because I was not sure that you really thought I was there.

W.A.—No wonder—I wouldn't. It would have knocked the stuffing out of me.

ANNIE—You know, I was not fully materialized then. I was etherealized, but I thought you could see me. Don't you remember I spoke of Dennis at school.¹ When I was there I had someone with me. An Indian. He was helping me to talk to you. He had

¹ Quite true. See page 28.

tremendous power. Don't you remember a peculiar sound—not a voice but a sound like something being rubbed—a scrubbing sound.¹ When I spoke to you I thought my voice was very good. I do hope that Valiantine will come. Later on he may come. Then I want to see what I can do under conditions that cannot be questioned. Valiantine seems to me to be rather a nice man.

W.A.—All mediums are funny.

FEDA—They aren't, W.A.

W.A.—They all seem to me to be a bit touched. One expects it. A little out of the normal. But on the whole Valiantine seemed to be a decent man, and he has already been tested by some very important people.

Here suddenly came the name of Tanner.² Feda said that some attempt was being made to bring Tanner forward.

W.A.—I have already met Tanner on this side. You know that I knew him on earth.

M.E.B.—Yes, we know Mr. Tanner. Is he on your plane now?

W.A.—Tanner is not on our plane, but I have seen him. He will be with us soon. He is not quite so happy as we are. He has got to get into things. It has been difficult for him. In a little time he will get through. Your sister and I will bring him along sometime, but there is a lot for him to adapt himself to. He has got much to alter; to turn about. He must do away with certain things so as to start on a new line. He has already started with a new will. John³ has helped him. Tanner had photographs and pictures. A sort of collection he had made with the intention of doing something with them. He had a definite purpose.

Here Feda described someone who had shot himself.

FEDA—He was not a relative. We knew of him

¹ De Wyckoff verifies this unusual sound.

² The name is that of a friend known to both H.D.B. and Mrs. Bradley. He died recently.

³ The full name was given. John was Tanner's brother who died a few years before him.

and are sorry for him. He was connected with M. and H.C.—not C——. He was young and promising and had been worried about a woman. He got involved with her and mixed up. He did not really mean to do it: he was absent-minded. He did not prepare for it. He was looking at something that shot him. We shall hear something more about it soon, and then you will be interested.¹

W.A. (to H.D.B. without warning and with an almost dramatic insolence)—You know Moira.² She is on earth. I help her sometimes. I was helping her specially a little while ago. I help her much more mentally than in the physical sense. I have been trying to get hold of her mind. I want to help her to grow bigger and bigger and bigger. I am fond of Moira. . . . I know her better now than when on earth. Then I did not know so much about her, but now I am able to be with her and understand her.

ANNIE—There is a possibility of your being asked to go to America again. We are not anxious for you to go just yet. The opportunity will be put to you. We do not want you to go, but we will not stop it forcefully. It is better not to go at present. You have so much to do here what with the writing and the speaking.

W.A. (to Mrs. Bradley)—You are thinking of going on a visit. Only a little distance, to stay for a short while. You thought it rather a nuisance and wondered whether you would go or not. It is quite all right for you to go, although you are not very keen on it.³ (To H.D.B.) You were at a little gathering a short time back. There was a lot of talking and discussing which were very interesting. All mixed ideas and views. You will be going to another soon with me. At the last someone's funny

¹ Not definitely placed in detail but applicable.

² The full and correct Christian name was given, but for personal reasons I am compelled to substitute another name. This name and what followed came as an electric shock to me and my wife.

³ A somewhat insignificant matter, but perfectly true. Mrs. Bradley had been wondering whether to go to Cambridge with my son Dennis or not.

face rather amused me. It was so solemn and yet so funny. You appeared to be amused too.¹

FEDA—Your sister and W.A. have been trying to knock near the top of your bed.

H.D.B.—I thought I heard some taps, but the sound was quite slight.

Here Feda said that W.A. made a little bow and said: "I will do better next time."

MRS. BRADLEY (to Annie)—Will you please tell me if Georgie is with you.²

ANNIE—He is with me but I cannot bring him here. He is older than you think. Time is different here. Our time is according to development. He is a great help. It is better for him to be over here—much better. He would have had trouble with his lungs. He does not come to the earth very much. I do, because I have work to do. There are so many of us who were cut off before we should have been. It does not look as if much can be done to preserve life on earth. (*A slight pause.*) —³ is married again. I do not mind. He is still in the physical body and there you are! It does not matter. It is very difficult on earth for most people. At first one is surprised at death, but not afterwards. I do not worry now. On this plane Georgie is more than a child. He fills the horizon for me. There is another boy with him, a boy who passed over a long time ago. You remember Irving⁴—how clever but how temperamental and difficult he was on earth? I often see him here. He is more settled and steady. On earth he could write, but he did not only write; he had another occupation as well. He was rather dark, pale, not exactly good-looking; gaunt and passed over suddenly. He was not old. He is a near relative

¹ This occurred at a so-called intellectual gathering. The "funny face" is a famous writer.

² Georgie was Annie's young son, who died a few years back.

³ I withhold this name.

⁴ I knew an Irving, but I do not claim definitely to identify him on Annie's description.

of M—A. You will remember later. On earth he was only happy in gusts: in pieces.

W.A.—It was so wonderful coming into a new life. Here we know that if we do what we feel to be right it is right. Therefore we want to do it. I think when on earth you nearly always know what is right, but you might not want to do it. When you know that we exist and that we exist on a plane, a condition to which you are coming to later on, you will want to do everything you possibly can to make sure of fitting yourself. It is all the uncertainty that has made people so spiritually, mentally, and morally flabby. Folk are not sure of themselves. This sounds as if I am moralizing, but I *do* know now. That man in America (Valiantine) could help a great number. He should be taken care of, safe-guarded, encouraged and understood. Let us see what we can do. I am sure that if he comes to England he will be able to do what he did for you in America. It depends so much on conditions. If you find you can do anything we shall help you from this side. At present you think it is knocked on the head. Will you suggest that he should come and try to carry it through?

ANNIE—Don't go to America yet, but remember what I have said about Valiantine. It is a very difficult power, but we feel that on that occasion at Arlena Towers he was wonderfully genuine. How did he know all that I wanted to say to you? You know the things I said and you know that I was able to say all that I wanted to say. Valiantine did not seem to me to be an extraordinarily clever man. Try him again under the right conditions. I am going now. All my love.

W.A.—My love to you both. Please do not worry about Old A. Get ready for the fray. We shall be supporting you and will back you up through everything. We can help you.

Here the sitting came to an end, two distinct and living personalities having conversed with us for two hours. The discarnate spirit of W.A. and my

sister were alive, intelligent, and alert. They proved their identity by unrequested evidence, and in a manner which words cannot convey we sensed and recognized their presence and their individuality beyond all shadow of doubt.

This is now my knowledge, not *belief*, mark you—*knowledge*. *There is no death. Life on earth is merely a shadow of existence. We live on through eternity in sphere after sphere, and as we learn and develop so we approach nearer to the intelligence of the great and incomprehensible God, who is the inspiration of the universe.*

Does any fool imagine after the revelations that have been made to me that I care one iota how the scientific critics may regard my evidence?

Like beaten curs the foolish and dull-witted unbelievers may seek refuge with the herd-like cry of "telepathy" or "subconscious mind," or some such drivelling explanation. Such theories are annihilated by the conversations of these two persons, or spirits, both known intimately to me and my wife. Moreover, the conversations were held in their own distinct and audible voices.

If science wishes to study psychics and spirit communications, it must approach this great truth from a different angle. Many scientists are still clinging to the old-fashioned, infantile conclusion of telepathy. They are like human flies feeding on the dung heap of intelligence.

Let me review the phenomenal points of this wonderful séance and the incontestable evidence that was accorded by the spirits of my sister and W.A.

The cable I had received from De Wyckoff had disturbed me. My American experience represented the foundation of my acceptance and was the inspiration of the studies in which I have since become immersed. This cable might have shattered these foundations. It did not; but as far as I was concerned, it appeared to leave the prospect of a general acceptance on the thinnest ice.

Here is the remarkable thing: my sister and W.A. knew this and from the second they were able to

get into direct communication with me, they thrust evidence after evidence forward in order to convince me and to convince the world.

I went to Mrs. Leonard's house with my usual open and receptive mind, and it was an amazement to me when Feda said at the very outset: "Your sister is here and also W.A." Besides the full—the real—Christian and surname of W.A. was given.

Immediately these two spoke, each referred to this book on which I had been working since I had communicated with them. Both knew that at that moment the book was hovering between two points of view, or rather two methods of treatment, on account of De Wyckoff's cable. Both said they wanted me to be definite but impartial.

The reference to Old A. was extraordinary. The full *surname* was given. He is always referred to in the family as "Old A.," which is not a usual designation. My interview with him was referred to. W.A. knew all about my seeing him and what took place between us. As a matter of fact, it is only because I had performed what I considered to be a duty that unpleasantness had arisen. When I saw Old A. and told him I had been in communication with the spirit of W.A. he refused to believe me, though I gave him exceptional evidence. Afterwards he wrote me a sort of legal letter saying that I must undertake not to publish anything whatever connected with W.A., as such publication might have a disastrous effect upon the health of some members of his family. He requested this undertaking by the return of post. I was sickened and also furious and kept him waiting for ten days for my answer, which answer I couched courteously, because of my sincere regard for him. I said I could not allow any interference as to what I might write, and refused to give any undertaking. I disputed his right to such a request.

The consequence was that I decided the evidence must be used and recorded, and any intelligent mind cannot fail to see the enormous importance of it. Had I been weak and conceded to ill-advised and

misplaced sentimentality I should have surrendered a magnificent weapon and handicapped all the value of my discovery of this great Truth.

The personal side is the difficulty of spiritualism. The mentality of certain people is a puzzle. It is hide-bound. Even though many indignantly disclaim the charge of atheism, they detest any mention of spiritual life. Why? Such an attitude is illogical and foolish. They regard spirit communication as a horror instead of a discovery of great beauty.

I like Old A. He is a fine old gentleman; he has led an irreproachable life and is kindly to those around him. He loved young W.A., and there was between them a splendid understanding and a mutual appreciation. Yet when I go to him with splendid tidings I am received with scorn.

That is why W.A. appears here under wrong but recognizable initials.

The references to my lectures were interesting. I have lectured on several occasions both here and in America, but I hate doing so. During the previous fortnight I had been approached to address two societies, and on the day *after* this very sitting I received a further invitation to address the Irish Literary Society. I refused because of the work entailed by this book. I manage to get my lectures over by sheer force, but I always feel too self-conscious and am possessed by the idea that my audience will fail to understand me.

The remark of W.A. that he and my sister were great friends struck a peculiar and grand chord. Neither knew each other in life, but I had a great regard for each on earth and because they both understood this they had found each other and had joined forces to help me. "She was more spiritualized"; this was understandable on her character and also on the ten years of development in another sphere.

W.A.'s reference to my uncertainty was full of significance, and his reference to my sister's miserable health on earth displayed the knowledge he had acquired from her on the other side.

Now I will deal with the test question. I put regarding America, a question that was of enormous significance and value from the evidential standpoint.

Because of its immense importance it is necessary to emphasize the following facts: (1) The sitting was anonymous and my identity unknown to the medium. (2) During the previous conversation with W.A., on August 28, 1923,¹ no mention whatever had been made regarding America, although W.A. had volunteered a remark on that occasion saying that he was disappointed that he did not speak to me at another sitting. (3) Before attending the present sitting I had not the faintest idea or even hope that I should get into communication with my sister. I had thought that I might get into touch with W.A. again, but I was not by any means sure even of this.

When Feda had told me that my sister was present I determined to put a leading test question to her. Having regard to the disturbing nature of De Wyckoff's cable and realizing that my theory of the solution or the annihilation of a problem of tremendous interest was involved, I was particularly careful to frame my principal question in such a way that it should convey as little as possible even to a mind that understood to what it referred, and also that it could convey no loophole for evasion.

Survey the situation. Here was I, sitting anonymously at Hertfordshire, asking the spirits to give me information of what had transpired in America, which only they and I alone could know. Frankly, I regarded this question as one which, if answered clearly and adequately, should prove beyond all doubt the certainty of the survival of life after death.

Consider the question in the exact words that it was put.

"Will you please ask W.A. or my sister if either was present at Arlena Towers."

The sentence indicates practically nothing. It

¹ See Chapter VI, Book I.

might refer to some trivial incident in either of their earth lives and be vaguely dismissed as such. Arlena Towers might be anywhere, but at once they referred to America.

Immediately the question was put every incident was discussed. They both knew and spoke of my mental worries and cogitation in connection with De Wyckoff's message and spoke of this *before* I introduced the question of the cable. My sister gave an amazing account of what happened in America; she described what she said to me regarding my work, she referred to her thanking De Wyckoff for bringing me there. Her references to Valiantine were extraordinary and her analysis of his character exact.

To continue the proofs, again my sister reminds me of how she spoke of my son Dennis who is at school at Downside. She refers to the Indian guide Kokum, who was helping her to get into touch with me. She mentioned the peculiar scrubbing sound which we heard just before she spoke; a sound which I did not think worth regarding at the time since it conveyed nothing to me specifically, but which is verified by De Wyckoff because he thought it so peculiar and unusual. The very insignificant character of this reference has exceptional evidential value.

She refers to her voice which "she thought was very good." It was astoundingly good, direct, and clear, and as I have already described, cultured and beautiful in its cadences.

W.A. was present in America, but, as he indicated, could not materialize his voice sufficiently to speak to me, but since then, as he said, both he and Annie understood my opinion of Valiantine. To destroy all questions of doubt even if it existed, my sister said—and here is an unanswerable argument: "How could Valiantine know all that I wanted to say to you?"

Here was given to me the most incontestable proof that has ever been given to man of the conquest of life over death and of the personalities

of those we love existing on another plane, and yet able to talk to us with their actual voices and help us to realize and solve our earthly problems.

It is magnificent. Whether the knowledge of this great discovery has existed in past ages and has been hidden or crushed out of acceptance I cannot say. All that concerns me is that all the material progress in science, marvellous as it appears to be, fades into a passing shadow beside this luminous and splendid reality.

Beyond the momentous Arlena Towers sitting, the sequence of evidence which followed was so extraordinary that it must rank as one of the greatest evidential séances ever held.

If questions were asked, the understanding was immediate and they were clearly answered without pause, and on several occasions names and comments on subjects were spontaneously introduced.

My wife asked my sister: "Is Georgie with you?" "Georgie" was Annie's young son, and she at once described his age and later developments, the weakness of his lungs and his being cut off so early in life. She also referred to the second marriage of — and philosophized on it in a personal manner.

It was as if both were determined to give me all the particulars of evidential value that they could muster.

After Arlena Towers had been discussed, and apropos of nothing in our minds, W.A. suddenly mentioned Tanner and says he had met him and that he knew him on earth. He gave the full surname straight out and the effect was startling. Mr. Tanner had passed away a month or so before these words were written and was well known to my wife and myself, and also to W.A. His references to him are precisely applicable and he also refers to Tanner's brother John, who died a few years previously.

Now in addition to all the exceptional evidence I have given the greatest evidence of all was an impression which words cannot convey. It was the

sensing and the recognition of both the existing but unseen personalities talking to us.

I can realize that it is likely to prove dangerous for persons of mediocre intelligence to experiment or to endeavour to comprehend the great and autocratic force of spirit communication. If the limitations of the mind of the student be confined to stupid earthly conventions he is likely, at any time, to receive a shock, which will send him scampering away in fear to the refuge of his earthly hutch. The philosophy of the spirits on a higher plane concedes nothing to the comic philosophy of Upper Suburbia.

W.A. was an exceptionally clever man on earth and he appears to be determined now to prove the fact of life after death, so that it may be established beyond question. Knowing me so well, he was aware when on earth and is even more aware now that I care not one iota for the ordinary code of convention; he knows that I disregard the world's opinion, and that in my quest for Truth would be willing to utilize every bit of evidence, however personal or delicate. Fear does not exist in my nature.

When the extraordinary confirmation of events at Arlena Towers was retailed I was impressed by the evidential worth, although, as a matter of fact, this did not mean nearly so much to me as it may mean to a certain multitude of asses. The references were exciting only because they would have a certain and defined material value. So far as personal emotion was concerned, none was created, because the confirmation was to me merely a step forward.

W.A.'s perspicacity told him that, so he proceeded to give me a shock, which he knew would stimulate my emotions.

After the banquet of necessary proofs for the consumption of the multitude had been given, he gave me the caviare of certainty when, without warning, and with dramatic unexpectedness, he mentioned Moira. This was a daring thing for W.A. to do, but he knew that it was right to take

this risk, even though my wife was present. He knew all about Moira and the delicate threads of my friendship with her. On earth he was a splendid friend of my wife's, and he knew that the reference he made might cause her transitory pain, but beyond all he knew that by conveying this information he could give us both a greater proof than all the tests that either of us could conceive. Here he was conceding an inner knowledge and proof of the after-life and at the same time was expressing from his plane the higher philosophy of the great scheme of the universe. This he could only make clear to both of us by this poignant and intimate evidence.

I can say no more of this staggering incident except that W.A.'s revelation led to a discussion later that evening which lasted two hours to the exclusion of all the other marvellous evidences that had been given.

It is not in any ridiculous mood of despicable sentimentality that I do record the aftermath of this discussion was a mutual agreement of the infinite value of this electric but exceptional evidence of superhuman knowledge.

It was an amazing experience. For two hours without a second's break matters of personal moment were intelligently discussed by the two living spirits of my sister and W.A. And both appeared determined to provide an accumulation of facts that would smash to derision any conceivable doubt which might be advanced against the mighty truth of after-life.

Life is eternal and we humans are merely strugglers in a morass of materialism, succumbing so often to the lascivious caress of earth that our spirits are seldom free to climb the heights of understanding.

CHAPTER X

THE TRIPLE LINK

Search for the jewel of knowledge—The poisonous story of death—Mrs. A.V.E. the medium—My sister again—A message from the dead—Convincing the fool world—The medium and the solicitor—Life an amazing adventure.

November 29, 1923.

REALIZING the tremendous issues at stake, not only for me but for the mass of uncertain humanity, I have been careful that my investigations were organized in such a way that if I succeeded in establishing the truth of life after death my facts should be beyond dispute, and if I failed my efforts should record a sincere and concentrated attempt.

Although I accepted my American experience with an understanding which words can never convey, I knew that other confirmations would be necessary before the accumulation of evidence would be sufficient to convince the world. My soul was aroused from its material phlegm and my scepticism and cynicism towards eternal life were annihilated.

It is only natural that I sacrificed material interests in order to get through this work. If I succeeded in discovering this jewel of knowledge, my reward would be beyond price. Not in the terror-stricken fear of old age, but in the virility of my manhood I sought to destroy the miasma of the poisonous sting of death.

From a reliable source I had heard of a woman medium whose genuineness had been vouched for. As a test an appointment was made for me in an anonymous name. The business was conducted as

discreetly as if I were an ambassador carrying the edict of peace or war.

The medium was Mrs. A.V.E. She had sat with Sir Oliver Lodge after "Raymond" had been published and also with Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, with both of whom she had obtained results which were considered of value.

I journeyed alone to her house on the outskirts of West London on November 29, 1923. I was mentally tired and, frankly, I did not expect from her anything of worth.

We sat together in a room with ample daylight, the blinds being pulled half-way down to subdue the glare.

Mrs. A.V.E. did not go into a trance, she translated the messages and gave the description in her own voice.

A.V.E.—There are three spirits present—a young lady and two gentlemen. The young lady is of medium height, rather slim, a nice figure, graceful in movement; she has oval eyes, eyebrows fairly arched, fair hair and wavy. Her manner is jovial and affectionate. She possesses a tremendous lot of character. She appears to be referring to some writing, or messages, through automatic writing. She crossed over about nine years ago; she is now very spiritual.¹ She shows me America, something is shown in writing regarding America. She shows me B. This is not the first initial. She refers to her brother. One of the spirits is an elderly gentleman. He is tall, dark moustache, high cheek-bones, eyelashes dark. Perhaps fifty-five to sixty. He has a strong personality. I see the initial D. He is a horsey type of man. Laughing about something connected with you. On earth he lived in the country more than in town.

A.V.E. then described a boy.

A.V.E.—He is tall. Nice athletic type. Features more round than oval. Mouth full—teeth short. Eyes blue grey, eyebrows arched. Hair fair, but

¹ This is within a year of the death of my sister, and the description given of her is fairly accurate.

darkened with grease. Aged about twenty-three or twenty-five. Affectionate character. In a way rather of the womanly type. He was connected with the Air Force. There is some link between the young lady and you. She passed out fairly suddenly. She had not been well for some time. You seem to come into touch with people of all types. You travel and write and although you are an author you have an extraordinary ability for business. The young lady is showing a photograph of an old lady—a grandmother who is very old and stout. She is clothed in a black dress. She is wearing a large brooch and has some white frilling at the neck. She has a long and broad face; there are many wrinkles and she has lost several teeth. Eyes blue—deeply set; hair rather grey and she wears a lace cap. The young lady says you have developed on your own line; everything that has happened in your life has been due to yourself. You have a terrific lot of fight in you. She says that she took you with her to Southampton Row.¹ You have done awfully well there, although you were afraid for some little time.²

ANNIE—I shall always be grateful to America. Owing to your experiences there you are going to do such a lot of good both for me and for yourself. In that country I referred to Dennis. You must make all this clear to people, they will take more notice of you than of most people. I am very glad that you have been so courageous. When I communicated with you in America it was in a small circle.

A.V.E.—Do you know that with regard to you I get the feeling that you take impressions wholesale? Although you are an author, if you had been an organizer you would want to organize on a huge scale. I get the picture of a pretty little boy about five or so. He is sturdy, full of mischief, and old for his years. I see a picture of him with a mass

¹ My sister was closely connected with me in Southampton Row, London.

² I do not wish to explain this, but it is correct.

of fair curls. Now, of course, he is too old for curls. The young lady says she is very devoted to this child, and is the child's aunt. She thinks he has a wonderful mind.¹

ANNIE—I got in touch with you and obtained good results, and now for some reason I cannot get the results in the same way that I got them before. Just lately I have wondered whether you had formed a hostile mind over this. There has been some mix up, but your mind is so sympathetic that it has allowed me to go on. I saw you in a three-storied house with a lot of ground about it. It is a large house and is partly walled round. The garden is a curious combination. There is a tennis court and quite close to it is a rose garden. You had something to do with the designing of this part of the grounds. There is a rockery and a walk round. I am often there; it is a favourite walk of mine. Leading from the house there is a path, on each side of which there are flower-beds. This path leads up to the tennis court. From the court there is another winding path which leads to shrubberies and trees and then on to a wooden gateway from which the walk crosses into an open part of the country.²

A.V.E.—I see a lady with a good figure. She is dressed magnificently. She is careful that everything she wears should match.

THE ELDERLY GENTLEMAN—That also is a fault of yours.

A.V.E.—The lady had two shades of hair. One dark chestnut colour with a sort of golden thread running through it. She is methodical and fond of sport. She teases you about some part of the garden. (*Suddenly to H.D.B. as if A.V.E. thought the question an absurd one.*) Do you ever sleep in an office?

H.D.B.—Why do you ask?

A.V.E.—Because the old gentleman is saying that

¹ I have a son named "Pat" of seven. He had fair curls.

² An exact description of Dorincourt.

"sometimes you sleep in your office, and you will get a bad name for it."¹

ANNIE—I want to clear up the affair in America. The first time I communicated with you was in America, and the communication there was not premeditated. You were there in connection with some business—and for no reason at all, you were offered the opportunity of receiving my messages. You will be offered another request to go there in the spring; this again will have to do with business. At the meeting there were three other persons present. Lately you have had alterations done in your house.² You have got to do a lot in connection with this subject, and from this side you are going to have a lot of help. You know what you are doing now would be the last thing that anyone who knew you before would think you likely to be engaged upon. You are such a constant surprise to those who know you: people are really never surprised at anything you do.

A.V.E.—You appear to me to be an extraordinary person with wide sympathy; you decide quickly on any purpose and then at times you appear to be like a stone. Your heart and head are absolutely separate. The spirit of your sister is going. Is there anything else you would like to ask?

H.D.B.—Will you tell her that there is a man now on his way from America whom I shall see in a few days. Has she any message she would like me to give him?

ANNIE—Tell him that he is the man who suggested the sitting where I was first able to communicate with you.³

Here the sitting closed. From beginning to end it was evidential in every conceivable detail and

¹ All my literary work is done in the country and at night time, but I have an office in London and very often sleep there for an hour in the afternoon or whenever life has no more alluring attractions to offer me.

² True.

³ See page 6.

unexpectedly it provided me with the incontestable proof of the triple link : in America, in Hertfordshire, and in Western London.

Immediately after the sitting I asked Mrs. A.V.E. a leading question : " Do you know who I am ? "

She replied : " I have not the faintest idea who you are, except that an appointment was made for you by Miss Phillimore in a letter introducing you as ' Mr. Author.' "

She went out of the room and in a few moments returned with the letter in question. It stated : " A gentleman whom I will call ' Mr. Author ' is calling upon you on Thursday morning. He desires to remain anonymous."

In addition to this I immediately wrote to Miss Phillimore asking her whether in any way or by any means she could possibly have conveyed my identity inadvertently to A.V.E.

I have Miss Phillimore's letter in reply saying that such a thing was utterly impossible.

These points I mention because I have arrived at the stage when I realize that to establish an incomprehensible truth to a fool world, one must work with a disgustingly obvious craftiness in order to combat the sordid suspicions and low mentality of the sceptical majority.

Let us assume that Mrs. A.V.E. had known my name, what sort of muddle could she have invented from this knowledge? Other mediums had known me and all that was publicly known about me, and they had made a hopeless mess of it. She knew nothing, yet through her the triple link was established.

In course of a talk with Mrs. A.V.E., she told me that her father and mother were mediumistic. Her mother was an Austrian Jewess and her father a French Roman Catholic. Both are now dead.

She said that she has possessed this gift since childhood. She is highly intelligent and extremely sensitive. Conditions affect her considerably, and the mentality of the sitter is a very great factor. Certain sitters are able to contribute a considerable

part of the power. She told me that she actually sees the faces of the spirits; sometimes they appear clearly and definitely and sometimes faint and shadowy. She hears their voices when they speak, although the sitter cannot.

During 1922 Mrs. A.V.E. contributed a series of articles on her experiences to the *Weekly Dispatch*. These I have since read; they are well written and record many extraordinary incidents.

Since I have been so successful in obtaining through her mediumship the valuable evidence I have quoted, in further testimony of her genuineness I will give the brief details of another remarkable case.

A solicitor and his wife and daughters were on friendly relations with Mrs. A.V.E., and all of them had sittings with her from time to time. The solicitor died, and some months later his wife visited her with the news that her daughter had just lost her little baby girl. Although the child had appeared quite healthy at birth, she had been found dead in her cot, and there was to be a post-mortem examination.

During the sitting the spirit of the solicitor appeared and communicated to his wife. He spoke of the death of his little grandchild and said she was in the spirit world with him and was quite happy. Then he added the information that the baby's heart had been wrong from birth, that she could only have lived long enough to know her mother, and that her heart seemed to have been swamped with fluid and so brought about death.

The wife was comforted by this because she had feared that the nurse had overfed the baby. She went home and told all the other members of the family.

The day following the post-mortem was held. The doctor's findings were that the child had been born with fluid round her heart, and that this fluid had quickly accumulated and interfered with the heart's action, and that the child could not have lived longer than three years at the utmost.

This information, which no human mind knew, was imparted by a discarnate intelligence. . . .

Life is an amazing adventure, even when confined to its material limitations. We flatter and preen ourselves on our puny little conquests and magnify our small achievements into importance, though all we are probably doing is to shake an infant's rattle. We occasionally puke and occasionally guffaw, but so far as knowledge of the great universe is concerned, we are merely sucklings, clinging to the breast of this earth, dependent upon it for sustenance and timid of the inevitable day when we must break from its embrace and start on the eternal journey of experience through unknown worlds until we approach towards the comprehension of the infinite God.

CHAPTER XI

THE DUOLOGUE AT CLARIDGE'S

In which the author records an interview with Joseph De Wyckoff at a London hotel relating to the disturbing cable—Questions and answers—The reason for the cable—Psychical research not for the credulous sentimentalists—The thin web of eternal knowledge—A short discourse on love.

December 5, 1923.

THE events that are recorded in the two preceding chapters were enacted whilst Mr. and Mrs. Joseph De Wyckoff were crossing the Atlantic.

I sent a letter of welcome to await the De Wyckoffs' arrival. In this I did not say anything of what had happened during the time of his passage on the *Berengaria*.

On the day after his arrival, De Wyckoff tele-

phoned me, when we arranged to lunch at Claridge's Hotel, where he and his wife were staying.

The luncheon party consisted of Mr. and Mrs. De Wyckoff, my wife, and myself, and I had impressed my wife that it was essential she should refrain from any mention whatever of the discoveries I had made. After a particularly merry lunch, during which the subject of spiritualism was not even discussed, Mrs. De Wyckoff and my wife went off to some *thé dansant*, and De Wyckoff and I spent the afternoon in his rooms.

De Wyckoff has been a student of psychics for many years. He is a life-associate member of the Society for Psychical Research in England and of the American Society.

By his cable it was obvious that something had disturbed him, and as he immediately explained he felt it was better not to write particulars but to wait until he could see me.

The cable had disturbed and puzzled me certainly; but I had, since then, received phenomenal and incontestable evidence that Valiantine was perfectly genuine when he sat at Arlena Towers with me. My mentality, therefore, was that I did not care even if De Wyckoff had discovered him on a subsequent occasion to be as disgusting a trickster as Bottomley or as crafty a murderer as Crippen. Whatever form the discovery took, it could not affect my personal experience. Nor did I feel that Valiantine's general movements or honesty were any concern of mine.

As a writer and a keen observer of character, however, this provided me with a fascinating opportunity for the study of the mentality of De Wyckoff. I could listen to his relation of the pranks that circumstances had played and observe the extent of the devastation of the beliefs he had possessed.

It was a peculiar situation. He and I in the heart of the West End surrounded by an atmosphere of materialism were discussing a problem affecting the mental acceptance of the proof of the existence of another world!

Old friends as we are, I asked him if he would

for the time being disregard our friendship and allow me to act merely as a recorder, or an interviewer, seeking information. I told him that I considered this interview as of the utmost importance, and asked him whether he would allow me to ask questions and record answers. To this request he at once assented.

It must be remembered that I knew nothing of his discoveries of Valiantine's "conscious fraud," and I realized it would be exceedingly foolish for me to disclose any "inner" knowledge that I had gained in the meantime. I regard it as essential from the evidential standpoint to record this conversation.

The following is a record of the conversation that took place:

H.D.B.—You know, your cable was frightfully deliberate in its wording! It came almost as a bomb-shell.

DE WYCKOFF—Yes, I know. I had to let you know that I was not bringing Valiantine over and also indicate my reason. I did not wish to write to you on the subject because I knew that I should be seeing you so soon, and that it would be so much better for me to discuss it with you in person. I hope my cable did not come as a shock to you.

H.D.B.—I am quite used to mental bomb-shells. I rather like them. I am certainly puzzled, but nothing on earth could shock me now. It is a pity. I would like a new sensation.

DE WYCKOFF—I felt that it would be a disappointment to you that I could not, in the circumstance, bring Valiantine over as we had arranged.

H.D.B.—It was. Of course I know nothing whatever of him beyond the two remarkably interesting experiences which took place at Arlena Towers. Shortly after, as you know, I sailed for England. Before you relate your discoveries of the "conscious fraud," will you tell me all that you know of him—his character, circumstances, and all that sort of thing. Just give me the impression you had previously formed of him.

DE WYCKOFF—I have known Valiantine for about three and a half years, and from what I have found out all his home surroundings are psychic. He lives in the same house as his wife, his father-in-law—a man named Everett, aged eighty-two—Everett's aged wife, and another daughter of the old folks. Old Everett is the father of Bert Everett, who died some eighteen years ago, and whose spirit Valiantine states is one of his principal spirit guides. Old Everett has been crayon artist and painter all his life. Some of his work he attributes to psychic forces.

H.D.B.—How do these aged people strike you?

DE WYCKOFF—I could not possibly place fraud with old Everett or his wife. They seem to me the personification of honesty and rectitude.

H.D.B.—Now before you explain the nature of your case against Valiantine, will you tell me, just as a matter of psychological interest, what is your exact mentality at the present moment? How do you *now* regard him?

DE WYCKOFF—I certainly feel some doubts as to whether I have judged Valiantine justly. I am still convinced of the survival of life after death. There is, of course, the case of the celebrated medium Palladino. At Cambridge she was pronounced to be a fraud, yet at Naples, under a test committee which included Fielding, Carrington, and Baggaley, and other scientists, she was declared to be genuine. This and other similar cases favour the assumption that mediums cannot always be relied upon. Sometimes they are genuine and sometimes they appear not to be.

H.D.B.—That is a very fair and unprejudiced statement. Now let us bring this particular case to a personal issue. According to your cable you have discovered an "undeniable instance of conscious fraud on the part of Valiantine." Now, before knowing what that instance of conscious fraud may be I should like to ask you this. How do you account for the various phenomena manifested at the many sésances you have sat at with Valiantine?

Will you first tell me how you regarded him before this discovery and then tell me how you regard him now?

DE WYCKOFF—Before I fully believed in everything that happened at séances with Valiantine.

H.D.B.—And now?

DE WYCKOFF—I still think that most of the phenomena that took place must have been perfectly genuine.

H.D.B.—And your case against Valiantine?

DE WYCKOFF—Valiantine came to me a little while back and said that as usual he had some sittings at home with the family circle and had talked with two of his spirit guides, Bert Everett and Dr. Barnett. During this series of sittings Valiantine stated that long messages were actually written by spirit hands and were signed by Everett and Dr. Barnett. Five or six written sheets of these notes—"alleged" by him to have been so obtained—Valiantine handed to me to read. None of these messages could possibly be regarded as of a spiritual character. They were specific in detail and referred to a material project, which would involve an expedition to Guiana. Details were given of the place and the climate, etc., which I checked by reference in the New York public library and found correct. The whole thing appealed to me as an adventure, and eventually I promised to make the trip with Valiantine about January, 1924, as an experiment. I had invited Valiantine to New York for a special séance, to which I had arranged to bring a wealthy Cuban friend. My friend had fought a duel some years ago, killing his adversary; prior to that his father—a well-known, highly respected Cuban planter with whom I was acquainted—was murdered by the superintendent of one of his sugar plantations. Valiantine stayed with me at the Vanderbilt Hotel, where my Cuban friend was also staying. By chance I had to dispatch an important letter that I had just written by hand. I had no time to make a copy of it for my files, and I asked Valiantine to sit down at the desk in my reception-room and make a copy for me

on the hotel stationery. Glancing afterwards at the copy which Valiantine had made, I was struck by the strong resemblance of the handwriting to that of the script which Valiantine had stated had been written by and obtained from the spirit guide, Everett, and signed by O. B. Everett and Doctor Barnett. I sent the scripts to a handwriting expert, who pronounced them to be written by the same hand—Valiantine's. I was upset and concluded that Valiantine had endeavoured to perpetrate a deception upon me. I wrote him a short note stating that for reasons best known to himself our relations were at an end. He received this at Williamsport. He at once called my residence on the long distance phone, and endeavoured to speak to me, but I refused to come to the telephone. The next day he again phoned, and ascertained from the butler that I was away, but would return within twenty-four hours to Arlena Towers. He at once took a train and came the following morning, having travelled all night, and endeavoured to see me. I was in New York and Valiantine was received by Percy Wheatley—my butler. Valiantine was terribly upset and broke down and wept. Wheatley phoned to me in New York and told me that Valiantine was in the house. He appeared to be heartbroken and was begging to see me. Wheatley added: "He seems like a man who has aged ten years in a night." I then consented to see him and motored there from New York. Before seeing Valiantine I questioned Wheatley and he expressed the opinion to me that Valiantine seemed genuine and had not acted as a guilty man. I then saw Valiantine and urged him to tell me the truth. Valiantine said that he had never acted fraudulently in his life, and adhered to the statement that the messages were the genuine spirit messages and were not written by his hand. I showed him the expert's report, pointed out many definite characteristics of both writings, and charged him that he was author of the alleged spirit writing. He admitted that there was a strong resemblance, but insisted that he did not do the writing. I then told

him that I would give him another chance, and that I would agree to attend one more séance at his own house at Williamsport under test conditions. This was arranged a short time later. I took with me a Mr. and Mrs. Maley, both of whom had attended one or two séances at Arlena Towers, and had expressed themselves bewildered and astonished at the phenomena which had occurred at the sittings. At this test séance there was myself, Mr. and Mrs. Maley, old Everett, Everett's daughter, a Mr. and Mrs. Leonard Wood of Williamsport, and of course George Valiantine. Valiantine had procured a strong new rope—about one inch thick—and requested that he should be tied up. We did so and I arranged to hold one end of the rope in my hands, giving the other end to Mr. Maley.

H.D.B.—What happened?

DE WYCKOFF—Nothing! We all sat there for over an hour and a half and nothing happened—nothing worthy of mention.

H.D.B.—A mediumistic suicide! But he had the gallantry to bring his own rope with which to hang himself.

Here De Wyckoff helped me to a generous brandy and soda.

DE WYCKOFF—After this I felt that I couldn't bring him to England for experiments, so I sent a cable to that effect.

H.D.B.—Is there any other point which you would like to add?

DE WYCKOFF—No. That is all there is to it.

H.D.B.—Now, Joe, will you please tell me if you are convinced in your own mind that Valiantine is a fraud?

DE WYCKOFF—No, I am not at all certain that he is. I think that unquestionably he has mediumistic powers. Perhaps not all the time or at will. But although he holds séances in his town amongst his friends and receives no fees, he receives fees and expenses when he has visited me, and I have, of course, recompensed him adequately for his services.

H.D.B.—Of course I understand that you are a

particularly generous man, which is quite unique since you are so ridiculously wealthy.

DE WYCKOFF—I have treated him well, of course, as I quite understand he is compelled to make his living for himself and his family, and must be recompensed for his loss of time in his business, but it seemed to me that when his powers failed he might have endeavoured to mislead by a little cheating.

H.D.B.—Would you mind if I asked what is Minerva's opinion? It is worth while to get the woman's mind and intuition.

DE WYCKOFF—She thinks that he is usually genuine and says she has never discovered him acting in any suspicious way.

H.D.B.—Now you have told me everything. Assuming Valiantine to be a fraud, can you possibly explain what happened at the two séances at which I was present in June at Arlena Towers? Is it possible for you or anyone to explain how I talked with my sister on personal matters for two evenings for as long as thirty-five minutes? Neither Valiantine nor you even knew I had a sister.

DE WYCKOFF—It is impossible for me to explain that. Valiantine must have been absolutely genuine on those occasions.

When he had finished his story without one word as to their contents I handed him the verbatim notes I had taken of my sittings with Mrs. Leonard and Mrs. A.V.E., and asked him if he would care to glance through them.

He was simply astounded. It was as if some great gale of evidence had suddenly arisen which in a few minutes had swept all scepticism to perdition. His intermittent exclamations justifiably invoked the Deity and were involuntary acceptances of His existence.

When De Wyckoff had finished reading the scripts he said that he regarded them as "the most marvellous proof of the evidence of the after-life and spirit intelligence that had ever come to his attention."

To the casual observer it may appear from the relation of these incidents that Mr. De Wyckoff had acted somewhat hastily in arriving at his conclusions, but it must be remembered that he is a particularly vigilant student, scrupulously careful in his methods of research and cannot tolerate any action bearing the breath of suspicion or deceit.

His severe attitude has value. Psychical research is not a subject for the study of credulous sentimentalists; it aims at the solution of the greatest problem in life. The tiny band of men and women who are now devoting their lives and their thoughts to this study are not fools but people of intellect. There must be no flaw in the chain of evidence they advance.

Although the incidents that influenced De Wyckoff's decision were relatively insignificant and may have assumed undue importance in his mind, it is easy to appreciate his mentality in not feeling justified in bringing Valiantine to England, where he would have to act as his sponsor. If the alleged "messages" he had brought were manufactured and then at a subsequent séance Valiantine had failed through the powers of his mediumship to produce any results whatever, one can certainly understand De Wyckoff's cancellation of arrangements and also the irritation which caused the dispatch of the cable.

That is the psychological aspect. To argue on a material basis is simple.

The tests *did not* prove that Valiantine acted in any fraudulent way. Even if Valiantine had composed the messages, this would certainly prove nothing, as in the investigations of psychic research the student should not be influenced by the doings of the medium *outside* the séance, or even regard anything that he may say occurred at séances at which the investigator is not present.

There is another point of view: assuming the messages to be genuine, why should not a spirit use Valiantine's style of handwriting when one considers the theory that spirits can only communicate through

some undefined power obtained through the medium? It is not illogical to assume the possibility that Valiantine's own handwriting might have been used whilst he was under some state of hypnosis.

The test séance, when Valiantine of his own accord requested that he should be roped, should be regarded as a proof of his genuineness, otherwise if he were the brilliant charlatan he would most certainly have made some sort of exhibition in order to give a show to his sitters.

There is another point. Why should Valiantine invent messages involving an expedition which could only result in abortiveness? As regards the test séance: the mental atmosphere created by a group of people sitting in one room vibrates with sensitiveness. One antagonistic personality in a Mayfair drawing-room can create discord and make tea taste of aloes. Conditions are of paramount importance to the accord of spirit communications. Conditions affect the assembly and do very considerably affect the vibrating powers of the medium. At this test séance Valiantine, anxiously endeavouring to prove himself and tied by his own rope, was in such a state of nervousness and fear that all the powers he may possess were at their lowest ebb and were consequently unable to function.

That was my analysis of his adventure test when it was related to me.

The next day I took tea with Mrs. De Wyckoff at the Embassy Club, and we talked more than we danced. Mrs. De Wyckoff is magnetically attractive and the natural intuition of her sex is acutely developed. I led her on to talk of her experiences with Valiantine, with whom she had sat on many occasions both with and without her husband. She told me many remarkable things that had happened at these séances, during which she had communicated with the spirits of relatives on personal matters. These had proved to her the survival of life after bodily death and had also proved beyond doubt that Valiantine was genuine.

I asked her a subtle question, formed in non-committal words.

H.D.B.—Of course the whole thing is extremely interesting to me. I suppose whenever you have sat with Valiantine you have had these exceptional results?

The answer was deliberate and illuminating.

MRS. DE WYCKOFF—Oh no. Not always. I have had sittings with him when nothing whatever has happened. We have sometimes sat for as long as an hour and a half and have had to give it up.

Why should one presume to expect spirit communications at prescribed moments to human orders? Surely one may assume that such concessions are on a plane of delicacy and that the communing spirits are sensitive to the atmosphere of scepticism and suspicion created by test conditions. Such an atmosphere will *never* achieve results: of that I am convinced.

It is all on a silken thread. As it is the finest so it is the thinnest web of eternal knowledge. The breath of suspicion fans a tiny spark into a prairie-fire of doubt, and the years of a divine certainty are consumed in a moment.

Suspicion is the consort of jealousy. The union results in the creation of evil forces.

We humans are swept with the wind of uncertainty. Our mental structure is so flimsy that we can seldom cultivate resistance.

If it were proved that Christ had relaxed for one night into debauchery all His teaching and philosophy would be discredited and Christianity could never be preached again. This would happen despite the disgusting hypocrisy of the multitude of mankind who, professing themselves His disciples, have blasphemed His name for centuries by the wholesale slaughter of their fellow-men in war.

So also is the human wind warped by what it assumes to be love. A man will love a woman for many years; he will take all she has to give, yet if she gives a fleeting favour to another, he will discard

from his memory all the great joys of the past and write her a hypocrite and a harlot.

We lack in the sense of proportion. It is all absurd. A trifling incident is magnified into an epoch, just as insignificant characters in politics bluster through life imagining they are kings, and the Bottomleys and Lloyd Georges eventually find themselves not even deemed worthy of categorization amongst the pygmies of the world.

The aftermath at Claridge's with my friend De Wyckoff provided, as I had anticipated, a fascinating mental exercise.

The two chapters I had obtained whilst he was on the seas exterminated the shadow of doubt that had existed in his mind.

The next day he wrote a very charming letter to Valiantine saying that he regretted having judged him so hastily. In this letter he invited him to England.

CHAPTER XII

THE RIDICULOUS "JOHN BULL" SÉANCE

An account of four sittings—This book is described as a thunderbolt—Counsel for mediums—Odd shots at the author's identity—The author records an amusing description of himself—A direct voice experiment—A journalist and an "old tin can" séance—Sir Arthur Conan Doyle criticized—The investigator goes to St. George's Hall and stands up against an illusionist.

December, 1923.

HERE I give accounts of four sittings—two of which are completely abortive, and also an account of an amusing experience which I had at St. George's Hall, London.

On Tuesday, December 4, I had a second sitting with A.V.E. It had been arranged under a pseudonym.

A.V.E.—The same spirit is present as appeared on the last occasion, that of the young lady.¹ She says that there is a gentleman coming to you from some long distance, probably from across the water. He is bringing you a lot of messages; something you did not know of. Some of these messages you might feel inclined to doubt. Recently you had a heated discussion—interesting and absorbing—on a psychic subject, with some literary men who were possibly sceptics. You won on points. She was there at the time. One was fairly elderly and one was young. Have you felt in some book or article that there is a link in the chain missing? We are going to overcome it. You will get it within two or three weeks.² You will be helped from three different directions. You are engaged upon a book which is about three parts written. You feel it is not exciting enough, but it will be a thunderbolt to other people. You have been asking this spirit to give a certain test, either in words or thoughts. It is a bad day to try and get a test through: the electricity is so poor. We cannot get enough power, but it may come later. By as near as I can judge you are going to jump into great fame. In about April or May. I do not know your position, but the effect of this will elevate you socially,³ and you are then going abroad on a trip. You are going to write three books on one subject. This you will be able to put in the next book on the subject.

The sitting, which was a short one, ended here.

At a later date during the month I arranged another anonymous appointment with A.V.E. She appeared quite listless. We sat together, and within three minutes she gave it up and refused to continue. She said it was utterly impossible for her to do anything.

¹ My sister Annie.

² This happened.

³ I abhor society.

It would be infinitely better if mediums were honest enough to confess that on certain occasions their powers do not function, instead of endeavouring to invent something in the attempt to give some sort of satisfaction to the sitter.

My next experience, which took place on December 5, I had arranged on the telephone myself, under the name of Mr. Anthony. It was with Mrs. Annie Johnson.

Mrs. Johnson is a professional medium, and is evidently extremely busy. It was a thick, foggy morning when I arrived and she was already engaged in one sitting and had to keep me waiting. This was my first experience of the busy and apparently prosperous psychic consultant.

Mrs. Johnson is a pleasant-looking woman who could certainly not be described as being well educated. She did not go into any trance but pulled the curtains to dim the room and I took notes by the light of the gas fire.

She opened in a somewhat chaotic manner, talking of travel and saying that I had travelled a lot and was very active.

Somehow she seemed to get into her mind that I was an engineer. She talked of an old gentleman and the sea and open country—rugged and hilly. And then on to Spanish people. She went on to say that she saw me passing the statue of Liberty a little time back and entering New York harbour, and that I was taking a journey over there again soon; an opening out of new conditions.

She asked me if I knew James, and said she saw me with a lot of papers, which seemed like plans. I seemed to be working in two directions—here and in America. There was some grey cloud and disturbance which the spirits were trying to reconstruct. I had had a disappointment, but things were opening out now and new conditions were coming, but not in this country.

She described a young man of from twenty to thirty, and floundered about with three names:

Charlie, Henry, Harold. Had I been to Italy? Had I been lecturing? She could see me lecturing.

There was a gentleman who had had an accident, a Jack or Wilson?

She saw me writing books.

She mentioned Arthur. "The spirits are telling you to go to America soon—in the New Year. You are doing something which will open out and which will be useful and constructive."

She described a lady of slender build; genteel, soft grey hair—blue eyes.

She saw a house standing in its own grounds; a room leading out on the garden; trees and quite a lot of flowers. It looked out on to open country—a pretty scene. An old gentleman was often in that room. He had a fine face; moustache short and a beard. There was a large cupboard full of books. The old gentleman was a very intellectual man and might be living.

She saw me in a car and with a lot of friends: I was entertaining them. She said I created interest through my powers in business, and caused attraction.

She mentioned Leslie.

She described a young lady—somewhere in the thirties. There was someone suffering in health at the present time and my conditions seemed to help her very much.

She described a little boy, and a beautiful young lady in spirit, aged about thirty. The latter had an oval face and blue eyes. She was carrying an armful of flowers and looking at me with tenderness and love. She is helping me and those she loves. There is something she wants to do and she is helping.

Suddenly the medium said "Annie" was connected with Francis.¹ She saw me writing.

She also saw me with a bundle of papers—as if I were selling shares.²

She said "Simpson" and added that she saw me

¹ My sister was associated with a Francis on earth.

² Never!

on a platform amongst others: a sea of faces and an audience.

Here she described again a big head—very fine forehead. Henry. He was associated with the theatre—a great actor. This man had been trying to help me. It looked as if he were helping me to write a play. He can help because I have the power. I can interest the public.

Dorothy—someone in whom I was interested. She had been a little bit adverse from certain things that had happened. There had been something I had tried to stop. There must be freedom. Join with that condition—open and free together. It was so helpful and so forceful.

There was an opening in front of me. I had got to go on the Continent—France or Italy—a long water journey.

Here the sitting was getting near to an end and it being preciously near lunch-time the medium gave about the worst description of me I have ever had.

She said that I lived outside London; had great psychical force which attracted spirits. I had a scientific mind and was rather too cautious. I lacked confidence and I loved harmony and music. I was depressed at times but I was awakening to new conditions. My mind was full of ideas. Something, perhaps, would come this year. Maybe victory over certain conditions.

Mrs. Johnson may possess mediumistic faculties, but undue usage of those faculties in taking on "all comers" is likely to have a prejudicial effect.

Another odd experience occurred quite unexpectedly early in December. De Wyckoff and I were dining in town and arranged afterwards to pay a purely social call on Mr. and Mrs. Hewart McKenzie at the British College of Psychic Science. There we met an American doctor and his wife—Dr. and Mrs. Chandon, who were passing through London from Paris on their way home. They had only during the last six months become interested in psychic matters, purely because Mrs. Chandon had,

to her astonishment, developed mediumistic faculties. Amongst the guests that evening were also Mrs. St. Clair Stobart and Miss Macgregor.

A short experiment was suggested. We sat round in a circle with a dim shaded light turned on, and after a while a direct spirit voice was heard, which was said to be that of Mrs. Chandon's brother, who had died a short time before. The conversation was monosyllabic, not particularly interesting, but, at the same time, the phenomenon of the direct voice is peculiarly dramatic, whatever the conversation may consist of. It may therefore be assumed that Mrs. Chandon will, in the future, be able to develop her powers still further.

During the latter part of 1923 a series of articles appeared in *John Bull* by a Mr. Sydney Moseley, who professed to be investigating the subject of spiritualism. A year or two back he wrote a book called "An Amazing Séance," which comprised of the accounts of his experiences, but which provided nothing whatever of evidential value. The "amazing" séance in question was not in the slightest degree amazing to me, but was of the type of the "old tin can" variety.

Mr. Moseley approaches the subject in *John Bull* in the method of the journalistic stuntist, only more amateurishly.

The manner in which Mr. Moseley makes his investigations is peculiar. He has apparently been inveigled into exploits which would never be countenanced or tolerated by any of the great scientists who have devoted years of work to this study.

It seems as if an editor thought out a set of sensational headings and asked the bright Mr. Moseley to cover them in a story, very much like some people write books around epigrams. Here is the kind of sub-title, set in bold black lower-case type, that Mr. Moseley had to write around and about :

"Astounding disclosures in regard to a recent séance have been brought to light. Their publica-

tion is bound to create a sensation in spiritualistic circles, and will certainly shake the faith of the multitude of believers who are intent to follow without question the pronouncements of their self-appointed leaders."

This, of course, is absolutely nonsense; and in fairness I must say that the masterpiece probably was the work of a sub-editor. It appears that Mr. Moseley attended some hole-and-corner séance held by a medium named F. T. Munnings who, according to Mr. Moseley, had been sentenced to nine months' hard labour for house-breaking and burglary. It is admitted that Munnings was not recognized by spiritualists, but was regarded as a "mischievous medium of low order." Yet Mr. Moseley makes a page story out of that incident and has the audacity to conclude that "Spiritualism has had a very fair chance, but all the evidence that the leading spiritualists have had to offer has badly led down the whole case of genuine psychical phenomena."

Some year or two ago he inveigled Sir Arthur Conan Doyle and some well-known people to an alleged séance which was conducted, as was revealed afterwards, by Mr. P. J. Selbit, a clever illusionist and conjuror.

Sir Arthur apparently was deceived by this exhibition, and announced that he was satisfied it was genuine psychic phenomena. He was then told by Mr. Moseley that the whole thing was trickery, and Sir Arthur, rather obstinately, maintained that he still thought the manifestations were obtained by some psychic power.

Scenting an effective stunt, Mr. Moseley then challenged Sir Arthur. He said that he would arrange with Mr. Selbit to produce the same results before a big assembly, the performance to take place in the offices of *John Bull*. Sir Arthur, it was agreed, was to pay twenty-five pounds if the same results were reproduced and if the séance was proved to be a fraud.

A two-page story of this comic performance appeared in *John Bull* a week or two afterwards.

It was peculiarly ridiculous and unlikely to mislead a child. Sir Arthur, however, had been misled by it, and as a consequence had to pay twenty-five pounds. I do not think he deserves any sympathy for his loss.

A week or two later Messrs. Maskelyne and Devant engaged Mr. Selbit at St. George's Hall, billing him as the man who misled Sir Arthur Conan Doyle.

On November 27, I attended a matinee of Mr. Selbit's show.

I should not have troubled to go but for the fact that my wife and my young son Pat were in town, and I thought such a performance might amuse them as well as me.

Mr. P. J. Selbit is a very able illusionist and conjuror. I have not one word of criticism against him as a performer, but as far as illustrating any resemblance whatever of what takes place at a genuine séance the performance that I saw at St. George's Hall was silly.

Mr. Selbit addressed the audience, and the assumed "medium," a woman, sat in a sort of curtained cabinet with a light overhead. Exactly as happened in the *John Bull* offices, Mr. Selbit asked people to place in a wooden box certain articles of theirs which, he said, the "medium" would describe and psychometrize. About a dozen various—and obvious—articles were placed in the box by members of the audience. I placed in the box three sheets of notes fastened by a paper clip.

The box was placed over the head of the "medium" in a position from which it would be quite easy for another person to obtain access to the various articles. She described them in a very simple fashion. Such as: "I see a cardboard box on which are the numbers 555." This was the description of a box of No. 555 State Express Cigarettes. And then again: "I see an instrument which is used to cut things with" in describing a knife. And so on with several other similar objects.

When the "medium" had given the easy description of all the other articles except mine,

she said: "This, I think, is all that there is in the box."

This was my cue for taking my part in the performance. I immediately shouted out from the stalls: "Oh, no, you have not made any attempt to describe the article that I placed in the box."

The "medium" blustered and stammered and failed to make any coherent reply. Feeling in an aggressive mood I then addressed the audience and said that since Mr. Selbit had made the statement previously that he could do anything on the stage which was done at séances, I considered he had failed miserably. I challenged the "medium" to give a description or to read one line on the odd sheets I had placed in the box, and again she could not make the slightest attempt and appeared to me to be exceedingly frightened.

Mr. P. J. Selbit had to give it up.

Continuing his performance, before giving what he termed an exhibition of "materialization" in which he would produce ghosts (as if any intelligent person cares a damn about ghosts), he made a speech after this manner:

"Ladies and gentlemen, you know that spiritualists are the sort of people who go to a séance in the hope of talking to a deceased uncle or aunt."

This, after the complete failure to deal with the simple preceding test which I had given, was too much for my patience. I again regarded it as an insult to the many eminent and intelligent men who have given a thorough and careful study to psychic matters.

I interrupted him and asked what right he had to assume that people like Sir Oliver Lodge, Sir William Barrett, and Sir Edward Marshall Hall should be classed as people wasting their time by seeking communication with deceased uncles and aunts?

A fiery dialogue took place between us, he speaking from the stage and I from the stalls. I won very easily; in fact, I so pulverized him that the

manager came round and asked me if I would be good enough to discontinue the argument for the sake of the audience.

The "ghost" scene was then proceeded with and all three of us quite enjoyed ourselves.

As we were leaving the manager was waiting for me in the corridor and explained to me that it was, of course, only a children's entertainment. I entirely agreed with him. He asked me if I would go behind the stage and have a chat with Mr. Selbit. I did. We shook hands and laughed about the incident. From a point of interest I asked him how it was that his "girl assistant" could not read or describe the few sheets I had put in the box, as it seemed to me it would have been a perfectly simple matter to do this by means of ordinary conjuring. He said the reason was that I had "paralysed" his girl. He added that both he and the manager were anxious that I should come to another performance so that they could have another test, when he would be able to achieve a different result. This I refused to do, because I could not spare the time, and, as I said to him: "You have had your show under your conditions at the *John Bull* offices and I have had my show under my conditions at St. George's Hall, so we must leave it at that."

We parted the best of friends, and with all sincerity I do wish to record that Selbit is a really clever and subtle illusionist and entertainer.

Strangely enough, I noticed amongst the audience on that afternoon Mr. J. T. Grien, the dramatic critic, who was amused at the whole incident. He did not recognize me at the time, but afterwards he had a chat with my wife (who stayed on with Pat after I had left). He said that he had really thought the whole thing was part of the performance.

Beyond the mere relation of this amusing incident, it has a point of significance. Why does Sir Arthur Conan Doyle allow himself to be intrigued and misled by such trivial demonstrations? Even if such an illustration of psychometry and the materializa-

tion of "filmy ghosts" were genuine, nothing of any interest or of intelligent value could be derived from such exhibitions. Sir Arthur is certainly to be admired for his sincerity, but he does not appear to be wise enough to move warily in his experiments, and since he is so enthusiastic that others should be convinced by his beliefs surely it would be advisable for him to be more careful in lending his name to this sort of stunt.

I find it quite impossible to agree with many of Sir Arthur's theories. He has had a long experience and has had the fact of after-life proved to him by many experiences. Considering this, it is utterly impossible to account for some of the opinions he expresses.

He delivered an address on the stage of the Royalty Theatre on the play "Outward Bound," in which all the characters are supposed to be dead. The scene of the play takes place on board ship, and the realization that they are dead does not come to the characters for a while. The first two acts are extremely good, and contain much humour. In the third and last act, however, the play falls to pieces; all the humour disappears, and in a ponderous seriousness the scene degenerates into Mission Hall sermonizing. An aggressive clergyman comes on board as the "Examiner" of the dead, and deputizes them to their various spheres in the next life. I should infinitely prefer complete obliteration to submitting to a cross-examination of such a type of mentality.

According to the *Daily News*, dated January 8, 1924, Sir Arthur said in his address:

"If the spirits did not always tell us what we wanted to know, one reason was that they did not know themselves, for the average spirit is, if anything, rather below the human being in intellect.

"A large number of spirits were actually earth-bound, and one of the great things that spiritualism will do in the future is to get at these poor creatures, tell them where they were and instruct them, said Sir Arthur. That is the object of rescue circles: to

repulse evil spirits was the most unchristian thing we could do."

Ridiculous! Spirit communication is thus reduced to the lowest level of intellect, and I declare vehemently that Sir Arthur's contention is entirely incorrect. The idea that the average spirit is, if anything, rather below that of the human being in intellect is appalling.

As for the idea of human beings getting into touch with these poor creatures in order to tell them what is the matter with them, is not only repulsive, but is stupendous arrogance. Such theories encourage the rejection of psychic studies by the ignorant mind.

If I appear antagonistic to Sir Arthur, it is because that I cannot pass actions and utterances which are detrimental to this great new Truth. I have a great regard for the spade work Sir Arthur has done and a great regard for his earnestness, and I hope he will not misunderstand my attitude. If our theories and philosophy differ we are both convinced of the fundamental fact of after-existence.

To be of value to the world it is necessary for spirit communication to be developed to the highest plane of philosophical dignity, before it can hope to claim universal acceptance by persons of intellect.

CHAPTER XIII

THE LONG CHAIN OF PROOF

A discourse on fools—An appointment in the investigator's own name—A sitting with Mrs. Leonard: Feda, W.A., and Annie appear—Annie talks of a strange link—The edifice of thought—W.A. describes his "passing out" and says that people on earth cover God in coats of religion until they can no longer see Him.

December 17, 1923.

AT this stage of my studies, despite the few experiences with indifferent mediums, I regarded the proof of after-life and the actuality of spirit com-

munication with beings on earth as established beyond any possibility of doubt.

The world is, of course, populated by a multitude of fools, whose intelligence is little beyond that of the lower form of animal, and often worse. That multitude will find acceptance beyond its narrow comprehension. It is content to feed on its own stupid opinion, but that is its misfortune and no concern of mine.

The third sitting of my wife and myself with Mrs. Osborne Leonard took place on December 17.

This appointment had been made by myself in my name.

Mrs. Leonard went into a trance and Fedra appeared.

FEDRA—Good morning. W.A. is here and sends his love to you both. He says he is enjoying the opportunities you are giving him of speaking to you.

W.A.—Do you know I am working in a sort of partnership with your sister?

ANNIE—It is a curious link because there was nothing to connect us up with each other on earth. There we were strangers to each other and it is so curious that this link has been set up since I have been over here. The link between us is just sufficient for you to obtain from us both all that you could wish.

FEDRA—Are you aware that Annie has been making attempts to get through to you? Can you corroborate this by other sittings?

ANNIE—I am saying this as a little test. It has already been given through Fedra.¹ Do you remember when you sat in the circle next to Miss Macgregor at the College?²

FEDRA—On Saturday Miss Macgregor was here and she was told that you (H.D.B.) had sat next to her.

ANNIE—Whenever I speak to you I try to

¹ This probably refers to the sittings with A.V.E. on November 29 and December 4.

² I sat next to Miss Macgregor at the British College of Psychic Science.

encourage you to go on with your work and also to develop yourself as well.

FEDA—Your sister says she does like the fat man at the College. He would not be pleased at this description, but we have to get hold of some characteristic. She says he has power. He was laughing a lot at the sitting and seemed to be rather amused.

ANNIE—He seems very fond of speaking about his reminiscences.

H.D.B.—What is his name?

ANNIE—Joe.

FEDA (*sotto voce*)—You mean Joseph.¹

ANNIE—No, I will not call him Joseph. Lately he has been worrying about something; something he wanted to do and he has been annoyed about it. One of the two sittings at which I was present recently was very much better than the other.² There seemed to be a different kind of condition. The power was uncertain; drifts—came and went again. Are you going to do any more automatic writing?³ Why were you thinking of altering the beginning of the book? You thought of reconstructing it and you were thinking of doing it because of later material.⁴ The book is all right just as it is. Do you remember I made an allusion to it the last time I came with Feda? Have you been thinking whilst you have been writing lately that this book will need another one? It is really a book which is leading up to the subject because you are giving facts. You will follow it up by a philosophy in which you will be able to give all your deductions. You will have acquired much new evidence before that time and you will be able to combine facts with philosophy and give an understanding of the life on this side. In the book you are now doing you are trying to give the

¹ She is referring to De Wyckoff, who was with me at the British College.

² She was referring to the two sittings with A.V.E.

³ See Book III, "Conversations with Johannes."

⁴ This was caused by the receipt of De Wyckoff's cable.

natural, common-sense way of looking at this subject.

W.A.—You will remember that something very important happened just about Christmas.¹ It seems so very strange that I should be helping you and talking to you and building up this edifice of thought. It is curious, because you know it reminds me of my transition—or my passing over; and it seems so very appropriate that I should be helping you now. I have been very keen to help because it has all seemed such an extraordinary discovery; such an adventure to me. I want to do everything I can for people so that they may look forward to an after-life instead of loathing the idea of earthly death as they do now. I want to do all I can to help old people as well as those who pass over as I did when I was well in the thick of things. It seems so extraordinary; one is certainly "here to-day and gone to-morrow." On earth I had no preparation and when I came here it was just like being "swished" from one place to another, or from one condition to another condition.

H.D.B.—I am, as you know, writing a book on spiritualism. Would you please give me as much evidence as possible in order that it may be published to the world? I do not mind however personal the character may be of any statement that you make.

W.A.—That is what I have been endeavouring to do. Do you remember that just before I passed over I was considering a purchase that would have entailed considerable expense? I was thinking something out in my mind at the time and I had deep laid plans which were made just earlier. It was not so much for myself but it had bearing on someone else—a lady. There was a great deal of uncertainty and a good deal of talking about it. When I was considering this purpose it created a pleasant interest and excitement, and steps had actually been taken about it. It was in connection with a new place—to

¹ W.A. was taken very ill on Christmas Eve and died within a week.

me a change altogether.¹ However, it was not to be, although it had been mentioned in letters. Some one was rather set against it and did not approve of it. There were discussions about it, and a man did not approve. I would have given in, but would not have been pleased. When I passed over I was very full of life, but had been worried and pessimistic about things. I had been depressed and I could not see ahead. I wondered what was going to happen regarding certain matters. However, I had kept a cheerful face and only a few people knew. During the last few months I had got very jumpy and depressed. There was one letter, however, in which I did express myself. It showed that I was feeling at that time that I should not be able to carry this through.

FEDA—W.A. is now showing me a picture of a young lady.

W.A.—I have been trying to get through to her, but it is not so easy to get through to her as it is to get through to you. She cannot help that. Dorothy!² She has got things of mine apart from the others. Old A. has also got some things of mine. Will you ask her if she has the photograph that she does not like very much? I think recently she tried to cover up a part of it. Now I am on the other side it appears to me that she is trying to think that she liked it better than she really did. She does not like it very much but is trying to make herself think that she does. Only a little time back she thought of putting it in a different place and she felt very uncertain about a frame.³ Will you ask her whether there is a photograph of mine which is often falling down?

¹ This refers to an important prospective journey to Canada which W.A. had been thinking of taking shortly before his death.

² W.A. was Dorothy's husband.

³ Neither my wife nor I knew anything whatever of this incident. My wife ascertained from Dorothy later that she had done all these things and thought exactly as W.A. had described, and that she had purchased another frame for the photograph.

M.E.B.—Is there any message you would like sent to your family?

W.A.—There are the two children. One I do not know quite so well. One I associate with myself so much more than the other. She seems so much more like myself. I have been able to get close to her and impress myself upon her. She is growing so much like me. It is as if I have brought some influence to bear on her. There is something of me in her eyes. There is that extraordinary movement of her head and the way in which she carries it that remind me so much of myself.

(The medium here held her head in an erect manner, turning it to and fro with a peculiar movement.¹)

M.E.B.—Would you please tell us her name?

W.A.—It is not always easy for us to give names; it is quite simple to give ideas because an idea can be dressed up in so many different ways, whereas names do not convey anything to the thoughts. Has she lately specially shown that she wants to do some writing or drawing? She has been doing something, but she cannot manage to do it yet.² (Here he laughed.) Betty! Phyllis!³ Will you tell them to be a little careful of Betty's throat? I have noticed it lately. They need not do anything hastily, but they must be careful of colds, because there is a weakness at the back of the throat and the nose. But please do not have anything drastic done. There is something wrong with one of Phyllis's toe nails. It is not growing in the right way.⁴

¹ This movement of the head was an extraordinary characteristic of W.A., and is of the child about whom W.A. was speaking.

² This is correct.

³ These are the names of his two young children. It is odd that after being asked for the names a short time elapsed before he gave them.

⁴ With regard to this matter, Mrs. Bradley inquired of the child's governess whether there was anything wrong with Phyllis's toe nails, and she replied that they were quite all right. About three weeks after, however, a nail split and eventually came off.

M.E.B.—Do you remember on a previous occasion when we were talking to you, you told us you were studying light and where it came from?

W.A.—Yes, I am still studying this question. The atmosphere here is always generating.

FEDA (*sotto voce*)—That is a funny way of putting it.

W.A.—What I will call the atmosphere of the universe is light in itself. My idea is that it is only the planets which are subject to variation of light. There is no such thing as darkness; it is only a variation of light. Darkness is only a shadow. Each planet creates its own conditions of darkness. The actual atmosphere in which each planet exists is full of light. In a peculiar way you brought that in, symbolically, just lately in your book.¹ On earth you always speak of joy and happiness as the brightness and the light, and of illness and depression as the darkness of life. The life-giving properties that feed each planet are light. Light does not all come from the sun; the universe lights the sun. The spheres here are more naturally affected, or penetrated, by light. The vibrations are stronger as they pass through our planes than when they reach the earth. All vibrations, power, life-force, and all light itself pass through our spheres before they reach the earth. Yours is the kernel and it has to get through the shell before it reaches the kernel. The farther away you get from earth the more light and power you have, and strange to say, the more power mind has over matter. I have got to call it matter—but matter is really chemical and a question of relativity. The matter on the seventh sphere seems absolutely solid to the people on that sphere, but it is not so relatively solid to me as the things on my plane.

M.E.B.—Does the atmosphere vary there? Do you feel the heat and cold?

W.A.—It is never cold here, but always warm; not too warm, but just right. In fact, everything here seems so all right.² There are, of course, places

¹ See opening of Chapter IX, pages 80 and 81.

² This is a favourite expression of W.A.'s.

here which look like places in cold countries. They look like, for instance, the mountains in Switzerland and are very beautiful, but there are no ugly places. Ugliness is a temporary condition belonging to earth. Ugliness is the condition of your thoughts. On the lower astral plane it is ugly because the people there make it ugly by their minds and conditions.

M.E.B.—Do you ever bathe there?

W.A.—Yes, we do bathe, but we do not need to wash. I should hate to have to wash in a basin with taps. There is no dirt here; there is, of course, soil, which I could take up and rub in my hands if I wanted to, but one does not wish to do this. I certainly love to bathe, old girl.

FEDA—You must not call her "old girl." It is rude.

M.E.B.—I do not mind him calling me old girl. That is how he always addressed me.

W.A.—On earth you feel conditions. For instance, have you not met a woman with a pretty face and yet felt that there is something ugly about her?

H.D.B.—Will you tell us your views on telepathy and the subconscious mind? This is the petty argument, of those who refuse to accept the evidence of spirit communications.

W.A.—There are always fatheads about everything. Even if I did prove beyond all doubt to them that I am talking to you they would still try to find some other theory in their endeavour to explain it away.

H.D.B.—In the last issue of the *Sunday Express* there was a long article by James Douglas in which he described a newly invented machine by which a message can be sent through in eleven million different ways and the message can be decoded only by the machine. He said that he would only accept spiritualism if a message came through from a spirit in such a code. Do you think that this could be done?

W.A.—I think possibly it could be done, but there

would be so much wasted force in the process. Is it worth while to waste such an amount of force and energy? Will you ask James Douglas, who is a religious man, if he can find cast-iron proof that there is a God? Douglas would think it unreasonable to doubt. God is a spirit and it is almost as difficult for me to give any cast-iron proof that I am a spirit made in the image of God. I say with all reverence that each of us is in the likeness of God. I say it because I *know* there is a God.

M.E.B.—How are the various religions regarded on your plane?

W.A.—There are no religions. Not as you conceive them. Religions on earth are the different coats of paint with which you cover God until you can no longer see Him. God appears to us here as a most wonderful jewel; the many coarse coats of paint with which you cover Him on earth affect your vision so that you cannot recognize Him in the end. Here there are no creeds and there are no sects. We worship God in appreciation and thanksgiving. We worship Him in thought every moment of the day. I feel at oneness with Him. Christ is the highest expression of God on this plane. Here there are no Jews and no Roman Catholics. Their differences on earth have withered. God and His works are patent here to everyone. On the earth it is all symbolism. One man sees God in candles and robes, another in music, and another in words. The gorgeous display which means God to the one is anathema to the other, but the trouble is that each demands that his conception should be held by the other. God is infinite. These people are finite and have tried to express God as finite. To me it is easy to see God in a flower. Every beautiful day seems as if God had opened His eyes. There are meeting places here to help those who have lately passed over to worship, but not to argue. Going back to Douglas—the man with the infernal machine. He will say: “Ah, but you can see God because I can.” I should like to say to him: “Ah, but how do you know that that is not

telepathy? How do I know that it is not a suggestion of God and the power of suggestion is so strong that it is making you think it is God?" I agree with him that it is a good thing to have faith, but we should be constant as well. If he has faith which he cannot explain, he must allow others to have faith which they cannot explain. From our side, if we are going to get physical effect in your environment, we have to make use of something physical from you to communicate and materialize the voice. The power we use is created by you. Even you, who sit with good mediums, contribute to this force. Some people inhibit bad conditions which prevent any influence from our side. We work mentally on the material you provide. If I lifted a table on earth it would be by mentally directing the force I got from you. The simpler the means of communication the easier it is to direct them.

H.D.B.—Have you any suggestion or advice to offer me with regard to the book I am writing?

W.A.—I am already working on it and occasionally I suggest alterations. You are writing it in the right way. This book will be what I call an "explosive book." Not so much a book of just teaching and explanation, but exploding wrong ideas. I would like to call it the "Dynamite Book." Lately it has been like that. Building up material for belief. To my mind it is a sort of catechism and you are making questions and we are helping you to answer them. I saw you working on this method just recently. You have been getting it straight from America.¹ Both your sister and I adhere to all that we said.

H.D.B.—The result of the last talk I had with you has cleared the American trouble, and in consequence of what you said Valiantine may be coming to England some time next year.

W.A.—It was your sister that did most of this work, not me. I know you have got power in the direct way. Putting the physical manifestations on

¹ Exceptional evidence.

one side, however, the most important part is the mental knowledge.

Here Nedra said my sister had appeared again.

ANNIE—You had an idea of going back to America. You need not go now that he is coming to England. I have thought a lot about him and want particularly to have another opportunity of getting into communication through him. To me this is the most convincing of experiences.

W.A.—What happened when we were there was wonderful and genuine and we are not the only spirits who have had extraordinary results through him. When Valiantine comes to England perhaps it may not be in time for the book, but I shall be seeing you again here and I will think out things and try and find some new tests. I shall be able to get many more things through and by the time we have done with them there will be things which they cannot dispute. I do this purposely as a test. She¹ has still got a jacket of mine. Has she been thinking of giving it away? It was in fairly good condition but had lost the colour a little. This coat was connected with a very happy and important time and many happy occasions.² I think she will remember because of the gatherings and celebrations. I see her and I see my father. With regard to my father, it is not easy to stir him up enough. His attitude seems to be "Oh, well, yes, I suppose so." Then he goes on with other things. My wife is rather psychic, but she does not seem to care to enter into these things. She is not like you two. It seems surprising in a way that it should be both of you to whom I am talking and communicating. Cheer up, we shall do a lot of good and make them sit up. Next time I shall arrive with some more missiles. Don't say "good-bye"—I hate to say good-bye.

Here the sitting, which lasted two hours, ended.

Although certain parts of the conversation may

¹ His widow.

² This I found out later to be correct. She had kept an old jacket of his. Neither my wife nor I knew of this fact.

not be of general public interest, it is necessary to place them on record, because it is only by personal details that proof can be established. *The great bulk of the evidence was volunteered spontaneously and came without hesitation.*

Throughout the whole time the unmistakable personality of W.A. was stimulating, exhilarating, and real.

CHAPTER XIV

THE HISTORY OF A GREAT MEDIUM

The approach to the mental millennium—A few truthful words about some public characters—Masculine pygmies and their beak-nosed feminine appendages—The story of Mrs. Osborne Leonard and Feda—The author's staggering accumulation of evidence.

December 29, 1923.

THE student of human nature finds it impossible to explain what gave Shakespeare the power to write his immortal verse, why Mozart should have been inspired to compose his melodies, why the music of Weber, Rossini, Wagner, and Beethoven takes characteristic form which can never die, why El Greco, Rubens, Piazzetta and Michael Angelo should have given the world the demonstration of an art which is imperishable, or from whence are derived the brilliant flashes which come to the mind of Marconi and enable him to produce the material miracles which astound our world and which he, the discoverer, cannot consciously explain. These marvels of art and science we accept without question because they are visible and audible.

We accept all these because the appeal is to the physical sense of sight and hearing. But beyond these senses there are untold mysteries of the mind.

The great writer is the medium of the flower of

words and thought, the great composer is the medium of the beauty of sound, and the great painter is the medium of the joys of vision. If beyond these there is a mediumship through which it is possible to commune with all these senses in an even higher degree on higher spheres, surely that should be regarded as the greatest gift of all and be welcomed as an approach to the mental millennium.

But this gift is rare and the power to guide has been given to few. Some of those to whom it has been given have been stoned by the crudely material and stupidly aggressive minds of low intelligence. Such crucifixion has been suffered by many and has driven them into the solitude of themselves.

Insignificant public characters and titled puppets are accepted and applauded so long as the force of their shrieks is persistently continued and their hypocrisy and inefficiencies are winked at. Thus the absurdity of the world's valuation is displayed.

Europe is overrun by political and social masculine pygmies barnacled with cat-like and beak-nosed feminine appendages who add to the chaos by their drivelling chatter.

I advance the deliberate and carefully weighed statement that I consider Mrs. Osborne Leonard is gifted with powers beside which those assumed by political leaders and their unfortunate spouses are infinitesimal.

Mrs. Leonard is the instrument through which it is possible to communicate with the higher intelligences of another world. Can one conceive a greater power than this? The power she possesses is just as indefinable as electricity, the atom, or wireless.

Let me give a very brief history of her, from which it will be seen that it was only by years and years of patience that she was able to develop her mediumistic faculties.

She was not brought up in a spiritualistic atmosphere. Her parents and all her relations were orthodox high-Church people.

She tells me that she was clairvoyant as a child

until the age of ten, but when she spoke to her parents of the people and scenes which she saw, they were very shocked and told her that she must endeavour to stop it, explaining that it was very wrong to "see things."

After that she says that this peculiar power seemed to have left her until she was fifteen. Then whilst reading she came across the word "spiritualism" on several occasions. She did not know what it actually meant, but felt that it should mean something to her. After this she attended one or two public séances. When she spoke of this at home she was forbidden to go any more. By this time she had not the faintest idea of becoming a medium.

At the age of nineteen she developed diphtheria and was attended by a nurse who knew something of spiritualism.

After her recovery she went to this nurse's home and there took part in a séance which revived her interest in psychic matters.

In spite of her mother's opposition she determined to investigate the question for herself. She attended public meetings, and was told by several mediums that she had psychic power and would be able to use it.

During 1909 she made the acquaintance of two ladies and they three experimented at table sittings. For the first twenty-seven times nothing happened. At the twenty-eighth experiment rappings occurred. (Table-rapping séances represent the most primitive form. The messages come through the alphabetical rappings on the table, 1 standing for A, 4 for D, 8 for H, etc., etc. It is a slow and irritating process.) A little later messages came through to the effect that she (Mrs. Leonard) was to develop and would become a trance medium. A question was asked as to whom her control would be, and the reply came that it was Fedá, and that Fedá had some special work to do through her.

Mrs. Leonard did not like the idea of being "controlled" and refused to go into a trance, so nothing was done for some months. She was

deeply disappointed when she did not develop any further powers, such as clairvoyance, and eventually came to the conclusion that as Feda had given her some very good evidence through the table, that she had better trust her and allow Feda to become the control spirit.

Three years, however, passed before she went under control. During that period, she sat constantly with the two friends, but nothing happened until one evening, feeling very depressed and convinced that she had no psychic powers, she suddenly went into a trance. She knows nothing of what happened whilst she was under that trance. Later her friends told her that they had spoken to Feda for over an hour.

She went into trances regularly for some months, sitting with a few friends for practice, and in particular with one lady who knew a great deal about psychic subjects, and who was extremely helpful to her.

In March, 1914, Feda told Mrs. Leonard that something big and terrible was going to happen to the world and that she had work to do through her.

Mrs. Leonard asked if she could not do the work quietly for any friends who needed it. Feda said: "No, it will limit the work to too small a circle. You must be in such a position that anyone needing a sitting will be able to come to you."

Mrs. Leonard did as she was requested, and although it was very difficult and trying at first, she soon realized that Feda had been right in making her give up her whole time to psychic work. The "big and terrible thing" prophesied was the Great War. Feda had promised that if Mrs. Leonard would be controlled by her, later on she would be able to develop clairvoyance and clairsaudience. Mrs. Leonard says that the promise has been fulfilled and occasionally she has had the joy of seeing spirit friends.

She tells me that she has travelled consciously to the spirit world and has brought back memories of the people she met there—people whom she had

never seen on earth, and she has subsequently been able to verify all the details which she remembered.

These are her words: "When one has heard and seen for oneself, nothing can shake one's faith or take away the feeling of hope and happiness, even when troubles and sorrows try one to the utmost."

She contends that most people could develop psychic powers of some kind.¹ It only needs patience and perseverance, and, if possible, the co-operation of someone whom one has loved or who has passed over to the spirit side.

I repeat that psychic studies are in their infancy. The difficulty is, I also repeat, that there are so few genuine fully developed or powerful mediums. I have found only four of any value, and, from what I hear, there are not more than a dozen at the outside in the world.

I am inclined to believe, however, that there are tens of thousands of people possessing mediumistic faculties which are undeveloped and which have been thwarted or knocked out in youth. There has existed hitherto such an extraordinary fear and prejudice against the display of any abnormal faculty. Therefore, as in Mrs. Leonard's case, should a child show any abnormal power in this direction, material forces combine to kill that power at the outset. When the world is fully awake to the enormous possibilities, the potential value may be realized and the mediumistic types may be more carefully and scientifically developed. If a child showed signs of a remarkable talent for any of the sensitive arts, it would be absurd to thwart that child or to tell it that development was wrong and evil. This is probably what has happened in thousands of cases with those who have shown signs of possessing mediumistic abilities.

The time has come when science must, for the sake of the world, study this development.

There exists at present a peculiar attitude towards

¹ This is perfectly true and I have confirmed it by spirit intelligence lately.

professional mediums. By the sceptics they are invariably regarded with a mistrust which is the outcome of prejudice. It must be conceded that the nature of their services lends many possibilities of deception, for it is comparatively simple for charlatans to invent vague references which are eagerly accepted and magnified by credulous sitters of stupid intelligence.

It is illogical and absurd to look askance at mediums because they take payment. If they do not possess private means, how otherwise can they possibly be expected to make the sacrifices which are necessary? That is merely the common human law. Yet the question is continually asked: "Was the medium paid?" and the affirmative is usually received with a silly sneer.

Is the minister, who is the medium of religion, paid? Of course he is, since he too must live. But do we sneer and say because of this that the creed he professes must therefore be a fraud? Is the painter, who is the medium of art, paid for his pictures? And do we say because of this that his work is worthless? Does not the writer, who is the medium of literature, receive his royalties, and because of this is he regarded as a fraud? Aren't we all paid for our work in life?

Mrs. Leonard willingly gives her services without payment in cases of necessity. She leads a very simple life, and the fees she receives are ridiculously small. They are insignificant, and she could easily quadruple them if she wished. The money side does *not* appeal to her. In character she is one of the gentlest and most straightforward women I have met. She has given her entire time to the development of the extraordinary powers with which she is blessed, and the spiritual value of the discoveries that have been made through her is inestimable.

She was submitted to the most severe tests by the Society for Psychical Research that have ever been imposed upon a medium.

This Society was founded to investigate debatable phenomena which are *prima facie* inexplicable on any

generally recognized hypothesis. Membership of this Society does not imply the acceptance of what is termed "spiritualism." The research is conducted purely from the scientific standpoint.

The President is M. Camille Flammarion and the officers and council include the Earl of Balfour, the Rt. Hon. G. W. Balfour, Sir William Barratt, Sir Oliver Lodge, Professor Gilbert Murray, F. C. S. Schiller, and Sir J. J. Thomson; and amongst the members are Professor Henri Bergson, Professor Charles Richet, Professor Romaine Newbold, and M. Maurice Maeterlinck.

In 1918, for a period of three months—from January 14 to April 15—the Society secured the exclusive services of Mrs. Leonard in order to pursue their investigations, and a Committee was specially appointed by the Council for this purpose.

The various sitters were arranged by the Committee, and the utmost care was used that each prospective sitter should avoid any mention of the appointment to anyone beforehand. In addition to the sitter a recorder was deputed by the Committee to be present to take verbatim notes of what occurred. The records were taken by Una, Lady Troubridge, Miss Radcliffe-Hall, Mrs. W. H. Salter, Miss Newton, and Mr. J. G. Piddington.

Out of seventy-three sittings all but three were anonymous. The records of these sittings are in the possession of the Society.

The report, made after the completion of these tests and written by Mrs. W. H. Salter, states that there was a general agreement amongst many that good evidence of surviving personality had been obtained and the *complete trustworthiness* of the medium could not be questioned.

I have read a considerable number of the records referred to. To the student the evidential points are interesting, but the great majority of the conversations recorded are extremely dull.

It is my personal opinion that since these tests were made six years ago Mrs. Leonard's powers have developed *enormously*. I believe also that

these powers may be added to by some latent power possessed by certain sitters.

This at least is evident. There has never yet been published such an amazing accumulation of evidence, continued in sequence for hours at a time, as that contained in the pages of this book.

CHAPTER XV

THE ESTABLISHMENT OF SUPERNATURAL KNOWLEDGE

W.A.: Life is a roadway full of stumbling-blocks—It is not possible for spirits to tell the future—"There is no actual hell," says W.A.—Spirit life is always promise and hope—Time in the after-life—W.A. at a dance: exceptional evidence—The philosophy of middle age—"Death will lose its fears"—W.A.'s last words: "Don't say good-bye to me: I am going back with you"—The author quenches the fire of his contempt—Concessions to ridiculous sentimentality.

January 6, 1924.

IF the physical condition of sitters count and it is said that it does, this séance with Mrs. Osborne Leonard was by no means an ideal day either for me or for my wife. We had had a dance party at Dorincourt the previous night and it had continued until about three a.m. This, following a dose of overwork, left me with a head which was making frantic efforts to burst.

Mrs. Osborne Leonard went into a trance and "Fedá" spoke.

FEDA—Good morning. W.A. is here and sends his love to you both. He says he has a great deal more to say.

After the usual greetings W.A. talked at length of certain personal matters. One of two unimportant points referred to earlier incidents in his life. These, he said, could be verified by his father if I wished.

H.D.B.—You know, W.A., it is very difficult for

me to ascertain any of these from your father, because he has expressed an objection to having anything whatever to do with the subject.

W.A.—He is very obstinate and difficult to deal with. I know that my father does not like having anything to do with spiritualism. He is really rather afraid of it. He sheers off it and closes up. I do not think it is that he does not believe—he thinks that it is best left alone.

M.E.B.—Could you tell us anything about your brother?

FEDA—W.A. looks worried.

W.A.—You know there is something he is going through. I am trying to help him, but I cannot tell how it is going to turn out. I do not know just yet.

M.E.B.—Do you think there is anything that can be done for him?

W.A.—They are doing all they can. It is difficult for them to know what to do. They have tried one thing one way and now they are trying something else. I have got to help him mentally; I can do nothing for him physically and it is very difficult for me because it is something that is in him—not just now—it has been in him for some time. I am having a tussle with it, but it is very difficult to help people unless they co-operate with you.

M.E.B.—Can spirits foretell what will happen in the future?

W.A.—Yes, we can sometimes. There is destiny. But you can will yourself off these lines. The real lines of destiny are all for good. There is no such thing as bad destiny. Illness or even accidents sometimes lead to good. (*To H.D.B.*) You have had one or two smacks. You did not like it at the time, but they were steps taking you where you are. You have made the best of your particular difficulties. Most people sit and howl. It seems to me that life is a roadway full of stumbling-blocks. Some people stumble and then, looking backwards, fall again because they could

not see those in front. Then they are continually falling. These people are the failures. We can foretell the future to that extent, but so many wills come into co-operation. You, Herbert, were meant to come into this—to write. Your life is very different to what you thought it would be. You had it all in you. It has made you very sensitive and difficult. If you had chosen differently you would not have progressed. You have taken each step up as it has come to you. If I had passed over fifteen years ago and foretold your future you would have been very surprised, and had you wished you could have used your will power and have averted it. We seldom dare foretell the future events, and it is impossible for me to foretell the future of my brother.

M.E.B.—Do you think there is any improvement in him? Is he getting better?

W.A.—Well, old girl, he is not so much better, but he is different. In one sense there is a change in his condition.

M.E.B.—Do you think he can become fit to take up his ordinary work in life?

W.A.—He will not be fit in the ordinary sense. He has not got it in him now. His trouble is too deep to get at. He may get very much better, but he is so undermined. It will be very difficult for him to resume his ordinary normal life. Later on I may lead him on to find something in himself on which he can concentrate. So far he has been unable to fix his mind and strength. At one time one felt that there was so much he could have done. His future looked so brilliant and promising.¹ Perhaps we shall be able to lead him on to something in which he can express himself. I am trying to bring out something. You know, it is only repeating history. If you go back into the family you will see what I mean. Two generations—a man—— The conditions are similar in a way. We cannot ignore heredity. We can only influence by right feeling and knowledge. It is impossible

¹ Every reference to W.A.'s brother is correct.

to avoid heredity. One inherits certain things just as one inherits blue eyes. You cannot change blue eyes for brown. We can only help to make the best of the conditions. It is a matter of cause and effect, but there are times when we wilfully take the wrong road.

H.D.B.—You say that the spirits can help us in certain ways. Is it possible for them to help us in any physical sense? For instance, I have been working very hard lately and I feel very tired.

W.A.—Yes, I know, and your mind has become congested. Isn't it possible for you to have a change in a week or so? The worst of you is that your mind cannot work in compartments. The mind is like a series of lids and you are now keeping the lid open only on this psychic subject. It is never out of your mind even when you are eating. You eat psychic matter. It is difficult for some men to avoid this. For, after all, the artist sees his picture even while he is eating. You are weighing all the pros and cons of your argument and you feel you must be very careful. Of late when you are talking to people you only answer mechanically, whilst your mind is still actually occupied by this subject at the same time. You have become just a little absent-minded of late and you have done ordinary things without knowing that you were doing them. But it has been worth it. This book is going to be a great success.

H.D.B.—You appear quite considerably in the book.

W.A.—I know. You might say that I have got the star part.

FEDA—What a funny thing to call it!

W.A.—I like being in the limelight on this occasion.

H.D.B.—Family objections prevent me from calling you by your proper name. I am going to call you "W.A."

W.A.—It is quite all right if you call me "W.A.," but I should not have liked it if you had called me "Percival" or "Archibald." It does

not really very much matter, but I prefer that you called me by some initials which indicate my proper name than if you had given me some fictitious name. It has been a tiring study, but the whole thing has been worth all the strain and stress. At first you were so thoroughly interested that it did not tire you so much, but the trouble now is that you are realizing all that it means. It is your peculiar style of writing which will convince people. You know I have seen you in your room and I have impressed you. I know the difficulty you have had in cataloguing the evidence.

H.D.B.—Do you think the book is likely to be of value to the world?

W.A.—Well, old chap, think what a different life it will mean for people on earth. It should immediately create a different condition on earth. That is why we want to make it clear. There is no actual hell. Hell is created and lived out on earth. Hell is a mental condition and it is really wrong to call it spiritual, for there is no spiritual hell, although people who are evil on earth are still evil to a great extent when they pass over here.

M.E.B.—Can people be affected by evil spirits on earth?

W.A.—No, spirits do not hurt people on earth. The only evil is some subconscious evil thing in themselves. On earth you keep a certain law and order. You do not allow criminals to worry you by roaming at large. The madman you shut up. Well, we are not less intellectual than you and we operate very much better here. The law here is a mental order, and with regard to evil-doers, they are limited and restricted. Directly they are out of the body they become at once in touch with laws which limit them and re-act on them. All crime means limitation. It is animal. It consumes—that is the taint of criminality. It is mental lack or disease which allows a man to commit a crime. It is derived from his physical and not from his spiritual part. It is grown in the physical. When these pass out of the body, which nurtures criminal tendencies, they

no longer have the physical freedom or will to do these things. They come in touch at once with spiritual laws and orders because all they have been doing restricts them automatically. On earth you might get bad thoughts if you invited them. And evil spirits cannot come near unless they are invited.

M.E.B.—Are you continuing your studies over there?

W.A.—Yes, that is the wonderful part of life here. It is always promise and hope. As we realize one thing, another is opened before us. There is never disappointment. Everyone on this plane is at his or her best. Only that part exists of us. It is a progressive life. You do not finish with living in a beautiful condition just with loved ones around you. It is not only that, but there are planes and planes and planes of greater knowledge and wonderment. I have had only a glimpse so far. I feel very much as a mole might feel on earth if that mole had dreamed of a glimpse of your life as you live it with your intelligence and then had to go back to be a mole again. If I had to come back to earth I should feel like a mole. The mole cannot read and has no higher intelligence. It works by instinct. The lower law of self-preservation is its only guiding instinct. Occasionally I do go to other planes. There I see extraordinary scenes of beauty which are a revelation. I understand them whilst I am there, but I am not ready to live in them yet. You on earth might go to some place and hear the most gorgeous music, but you are not prepared to live in that atmosphere always. I shall not be ready for hundreds and perhaps thousands of years to reach the highest planes. Of course, you know, here we have no time.

M.E.B.—Does it seem long since you left the earth?

W.A.—It does not seem long to me. Only when I return to you, I can gauge it by your time. But here I do not count time. It might be eleven or two or the night time, for it makes no difference.

H.D.B.—You know that Valiantine is coming to

England this year. When he comes do you think you will be able to speak to us in your own actual voice?

W.A.—Yes, I think I shall be able to. Valiantine has very great power; more power even than that which enables us to use our own voice. He has almost the power for materialization. It is not only that he gives power to the vibrations; he can, I believe, get the solidification of the spirit. You know, Valiantine has given you the key-note to all that has happened here between you and me.¹ I am glad you have been able to clear up those matters with De Wyckoff. It has helped him as well as you. It has cleared his mind and has put his thoughts in order.

H.D.B.—It may be difficult for you to materialize your own voice at first for any length of time, but it does not matter if you can only manage to give us a few sentences. How would you advise us to start experiments with Valiantine?

W.A.—At the start I should only have a few experienced people present. (*Breaking off*) You know, old Doyle will be very pleased about all this.

FEDA—You should not call him "old Doyle,"

W.A.

W.A.—That does not matter. I like him very much.

FEDA—I shall talk to Valiantine when he comes.

M.E.B.—How many would you advise us to have at the first experiment?

W.A.—I shall have to try and impress you on the first few sitters. I should advise you not to have more than five or six. Valiantine is a funny man. He is rather touchy and it depends on him how it goes. He has been rather upset by people.

M.E.B.—Would you advise us to hold sittings in the dance-room?

W.A.—No, I should think really a smaller room. It would conserve the power more. While Valiantine is there I want to find out how it is done. No one has any idea how it is done from the

¹ Confirmatory evidence.

scientific point of view. (*To H.D.B.*) Will you register anything you notice and I will register anything I notice on my side?

H.D.B.—Yes. I shall take a note of everything.

M.E.B.—But surely there must be a large number of very clever scientific men on your side to investigate these matters?

W.A.—There are, of course, a great number of clever men, but the trouble is that they have lost touch with the physical aspect. If we can do this there will be a great deal of talk about it. You may be able to arrive at the discovery through our synthetic impressions. If we can do this it will have a tremendous effect on the man in the street. It is the ordinary people who should know of these things so that they may form a common-sense idea. Perhaps together we shall be able to find out how power is liberated and how it is used.

FEDA (*To H.D.B.*)—W.A. is pointing to your shoulder.

W.A.—Lately you had an alteration made to the shoulder of your coat. I did not think there was anything wrong with it. It looked quite all right to me.¹

M.E.B.—Were you with us last night?

W.A.—Yes. I was trying to get through to you, but it was rather a material condition. You would not think you were on the Seventh Sphere, but all the same I enjoyed it. There was a lot of laughing and from you (*to M.E.B.*) a loud "Ha! Ha!"² There was plenty of tinkling there. I thought it was rather nice.³ Do you remember that you were afraid of something being upset?⁴ You were also seeing to a lot of things being moved about. I saw

¹ A week or so previously I had a slight alteration made to the shoulder of the coat I was wearing.

² This actually occurred. A remark was made by a guest to M.E.B., after which he said, "That will make you laugh," and she replied with a satiric "Ha, ha."

³ W.A. was referring to the band.

⁴ A certain bowl was put on a pedestal just near the dance-room, and, because of the people passing through M.E.B. had it removed.

you bending down when you were dancing. I tried to follow you round, but got too mixed up. Who was the man with the big nose? ¹ I think there was someone there who was very stupid. You were thinking at the time how very boring and stupid this person was.² (*To M.E.B.*) You were afraid of your dress coming undone. There were some things attached to the dress and you thought you were going to lose them. Two or three times the end of the threads came undone. I liked the dress, although it did cause you a bit of anxiety, but I could not go crawling about the floor for them. You were afraid the dress was coming down and you were going to lose them.³ I liked the straight up and down look of your dress. It was hitched up a little on one side. I think it suited you very well. You were thinking of putting something over it. You took out a shawl to put round your neck and then took it off again two or three times. You were feeling cold, and I tried hard to impress you to wear it. You hesitated and then decided you wouldn't.⁴ You know you are obstinate. I tell you all this because lately I find I can see things so much more plainly. At the dance there was something left behind. I heard a remark about it: "It is too late now to look for it."⁵

M.E.B.—Did you see your wife last night?

W.A.—Yes, I saw her but could not get awfully close to her. What I want to do is to help her, but I cannot get so close to her as I can to you. After all, you know, she can't write books, so I have got to get to work with you and not with her. You see

¹ One of the guests.

² Extremely rude but true.

³ M.E.B. was wearing a beaded frock on which the threads had come undone, causing the beads to roll about on the floor.

⁴ Extraordinary! Exact both in action and thought. M.E.B. felt cold, did not wear the shawl, and two days later was laid up for a while with a chill.

⁵ A guest left behind a little blue and white evening bag, and said on leaving: "Never mind, too late to look round for it now."

I do not mind either if she is interested in other people. She is young and it does not hurt me. I want her to be happy, and I have felt it would not be good for her to feel that she had got to consecrate herself to me. I have also felt that it would not do for her to be alone, and I have been impressing her with this. She can find happiness through other people, and I never feel jealous. I am quite satisfied in my condition and I do not worry about anything.

M.E.B.—Is everything all right so far as business matters are concerned for your wife?

H.D.B. (*somewhat annoyed*)—Don't ask material questions of that description.

M.E.B.—Do you mind my asking questions, W.A.?

W.A.—No, it is quite all right. I like it. I am interested in a sense in these matters, for they are necessary adjuncts to your life. I do not think you have any cause to worry about these things. I feel that everything is going to be all right materially both for you and for her.

M.E.B.—A little while back you advised Herbert to go away for a change. You know this is impossible just now.

W.A.—Yes, when we have got the book completed we can make him relax. At present he can think of nothing else.

H.D.B.—Well, it is of no use attempting such a work as this unless I concentrate on it. You would not have thought a year or so ago that you would have been connected with a book of this description, would you?

W.A.—No, I should probably have had a fit. And nobody would have thought a year ago that you would be engaged in writing such a book. It does seem so extraordinary that I should be able to come and talk to you and be with you. You know this is a great book. It is dealing with the problem of life and death. It was inevitable that you should come into it. Now that I am over here I do say that there are guides who tell me that you were

meant to come in. There are higher powers here than you have any idea of. We are the instruments of higher powers. You have been led on by the ordinary natural steps. You have gone on step by step and have obeyed whenever the hand has beckoned. When you get older you will realize more what this means. When people on earth arrive at middle-age they become vaguely unhappy the whole time. They become afraid. They feel themselves coming nearer and nearer to the inevitable change, and they do not like the thought of this plunge into the Unknown. Directly it is known and proved that beyond all doubt there is an after-life, death will lose its fears. Of course, old man, you can never take away the shrinking from it. This instinct to preserve life is *right*. But for this, if when driving your car you ran over a man and killed him you would say, "Oh, well, it's all the better for him." And the more men you ran over the more you would pat yourself on the back. Of course it is absolutely necessary to preserve life on earth. (*To M.E.B.*) You did not get the flowers you wanted. Never mind, it cannot be helped, although you were disappointed at the time.¹

H.D.B.—Have you been with my sister lately?

W.A.—Yes, I have seen her and she has been with me often whilst I am with you. She has done a lot of good to you, especially when you are tired. She is very spiritual, and she can give you a great deal of power. This influx of spiritual power keeps the machine going. She gave you a great deal of help in the middle of the week. Do you remember the night you felt you would have to stop work? We felt for the moment that you were going to crack up.² She was able to help you then especially; even

¹ On the previous evening, by some mistake the wrong flowers, mimosa, had been placed on the dinner table. These formed a horrifying contrast to the pink shades.

² About ten o'clock that evening I felt ill and nervy, and thought I should have to go to bed. During the day I had felt queer. I retired and undressed and then suddenly felt quite well again, and came down in my dressing-gown and did several hours' work.

more than I could, because she has more spiritual power than I have. Through her you did not give in and you went on. I am very glad you did because I thought we did some quite good work afterwards. Earlier on that evening you had hesitated whether to go out or not. You got up and then sat down again and thought to yourself "Shall I go or not?" I was responsible for telling you not to.¹ Do you remember also on that evening you looked at your writing pads and found you had nearly exhausted them? On the following evening you came home from town with a great stack of them. I was with you and helped you to stagger in with them. (*Humorously*) We did not quite fill them all, old chap, did we? On that night you changed the room you worked in.² Do you know, I like old Wyckoff. I think he is a very nice chap indeed. Will you tell him that I saw a little girl with him—a spirit who has attached herself to him: a control. She is a dark little girl; rather pretty and full of life and fun. She keeps trying to present him with a bunch of red flowers. He must have thought of her in some way connected with red flowers. The Wyckoffs have got power. They are very nice people—good people.

M.E.B.—Do you think it is necessary when we have sittings with Valiantine that we should have to sing together beforehand?

W.A.—Yes, it is necessary to have singing with Valiantine. It increases the power.

M.E.B.—Is it necessary to sing hymns?

W.A.—No, it does not matter what you sing as long as you keep it going.

¹ My wife and her sister had arranged to motor to town that evening, and I had said to them during dinner that I felt too tired to work and that I would go with them. Afterwards I decided not to go.

² On January 4, the evening referred to, I looked and found my writing pads almost exhausted. On the following evening I brought down from town a dozen and worked in the drawing-room instead of in my study.

M.E.B.—Would it do as well if we used the gramophone?

W.A.—Yes, that would do so long as you keep on humming to the melody. You must keep singing or, when you are not singing, keep on talking. It does not matter whether you talk any kind of rot; but just keep it going.

H.D.B.—This is probably the last opportunity we shall have of talking before the publication of this book.

W.A.—This is not the only book you will write on this subject. You will write on.

M.E.B.—Can you suggest a title for the book?

W.A.—You have got the title and it is out of the ordinary. To me it is very symbolic.¹ It is more than just a title. I am going to help you about the beginning of the book.

FEDA (*interrupting*)—That can't be right, W.A. The book is nearly finished.

W.A.—It is right. It is to do with the beginning.

H.D.B.—I know exactly what he means. It is very extraordinary.

W.A.—It is very important. It is the first chapter. It must gradually lead up to the subject and give the key-note.² I shall have to do this chapter with you. You have changed your mind about it several times. In this chapter we have got to give the *raison d'être*. We have got to think it out together. I thought that you would have had to write the other part first. It is a peculiar method that you have used. It seems as if you are now going to build the foundations after having put up the upper floors. I doubt if anyone has ever done it in this way before, but it is the only way to write this book. I shall get it through for you. It is a great thing and you have done so well. The dis-

¹ I had fixed the title in my own mind over a month ago.

² At this time I had not written the first chapter, and about two months before I had altered Chapter I to Chapter II of the typescript and deliberately left the writing of an additional chapter, which I felt was necessary, to precede it. That first chapter is not written at the time I make this note.

covering process has been very hard, but in your writing you have not waited for people to stone you. You have picked up the stones first. There are no loopholes left. You have forestalled the critics. There can be no criticism, for they have no reason left to stand on. Nobody can pick holes in your arguments. You have taken the theories for and against and have answered them yourself.

H.D.B.—I have, as a matter of fact, tried to do this. Really, you know, you should appear as a collaborator.

W.A.—I know. This is OUR BOOK. Don't trouble to think about that first chapter. We can struggle through with it. Start writing it without thinking. Slash it out. Write anything. Then I will go back on it with you and we can polish it up afterwards.

FEDA—W.A. is suddenly looking very serious.

W.A.—I want to tell you this before I go. There is a blessing on this book. There is a blessing on you for writing it. There is a blessing on me for helping you. It is an all-told blessing. It is another torch towards the light. I send my love to you. Bless you both. Look after each other. It will all come so much easier now. Don't say good-bye to me; I am going back with you.

The sitting ended.

The personal evidence throughout the sitting was marvellous. I quench the fire of my contempt for any fools who dare to say that all this is telepathy. I have only pity for the dimness their low intelligence has doomed them to endure.

In addition to the evidences which W.A. bombarded us with, we heard on two or three occasions *his actual voice* which we could recognize among ten thousand voices. It sounded distinct and vibrating as if on a delicate wire. *Is this telepathy?*

W.A. gave remarkable evidence about his brother. The question put to him by my wife conveyed nothing whatever in its form, and the answer was complete in its extraordinary comprehensiveness.

That is why I consider it imperative to publish it. I have already made quite enough exclusions because of concessions to the ridiculous sentimentality of others in this book. I make no more. Knowledge does not progress by weakness.

I am going to advance an argument which the mutton-minded imbeciles may scoff at. Incidentally, madness is a matter of relativity on earth, otherwise the world would be one huge lunatic asylum with three or four men governing these invalids.

My argument is that the spirits can influence health. I was half dead on that particular evening referred to, and an extraordinary power was pumped into me by some spiritual means, and I was revived.

This book of mine is merely a twentieth century mental simile of Stephenson's material observation of the bubbling lid of the boiling kettle. Within the century we shall understand the mental and the physical value of all these psychic discoveries.

A few years ago people would have laughed at the idea of wireless and burst their bloated sides at the suggestion of television. Both of which are now accepted as ordinary facts.

W.A.'s knowledge of this work and every thought of my mind is uncanny. He gets into my mentality. Of course he is working with me. He knows all those things which I alone can know and expresses them in an audible voice.

So far as I am concerned, I do not care one iota what may be said or thought of my book. If people care to be blind to truth I shall feel only a sorrow that their voices have become husks and their thoughts decayed.

This is the viciousness of my aggression against foolishness.

It is useless to give knowledge in whispering accents. To be understood nowadays it is necessary to give some vulgar shout.

Within the short span of a few months I have learnt a little of the scheme of the great universe. I feel the power of my aggressiveness, but I only use it in my endeavour to convince the few. I know so

much of this small world, and yet so little of what there is to come. The arrogance of tone that I adopt is merely the usage of a weapon with which to lash the herd to understanding.

Inside myself there now exists a flickering glimmer of comprehension. This earth-life is only the first breath of our existence, and as we strive to learn so may we advance to attain the realization of the divine spark of God that is within us all.

BOOK II

VALIANTINE IN ENGLAND

CHAPTER I

Valiantine the man: slow and reticent—How he discovered his mediumistic powers: rappings on a door; instructed to make a trumpet and a cabinet; how a spirit plays a guitar and sings a song—Valiantine in England—The author's love of steeplechasing—A séance at Dorincourt—Annie speaks again—A puzzling incident.

February 1, 1924.

GEORGE VALIANTINE came to England on February 1, 1924, through a mutual understanding between De Wykcoff and I. We met him at Waterloo, and motored him straight down to Dorincourt where he was to remain during his stay, and the utmost care was taken that he should know nothing whatever of my psychical experiences in England.

Valiantine is a short, sturdy man of fifty years of age. In conversation he is slow and reticent, and his range of interests is amazingly limited; naturally he believes in spirits, but I cannot recall any other subject which he discussed with any degree of fluency. I questioned him about American art and literature; he knew nothing. I questioned him about the theatre and he knew nothing; and seemingly his knowledge of American commercial life is not extensive. His vocabulary is just as limited and he has little notion of the value of words. When asked by an acquaintance what he thought of London, he replied: "Just grand." Then he dried up.

He told me that he did not discover his mediumistic powers until he was forty-three. But now that he has discovered them, he remembers hearing, at

various times, rappings on walls and tables. These he put down at the time to expanding or contracting wood.

Some seven years ago, while staying at an hotel in the course of his business, he heard three distinct raps on the door of his room. He got out of bed, switched on the light and opened the door to his supposed visitor. There was no one there. He closed the door. Then came three more raps, this time on the wall of the corridor. He again got up and there being no one there, he rang for the attendant, who assured him that both the corridor and the next room were empty.

A little later he mentioned these happenings to a woman friend who was a spiritualist, and she persuaded him and his wife to sit with her in a darkened room. They did so, and by means of table rappings, a message came through saying that the "speaker" was Bert Everett, Mr. Valiantine's dead brother-in-law.

Thereon Valiantine developed his mediumistic powers by gradual degrees, and after a while he heard the direct voice of Everett, telling him to get a trumpet made and how to make it. The trumpet was got together during the day, and the next night Everett's voice came through clearly and audibly. Valiantine says that he did not know what a trumpet was until he was told.

Strange phenomena occurred afterwards: on one occasion the strings of a violin were touched on being brought into the room, and on another a spirit voice sang a song to the accompaniment of a guitar.

Everett also instructed him to make a cabinet, with which to obtain materializations. Valiantine obeyed. And one evening he went into a trance in the cabinet and the fully materialized body of Bert Everett appeared.

On the day after his arrival in England, De Wyckoff and I took Valiantine to Sandown Park races.

Horse-racing, especially steeplechasing, has always

had a very great appeal for me; not from the material or gambling point of view, but for the sheer love of the sport. De Wyckoff is also a racing man, though he knows very little about English form.

On the first two races De Wyckoff made two bets, resulting in a loss of £30; I made two bets and won £15. On the fourth race De Wyckoff handed his racing card to Valiantine and jokingly said: "I can't find the winners; you mark one for me." Valiantine took the card and ran his finger up and down the entries and then pointed to Taffytus. Personally I regarded this simply as a humorous incident and did not back the horse. Neither did De Wyckoff, both of us backing Libretto.

Taffytus won easily. The three of us sat on a seat afterwards and laughed over the incident. De Wyckoff again gave Valiantine the card, saying: "See if you can find the next winner." In this race there were twenty-three entries and, as I knew, there were likely to be only seven or eight runners. I made the mental speculation that the odds were two to one against Valiantine even marking a starter. However, he ran his fingers up and down the card and then marked Old Nic. This horse turned out to be a starter, but it had never jumped hurdles before and of the thirty newspaper tipsters only two mentioned it. For the fun of the thing I put a modest fiver on it. De Wyckoff put £50. It was a wonderful race and three horses were together at the last hurdle: Old Nic, All Away, and Battle Cruiser. Old Nic was just leading, but the other two both passed it on the straight. In the last fifty yards, however, Old Nic came again and won by half a length.

In relating this incident I do not imply that the psychic sense should be employed for material purposes. It may be regarded either as an extraordinary coincidence—the odds against which being 220 to 1—or as a peculiar sign given to demonstrate a certain power. In no circumstance should I pursue my investigations in these matters on any

material basis, and I have no wish whatever to attempt such experiments.

The same evening we held the first séance at Dorincourt, Mr. and Mrs. De Wyckoff, my wife, myself, and Valiantine being present. It took place about nine p.m., shortly after dinner.

We first sat in a room at the back of the house, which is my young son's nursery. The usual procedure¹—gramophone tunes and singing—was gone through. The conditions were not very good, as there was considerable noise coming from the servants' quarters below, and somewhat near the room. However, we did get one direct voice—that of Bert Everett, Valiantine's chief spirit guide, and an attempted communication from another spirit, who spoke in a foreign language which we failed to decipher. We then adjourned to my study on the ground floor, and within five or six minutes Everett spoke again in his usual shrill voice, which came from near the ceiling. The direct voice is peculiarly dramatic, and my wife was a little frightened. Everett said that one of the sitters was not accustomed to these sittings, and told my wife that there was nothing to be nervous about, and a spirit hand came and stroked her hair. Mrs. Bradley said: "Please do not touch me."

After this, Kokum spoke in his great voice, resounding through the room, and sang a song which probably could be heard two hundred yards away.

Then came the spirit of my sister Annie, who told me of how she had been with me continually and helped me during the last few months. She also spoke of certain passages in my book, passages which it would be unnecessary for me to dwell upon, since they might appear as reiteration. She talked to De Wyckoff and to my wife, asking the latter about our two boys, Dennis and Pat; she also spoke to Valiantine about his coming over to England. Her

¹ This is the procedure that prefaced most of Valiantine's sittings at Dorincourt, where all the sittings took place with one exception.

voice on this occasion was little more distinct than a loud whisper and did not possess nearly the same power as at Arlena Towers.

After this another of the spirit guides, Dr. Barnett, addressed us in his loud, broad Scottish tones. He had a very interesting discussion with De Wyckoff and Valiantine, and also with me. The racing at Sandown was mentioned, and Dr. Barnett laughed about the business and said: "We were there." De Wyckoff, referring to the racing, then said: "Can you do it again?" There was a dead silence, and the spirit of Dr. Barnett disappeared.

Then came Hawk Chief whom De Wyckoff asked if he was a "brave" when he was on earth. He answered: "No, I was a man of peace."

We talked and complimented him on his views, and in leaving us he gave a terrific shriek of exuberance which must have been heard by the entire household.

Pat O'Brien appeared after. With him we discussed politics in Ireland and the present conditions there, and, in the midst of our discussion, a spirit voice came between Mrs. De Wyckoff and me and spoke *at the same time as O'Brien*. O'Brien said that as there was another spirit there it would be better for him to leave. O'Brien's voice was loud, whereas the other's was much fainter. The intruder (if I may use such a word) said she was Sadie Morgan, whereupon Mrs. De Wyckoff was overjoyed, because Sadie Morgan was one of her closest friends, and had died about six months previously.

MRS. DE WYCKOFF—Any of our mutual friends with you on the other side?

SADIE MORGAN—Yes.

MRS. DE WYCKOFF—Have you met that particular friend of ours—you know whom I mean?

SADIE MORGAN—Yes, Flo Macfarland.

MRS. DE WYCKOFF (*to the assembly*)—Sadie Morgan and Flo Macfarland were very great friends.

After Sadie Morgan had gone Bert Everett gave a short, interesting address on psychic matters, and the séance closed.

CHAPTER II

The phenomena of silver stars—The medium goes into a trance—A spirit warning: "Don't turn on the light"—Ectoplasm—The author's theory of a strange séance.

February 3, 1924.

ON this occasion, in addition to my wife and myself, and Mr. and Mrs. De Wyckoff, there were present Mr. and Mrs. Mortimer Bryans, and Mr. and Mrs. Caradoc Evans. Mr. Evans is the distinguished Welsh novelist and playwright.

The sitting took place in the dance-room, the windows of which were covered with very heavy black velvet curtains. There was a small dissension between two of the sitters on some insignificant point, which may have affected the conditions.

Within five or ten minutes some brilliant silvery stars appeared near the ceiling; later similar lights appeared in other parts of the room. One of the two trumpets moved around the room and touched each of the sitters.

The servants had previously received instructions to turn off all lights in the corridors, but by some mishap a rather powerful electric light appears to have been switched on in the yard of the garage, the building of which is close to and partly facing one of the windows of the dance-room. Previous to this I and one or two of the sitters had noticed that Valiantine was not singing and that he was breathing very heavily. It may be assumed, therefore, that he had gone into a trance, although he does not do so unless he is sitting in a cabinet for the purpose of obtaining materializations.

The garage light came through the window over the top of the curtains, and in a sufficient quantity for one to see dimly the faces of the sitters. Valiantine was then observed to be in a limp condition, and we

saw a trumpet suspended without visible support close to Mrs. Bryans in mid-air. At the moment the light appeared, however, it fell to the ground.

Valiantine was now breathing very heavily. We sat on in the dark for about ten minutes, when we heard him murmuring: "Oh my stomach!" As he seemed to be in such distress we decided to turn on the light. De Wyckoff got up from his chair and took two steps forward to the switch when the spirit voice of Everett cried from the ceiling: "Don't turn on the light!" The voice was unmistakably urgent and frantic.

De Wyckoff went to Valiantine's assistance and said that Valiantine was enveloped in a whitish sort of film. Mr. Caradoc Evans then crossed over and later described this substance as a slimy, frothy bladder "into which you could dig a finger but through which you could not pierce." I felt the face and hands, and they were dead cold. De Wyckoff, Bryans, Evans and myself—the ladies had left the room—remained with him in the dark for about half an hour until he revived sufficiently to be half carried to a couch in my study.

It is a scientifically established fact that ectoplasm comes from a medium's body, and that the effect of light on some mediums is to cram this ectoplasm back into the body with a terrific shock. This, I seem to think, is what happened to Valiantine.

After a time he was put in bed, and in the morning, on account of his continued illness, Dr. H. Cooper, of Surbiton, was called in. That day he remained in bed. On Tuesday, with the exception of a black bruise on the stomach, measuring about two inches by three—evidently caused by the shock of the returning ectoplasm—he was quite well.

CHAPTER III

A short chapter recording a brief séance at which sat only the author, his wife, and George Vallantine—A spirit who was asked an unusual question giving an unusual reply.

February 5, 1924.

ON the evening of February 5, my wife, Valiantine, and myself, having dined with Mr. and Mrs. De Wyckoff at their flat in Davis Street, reached Dorincourt shortly after midnight. Without any prompting, Valiantine suggested that we two should join him to see if any manifestations occurred. The three of us sat in my study, and within two minutes the spirit voice of Bert Everett was heard.

After a long conversation there came the deep Scottish tones of Dr. Barnett, who is studying chemistry on the other side. Dr. Barnett said that the sitting on the Sunday had not been successful in its early stages because there was a certain amount of dissension among two of the sitters, and he also said that the shock to Valiantine was caused by a material light which had been turned on outside the room. He discussed with me certain matters appertaining to my book and many other matters of personal interest.

We had a particularly interesting talk about materialism and spiritualism, during which I introduced the subject of the project which had been suggested in America of the expedition to Guiana.¹ I asked him whether he was of the opinion that the mission—a material one—should be pursued. His answer came in very decided tones: "Most emphatically."

The sitting, which we had intended to be brief, lasted about fifteen minutes.

¹ See page III.

CHAPTER IV

*Dr. Barnett and Bert Everett explain Valiantine's condition—
The student establishes an important link that confounds
the telepathy theory—Annie appears again—Our author
discusses Irish politics with the spirit of Pat O'Brien.*

February 6, 1924.

IN addition to my wife and myself and Valiantine, there were present Mr. and Mrs. De Wyckoff, and Mr. and Mrs. Mortimer Bryans.

De Wyckoff and others discussed with Bert Everett and Dr. Barnett the incident of the light being turned on on the previous Sunday.

Everett and Dr. Barnett agreed that Valiantine's condition was brought about by a material light. On that occasion it will be remembered, Everett warned De Wyckoff not to turn on the light.

De Wyckoff asked Everett what would have happened to the medium had the electric light been switched on when Valiantine was in a trance. Everett replied that the light would probably have caused him to "leave the body." (Meaning that it would have killed him.)

During the evening the spirit of Mrs. De Wyckoff's mother spoke to her daughter and De Wyckoff, and also to her son, Mortimer Bryans—whom she called "Mort," the abbreviation she used on earth—and his wife. Of the Bryans she asked questions about their little son Peter.

My sister Annie addressed me on personal matters and on my literary work. After a few words to my wife and Valiantine:

ANNIE—W.A. is here and we are trying to help him to talk to you,

Here the spirit of Sadie Morgan asked Mr. and Mrs. De Wyckoff questions about certain social matters connected with all three on earth.

Later the direct voice of W.A. came through. It was a little indistinct at first and, as I regarded it as of extreme evidential importance, I avoided claiming recognition until he had given his full Christian and surname, so that it could be heard and verified by all those present. He conversed with my wife and me.

H.D.B.—Will you please tell me when and where was the last occasion on which we spoke to each other?

W.A.—The last time I spoke to you was at Mrs. Osborne Leonard's circle. I would like you to invite Mrs. Leonard to a sitting with Valiantine. I should like to talk to her.

It is of the utmost importance here to emphasize that Valiantine knew nothing whatever of W.A. and had never even heard his name mentioned. Neither had Valiantine any knowledge of Mrs. Leonard or that I had ever sat with her. Realizing the issues at stake I had been particularly careful not to mention to him one word of the extraordinary experiences and evidences I had acquired in England. Of these he knew nothing, absolutely nothing, until W.A. spoke and discussed all that had taken place.

This unquestionably establishes the link between the Leonard and the Valiantine sittings, and since the information was given by the audible spirit of W.A. there can be no suggestion of telepathy.

Later Annie again appeared, telling me that she was glad that W.A. had managed to speak to us. She also referred to an incident in her life which is evidential but is of too purely personal a nature to publish.

The séance throughout was remarkable. Other spirits who talked were Pat O'Brien, Kokum, Hawk Chief, and an Italian who sang an operatic song in a very loud voice coming from the ceiling.

The spirit of Pat O'Brien was especially interesting, as the voice was splendidly rich and he appeared to be walking about the room. I had a short discussion with him on current Irish politics.

CHAPTER V

A stranger from the spirit world—A man who died on board ship—Gramophone records that slid to the middle of the room.

February 8, 1924.

THIS sitting took place in the dining-room at Dorincourt. There were present Mr. and Mrs. Hewart McKenzie, Mr. and Mrs. Charles Sykes, Mr. and Mrs. De Wyckoff, my wife, and myself; also, of course, George Valiantine. In twenty minutes the voice of Bert Everett was heard high up in the room, greeting us with a short phrase.

After a while there sounded an indistinct whisper, claiming to be the mother of Mrs. Sykes. The conversation was a little difficult to interpret and no questions were put of any evidential value.

The next was the spirit of Professor James Hervey Hyslop, which conversed for a short time with Mr. McKenzie. Mr. McKenzie states that this spirit has come to him on many previous occasions.

The third was W.A., who spoke to me, Mrs. Bradley, and to Valiantine.

H.D.B.—You told me, W.A., at the last sitting at Dorincourt that the last time you spoke to me was at Mrs. Leonard's. Would you please give me one of the subjects we discussed there?

W.A.—I talked about my brother and my father.¹

W.A. also mentioned the name of his wife, Dorothy.

A spirit addressed itself to De Wyckoff. We could not at first decipher his name, but the voice went on to describe that he had passed away about eight years ago. Asked where, he replied that it was on board ship coming from New York to England.

¹ See pages 147-149.

THE VOICE—I was travelling on the same boat with Joe and Minerva.

MR. DE WYCKOFF—Will you please tell us whether you were a small or big man?

THE VOICE—I was a very big man.

MR. DE WYCKOFF—How big?

THE VOICE—So big that I could hardly get through the door.

MRS. DE WYCKOFF (*excitedly*)—George Crawford!

Although the spirit had identified itself by the description De Wyckoff was annoyed that the name had been given before it had been made distinct, and he called out to Mrs. De Wyckoff: "Why did you do that?" At this moment the trumpet dropped and the voice disappeared.

Except from Kokum, there were no more manifestations, although we sat on for half an hour or so.

During the evening I was working the gramophone, and keeping control of the records. They seemed occasionally to slip away from me, and when the lights were turned on two were found in the centre of the room.

CHAPTER VI

Bert Everett describes life in the spirit world and Pat O'Brien discusses religion with the author—Love the only religion of value—O'Brien's twin woman soul—A baby spirit—"Spirit communication will sweep like a great wave over all the earth."

February 9, 1924.

THIS was a quiet evening at Dorincourt. There were only three of us at dinner: Valiantine, my wife, and myself. Of his own accord Mr. Valiantine asked whether we two would hold a séance with him.

The three of us sat in my study and within about three minutes we achieved results.

This séance, from the point of philosophical beauty, was exceptional. There was an air of absolute tranquillity in the room.

I asked Bert Everett to give me an account of his life in the spirit world from the time of his death. Speaking for twenty minutes, he described his death in hospital, the transition period, his first moments of spirit consciousness; his existence from then until now. He also described the beauties of spirit existence, a subject I may deal with in another book.

Pat O'Brien, whom I asked to describe his life on earth and his life in the spirit world, told, in his liquid Irish voice, how he left Ireland and entered the United States and how after many years took the journey home by sea to see his mother in Dublin. He fell ill on board and was buried at sea.

He says that now he is living with his mother in the spirit world. During life here he was a devout Roman Catholic and he and I discussed religion. He said that the Roman Catholic theory of purgatory, as preached by the Church, is incorrect, and that there is no purgatory in the sense that it is preached. There is a rest, or a supreme existence, beyond material disturbances. He added that religions did not count in the after-life, and that there was only one religious thought of value, and that was love.

H.D.B.—Since you were never married, have you found in the spirit world a twin woman soul?

PAT O'BRIEN—My twin woman soul lives with mother and me.

W.A. came again and talked with us all. The conversation was purely personal and there is no need for me to record it. However, he expressed a very sincere wish that his wife Dorothy should come and speak to him.

W.A.—I am watching over her and the children. I love them all and am doing all in my power to help them.

Annie had a long talk with the three of us.

Now appeared the spirit of a child of about five

years of age. It was that of the son of a friend of the medium, and his name was Bobby Worrall. He was absolutely charming. He said that he liked being at Dorincourt and being able to talk to us. He added that he was there during the day when he had seen the other little boy Pat playing in the garden with a dog, and said he would like to be able to play with him.

Dr. Barnett discussed philosophical questions and the effect of spiritualism on the world. He said that during the next few years spirit communication would sweep like a great wave all over the earth, and its acceptance would be world wide.

H.D.B.—How long will it be before this is likely to happen? Will it be in this century or during the next decade?

DR. BARNETT—It will happen within the next year or two . . . your book will make your name famous throughout the earth plane.

During the evening we asked both Everett and Dr. Barnett what was the cause of the sudden termination of manifestations on the previous evening, and they both said that the reason was that there had been dissension between two of the sitters which had affected the vibrations and rendered spirit communication impossible.

The sitting lasted, with scarcely a pause, for about an hour and a half, and what I have recorded is merely a skeleton of what was said and does not pretend to convey the extraordinary manifestations. In odd moments throughout the sitting starry lights appeared in various parts of the room.

CHAPTER VII

The spirit of George W. Crawford—Mr. De Wyckoff secures startling evidence—Bob Worrall tells about his walk with Pat—H.D.B. emphasizes a fact—The spirit of "Kenton" Roosevelt.

February 10, 1924.

THIS séance was held in my study at Dorincourt and there were present, in addition to myself, my wife and Mrs. Hunt (my wife's mother), Mr. De Wyckoff and Mrs. Travers Smith. Manifestations occurred in about a quarter of an hour.

Bert Everett's shrill voice came from high up in the room, and when he was asked if the conditions were favourable he replied that they were exquisite. He patted Mrs. Travers Smith on the head and she confessed that at the start she was rather frightened.

Kokum sang a song in his terrific voice which could be heard all over the house. (A maid, on one of the upper floors, was so startled that she dropped a jug of hot water and fled as for her life. God knows why!) Dr. Barnett spoke in his Scotch accent, and Pat O'Brien flitted all round the room. Hawk Chief spoke in a tremendous Indian voice.

W.A. introduced himself to Mrs. Hunt, whom, of course, he had known quite well on earth.

He again expressed the request that Dorothy should be brought here.

Annie talked to us, including Mrs. Hunt, whom she had known on earth.

I asked her one slightly evidential question.

H.D.B.—Will you please tell me the last time you spoke to me in your *own voice* before you spoke to me at Dorincourt?

ANNIE (*going straight over to him*)—Mr. De Wyckoff, I spoke to my brother in America in your

house. (*To H.D.B.*) Please do not ask me any questions about . . .¹

Mrs. Hunt's husband, who passed over a few years ago, announced himself by his names.² He talked to Mrs. Hunt affectionately and went over to my wife, saying: "I want to talk to my daughter Mabel." He also spoke to me.

The "big man," who had appeared previously, addressed De Wyckoff as Joe. This time he gave his name so that all in the room could hear it. He said: "I am George W. Crawford."

DE WYCKOFF—Please give me further evidence of your personality.

GEORGE W. CRAWFORD—Don't you remember when you changed the room?

DE WYCKOFF (*thinking that the spirit was referring to our having changed the sitting from the dining-room—where George Crawford first appeared—to the study, where we were sitting on this evening*)—Yes, we changed the room because the conditions here are better.

GEORGE CRAWFORD—I do not mean that, I mean that you changed my room for me on board ship.

De Wyckoff gave a startled exclamation and told us that this was most remarkable. When Crawford was taken ill on board ship he had got only a small cabin and De Wyckoff, using his influence with the purser, had obtained for him a larger cabin, to which he was moved, and in which he died.

I told W.A. that Mrs. Travers Smith was present and that I had done considerable work with her on automatic writing which forms Book III of this volume.

W.A. (*to Mrs. Travers Smith*)—I am very pleased to see you here, and I want to tell you that your guide is here and will try and speak to you.

¹ I cannot give this name but it refers to the incident at Arlena Towers when she broke down. (See page 27.)

² He gave his full Christian and surname. Neither the medium nor any of the sitters, with the exception of the family, knew these names, or even that Mr. Hunt had passed away.

There then appeared the spirit of Johannes. He announced himself by his name, which was heard by everyone in the room. He talked to Mrs. Travers Smith and explained how he had been helping her and guiding her.

MRS. TRAVERS SMITH—Do you know who is sitting on my left?

JOHANNES—Mr. Bradley, and I have been working with you and with him on his book.

Bobby Worrall appeared and was just as delighted as on a previous evening, wandering around and speaking to everybody.

H.D.B.—Have you been here to-day and have you seen Pat?

BOBBY—Yes, I saw Pat to-day and I went for a walk with him and Mr. Valiantine, and Mr. Valiantine said "There is an awful lot of mud about here."

I should like to again emphasize this point. *Valiantine, the medium, often speaks and can be spoken to at the same moment that the spirits are speaking.* At séances I always draw the attention of new sitters to this fact.

Shortly after this the trumpet was lifted and whizzed round the room at a terrific pace, making a tremendous buzzing noise, like the propeller of an aeroplane. It went round the room two or three times and then crashed to the ground.

The spirit guide, Dr. Barnett, appeared afterwards and we asked him what this demonstration meant. He said that it was the spirit of "Kenton"¹ Roosevelt, who was killed in an aeroplane accident.

¹ It sounded like this—I do not know the correct name.

CHAPTER VIII

An old friend greets Mr. and Mrs. Caradoc Evans—The spirit of an unburied woman—A chorus girl comes to Mr. Miles Malleson.

February 13, 1924.

AN amazing evening. The séance was held in my study at Dorincourt. There were present Mr. Miles Malleson, Mrs. Osborne Leonard, Mr. and Mrs. Caradoc Evans, Mrs. De Wyckoff, Mrs. Bradley, and myself and George Valiantine.

Throughout the evening four of the medium's guides appeared: Bert Everett, Kokum, Hawk Chief, and Pat O'Brien, each speaking in his characteristic manner.

W.A. announced himself by his full Christian and surname. After greeting my wife and me, he crossed over to Mrs. Leonard. He said how glad he was that she had come to Dorincourt so that he could thank her for all she had done in enabling him to get through to us. He discussed two or three personal matters with me and then:

W.A.—Isn't it extraordinary that I am here and able to talk to you and to Mrs. Leonard? I asked you to bring her here so that I could talk to her in my own voice.

He stayed with us for a considerable time and again expressed the urgent wish that his wife Dorothy should be brought there so that he could talk to her. Here I should mention that W.A.'s wife appears to be somewhat nervous, and states that she is afraid the experience would upset her.

A spirit voice came to Mr. Caradoc Evans. At first Mr. Evans had difficulty in understanding it.

CARADOC EVANS—I am sorry I can't catch your name. Perhaps you know my wife? Talk to her.

A second later the voice was speaking to Mrs. Evans.

CARADOC EVANS—Say your name again—slowly.
The voice returned to Mr. Evans.

“Edward,” it said; and all the sitters heard it.

CARADOC EVANS—Good God! You're not——?

“I am Edward Wright,” said the voice.

CARADOC EVANS—How are you, old bloke?

EDWARD WRIGHT—I am very happy.

CARADOC EVANS—Tell me where your wife is living?

EDWARD WRIGHT—Henfield.

CARADOC EVANS—Listen to me, my lad. Bet you can't say her name.

EDWARD WRIGHT—Eddie.

CARADOC EVANS—Talk to my wife.

EDWARD WRIGHT *(to Mrs. Evans)*—Hallo, Rose. I want to thank you for being so good to my little girl.

MRS. EVANS—Whom do you think we are going to see this week-end?

EDWARD WRIGHT—Eddie and Rowland.

CARADOC EVANS—I say, Wright old bloke, did you come and see my play?

EDWARD WRIGHT—“Taffy”—yes.

CARADOC EVANS—Liar!

EDWARD WRIGHT *(laughing)*—I did.

CARADOC EVANS—Is there here anyone who had a lot to do with it?

EDWARD WRIGHT *(whose voice now stands before Miles Malleson)*—You did it very well.

MILES MALLESON—I did not know I was producing for an unseen audience.

CARADOC EVANS *(having asked a personal question about a sick friend)*—Say good night to Rose.

EDWARD WRIGHT *(patting Mrs. Evans three times on her cheek)*—Good night, Rose. *(Moving to Mr. Evans and patting him also on the cheek and touching his hand)* Good night, old man.

There then appeared a spirit voice which went and addressed itself to Mrs. Bradley by name, saying

"Mabel, I am Aunt Carrie." This is another remarkable incident as no one in the room, with the exception of my wife and myself, knew that my wife's aunt had died two days before. She talked in a clear voice for quite a considerable time.

H.D.B.—How long is it since you passed away?

AUNT CARRIE—On Monday.

H.D.B.—Will you please tell me if the ceremony has been performed?

AUNT CARRIE—No, not yet. Frank (*the name of her dead husband*) met me on the other side.

H.D.B.—Tell me, was there any period of unconsciousness when your spirit left the body?

AUNT CARRIE—None whatever.

H.D.B.—Do you remember just recently an incident in which you referred to Frank?

AUNT CARRIE—Yes, he came to me one night and comforted me and tucked me up in bed.¹

The spirit of Mrs. De Wyckoff's mother talked to Mrs. De Wyckoff for some time on personal matters, some of the more intimate passages being particularly humorous.

The spirit of Sadie Morgan also talked to Mrs. De Wyckoff. One remark which Mrs. De Wyckoff could not understand was understood by Mr. Caradoc Evans, whereon the trumpet came in front of Mr. Evans's mouth, saying: "Thank you, sir."

Then a voice—very indistinct—spoke to Mr. Miles Malleeson. Various names suggested were answered by "No."

CARADOC EVANS—Ethel Morgan?

THE VOICE (*somewhat cheekily*)—And how do you know my name?

She said that she had acted with Mr. Malleeson at the Vaudeville Theatre in the revue "Now and Then," that she had danced with him on the stage,

¹ Her Aunt Carrie had mentioned to my wife a little while previous to her death that just recently, when she was feeling very depressed, whilst in bed, she cried out: "Oh, Frank, I wish you were with me now." The bedclothes were taken by unseen hands and she was tucked up in comfort.

and that she had had lunch with him. She added that she was in the chorus, and afterwards had gone to Paris where she died about a year ago.

At the time of writing her identity has not been established.

CHAPTER IX

The spirit of Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's brother—Indistinct voices—A dramatic conversation with George Crawford, who says that he died through over-eating.

February 15, 1924.

THIS séance I should regard as one of the least successful. The sitting was held in my study at Dorincourt and there were present, in addition to my wife, myself, and George Valiantine, Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, Mr. Stuart Hodgson (editor of the *Daily News*) Mr. Robert Lynd (the brilliant essayist), Miss Aikman and Mr. De Wyckoff.

The conditions did not seem to be favourable, and it was twenty minutes or more before there were any manifestations. Then a spirit voice addressed itself to Sir Arthur Conan Doyle and announced itself to be his brother, Innes Doyle. This spirit voice stayed for some time and appeared anxious to get his communications through. The voice, however, was very indistinct. Innes stated that he had materialized for Sir Arthur in New York. When asked where, the voice said "At Mr. Miller's. In a three-storey house near Fifth Avenue, on the ground floor of which antiques and jewellery were displayed."

Sir Arthur announced that he had attended a séance at such a house in New York, which was occupied by a Mr. Miller. He added that he

regarded this statement as of evidential value and that he had not mentioned this incident in any of his books.

Sir Arthur inquired of the voice whether he knew any of the other sitters in the room, and at once it addressed itself to Mr. Stuart Hodgson: "I met you at Oxford." This, Mr. Hodgson said, was correct. Mr. Hodgson endeavoured to get other evidential information, particularly regarding an incident at Richmond, but the voice was so indistinct that it was practically impossible to interpret the replies.

W.A. spoke to us and again expressed the wish that his father and Dorothy should be brought along in order that he could talk to them.

The next voice addressed itself to Mr. Robert Lynd; this voice spoke to Mr. Lynd on three different occasions during the evening, but it was impossible to say to whom it belonged.

George Crawford conversed with De Wyckoff.

DE WYCKOFF—How long is it since you passed away?

GEORGE CRAWFORD—About eight years.¹

DE WYCKOFF—What was the name of the boat you were travelling on?

GEORGE CRAWFORD—The *St. Paul*.²

DE WYCKOFF—Do you know now what was the nature of the illness which caused you to pass away?

GEORGE CRAWFORD—Over-eating.³

DE WYCKOFF—Do you remember your burial?

GEORGE CRAWFORD—Yes—I was put in a box with heavy weights.⁴

DE WYCKOFF—How is it that during all these years you have never before tried to communicate with me?

GEORGE CRAWFORD—I remained in a state of unconsciousness for a long time.

These are indications of a few evidential questions

¹ Correct.

² Correct.

³ Crawford weighed nearly twenty-five stone and had an appetite equivalent to his weight.

⁴ He was buried at sea.

put by De Wyckoff. In every case an answer was given correctly, and at the end Crawford said: "I think I have given you enough."

During the evening only two of the spirit guides appeared—Bert Everett at the start and, towards the close, high up in the room, Kokum, loud in volume but emitting only short sentences.

CHAPTER X

My son Pat at a séance—Amused by Kokum—"Right that children are taught the wonderful truth."

February 16, 1924.

My son Pat, who is an extremely virile seven-year-old, had been persistent in his demands that he should be allowed to sit at a séance and talk to the spirits. Since he is far more intelligent in fundamental matters than the average member of Parliament, I saw no reason to deny the gratification of his wishes. Furthermore, I regard the repression of any sincere desire in a child as stupid.

There were just the four of us—Pat, his mother, myself, and George Valiantine.

Within less than a minute the spirit voices appeared in quick succession. Bert Everett came first and spoke in an awfully nice way to Pat, saying how glad they all were to be able to talk to him. Pat made a splendid sitter. He talked quickly and brightly, keeping the conversation going at a rapid pace.

Kokum came and Pat was amused with his Indian accent. My sister Annie was delighted. She and Pat chatted together in a really charming way. Pat said it was splendid to be able to speak to his aunt. During the general talk which Annie had with us, in answer to a question she said that it was entirely

right that Pat should be given the opportunity to learn this wonderful truth at so early an age.

Another of the guides, Hawk Chief, talked to Pat, so also did Dr. Barnett.

My wife asked Dr. Barnett if he thought Pat was too young to attend a séance, and he replied that it was absolutely right that all children should be taught that actual communication with spirits is possible.

The sitting lasted about twenty minutes—twenty minutes replete with a simplicity and beauty which one seldom meets in life.

Throughout my son exhibited not the faintest trace of nervousness. He was really disappointed that the séance was not continued longer.

CHAPTER XI

Mr. Charles Sykes' surprise—A spirit child plays with a rattle.

February 16, 1924.

A SECOND wonderful séance in one day. This was a spontaneous sitting. I rang up Mr. Charles Sykes, and he and his wife motored down to Dorincourt. These two, with myself and my wife, sat with Valiantine. This was only the second experience of Mr. and Mrs. Sykes. The first had taken place on February 8, when the results were comparatively negative. On this occasion, however, there was complete harmony amongst the sitters, and the results were extraordinary. Six of the guides appeared: Bert Everett, Kokum, Pat O'Brien, Hawk Chief, Honey, and Dr. Barnett; and four other spirits.

The spirit voice of Mrs. Sykes' mother spoke to her, calling her by her Christian name of "Jessica." She had died when Mrs. Sykes was quite young. Regarding this incident, I will give Mrs. Sykes's own description:

"After we had been sitting about five minutes a curious cold draught began to creep about the circle. The room was small and was adequately heated by a radiator. We were five people including the medium, and this number, in itself, seemed to me significant.

"I was the second sitter to be summoned; a cold soft, small hand rested for a second on my right hand which was placed upon my knee. It was surrounded by astral light and two fingers and a thumb were fully materialized. Soon after this touch I heard my name being called in a faint and yearning murmur. I begged the speaker to raise the voice a little more and say who it was. It said it was my mother and answered my questions in monosyllables. I said: 'Are you happy?' and 'Is my sister with you?' The voice, however, did not gain much in strength, and after kissing me through the trumpet, departed, to give place to more robust communicants. My mother had passed over when I was three years of age, so of course I can remember nothing of her."

Several voices then claimed our attention, sometimes even two at a time wanted to be heard.

W.A. came and spoke to us all in clear and distinct tones for some time. It is useless to record this conversation, since W.A. has already given a mass of evidential information which is recorded in this book.

My wife's relative, Carrie, who has previously given evidential information, also came and spoke to my wife and myself.

Mr. Charles Sykes is, in addition to being a great artist, a brilliant psychologist; he is a keen observer and had, until recently, been extremely sceptical and disinclined to accept any phenomena alleged to be supernatural.

A spirit voice addressed itself to Mr. Charles Sykes, and I give his description of the incident in his own words:

"I was addressed by a voice about a foot away from my face as 'Charley.' This surprised me because I am now accustomed to Chas (Chasse), Charles or Sykie.

"It was spoken with a Yorkshire accent familiar to me when a boy.

"My mind at this moment was occupied with thoughts of my father and a very dear friend who was drowned. I asked two or three times who was speaking before I could clearly distinguish the name 'Aunt Charlotte,' who was far away from my thoughts.

"To make sure I asked how long it was since she passed over. 'Three years,' came the answer rapidly. This I knew to be correct. Then I plied questions and got answers.

"'Do you know Hannah is ill?' (I said 'Hannah' instead of 'my mother.')

"'Yes, I have seen her, Charley.'

"I had recently visited my mother, whose doctor had given up any hope of her recovery from an illness. She had impressed me as one resigned.

"'Do you know I have tried to understand her?'

"'Yes.'

"'Did she understand me?'

"'Not so well as you understood her.'

"'Is she resigned?'

"'Not yet.'

"'Can you tell me the name of the husband of Hannah?'

"I could not catch the answer clearly enough.

"'What did Hannah call him?'

"'Sam. Sam,' was repeated. This was her pet name for my father.

"'Do you ever see my father?'

"'Yes, and Charles Xavier too' (who was his brother).

"'Is my father interested in the Tutankhamen Tomb?'

¹ All these answers were correct and the names were volunteered by the spirit.

" ' Yes, he is making great progress with his studies.' "

" ' Then he still likes Egyptology? ' "

" ' Yes, but he likes his study of French much more.' "

" My father had taken up the study of the French language and literature at the age of fifty-five, and two or three years later had taken himself and a bicycle to France and roamed over the country to try his tongue.

" ' Does he still continue with Freemasonry? ' "

" ' It is not necessary.' "

" ' I am asking more questions when I am kissed Good night, Charley.' "

Each spirit which appeared during this evening spoke easily and distinctly and at length. Of the guides, Pat O'Brien was particularly humorous when talking to Mr. and Mrs. Sykes.

The little childish voice of Honey was quite fascinating. The child appeared to be running around the room and talked to us all in turn. By chance I remembered that at the top of one of the book-cases in my study there was one of the little rattles which they gave away at the Midnight Frolics. Whilst Honey was there I asked my wife to take this up and put it in front of her. Honey took the rattle and rushed round the room at a terrific pace, shaking it.

At the end of the sitting Dr. Barnett asked whether we wished to ask him any questions. In reply to the first he dealt with paintings and sculpture on the higher spheres, and then in reply to a question of mine he gave a long and explicit discourse on chemistry and the methods by which the spirits were able to materialize their voices on the ether waves and so communicate with us on earth. It was a brilliant and amazing study.

CHAPTER XII

At which nothing happens.

February 17, 1924.

At this sitting there were present Mr. and Mrs. De Wyckoff, my wife, myself, and Valiantine.

We sat from half to three-quarters of an hour, but nothing whatever transpired with the exception of a few rappings, and the sitting was abandoned.

CHAPTER XIII

Annie speaks to my father: she is overjoyed—Pat O'Brien's Irish brogue.

February 18, 1924.

At this sitting there were present my wife, my father (aged eighty-four), myself, and George Valiantine.

Manifestations occurred within about ten minutes, and Bert Everett, Kokum, Pat O'Brien, Hawk Chief, and Dr. Barnett talked for some considerable time.

Annie was overjoyed and excited that our father was present. She talked at a much more rapid pace than usual and was particularly distinct.

She thanked me for bringing my father, and whilst she was being asked some questions by him, she

rushed over to me and said: "Tell him not to ask me about ——" (She gave the full Christian and surname.¹)

She also spoke of various relatives and friends to my father.

She stayed for some considerable time with us and our discussions were naturally of quite a personal nature.

W.A. came and was pleased to find old Mr. Bradley there and talked with him for a while.

As I had previously found, when a small circle is sitting the spirit guides talk to us at greater length. Bert Everett and my father had a long chat on life on other spheres and Pat O'Brien also talked with him.

My father has not lost, although he has lived many years in England, his rich, Irish brogue, and it was quite extraordinary to hear these two Irish voices—his and Pat O'Brien's—talking humorously together of Ireland and the spirit life.

¹ This refers to an incident in her earth life. It was first introduced by me at Arlena Towers. See page 27.

CHAPTER XIV

A séance at the British College of Psychic Science—Two spirits speak in German—A criticism of spiritualists.

February 19, 1924.

ON this evening George Valiantine sat at the British College of Psychic Science.

De Wyckoff and myself were present, and in addition there were eight members of the College: Mr. and Mrs. Hewart McKenzie, Mrs. de Crespigny, Mrs. St. Clair Stobart, Captain Ben Hicks, an Austrian lady (Miss Eisner), Mr. Schofield, and Miss Debenish.

During the evening three of the spirit guides spoke clearly and distinctly, but only in short sentences; they were Bert Everett, Hawk Chief, and Dr. Barnett. It must be understood that the medium knew nobody in the room either by face or by name, with the exception of Mr. and Mrs. McKenzie (whom he had met on one other occasion), Mr. De Wyckoff and myself.

A spirit voice addressed itself to Mrs. St. Clair Stobart, saying that it was Lionel, her son. He spoke to her of his children, who were under the care of Mrs. Stobart, and also of other personal matters.

The spirit of a Dr. Peebles spoke to both Mr. and Mrs. McKenzie.

A spirit addressed itself to Mrs. de Crespigny and another to Captain Ben Hicks, giving the name of Harry Ackerland. Ackerland and Captain Hicks talked about matters connected with the United States. The spirit voice referred to Captain Hicks coming over on the same boat as his sister-in-law. This was the *Aquitania* which sailed from New York for Southampton on January 26.¹ Harry Ackerland was a very close friend of Captain Hicks on earth.

¹ Correct.

Feda appeared, strolled about the room, talking to everybody and addressing everybody by his or her correct name.

A voice addressed itself to the Austrian lady, saying that it was her grandmother. The conversation opened in English and drifted into German.¹

Later the Austrian lady's mother came and conversed with her also in German.

The séance was fairly successful, but the sitters did not appear to me to be very intelligent in keeping the conversation going. There was repetition of platitudinous remarks and even these were stilted. I got sick of the same old question which took the form of: "Have you any message?"

It is absolutely essential when a spirit voice appears to keep the conversation going, as this affects the vibrations. So far I have found a considerable lack of brilliancy in the majority of spiritualists as conversationalists.

CHAPTER XV

A disappointing séance—A coldness in the room—H.D.B. on questions and evidential replies—A spirit requested to retire—The art of "drawing out" a spirit.

February 20, 1924.

THE séance was held in the dining-room at Dorincourt. On this occasion I had invited the Society for Psychical Research to appoint three anonymous sitters to make independent investigations. It was only after the sitting had been held that their identities were disclosed. They were: Dr. V. J. Woolley, Mr. E. J. Dingwall, Mr. E. Fielding.

¹ Valiantine knows no German.

There were eleven sitters in all, including Mrs. Travers Smith, Miss Cummings, Miss Estelle Stead, Mr. Bligh Bond, De Wyckoff, my wife, myself and George Valiantine.

This sitting was one of poverty so far as results were concerned. It was half an hour before any voice was heard, but during this time several of the sitters had been touched at odd times by the trumpet—including the representatives of the S.P.R.

Bert Everett just said: "Good evening, souls." The voice came, as usual, from near the ceiling. On another occasion, whilst a gramophone tune was being played, Everett gave a loud and distinct laugh. On still another Everett shouted to one of the sitters: "Sit up straight, sir."

Kokum gave us one short sentence, and Dr. Barnett spoke to us three times, the voice, as usual, seeming to spring from the middle of the floor. First he greeted the assembly; second: "Have patience, we are doing our best"; third, a few words at the close of the sitting.

The conditions appeared to be very poor. The mental attitude of some of the sitters was not only unsympathetic but repellent, and spirits are not slaves obeying the orders of humans. Since I have now acquired a considerable experience of how conditions and sitters affect the vibrations and the spirit voice manifestations, I state it is my opinion that there was not harmony in the room. If a spirit speaks to a sitter and is not encouraged to continue or is received with a repelling coldness this destroys the vibrations necessary to communication.

In acquiring evidence of the survival of the personality of a spirit the utmost care of course should be used in putting questions in such a form that the evidential information is given by the spirit. At the same time, it is necessary to keep going conversation, which may not be evidential until the communicant's power strengthens. Then the information often comes through freely and fluently and of its own accord. This is the method I have used with successful results.

The first spirit voice we heard was one addressing itself to Mr. Fielding. It was extremely faint and indistinct. The spirit claimed to be Mr. Fielding's father.

Mr. Fielding said: "What is your name?"

The reply was inaudible, although the question was repeated several times.

I asked Mr. Fielding to assume that it was his father and keep the conversation going on that assumption for a while. Mr. Fielding made a slight attempt by asking one or two questions regarding incidents that had occurred between thirty and forty years ago, but the spirit voice remained very indistinct, and the conversation had awkward pauses and languished. During an icy pause Mr. E. J. Dingwall remarked to me: "What a pity it is when no encouragement whatever is given!"

Mr. Fielding requested the spirit to retire as it was taking up the time of the company.

A spirit voice spoke to Mr. Dingwall, who sat on my right. This too was merely a thin whisper and no satisfactory results were achieved.

Announcing itself as Zena Vowell, a voice addressed itself to Mrs. Travers Smith, who at once kept the conversation going. The voice was heard to be speaking about two feet in front of Mrs. Travers Smith. I was seated next to her and heard it.

MRS. TRAVERS SMITH—When did you pass away?

ZENA VOWELL—Eight years ago.

MRS. TRAVERS SMITH—Where did we last meet?

ZENA VOWELL—The Hill of Howth.

Mrs. Travers Smith said afterwards that she had spent two summer holidays at the Hill of Howth some years ago with a friend of hers, named Zena Vowell, who had passed away eight years back.

W.A. appeared and talked to me and my wife. His voice was certainly more distinct than any of the others. I kept the conversation going with him at a rapid pace and his replies could be distinctly heard by everybody in the room.

W.A.—Herbert, is it very difficult for us to-night. The conditions are not good.

H.D.B.—What is wrong?

W.A.—It is the conditions of the sitters.

MRS. BRADLEY—Can you tell us which of the sitters is affecting the conditions?

W.A.—I do not wish to do so.

Mr. Fielding very courteously asked if he should leave the room.

I kept the conversation going with W.A. quickly and without a pause, and this is the only way to obtain successful results. It seems to me that when experiments and investigations are made at a direct voice séance, the first essential is for sitters to learn how to converse with fluency.

After the séance the S.P.R. officers asked me if it would be possible for Mr. Valiantine to give his services for either one or two months for further experiments, and a little later I received a letter from Dr. V. J. Woolley of the Psychical Research Society asking if I could arrange with Mr. Valiantine for a series of sittings for the Society. At the end of his letter he added: "We are naturally anxious for a chance of investigating such a remarkable medium and I should be extremely grateful for your help."

I replied that it was impossible on the occasion of this visit as Mr. Valiantine was compelled to return to America to attend to his commercial affairs.

CHAPTER XVI

Harmony and success—A dead friend of Lady Grey of Falloden and the son of William Archer appear—Kokum amuses us and Bert Everett sings two songs.

February 21, 1924

THE conditions were good and throughout there was complete harmony in the circle.

The sitting was held in my study. There were present Lady Grey of Falloden and her son, Mr. Stephen Tennant; Mr. William Archer, the dramatic critic and dramatist; Dr. R. M. Riggall (Psycho-Analyst) of Wimpole Street; Mr. and Mrs. Osborne Leonard; my wife and myself, and Valiantine.

Operatic music was played on the gramophone and phenomena occurred within about ten minutes.

Bert Everett, Kokum, Pat O'Brien, and Dr. Barnett spoke to us, their voices being at times much louder than the ordinary human voice in conversation. Of the personal spirit friends several spoke.

Two of her relatives addressed Lady Grey on personal matters and were immediately recognized by her. One made a reference to "Ute," the abbreviated name of a friend of Lady Grey's (U.T.E.).

At a later stage a spirit endeavoured to hold a conversation with Lady Grey and Mr. Archer in Spanish.

The spirit voice of Mr. Archer's son came through, saying that he had passed away some years ago. For some time father and son discussed with each other matters appertaining to the former's work.

Dr. Riggall failed to establish the identity of a voice that came to him.

Feda flitted around, laughing and chatting with each of us.

The spirit of W.A. talked to my wife and me and also to Mrs. Leonard and Valiantine.

Like a Greek chorus each night the same refrain was heard from W.A. : " When is Dorothy coming to speak to me ? " and night after night I replied : " I am doing my best."

My sister, Annie spoke to my wife and me. She told us that she was so glad that she had been able to speak to her father.

Here it is interesting to mention that the intonation of my sister and W.A. have never varied in all the conversations I have had with them. Each voice I could recognize amongst a million.

Dr. Barnett asked if anyone would like to question him. He gave the date of his passing away —1861—and said that when on earth he was a doctor of medicine and added a long discourse on the ether waves. This was so technical that I had difficulty in following it.

Towards the close Kokum sang " La Poloma " in a terrific voice which again filled the room. The voice came from within about two feet of the ceiling. Whilst Caruso and Scotti were being played on the gramophone, Bert Everett called out : " That is exquisite ! I will talk to you when it is finished." He then said that he would sing, and rendered two verses of a song in a shrill, high-pitched voice. We thanked him, and thereupon he said he would sing again. He then sang three verses of another song which none of us had previously heard. Many of the notes were so high and penetrating that some of us could not help laughing. Valiantine said he had never heard Everett sing before and I heard him laughing at the same time that the singing was going on.

CHAPTER XVII

The author of "Lascar"—W.A. meets a friend—Mr. Charles Sykes's dead father speaks to his son.

February 23, 1924.

ON this occasion there were present Mr. and Mrs. Charles Sykes, Mr. Edgar Graham King, myself, and George Valiantine.

This was Mr. King's first experience of a séance.

Manifestations occurred within about a quarter of an hour of sitting. During the evening there appeared the spirit guides, Bert Everett, Kokum, Pat O'Brien, and Dr. Barnett, all of whom spoke at length in clear, distinct, and characteristic voices.

Mrs. Sykes's mother spoke to her daughter, calling her by the name of "Jessica." Mrs. Sykes's mother passed away many years ago when Mrs. Sykes was three years of age.

MRS. SYKES—What used you to call me when you were on earth?

THE SPIRIT—Jessie.¹

The mother referred to another daughter named Cecile, whom she said was with her.²

Then came a spirit voice to Mr. King. It was somewhat indistinct and difficult to catch the name which was given. Questions were asked and the voice said that it had passed away about twelve years ago. It stated that it was a friend of Mr. King's and by and by we found that it was the spirit of Frank Desprez. Twelve years ago Mr. King was manager of *The Era* and Frank Desprez was the editor.

MR. KING—Do you know Mr. Bradley?

¹ Mrs. Sykes states that this was true.

² Mrs. Sykes's sister Cecile died some years ago.

DESPREZ—I did. Mr. Bradley ought to remember me. He knows my work.¹

MR. KING—Have you any message for anybody?

DESPREZ—Daughter—give my love.

The spirit of W.A. talked to me and I asked him if he knew who was sitting on my left, and the voice immediately went over to Mr. King and said: "Hello, Edgar, old man."² W.A. also spoke to Mr. and Mrs. Sykes and with Valiantine.

W.A. (to Mr. King)—Your sister is here and will try and speak to you, but I do not think she will be able to for long.

A spirit voice then spoke to Mr. King and said that it was his sister. The voice was very weak and Mr. King asked her for her Christian name. We could not, however, catch the reply. Mr. King spoke to her for a short time and then the voice went away.³

When the voice had gone Mrs. Sykes asked Mr. King the name of his sister and he replied "Greta."

W.A. (reappearing)—That was your sister Greta speaking to you.

Charlotte, Mr. Sykes's relative, told Mr. Sykes that his father was going to speak to him.

A while later Mr. Sykes had a long talk with his father.

MR. SYKES—What are you doing on your present plane?

THE FATHER—I still paint, but I prefer to study the French language and literature.

Mr. Sykes said that the voice was about three inches from his left eye. He was feeling an extremely nervous vibration when the voice said: "Do I make you nervous, Charley?" And Mr. Sykes was softly stroked down the right side of his head.

Feda chatted to us all in her cheery manner.

At the close Dr. Barnett gave us a lengthy and brilliant address on electrons, atoms, and molecules.

¹ Desprez was the author of a poem called "Lascar."

² Mr. King was a friend of W.A.'s, and this is exactly how he used to address him on earth.

³ Mr. King had a sister who died a few years ago.

CHAPTER XVIII

An unidentified spirit—Doctor Barnett on evolution and mental progress—A spirit cure for cancer and tuberculosis—The two Pats.

February 24, 1924.

ON this occasion there were present Captain B. Hicks, Mr. Patrick Francis Murphy, the celebrated American wit and raconteur; Mrs. De Wyckoff, Mrs. Mortimer Bryans, myself, George Valiantine.

Mr. Murphy had no knowledge whatever of spirit communication, and before the sitting appeared to be amusingly sceptical, but in no way antagonistic. He told us that his only previous experience of a séance was when he and Mr. Joe Coyne, the comedian, and a few friends had sat round a table with George Grossmith as the medium to see if they could get rappings. Mr. Coyne achieved the rappings by kicking the table underneath with his feet.

Bert Everett greeted us, and during the evening there appeared Kokum, Hawk Chief, Pat O'Brien, Dr. Barnett.

Mr. Bryans spoke to his daughter, Mrs. De Wyckoff, and to Mrs. Bryans, his daughter-in-law.

A spirit voice addressed itself to Mr. Murphy, asserting that it was that of Harry Grovell. (It sounded like that.)

THE VOICE—I met you once at the Rotary Club in New York. I spoke at the same meeting as you. I was connected with the *Popular Magazine* as advertising manager.¹

Mr. Murphy was not able to remember this person.

¹ Whether this information is correct or not I do not know.

Feda had a very amusing conversation with Captain Hicks.

My sister Annie did not stay long. She said that she knew my wife was ill, but that she would be quite well again very soon, and that there was nothing to worry about. She was with her and was trying to help her.

W.A. came and talked with me and with Mrs. Bryans, whom he knew quite well in life. He asked if I thought I could manage to persuade Dorothy to come and speak to him. He went straight over to Mrs. De Wyckoff, whom he did not know in life, and said to her: "I am so glad you are here, Mrs. De Wyckoff."

MRS. DE WYCKOFF—Do you know who was with me to-day, W.A.?

W.A.—Yes, Dorothy was with you at lunch. I was there.¹

Towards the close Bert Everett said: "Dr. Barnett wishes to speak."

Dr. Barnett addressed us on evolution and mental progress. He said that on their plane the higher intelligences are studying the conditions of man's physical body, and that the spirit intelligences are now prepared to give to the world a formula by which human ailments can be cured. Answering a question, he said that the first formula would be a cure for tuberculosis, the next would be for cancer, and the next for syphilis. He gave the name by which the first formula of phosphates would be called, and said emphatically that all human ailments could be cured. It was desirable that De Wyckoff and myself should sit privately with Valiantine, when he (Dr. Barnett) wished to discuss matters with us.

Pat O'Brien appeared and had a long and humorous chat in his rich Irish accent with Mr. Murphy. Together the two Pats kept the room in laughter with their sallies.

¹ This is true, but the fact hadn't been mentioned to me or to Valiantine, and no one knew of this incident in the room except Mrs. Bryans and Mrs. De Wyckoff.

After the sitting had finished I asked Mr. Murphy what he thought of it, and he replied: "I am staggered."

CHAPTER XIX

Dr. Barnett's secret—The author pokes fun at Mr. Bernard Shaw—The spirit of Caruso sings a song.

Monday, February 25, 1924.

IN accordance with Dr. Barnett's request De Wyckoff and I sat with Valiantine in my study at Dorincourt.

Dr. Barnett spoke to us within thirty seconds of sitting, and talked with hardly a pause for over half an hour. He said that it had been decided to give us the recipes to treat the diseases¹ which ravage the body, but that it was necessary for us to bring there one of the leading physicians so that the formulæ could be correctly noted and that the methods of treatment could be scrupulously carried out.

He said that tuberculosis, cancer, syphilis and all diseases can be eradicated, and that in the future it will be possible for men to live so long that two hundred years will be considered but a shortish span. I told him that after the descriptions I had received of the spirit life, I was not particularly anxious to spend two hundred years on this earth plane, but if it were ordained that I should do so I sincerely hoped the conditions would be more alluring than those inspired by the imagination of Mr. Bernard Shaw in "Back to Methuselah." At this Dr. Barnett's laugh resounded through the room.

During the day I had been depressed by various personal matters connected with this book. One incident was a request from one of my friends to

¹ See page 202.

suppress certain personal but valuable evidential information which had been given to one of the sitters. In addition to this it had come to my knowledge that during the last few weeks a certain person closely connected with me had been endeavouring to poison the minds of some of my friends.

Of his own accord, without the evidence suggested, Dr. Barnett volunteered the following statement: "We all understand that you are depressed, and your sister is here and wishes to speak to you."

The spirit of my sister then came and talked to me with wonderful sympathy and understanding. After she had spoken W.A. came. On this occasion he spoke without the assistance of the trumpet, saying: "Herbert, this is the first time I have been able to speak without using the trumpet." His voice was remarkably good and clear. Amongst other personal things he said to me: "Don't be worried because of Dorothy. I know you have tried your very best for me."

During the evening both Bert Everett and Kokum spoke to us, and both came over to me and patted me on the head and on the shoulder. This, I might mention, has happened on several occasions.

The spirit of George Valiantine's mother appeared and spoke with him for some time.

Everett told us that Caruso was there and would speak to us. Caruso spoke to us and his voice was powerful and distinct. He said that his young daughter Gloria would have a wonderful voice, and that she should be carefully trained. We asked him if it would be possible for him to sing to us, and he said that he would try. After a pause of a minute or so he sang a verse from an Italian opera, the name of which I do not know. His voice was wonderfully powerful and came from high up in the room.

Dr. Barnett asked us to discuss together the arrangements to be made for the receiving of the formulæ.

After the sitting the three of us talked over the matter and it was agreed that as Valiantine was

returning to America within a week De Wyckoff and he should consider the advisability of making arrangements for one or two of the leading physicians in the United States to attend a séance in order that the formulæ might be carefully taken down. It is possible, however, that Valiantine may return to England specifically for this purpose.

CHAPTER XX

*Spirit voices address Lord Dewar and Mr. Hannen Swaffer—
A startling disclosure—A remarkable séance.*

February 26, 1924.

ON this evening there were present Lord Dewar, Mr. Hannen Swaffer (the famous journalist and editor of *The People*), Mr. J. E. Southwell, Captain Ben Hicks, Mr. and Mrs. Osborne Leonard, Mrs. De Wyckoff, Mrs. Mortimer Bryans, Mrs. Bradley, myself, and Valiantine.

Neither Lord Dewar nor Mr. Swaffer, nor Mr. Southwell had had previous experience of a direct voice séance.

Here I should say that the majority of my guests were never introduced by name to the medium throughout this series of experiments, and he did not know the names of any of the above three sitters.

After about ten minutes the shrill voice of Bert Everett greeted us. During the evening there also appeared Kokum and Dr. Barnett.

After a while a voice addressed itself to Lord Dewar, saying: "I want to speak to you, Tom Dewar."

LORD DEWAR—Who is speaking?

THE VOICE—Arthur Dewar.

A personal conversation followed, during which the spirit referred to either John or James Buchanan.

The time of Arthur Dewar's death was referred to, which happened at about the same time as the Tay Bridge disaster.

W.A. came through.

H.D.B.—Do you know who is sitting on my left?

W.A. (*going over to Mr. Southwell*)—How are you, Teddie?¹

H.D.B. (*to W.A.*)—I have got some good news for you to-night, W.A.

W.A.—Yes, I know. Dorothy has said that she will come on Thursday.²

A voice then spoke to Mr. Swaffer, announcing itself as "Grandfather Hannen." Mr. Swaffer and the spirit carried on a conversation, in which Mr. Swaffer's work was referred to.

The spirit of Sadie Morgan gave her full Christian name and surname and spoke to Mrs. De Wyckoff on intimate matters.

Another voice told Mr. Southwell that it was "May's mother."³

MR. SOUTHWELL—Have you any message to my children?

THE VOICE—Will you give my love to Neville?⁴

Mr. Southwell's other child, Peter, was also referred to.

The spirit of the father of Mr. Osborne Leonard came and talked with him and with Mrs. Leonard.

Feda chatted in her delightful way with everyone in the room, including Valiantine.

The spirit of Dr. O. M. Leiser, who had passed away five years ago and who was a great personal friend of Captain Hicks, came and spoke to him. The voice was particularly distinct in articulation, picking up questions and replying to them with extraordinary rapidity. Captain Hicks addressed him throughout as "Pill," a name by which he had

¹ The name by which he used to address Mr. Southwell.

² Dorothy had, on that afternoon, seen me and agreed to come to a séance on Thursday evening.

³ May is the name of Mr. Southwell's wife.

⁴ This is of evidential value—the correct name being immediately given.

always addressed him on earth. The spirit referred to some books of his in Chicago.

CAPTAIN HICKS—What do you want me to do with them?

PILL—I don't want them. They are no use to me up here. You can have them now.

The spirit of Mrs. De Wyckoff's mother talked to her daughter.

THE SPIRIT—We are very disappointed in ____¹

MRS. DE WYCKOFF—Why?

THE SPIRIT—He told ____'s wife that . . . ____²

MRS. DE WYCKOFF—I don't think he could have said that. How do you know?

THE SPIRIT—Because we heard him.

I am unable to give further particulars of the incident to which the spirit referred, other than to say that the statement had been made by an outside person and had resulted in very unpleasant consequences. It was absolutely startling to hear the confirmation and disclosure made by a spirit voice. I could not restrain myself from shouting: "This is perfectly true. It is a scandalous thing." Immediately the voice of Dr. Barnett spoke from the centre of the room and said: "Please will you avoid any discussion on this matter until afterwards."

Johannes spoke to me about my work, and especially the philosophical section of this book.³ I told him that I had to thank him for giving me the benefit of his philosophy and that the credit was entirely due to him. He replied that our minds had worked together and added: "It was your hand which wrote the words."

Dr. Barnett spoke and closed the séance.

It was a remarkable evening.

¹ The name was heard by everyone in the room.

² The dashes represent five words, which were heard by all, and which referred to a fact that I alone knew.

³ See "Conversations with Johannes," Book III.

CHAPTER XXI

His father speaks in Welsh to Caradoc Evans—Harold Wimbury talks to a Birmingham journalist—A dramatic sitting.

February 27, 1924.

At this sitting there were present Mr. Newman Flower (the distinguished author), Mr. Harold Wimbury, Mr. and Mrs. Caradoc Evans, Miss Queenie Baylis, Mrs. Bradley, myself, and Valiantine.

Mr. Flower, Mr. Wimbury, and Miss Baylis were not introduced to the medium until after the sitting.

Luminous lights floated about the room almost immediately.

While changing a gramophone record, I remarked: "The spirits might like to hear something new," whereat Bert Everett laughed shrilly.

Of the spirit guides Kokum said a few words and Dr. Barnett spoke on several different occasions.

The voice of Edward Wright again spoke to Mr. and Mrs. Caradoc Evans, addressing Mr. Evans variously as "Caradoc" or "Carad."¹ After discussing Wright's life on the other plane and the welfare of his family on earth, Mr. Evans asked: "Have you met a certain person² yet?"

EDWARD WRIGHT—Yes. (What immediately followed was not distinct).

CARADOC EVANS—I mean a certain lady—an elderly lady. Have you met her?

EDWARD WRIGHT—Yes.

CARADOC EVANS—That's all very well, my lad. Her name?

¹ As Wright had addressed Mr. Evans in life.

² Mr. Caradoc Evans later said that he meant Edward Wright's mother-in-law.

EDWARD WRIGHT—Your father.

CARADOC EVANS—Oh, go on with you! You never knew him. You're too bright to-night, young fellow.

EDWARD WRIGHT—We do not use slang over here.

As at a previous sitting, Mr. and Mrs. Evans were touched on the cheeks before the spirit said good night.

A voice spoke to Mr. Newman Flower. As far as Mr. Flower could make out, it was that of his grandfather.

Then there appeared the spirit of W.A. He spoke quietly and a little sadly. His first words to me were "Herbert old chap, don't trouble any more about Dorothy. You've done your best."¹

H.D.B.—Can I give her any message from you?

W.A.—Tell her that I think it is right for her to marry again. I do not wish her to think I should mind. (*A little later*) Give my love to Phyllis and Betty. I am afraid the old man² does not understand.

H.D.B.—You know, W.A., in this book I am making a faithful record of all that transpires and I write only the truth. Shall I record this?

W.A.—Yes, you must write the truth.

MRS. BRADLEY—W.A., do you want him to put this in?

W.A.—Mabel dear, it is the truth, and the truth must prevail.

H.D.B.—I am sorry, old chap, I have not been successful in this matter.

W.A.—You've done all that you can. Dorothy will know one day.

The spirit of Feda came and flitted round the

¹ This statement was made by W.A. straight off without a word from me. During the day his wife Dorothy had 'phoned me cancelling the arrangement she had made for Thursday, saying that she had decided not to attend a séance. I had been depressed by this because I consider that the expressed wish of the spirit of W.A., which had been persistently made almost every evening for the last few weeks, should have been respected.

² W.A.'s father.

room, laughing and chatting with everyone, including Valiantine.

My wife asked her if W.A. was in any way affected by the incident recorded above, and she replied enigmatically: "He realizes now."

A voice, which Mr. Caradoc Evans described as struggling through the floor and coming up between his feet, spoke in front of Mr. Evans' face. Here is his account:

CARADOC EVANS—Do you want me?

THE VOICE—Yes.

CARADOC EVANS—Who are you?

THE VOICE—Your father.

CARADOC EVANS—Father! Can't be. How do you know that I am here? Who told you?

THE VOICE—Edward Wright.

CARADOC EVANS—Well, look: if you are my father,¹ siaradwch a fy yn eich iaith.

THE VOICE—Beth i chwi am i fy ddweyd?

CARADOC EVANS—Eich enw, wrth gwrs.

THE VOICE—William Evans.

CARADOC EVANS—Yn le marwo chwi?

THE VOICE—Caerfyrddin.

CARADOC EVANS—Sir?

THE VOICE—Tre.

CARADOC EVANS—Ble mae'r ty?

THE VOICE—Uch ben yr avon. Mae steps—lawer

¹. . . Speak to me in your own language.

THE VOICE—What do you want me to say?

CARADOC EVANS—Your name, of course.

THE VOICE—William Evans.

CARADOC EVANS—Where did you die?

THE VOICE—Carmarthen.

CARADOC EVANS—Shire?

THE VOICE—Town.

CARADOC EVANS—Where is the house?

THE VOICE—Above the river. There are steps—many steps—between the house and the road. Why do you ask? You go to see the house every time you are in the town.

CARADOC EVANS—My father—

NOTE.—Mr. Evans vouches for the accuracy of the above. But in common with everybody who knows Mr. Evans' handwriting, I do not vouch for the spelling!

iawn—rhwng y ty ar rheol. Pa beth yr ydych yn gofyn? Y chwi yn mynd i weled a ty bob tro yr rydych yn y dre.

CARADOC EVANS—'Nhad——

The trumpet fell noisily on the floor.

It was amazing to listen to this conversation between father and son in the strange Welsh tongue.

The next spirit voice addressed itself to Mr. Harold Wimbury. Here is his description of his own experience.

"In the early stages Feda spoke. She spoke to Newman Flower who had many times sat with Mrs. Leonard, and Feda is Mrs. Leonard's control. At two or three of these sittings I had been present largely for the purpose of taking a verbatim shorthand note of the proceedings.

"Feda spoke to N.F. Then Caradoc Evans said:

" 'Feda, is there anyone else here to-night whom you have met with Mr. Newman Flower?'

"Feda laughed, and her voice moved almost directly in front and just above my face.

" 'Oh yes,' she said, 'but how funny he looks. He's cut his moustache.'

"For a moment I did not realize.

" 'Moustache, did you say, Feda?'

" 'Yes,' in her high childish treble. 'You've cut it short.'

"Then I understood. It is six years or so since I was at a Feda sitting. Then I had rather a long moustache. Now it is what is known as the tooth-brush variety. I had forgotten.

"I mention this not only for its evidential value, but to explain that before Feda sent me a very emphatic kiss in good-bye, I asked her:

" 'Is there anyone over there who was very well known to me on earth?'

" 'Yes,' said Feda, 'your father.'

"He had passed over since I had last had a sitting.

"I said: 'Shall I be able to speak to him to-night?'

" 'We will do our best,' she answered.

"The significance of this is that when later in the sitting the trumpet voice spoke obviously to me I expected my father.

" 'You want to speak to me?' I asked.

"The voice said 'Yes.'

" 'Who are you?'

"I could not catch the answer.

" 'I am so sorry. Would you please repeat the name.'

"Again it was too 'trumpet-y' to be sure of. I thought it said 'Father,' but doubted this since I had always called him, and he had always called himself to me 'Dad.'

"Someone in the circle eventually said 'the name sounds like Walter.'

" 'Is it Walter?' I asked.

" 'Yes.'

" 'Did I know you here?'

" 'Yes.'

" 'For how long?'

" 'Several years.'

" 'How long ago?'

" 'About twenty years.'

" 'Where?'

" 'Birmingham.'

" 'What is your other name?'

" 'Downing.'

" 'Good lord, Walter!' I exclaimed regardless of conditions. 'I am glad to see you. Do you remember your last holiday?'

" 'Yes,' he laughed. 'But I've all my faculties now.'

" 'You always had.'

" 'I mean I'm well now.'

"Walter Downing at that time had consumption, which very little later resulted in his death.

"He and I had dreamed our young dreams of literary attainment together. We were both on the same newspaper, I as reporter, he as leader writer,

a tender-hearted, generous, cultured fellow—the most likeable man I ever knew.

“ ‘Walter,’ I said, ‘have you watched my career?’ ”

“ ‘Yes. I am often with you.’ ”

“ ‘Do you think I have done well?’ ”

“ ‘Yes.’ ”

“ ‘All I might have done?’ ”

“ ‘No.’ ”

“ ‘You needn’t be so emphatic, old man,’ I told him, laughing.

“ ‘An interesting point here :

“ ‘Do you remember Sally?’ I asked (curious how I raised my face as though talking to someone above me—the voice sounded a couple of feet high up in front of me).

“ ‘Yes,’ he said. ‘Remember me to him and all of them. Tell them I am very happy here.’ ”

“ ‘Sally’ was the nickname for a man named Sanders—not a female.

“ ‘Another thing I asked him :

“ ‘Do you remember that we lived together?’ ”

“ ‘Yes.’ ”

“ ‘Where?’ I asked.

“ ‘Over the hotel,’ he replied.

“ ‘Walter and I, working on a morning paper, often missed our last trains to our own homes and so shared a room in Birmingham where we snuggled in when late, often together.

“ ‘The room was over the Crown Hotel, two minutes from the office.

“ ‘I asked him about his dog, of which he was inordinately fond. He said he had it with him sometimes, but they seldom went to the animal kingdom. And then before much more conversation could take place the trumpet fell with a loud crash at my feet, the power gone.’ ”

The next spirit addressed itself to Miss Baylis, and I append her own account of the conversation.

“ ‘During the evening Mrs. Bradley asked Feda if there was anyone who wished to speak to ‘the

lady who helps Mr. Bradley with his work." Feda answered, without any hesitation whatever, 'Yes, her father wants to speak to her.'

"I called Feda and said that if it were possible I should love to speak to my father and, I added, 'Do you think you could help to get him through for me?' She replied: 'I'll try very hard presently.'

"Later a spirit voice appeared to be coming towards me quickly from the other side of the room, saying: 'I want to speak to my child.' I asked: 'Do you want to speak to me?' The voice replied: 'It's your father, dear—how are you?' I told him that I was quite all right and questioned him as to whether he was happy. He said: 'Yes, I am quite happy—are you?' I told him that I was.

"I then asked who was with him and he mentioned two names. The first was most certainly 'Harry,' but I did not hear the second name. I asked: 'Harry who?' He gave it again and it then sounded like 'John.' Neither of the names conveyed anything to me, and I went on quickly: 'Is my brother with you?' He laughed, and said: 'Yes, he is a big boy now.'

"He talked with Mr. Bradley, and asked me to give his love to all. Concluding he said: 'If there is the slightest possible chance I want to speak to your mother. Good-bye, dear.'

"Not one of the sitters was aware that my father was dead or that my mother was alive. Neither could they possibly be aware that a brother ever existed. He died whilst I was practically a baby myself, at the age of six weeks, and naturally the incident was one of little importance in my life—I did not even know his name. When mentioning the matter to my mother afterwards I asked her if she had ever known a 'Harry John.' She replied 'That was the name of your brother.'

"Some little while afterwards Feda came to me,

¹ Miss Baylis is my private secretary, but I know nothing whatever of her family.—H.D.B.

saying: 'I want to speak to this lady,' and then: 'Aren't you frightened of spirits?' I had to admit that at first I was a bit frightened, but added, 'Not now.' 'Then,' she said, 'why are you holding someone's hand?' 'I was holding someone's hand at the time so I could only laugh with her in reply.

"Feda appeared to be most amused at the incident and still laughing, in her fascinating way, turned to Mr. Bradley, saying: 'She writes lots about me—I like her, I am going to kiss her.'¹ She kissed me and flitted away to another sitter."

At the close Dr. Barnett asked if there were any questions we wished to put. Mr. Evans asked why the trumpet, through which his father was speaking, had fallen so suddenly and noisily. Dr. Barnett said that the voice was not able to keep up the power. Amongst other things Dr. Barnett dealt with was that it was possible for people to acquire mediumistic powers. I asked him about the formulæ for the cure of tuberculosis, etc., and said that as Valiantine was leaving this country in a few days we might possibly arrange for physicians to attend in the United States to take down the particulars.

This was a typical sitting and in no way more remarkable than many of those held at Dorincourt. I have purposely given it more detail and recorded more of the sitters' own accounts in order that readers may gain a clear impression of what usually takes place.

¹ Miss Baylis has typed the whole of the script of this book.—H.D.B.

CHAPTER XXII

*W.A.'s message to Dorothy—My friendship with a spirit—
A dramatic conversation concerning a will—A spirit
keeps time to music.*

February 28, 1924.

THERE were present Mr. Henry Worrall; his daughter, Miss Worrall; Mr. De Wyckoff; Mrs. Hunt; Mrs. Bradley; myself, and George Valiantine.

Mr. and Miss Worrall had never before experienced a séance, and Mr. Worrall had expressed himself as being extremely sceptical.

Manifestations occurred within about ten minutes. During the evening of the spirit guides Bert Everett, Dr. Barnett, Kokum, Hawk Chief, and Pat O'Brien talked with us at intervals.

A voice spoke to Miss Worrall and Mr. Worrall, calling them "Maudie" and "Harry" respectively. "I am your mother," it said. A personal conversation was carried on with this spirit, during which evidential names connected with the family were mentioned.

W.A. talked with me and with my wife, and also with Mrs. Hunt.

Although we are assured that spirits do not feel pain in the same sense that we feel it, yet it must be remembered that memory and affection do survive in the spirit. One felt a note of sadness in W.A.'s voice.

W.A.—Tell Dorothy that it is my wish that she enjoys herself and has a good time. (*A pause*) I shall always be with you, Herbert, and will work with you.

W.A. and I have arrived at a wonderful comprehension and understanding. Without any stupid sentimentality; I wish to say that there exists between us now a friendship beyond anything which could be arrived at in human life.

Then there appeared the spirit of a young child, Bobby Worrall. He spoke in his babyish voice to Miss Worrall and to Mr. Worrall, calling the latter "Grandpa." "Bobby" was Mr. Worrall's grandchild. He was born in America and had never seen his grandfather before. He chatted to us all, including Valiantine, and talked of his father in America.

My sister Annie talked to me and my wife, and to De Wyckoff and Valiantine. When talking to my wife she referred to a visit she was making to America. She said that she would be with her and would look after her.

The spirit of George Hunt—Mrs. Hunt's husband—spoke to his wife. It said: "I cannot understand why Dorothy will not come."

The spirit of Mr. Bryans (Mrs. De Wyckoff's father) asked Mr. De Wyckoff "to see — and stop him making the statements he had recently made. He is doing a great harm to humanity."¹

The conversation from this point was continued between Mr. De Wyckoff and the spirit of Mr. Bryans in Russian.

The spirit of Carrie, my wife's aunt, spoke to my wife and to Mrs. Hunt, her sister.

This conversation was also personal and dramatic. The spirit referred to her will and also to matters which had been wrongly carried out since her death.

Towards the close of the evening De Wyckoff asked Kokum to sing. Kokum sang a song in his terrific voice.

During the séance I had control of the gramophone, and whilst one of the lively tunes was being played, perfect time was kept by some spirit tapping on the trumpet as if with drumsticks. This particular record was played twice over without my changing it. The lid was closed and my arm was resting on it.

¹ This refers to the incident recorded at the sitting of February 26, 1924. See page 207.

CHAPTER XXIII

Senator Marconi's questions — Mr. Philip P. Page — Dr. Barnett's brilliant address—Broadcasting spirit voices.

February 29, 1924.

THERE were present at this sitting Senator Marconi and a lady friend, Captain Ben Hicks, Mr. Philip P. Page (the well-known journalist), Mrs. De Wyckoff and Mrs. Mollo, Mrs. Bradley, myself, and George Valiantine.

Senator Marconi, two of the ladies, and Mr. Page were unknown to the medium, nor had they previously experienced a direct voice séance.

Bert Everett, Dr. Barnett, and Kokum spoke at intervals.

Everett, in his shrill voice from high up near the ceiling, gave the first greeting, and Dr. Barnett, in his deep voice which appeared to come from the centre of the floor, greeted us and said: "Have patience, friends, we are gathering the forces."

It was about a quarter of an hour before a voice was heard, but during this time all the sitters had been touched with the trumpet.

Kokum's tremendous voice startled one or two of the sitters.

Of the personal spirit voices, the first to appear addressed itself to Senator Marconi, calling him by name. The voice spoke to him in Italian—a language which I cannot follow—and addressed him as "Guglielmo." The voice was rather indistinct, but Senator Marconi kept the conversation going for over ten minutes, and he was answered throughout in the Italian language.

Senator Marconi afterwards said that the spirit voice announced itself to be his father, but he had not been successful in acquiring sufficient evidence to establish his identity.

This spirit voice returned after a slight pause and again addressed Marconi.

Feda laughed and joked with several of us.

SENATOR MARCONI—Did you hear the conversation with me and the spirit in Italian?

FEDA—I did. But I do not know the Italian language. The spirit is rather like you.

A voice addressed itself to Mr. Page, who had come into the room at the last minute and was introduced to no one. The voice called "Peter, Peter."¹ It was rather indistinct, but announced itself as Mr. Page's uncle, who had passed away thirty-five years ago.

At the end of the conversation with this spirit, the voice, which had been within one foot of Mr. Page, evidently lost power and the trumpet crashed to the ground. At this Mr. Page almost jumped out of his chair. He had also been touched on the head and on the face.

George Hunt, my wife's father, talked with his daughter.

W.A. remarked that the conditions were not very good, and that it was difficult, on account of the vibrations, for some of the spirits to speak distinctly. He (W.A.), however, was particularly distinct, as, of course, were all the spirit guides.

A voice talked to Mrs. Mollo in what sounded like Russian.

Feda had previously stated to this lady, whom none of us except Mrs. De Wyckoff knew, that a relative of hers was there and would try and talk to her.

The voice, during the conversation, addressed Mrs. Mollo as Anna Gregorievna and stated that it was the son of her husband. I ascertained afterwards that Mrs. Mollo's husband had a son by a previous marriage and he had passed away. This step-son had always addressed Mrs. Mollo as Anna Gregorievna.

Then the spirit voice of Dr. O. M. Leiser spoke to Captain Hicks. Captain Hicks addressed this

¹ Mr. Page is usually addressed by his friends as "Peter."

spirit throughout as "Pill." The spirit replied in quick staccato sentences and with ready humour.

At the close Dr. Barnett told us that the forces were rather low, but asked the company whether they had any question to put to him. From then a long and brilliant conversation took place between him and various of the sitters. The first questions were put by Senator Marconi. The attention of everyone present became riveted and concentrated while Dr. Barnett carried on a lengthy discourse on electrons, molecules, and the atom, using scientific terms and words which I did not understand.

Senator Marconi asked Dr. Barnett whether he knew what study he (Senator Marconi) was engaged upon at the present time.

Dr. Barnett replied: "Yes, your study is concerned with height."

Senator Marconi said that the study he is engaged upon has something to do with height.

Dr. Barnett was asked whether, if an instrument (a microphone) were placed in a room at a séance the spirits could use this instrument to speak through instead of the trumpet. This instrument, it was suggested, would aid the sound and would make the whisper of an inexperienced spirit voice loud and distinct.

DR. BARNETT—It would be quite possible for spirits to use this. An experiment should be made.

Dr. Barnett also said that new continents would be discovered on this earth plane which would prove of considerable value to the world.

It must be mentioned that Dr. Barnett's voice is as loud, clear, and distinct as any human voice; in fact, perhaps slightly louder than the ordinary tone of conversation.

We asked Dr. Barnett whether it would be possible to install a wireless receiver in a room and broadcast his and other spirit voices throughout the world.

DR. BARNETT—This is possible and could quite easily be done.

This experiment will be made in the near future and the whole world will be able to listen to the spirit voices of another sphere.

Dr. Barnett said that great revelations would be made in the near future, and that a tremendous leap in human knowledge would take place probably about 1926 or 1927. I asked him if it would be possible in the near future for us to communicate with persons in the *physical* body on other planets. He answered that this would become possible and would happen before very long.

CAPTAIN HICKS—Can a soul that has existed on this plane be transmigrated to another body on the earth plane?

DR. BARNETT—This is merely an absurd theory. The physical body is merely a garment that is shed before the soul passes into the ethereal spirit existence.

Dr. Barnett was brilliant throughout the sitting. It was, of course, never a question of argument with him. Each subject he handled with determined knowledge. On several occasions his deep and pleasant laugh rang out. His statements were made with the unhesitating confidence of an intelligence above that of the human mind.

It was an alluring experience to hear a scientific discussion between two such great minds as Marconi and Dr. Barnett.

Professor Charles Richet, who despite his long years of study of psychic matters is still sceptical of survival after bodily death, has made the public statement that barely one message in a thousand alleged to come from spirits possesses any intelligence.

I would refer Professor Richet to my conversations with Johannes of Book III. I would also guarantee that there is no question that he could put to the spirit of Dr. Barnett which would not be completely and brilliantly answered, and the answer would be given in a loud, distinct, and understandable voice. Dr. Barnett would also be able to illuminate Professor Richet on the paramount importance of

the energy of ether and also of the functions of ether in space—a subject which, not being understood, has been more or less ignored by science.

Dr. Barnett does not theorize—he pronounces knowledge.

I am fully aware that I have not given full justice to Dr. Barnett's brilliant discourse, but this report was dictated at a time when I was suffering from mental tiredness and overwork. Every word, however, is indelibly registered in my mind and will be drawn upon and used at a later date.

CHAPTER XXIV

At which the Society for Psychical Research is represented and the representative fails to put a question—My son receives wonderful evidence—Dr. Barnett's prophecy of spiritualism and the Church of Rome.

March 1, 1924.

THERE were present at this sitting Dr. V. J. Woolley (representing the Society for Psychical Research), Mr. Cyril Scott (the composer), Mrs. Gibbons Grinling, Mr. Denis Grinling, Mr. Joseph De Wyckoff, Mr. and Mrs. Osborne Leonard, Mr. Dennis Anthony Bradley (my son who was home from school for a week-end), Mrs. Bradley, myself, and George Valiantine.

Valiantine had never previously seen Mr. Cyril Scott, Mrs. Gibbons Grinling, Mr. Denis Grinling, nor Mr. D. A. Bradley.

Bert Everett, Kokum, and Dr. Barnett addressed us at odd intervals. Feda also chatted away in her merry childish way to some of the sitters.

The first personal spirit was a voice addressing itself to Dr. Woolley. The tone was very

indistinct, and it was with difficulty that it was ascertained that the voice claimed to be a Dr. Brownlow: that's how it sounded. He stated he had worked with Dr. Woolley in the same laboratory. Dr. Woolley did not remember this character, and, of course, naturally found it difficult to keep up a conversation.

Speaking to Mrs. Gibbons Grinling, a spirit voice said "Godfrey." Recognition was immediate, the voice was clear and distinct, and a conversation took place between it and Mrs. Grinling and also Mr. Denis Grinling. A little later another voice came, addressing itself to Mr. Denis Grinling, and said it was "Ray." During these conversations four evidential names were given.

W.A., having greeted me, went over to my son and said: "Hello, Dennis, old chap, I am so glad you have come to-night." Dennis answered him cheerfully and they both chatted away in a perfectly natural manner. W.A., without any leading up to the question, volunteered the following remarkable evidential statement:

W.A.—You know, old chap, you followed my body.

DENNIS—What's that, W.A.?

W.A.—You followed my corpse to the grave.¹

The spirit of my sister Annie came and said to me: "Herbert, I am so glad you have brought Dennis," and immediately went over to Dennis and greeted him in a most affectionate manner; and they talked together for a while.²

The spirit of Mr. Leonard's father came and talked to him, addressing him as "Will," the name by which he addressed him on earth, although Mr. Leonard is now always called "Fred."

A voice spoke to Mr. Cyril Scott, announcing itself to be "Grandfather Scott," and addressing him as "Cyril." This voice was not very clear and Mr. Scott did not succeed in keeping the con-

¹ On the day of W.A.'s funeral I was ill and Dennis represented me.

² She was particularly fond of Dennis when on earth.

versation going. The spirit gave an affectionate message to "Mabel," being the correct name of one of Mr. Scott's relatives.

George Crawford again spoke to De Wyckoff. This spirit appeared to have a tremendous lung power, and his voice was very loud. De Wyckoff said that the accent was exactly the same as when Crawford was on earth.

Mr. De Wyckoff asked Crawford to explain to him how it was first possible for him to come through and talk to him. George Crawford replied: "I saw a light and was attracted by it, and then I saw you sitting in the circle. There were many other spirits hovering around and I had to wait my turn to get through to you."

The light that attracts spirits evidently emanates from the medium. This explanation has been given on several previous occasions.

Dr. Barnett had previously, during the evening, said that the conditions were not good, and he had deliberately stated that in the room there were present some who doubted the source from which the voice came.

At the close Dr. Barnett, as usual, asked for questions. I asked Dr. Woolley if he would like to put some questions, but he replied: "There are no questions that I can think of." This, I think, was rather a pity, as any question he may have put would probably have been valuable from the psychical research point of view, especially as Dr. Barnett is one of the most brilliant intellects I know.

DENNIS—How long do you think it will be before the Roman Catholic Church accepts spiritualism?

DR. BARNETT—Quite soon, my dear lad.

Dr. Woolley was acting as Research Officer of the S.P.R., and was present in order to investigate the phenomena. I should like to record that he is a very good sitter indeed and is particularly fair. He agreed with me that the spirit voices came from all parts of the room.

CHAPTER XXV

Old new friends take their leave: Dr. Barnett, Bert Everett, Kokum, Hawk Chief, Annie—W.A.—Farewell words—Great love, great beauty, great splendour.

March 3, 1924.

THIS chapter—the last chapter in my book though it is placed here—records the most sublime half-an-hour's conversation in which I have ever taken part; it records the most beautiful evening in my life. If I go through others half as beautiful—half as inspiring—I shall pass out remembering them with a song of thanksgiving on my lips.

For I met my friends—my old new friends: my friends who will abide in me as long as I am on earth and whom I will meet on the other side of the silver stream. . . .

There were three of us: my wife, myself, Valiantine. I asked my friends to come to us that we might thank them for the entertainment they had given us, for the surety of immortal life they had planted in our hearts. They came.

In less than half a minute of Valiantine ending the Lord's Prayer, they came.

We thanked the great Dr. Barnett that he gave us the fruit of his brilliant intellect. "My dear sir," he laughed, "my mind is puny in comparison to others on this side."

VALIANTINE—Will you please advise me about the Guiana matter?

DR. BARNETT—The arrangements which you have made are very good. We heard all that you and Mr. Bradley discussed together this afternoon in his office.¹

¹ This is perfectly true. Valiantine and I had discussed the matter during the afternoon. It is very extraordinary that time after time I have found that the spirits, when they are interested in me, know not only everything I say but everything that I think.

We thanked Bert Everett for all he had done for us, and in going he patted each of us on the shoulder.

Kokum and Hawk Chief came and chattered to *each other* in coming. We three heard them and each of us exclaimed in astonishment. It was so that *five* voices were speaking in the room at the same time.

Pat O'Brien gave us Irish cheer; and little Bobby Worrall spoke of Pat and Pat's tricycle, of his grandfather and his aunt, of his talk with his father in America about the happenings in England.

Valiantine's Uncle George—a spirit with the voice of an orator—spoke to his nephew and to us.

Annie spoke of our first meeting at Arlena Towers ten years after she had passed from this earth plane, and of many of the events that have happened since. I thanked her for all she had done for me, and told her that dearly as we loved each other on earth that love was now grown into an infinitely greater love.

"Oh, my dear," we heard her sweet tones—tones purified, made golden, by joyous death, "there is no measure to my love for you . . . I will be with you always."

Then W.A. spoke. As I realized that it would be long before I should have another opportunity of hearing his voice, I was deeply moved. With great sincerity I thanked him for the splendid way in which he had helped me to establish this great Truth.

My wife asked him if he thought it was right for me to refer to Dorothy under her own name in this book. He replied: "Mabel dear, it is right, because it is the truth." He referred to a little gold cigarette case of his, and asked me to have his initials put on it and to keep it in remembrance of him.

He thanked Valiantine for his wonderful services to us all in rendering it possible for him to speak in his actual voice.

Between W.A. and me there is now created a more wonderful bond of friendship than any which could exist on earth, for it is one that will endure between us for all time. W.A. is a magnificent

character. He has done great work for humanity, and his fine spirit will progress to unknown heights.

After W.A., Johannes. He spoke of the work we had done together in the philosophical section in this book.¹ He spoke to me intimately and as a friend. He told me that whenever I wished he would be with me and that we could continue to work together in mind communication. I asked him if that meant that he would be willing to attach himself to me as one of my guides and he replied: "Yes, my dear sir, from now and at any time that you may need me. It is only necessary for you to sit and think of me and I shall be with you, and can work with you." As he bade me "good night" I understood the mental bond that has existed between me and this great two-thousand-year-old philosopher for so long and will continue to exist whilst I am on earth.

At the close Bert Everett came in and spoke wonderfully to us all. He said: "All the spirits are in this room and on each face there is a smile."

This was one of the greatest evenings of my life. I have failed lamentably in my attempt to convey it in words. The scene was one of great love, great beauty, and great splendour.

March 5, 1924.

George Valiantine sailed back to America on the *Aquitania* on March 5, 1924. During the whole of his stay in England he remained with me at Dorincourt.

I want to say of him that he is the finest, kindest and simplest man I have ever known. Although he is not so well versed in the affairs of the world as many of us, he is blessed with an innate refinement beyond that of the great majority of people. He is so sensitive and modest that he does not appear to realize his own wonderful powers as a mediumistic instrument.

Only a bare indication is given of the evidences

¹ Recorded in Book III.

which I have obtained of surviving personalities. Each of the many spirits that have spoken was undeniably individual. Conversations were carried on in Russian, Spanish, German, Italian and even idiomatic Welsh.

My reports of these sittings, most of which lasted for nearly two hours, are curtailed to a minimum and deliberately understated.

Whilst many of the famous people who have sat at séances at Dorincourt have walked out of the house almost incoherent in their amazement, Valiantine has regarded everything as perfectly simple and natural.

I am of opinion that Valiantine is the greatest medium in the world.

His visit to England marks an epoch. A great leap has been made into a new and virgin field of knowledge.

And before this strife-ridden world a new vista is opened, limitless in its grandeur and stupendous in its potentiality.

BOOK III

CONVERSATIONS WITH JOHANNES¹

CHAPTER I

THE PHENOMENA OF AUTOMATIC WRITING

On creative work—Automatic writing—Mrs. Travers Smith—Agnosticism—Sir William Barrett's testimony—Sir Hugh Lane and the sinking Lusitania—Our author discusses marriage—The Oscar Wilde messages—The way of automatic writings.

September, 1923.

CREATIVE writing is an art, and is dependent upon the mood of the writer. It cannot be produced at will. There come days when expression is fluent and words pulsate and live, and then come days when the stream runs dry, and though the mind works not a thought can take form.

It is easy for the cheap fiction-monger to dictate his crudities into a dictaphone, for this is merely incoherent manufacture.

In order to explain to the uninitiated the extraordinary phenomena of automatic writing and that he may appreciate the rapidity with which philosophical questions were dealt with in this book, I will indicate the mathematical capacity of a writer.

"The Eternal Masquerade," a philosophical and historical work of about 80,000 words, was written in four months. This represents an average of 5,000 words a week. Once or twice I (the author) wrote over 4,000 words in a day and a night, but that was only an occasional phase of madness. Any writer,

¹ Book III was written between September 6, 1923, and January 7, 1924—that is, before Book II which chronicles the experiences with Valiantine in England. The conversations with Johannes are placed in this later section because they are mainly impersonal and philosophical and because the author did not desire to disturb the evidential sequence.

however, will agree that to turn out 2,000 sane words on a philosophical subject is a long day's work, and sufficient to encourage him to do nothing at all on the day following.

Now what writer in the world could turn out four stimulating essays, containing 2,000 *words, in less than half an hour?* This has been done, and the essays appear between these covers. The essays were communicated by automatic writing.

To the lay mind such phenomena may not appear as sensational as the more personal conversations with a living discarnate spirit, but to me, however, they are equally remarkable, and in reality may prove to be a means of communication by which we may eventually obtain a knowledge of supreme value.

The automatic experiments were made by me through the mediumship of Mrs. Hester Travers Smith, who is very well known in artistic circles and has come prominently before the public through the famous Oscar Wilde script, communicated in the summer of 1923.

There are two forms of automatic writing. One is the actual handwriting with a pencil or a pen on sheets of paper, and the other—an even quicker form—is obtained with the aid of the Ouija Board. The Ouija Board takes the form of the letters of the alphabet—A to Z—and the numbers—1 to 9—being placed in numerical order on a green baize table with a sheet of plate glass on top of them. The value of the Ouija Board is that it affords an equivalent automatic rapidity to that of the typewriter.

The medium places her hand on a small padded pointer. When the messages come through the hand moves with phenomenal rapidity and the messages are read out. This method is infinitely quicker than average handwriting.

It is by no means unique to have the automatic script in a language of which the scribe is totally ignorant. Therefore, if one can accept such messages as genuine, it is certainly the most rapid of all means of intellectual intercourse with spirits, and in expression it is the clearest.

Mrs. Travers Smith is the daughter of the late Edward Dowden, Professor of English Literature, author of the standard life of Shelley, a student of psychical research, and a Shakespearean scholar. She is not a professional medium, and has had few experiences beyond automatic or Ouija Board writing. She has hitherto professed herself to be an agnostic, not a spiritist or a spiritualist, which attitude is valuable, for it eliminates the emotional side of the problem and leaves the mind free and receptive. Underlying there may be in her mind the sense of fear, for apart from its scientific value she regards psychical research as dangerous. In this I agree, for as I have already stated it is easy to see that with weak or neurotic intellects the results may be devastating in the initial stages.

With all her experience she cannot explain her gift, therefore she neither accepts nor rejects any theory.

During her experiences Mrs. Travers Smith states that she has had several "controls," or guides, who apparently act as organizers on the other side. They have quaint names and some say that they lived many hundreds of years ago. Professor Sir William F. Barrett, F.R.S., who has tested Mrs. Travers Smith considerably, referring to her "controls" says: "I regard them as distinct psychic entities and not mere phases of her personality as an automatist."

This is the procedure: Mrs. Travers Smith sits at the board or with pencil and paper as the automatist. Sometimes she may be accompanied by a second automatist. The control comes, and when questions are asked the replies are given immediately and at an amazing pace, the automatists merely acting the part of amanuensis.

As a test the letter blocks of the Ouija Board have been indiscriminately disarranged—such as: W.B.F.G.X.—before Mrs. Travers Smith is led into the room blindfolded. Then questions have been asked and immediately intelligent messages have been spelled out by her hand with the pointer, although it was impossible for her to know even the words she was writing.

She has received messages from persons who were totally unknown to her on earth, and on the evidence of Sir William F. Barrett every statement has proved to be correct.

Many of her sittings have taken place with the Rev. Savell Hicks and Mr. Lennox Robinson, the author of that brilliant comedy, "The White-Headed Boy." She was sitting with both of them when on a day this message came through: "It is Sir Hugh Lane, drowned. Was on board the *Lusitania*." They three were shocked, as Lennox Robinson and Mrs. Travers Smith knew Sir Hugh. At that moment boys were selling the evening papers in the street, which contained the news of the disaster. Mr. Robinson ran out and bought a paper. When he came back he pointed to the name of Sir Hugh Lane among the passengers. The sitting was continued. The spirit of Sir Hugh Lane described the scene on the *Lusitania*: "Panic. Boats lowered. Women went first. Lost in an overcrowded boat, fell over. Lost all memory until I saw a light¹ at the sitting."

A few days later Sir Hugh sent another message about the last meeting and gave greetings and advice to some intimate friends of his and of Mrs. Travers Smith's in Dublin.

Further messages came through regarding his personal affairs, his pictures, the codicil to his will, and the efforts that were being made to erect a memorial gallery to him in Dublin, which proposal, he declared, horrified him.

Mrs. Smith's theory why spirits should communicate through mediums is deduced from Sir Hugh's remarks that "he saw a light." This is logical, and has been advanced through various psychic channels. It is a light that attracts the spirits and enables them to communicate. The light varies; it is sometimes strong and sometimes weak, according to the psychic powers of the medium and the sitters.

The Oscar Wilde script was obtained through the mediumship of Mrs. Travers Smith whilst sitting with

¹ Further confirmation of the "light" of the medium.

Mr. V——. It came through at a rapid pace—as fast as the hand could write. Wilde's signature was an exact replica, and the handwriting, with its peculiarities, is reproduced throughout. Events of his childhood were recalled and he mentioned Iso, a sister who died as a child, of whom the medium had never heard.

Wilde's literary style was, to my mind, characteristic. The epigrams were typically in Wilde's manner and of his period on earth. To quote one, in describing the grey circles in which his spirit was now existing, his humour exhibited the survival of his personality when he dictated: "I can conceive nothing more dull than life after death, unless it be marriage or dining with a schoolmaster."

This epigram is Wildean, representing the wit of the nineties. Nowadays marriage is more a riot or a fast-consuming furnace, and there exist several schoolmasters who are more brilliantly amusing than most of our dramatists and Prime Ministers.

In other messages Wilde reviewed some of our English writers. Of Mr. James Joyce he says: "Even I, who am a shade, and I who have tested the fullness of life and its seed of bitterness, I should cry aloud, 'Shame upon Joyce, shame on his work, shame on his lying soul!'. . . Compare this monster Joyce with our poor Shaw. Here we find very opposite poles. For both these writers cry aloud that they have found the truth. Shaw, like a coy and timid maiden, hides his enormous modesty with bluster. Joyce, on the other hand, is not a blusterer at all. In fact, he has not vomited the whole even in this vast and monumental volume. For he has eaten rapidly; and all the undigested food must come away. I feel that Joyce has much to give the world before, in his old age, he turns to virtue. For by that time he will be tired of truth and turn to virtue as a last emetic."

Of Thomas Hardy: "His simple mind appeals to more . . . but all that is in me of rusticity revolts against the realism that flaunts itself in hopeless wanderings among the fields of Dorsetshire. Think

for one moment and reflect that Mr. Hardy's works are just the jottings down of a limited village experience with a primitive sense of romance added to it. A very harmless writer Hardy. He almost succeeded in being a little risky now and then in that dull period when he wrote. I well remember how his 'Tess' set maiden hearts throbbing. It was a tale which might attract the schoolgirl who imagined she had just arrived at puberty; but as a work this book is shapeless and has neither value as an artificial rendering of rustic life nor as a minute study of the village. Mr. Hardy is indeed the middle-class provincial. He never dreamt he could arrive, and yet, he had his day partly because he tried to paint the peasant, who at this period was just about to peep over the horizon for the first time."¹

Of George Meredith: "I am frankly an admirer of Meredith. He, of course, was a man without any appreciation whatever of beauty, but he had a most ingenious way of plaiting words, so that his most ardent admirers could never extricate his thoughts from them. They clung about his ideas as barnacles on an old whip, and he was so completely clogged that his ideas escaped and only words were left. But after all, what an immense achievement it is to plait the English language. I never attempted this experiment myself. My plan was to select my words, to cherish them and move them from one corner of my room to another until they each and all received their due. Meredith collected them and wove them so intricately that his intelligence was cramped by them and no one ever penetrated their crustated masses."

Of Mr. G. B. Shaw: "I had a kindly feeling for poor Shaw. He had such a keen desire to be original that it moved my pity. He was without any sense of beauty or even a sense of the dramatic side of life. And yet there was the passionate yearning to be a personage, to force his person on the world, to press in, in spite of the better taste of those who went before him. I have a very great respect for his work.

¹ What about "The Dynasts," oh egoistic shade of Oscar Wilde?

After all he is my fellow countryman. We share the same misfortune in that matter. I think Shaw may be called the true type of the pleb. He is so anxious to prove himself honest and outspoken that he utters a great deal more than he is able to think. He is ever ready to call upon his audience to admire his work, and his audience admires it from sheer sympathy with his delight."

Of Mr. Arnold Bennett: "He is the assiduous apprentice to literature who has conjured so long with the wand of his master, Flaubert, that he has really succeeded in persuading himself and others that he has learnt the trick. But Flaubert's secret is far from him. Of his characters one may say that they never say a cultured thing and never do an extraordinary one. They are, of course, perfectly true to life—as true as a bad picture. . . . Mr. Bennett has undertaken a grave responsibility by adding to the number of disagreeable types in the world."

Of George Moore: "My little countryman from Dublin? Little Moore is absolutely little, mind and soul. Moore is the dwarf who thinks himself a giant. This is quite natural for one of stature such as his. But, strangely, Moore has made an entry into London with drum and fife. Moore's great desire to shine has helped his progress. In his journeyings he has travelled many roads. He goes a little way and then turns back because he cannot find the creature he desires in any country. When I speak of Moore, futility is all I see before me. The man that misses, this is little Moore."

Of the Sitwell's verses: "I do not spend my precious hours catching tadpoles. I only leap into the minds of those who have a certain value. Below this standard I do not sink."

Of modern writers: "I am not given to admiration, I fear. But if you ask me sincerely whom I admire among the modern dramatists I think there is only one who has any approach to form and a sense of drama. I assure you the only mind I have entered into which appeals to my literary sense is John Galsworthy. He is my successor in a sense. He is

the aristocrat in literature, the man who takes joy in selection, as our poor friend, Shaw, never did. Shaw plunges in and seizes the first object his hand can grasp, and takes a wholesome joy in ripping it to pieces. Galsworthy is slow in his selection, but when he selects he does so from an exquisite sense of fitness, and he presents the complete pattern of his idea. . . ."

Of painting and its connection with literature :
" Let your imagination strain itself a little. Take one word and let its sound sink deep into your mind and conjure up at the same time a deep and richly coloured tone. Take the word purple. Let the infinite depths of that rich colour penetrate your being and listen to the word and let its music bring to your mind the depths of tone that comes from perfumed violets till word and colour merge into each other. This gives you some idea of how my work was wrought and fashioned, of how my music sprang from word and colour both. (For as I wrote I held the picture ever in my mind of pattern wrought from colour and from sound.) And as I wove the web I added richness as I went, ever fashioning, moulding and forming, until a perfect shape rose from me. This was my own particular form of art—an art which gave me light, which has not vanished with my good name and all that fame the false world heaped upon me. For my art had sprung direct from nature, nature was the force that gave it being. I was the priest who fashioned from it the thing created, perfecting the form with care and infinite pain until the children of my being had grown to their full stature and like stately swans had floated out upon the waters and escaped from me into the infinite where they shall never perish."

Of woman : " Woman was to me a colour, a sound. She gave me all. She gave me first desire, desire gave birth to that mysterious essence which was within me. And from that deeply distilled and perfumed drug my thoughts were born ; and from my thoughts words sprang. Each word I used became a child to me. I loved my words and cherished them

in secret. They became so precious that they were hidden from the gaze of men until I nurtured them, and in their fullness brought them forth as symbols of the woman."

In my opinion, such writing, from whatever source it came, could not have evolved from the mind of Mrs. Travers Smith. The style is utterly and completely different from hers.

The effect of a changed "polarity" in the association of the medium for automatic writing with a new sitter is interesting. Mrs. Travers Smith recently tried the experiment of sitting with Mr. Bligh Bond. No trace is apparent of the Oscar Wilde control. Instead of this, at once a group of Glastonbury monks purport to communicate, one after another reciting details of the burial of Abbey relics in A.D. 980—a year in which history affirms great fear of Danish incursions.

Following this comes much poetic script of the Sangreal and King Arthur's Round Table, and finally the whole of the missionary journeys of St. Philip the Evangelist are detailed, with the promise of his lost "Gospel"—a document known only by tradition among the ante-Nicene Fathers of the Church.

For very many years automatic messages have been received by various people, but until quite recently most of them were dull and uninspired, and took the form of the pseudo religious or sentimental sort. All appear to have been dictated by spirits of an extraordinarily low intelligence.

Having met Mrs. Travers Smith, I saw no necessity for making any blindfold tests, as this meant that I should have to read and transcribe, and since we found that by sitting together we could achieve rapid results there seemed to be no object in imposing difficulties, especially as the subjects I wished to deal with were philosophical and not personal. My purpose was to test the discarnate intelligence on problems which at the moment were occupying my mind, or the minds of those associated with me.

Mrs. Travers Smith says that during her experi-

ences sittings have varied considerably. With some sitters the results are slow and unsuccessful, with others, fluent and intelligent. If we regard the spirits as possessing likes and dislikes, which is perfectly logical, it is only natural to assume that they will not wish to be bothered to communicate with sceptics and antagonists.

Mrs. Travers Smith says that the best results are obtained when the medium receives the messages through the brain and transmits them to the board whilst the sitter provides the mental force.

She also states that controls and spirits dislike being subjected to evidential questions. This is quite understandable, just as an invited guest would be indignant if he walked into one's house to have his identity questioned.

In my experiments the method between Mrs. Travers Smith and myself was that she placed her hand on mine, while I put the questions to her guide, Johannes. Immediately the question was put her hand would fly away from mine and transcribe the messages in reply on the Ouija Board, while I recorded them in my own system of shorthand, with pencil on paper. Although I am able to write at a terrific pace, I found it at first extremely difficult to keep up. Some of the messages were so long that often we had to stop them because we were both exhausted. In later experiments, however, I discovered that by leaving my hand quite limp, I could write at an infinitely quicker pace and without any exhaustion. Often during late afternoon sittings I worked in almost darkness, and not only I wrote a clear and legible hand but in lines absolutely straight.

I doubt if there is a living writer who could have submitted to such a test. Answers requiring serious consideration came slick on the heel of questions.

There is neither human nor scientific explanation for these communications. Richet's theory of "cryptæsthesia" (a hidden sensibility) is as difficult a theory to accept as is to some the acceptance of a spirit existence in after-life with powers to communicate with the earth-plane.

CHAPTER II

ON GOD AND WAR

A first experiment in automatic writing—Two spirits: Ianthus and Johannes—Johannes's war philosophy: "It is the primitive desire for blood"—The Evolving Wheel—A riddle that is without an answer—The author is bitter about what he calls a "savage madness."

September 6, 1923.

THE record of my first experience with Mrs. Travers Smith.

We sat together, and taking a pencil in my hand Mrs. Travers Smith placed her hand upon mine. I left mine quite inert. Nothing happened for a minute or two and then my hand began to write strange scrolls; then without any thought or effort on my part I wrote my own name; also the words "Johannes" and "Ianthus."

Then Mrs. Travers Smith took the pencil and I rested my hand on hers. Suddenly her hand twitched and she commenced to write rapidly: "Johannes is here. I have come here as you called me. Ianthus is with me."

She told me that Johannes was her control. Ianthus she did not know. The Ouija Board was there, so we agreed to use it as it is the quickest method of receiving messages.

I placed my hand upon hers for a few moments, after which her fingers moved with amazing quickness and she dictated the messages which I record herewith.

IANTHUS—I want to speak. I am one of the guides of the man who is here. I was born in Greece three hundred years before your Christ. My name is Ianthus. I will help him. He has a great deal of power. I am Ianthus and was born in Delphi. I was in the temple for some time. I left

my own land afterwards and came to France, where I lived for many years, but Greece is my own country. This man has a very great deal of power, but he has not used it so far. I want to help him, and if he tries he can get close to us on this side. I might be able to write through him soon, but he must have patience, because he has not yet acquired sufficient passivity. Already people have been around him from here. They have tried to speak, but he cannot get into touch with them unless he gives them more time. I can help him if he calls me; I think he can do a great deal in this way. It might be better than the pencil. There is one person who has a special desire to get in touch with him. He is too definite at present; he must let his mind become quite loose. I have been with him for many years, but could not speak because I was not called.

MRS. TRAVERS SMITH—Is there any particular question you would like to put to him or to Johannes?

H.D.B.—It is not easy to think of questions on the spur of the moment. I am much more interested in philosophy than anything else. Let us ask Johannes to give us his opinion on the perpetual human wars which have dragged down civilization.

JOHANNES—In our sphere there is a struggle too, but here there is a difference. We cannot destroy our physical parts because they do not exist. There is no real solution in the world for that desire which causes men to destroy each other's bodies, but there will be a great peace soon because the thirst for destruction is almost spent; and, on our side, we cannot have these people thrust unprepared on us any longer. The problem of war in the world is in reality the primitive desire for blood, for sacrifice, for flesh, and that cannot be removed entirely. Over here the struggle is different. There is no destruction, for destruction here is impossible, but there is the possibility of a casting back of the Evolving Wheel. We can be thrust back if evil overcomes us. We know that here it is a case of development and experience, and for the completion of that experience it is necessary to struggle, or be crushed.

and driven back. This knowing helps us. In the world you cannot know because the body clogs you. In the great wars in your sphere you have had destruction of the body, but in many cases souls have brought a draught of knowledge over to this side, which has saved them the horror of being driven backwards when they have arrived. If you imagine that by word or even by desire or ideas you can end this longing for destruction on your planet you will be disappointed always, because it is inevitable. It is primitive, it is born of those who came into the flesh. I want you to understand the great difference between the people who are destroyed in war and those who are driven over here by natural causes. Those who have crowded over during the last few days have not been the prey of evil thoughts. They may come to us and suffer nothing. In a war it is different. For in spite of all that leads towards civilization, those who fight have had their brute parts brought to the fore, and these brute parts must be destroyed before their souls find room for growth.

H.D.B.—Do you on your sphere acknowledge and accept the omnipotence of one Supreme God?

JOHANNES—My dear friend, you ask me a question which none of us who have been here for centuries can reply to. We know far more than you do. We have lived in many different worlds and have gained by the memory of all our past existences, which is collective memory; but God, as you speak of Him, is as mysterious here as He is there. In the beginning was chaos; vapour and mist surged about without form or order, but behind all the chaos was a deep, mysterious force, which you call God, and He is hidden from us as He was hidden then. The real beginning of the universe was when particles began to move towards one other. It is the system upon which the whole great work was based. It applies to the heavens, the stars, and the planets, to each rock, to every flower, to every living creature, and most supremely to you poor human victims of that desire which binds you to each other. If you speak of God you sometimes think of love, sometimes of

force and cruelty, but believe me, there is absolutely no limit to Him. He contains all in Himself, supreme in love, supreme in hate and cruelty. He is the ground work of all that is, and we who are only particles must pass into the Infinite Being—into Him who is not to be seen or understood. From time to time He must pass over the world to destroy, for no human passion is as His, but from time to time He will smile and there will be fertility and plenty. All things come from Him; man has no part in anything.

This ended my first experiment in automatic writing.

Johannes's discourse on wars appears to be logical, and so far as the world has developed there certainly does not seem much prospect of eradicating this cancerous disease. If we accept Johannes as a spirit of a high intelligence, even so that is no reason why we should accept his views as infallible. He is justified in his opinion because he has viewed the human strife for thousands of years. But evolution on our physical plane may eventually conquer this devastating stupidity and whilst I am on earth I will never cease to declaim against this savage madness.

When he speaks of God, Johannes is definite in his acceptance, but confesses that even after centuries of experience of the after-life he has not arrived at the condition in which he can comprehend the vastness of this mysterious force.

That is what I should regard as the right conception of God. If He is the great Spirit that we intuitively feel, it is impudent to assume that we should enter into the intimacy of His presence directly we have finished our tin-pot life on this mean-spirited earth. Here we are crudely living the first few moments of the soul's existence, and in our journey towards the refinement of eternity we are at present mere infants learning our first few lessons in experience and gaining here and there some crumb of wisdom from our follies.

CHAPTER III

THE PHILOSOPHY OF SEX

Johannes is asked about the survival of the sexual instinct—The birth of thoughts—The spirit of Johannes rebukes our author—Woman's place in the Spirit World—The great creator—Earthly lovers in after-life—Elective affinities—The man who has never loved—The only real sins—Johannes on Dennis Bradley—And Dennis Bradley points a moral—Perfect love and mental barbarity—A roseate dream.

October 9, 1923.

I HAD not thought out any particular subject for conversation, so my questions were put on the impulse of the moment.

Johannes announced his unseen presence in a message of greeting to Mrs. Travers Smith and me.

H.D.B.—Will you please tell us, Johannes, how you regard the question of sex from the moral point and also tell us whether the sexual instinct continues on your sphere?

JOHANNES—It seems to me very easy to answer. Do you want to know whether sex continues on this side or how we regard it from the moral point of view?

H.D.B.—Please explain both points to us.

JOHANNES—You will want to know whether it continues first. I shall try to explain that sex really consists in the perfecting of two halves into a whole. Of course over here that continues, but not in the earthly way. Over here we have got rid of the body, but there remains soul and spirit, and sex continues between mind and mind; the male mind perfecting the female until new thoughts and ideas are born of that connection. It is a complete mistake on the part of the human race to assume that sex vanishes

over here. It is the root of all life—the life of ideas as well as of earthly children, and it must continue from the very beginning to the very end, for spirit and spirit must perfect each other as mind perfects mind. Do you follow? My dear people, I feel you understand very little about us or even about yourselves. The whole universe is governed by the attraction of particles. It is the fundamental law, and sex is merely a branch of this great law which governs not the earth alone but the constellations and the sun which ride in the fiery heavens.

H.D.B.—Now give us your view of sex from the morality point of view.

JOHANNES—My dear man, why should you, who seem to me a sane, even a wise, person, ask such a foolish question? There are no morals. Nothing is moral or immoral, but there is wisdom and folly, and the mistaken use of sex on your planet is merely a form of folly. If you could only appreciate the wisdom of what you call morality there would be no immorality. Over here there is less on the whole, because we are better able to appreciate each other's mental parts, but there is a certain amount of folly over here too, and at times we pay for this. Not when we arrive at a certain stage of development, but in our early stages we sometimes commit acts of foolishness. The mental portion is exposed in a way you cannot understand, therefore there are fewer mistakes in temperament than on your earth, but the spirit being hidden it is at times possible to make unfortunate mistakes which would correspond to what you call sexual blunders, and it retards progress as it retards it on your sphere. Do you want to ask further questions on that subject?

H.D.B.—Yes, I do. But first tell us whether you regard the male or the female as the higher being?

JOHANNES—Neither higher nor yet lower; these are not used to apply to two parts of a whole. The woman is ever the same here as with you. She is the power that creates ideals in man. She is the great creator; not only of children but of thoughts. Her responsibility is even greater than that of the

man. Not only does she bring forth children, but she actually creates the ideals low or high, as the case may be, of the male. And for that reason when a high and holy act has to be accomplished, it is the woman who is chosen to perform it. It is her inheritance; her responsibility. But you must not imagine that man is not her equal. He is not her superior; he does not give her ideals as she does to him, but he encloses her as the cup encloses the flower, and he can make or destroy her as he wishes. He is the more powerful, though to her is given the greater burden. Here it is as it is on earth. She goes on as the woman soul; he as the man. Now I want you to understand that what you call love has nothing to do with this. Love may exist in many other forms. You asked me about sex, for sex is the law; love is not a law but an inspiration. You understand, I hope, and do not confuse these two.

H.D.B.—Yes, I do understand that love is an inspiration. Tell me, if two beings—man and woman—love each other on earth, are they sure to meet each other again in the after-life?

JOHANNES—I can answer that at once. Love counts only as an attraction. Sex may go on again with others, but where love comes in there is a certainty of meeting over here. That is the law of attraction I have spoken of. Those who have loved one another must meet here. They cannot avoid it. But not so with a mere sex attraction, which even on your little planet soon fades.

H.D.B.—What happens in the case of the man who has loved more than one woman, or that of the woman who has loved more than one man?

JOHANNES—I can explain. There are degrees in love as in everything else. Man and woman are really two parts of a whole, and your idea, which is often scoffed at, of elective affinities is not a mistaken one; those who loved one another on earth meet here, but just imagine how much more they know of their minds. Elective affinities recognize one another at once. They rush to one another and complete each

other. The rest are friends, but this completion of the whole is inevitable.

H.D.B.—What then is the position of the man who has never loved or has never been loved?

JOHANNES—That is more difficult. Nature has turned him out as half a shell, without its corresponding shell, and he drifts about here looking for the other part, and the explanation is that the other part is in a totally different degree of development. They will probably find each other eventually, but it may be delayed long. His singleness delays his progress. He will wait until she finds him.

H.D.B.—Let us take the case of a man who is happily married on earth and has children. We will assume that he loves his wife and loves his children, but in addition he also loves another woman, not merely in the physical sense, but completely in soul and mind with that inspiration of which you have spoken. Now what would be the result of breaking the thread with either of these two women?

JOHANNES—I feel that this is a very difficult subject to speak of. It is dangerous to break the thread between two people when children are in question. I will explain why. The time has not come for that mental completion while a man is on earth and there is the continuance of himself in his children, which should not be interrupted or broken in any way. But then there is again the pain which would be inflicted on the second woman if he has really found his own. I mean if this is the case he would inflict such a wound on her that she would take a long time to recover from it even over here. I think he must weigh these two points. It is good to be with her. It is bad for the continuance of himself in his children. Do not look at it from the point of right and wrong. There are no such points in reality, unless you can apply them to cruelty or hardness. They are the only real sins.

An interruption.

JOHANNES—Wilde is here.

A pause.

MRS. TRAVERS SMITH (to H.D.B.)—Johannes says

he dislikes Oscar Wilde intensely. He was very annoyed when the first Wilde communication came through.

JOHANNES (*returning*)—I have sent him away. He is a very unpleasant personality, but since the Glastonbury monks¹ came he is less dangerous to you. I do not mind him talking to you at times.

MRS. TRAVERS SMITH—Johannes, would you like to give us your opinion of H.D.B.?

JOHANNES—I think he has a curious combination in his character. There is a deep tendency to believe in him, and also a reasoning power which negatives it to a great extent. It is as if two minds were confined in one person. They continually contradict each other. There is this faithful mind ready to follow and believe, and there is this questioning creature ever ready to hold the other back. That second mind has much the greater sway with him, but the first sometimes suffers in being repressed. There is a certain kind of truth in this man. He believes that things are going to expand. The feeling of annihilation does not appeal to him at all because he has a reasoning mind, but he will always suffer from conflict.

Here the sitting ended.

The discussion was intriguing. It must be assumed that Johannes gives his theories only to the extent of his individual spirit knowledge and in accordance, perhaps, with the inclinations of his intelligence.

One must not assume that his communications represent the belief of the spirit world. Obviously other spirit intelligences have formed other ideas. Nothing should be fixed. Anything that is fixed loses sensitiveness and entails the death of emotion. When vibration ceases balance is replaced by rigidity.

Sex is of perpetual interest to us. It is therefore alluring to be told that it is still alive in after-life,

¹ This refers to the Glastonbury script.

although the form of functioning is more spiritual, and probably embraces a more refined ecstasy.

The statement of Johannes that from the connection of the male and female spirits new thoughts and ideas are born is poetic.

The discordant morality view, which is a fixed and man-made law, or convention, covering a multitude of hypocrisies, is abhorred by every developed intellect. The question of morality or immorality is a question of use or abuse, of wisdom or of folly.

The idea that a man and a woman might love each other in the most perfect beauty conceivable, and yet, because these two had not conformed to some narrowly prescribed code, that such a love should be deemed evil or immoral is an absurdity. That severance should be ordered by convention or by law is an exhibition of mental barbarity.

The theory that affinities meet again and unite in another world fits into the scheme, and it is possible that until we arrive at a higher state of understanding and intelligence we may not know for certain which is our affinity or our twin-soul. That man and woman merge again into one coincides with the entire mystical scheme of creation so far as we can comprehend it.

Whatever the complications presented to our minds in earthly condition these are likely to lose their significance with the development of higher senses. It is encouraging to know that love and emotion survive, and that there lies before us the prospect of new ecstasies of a more enthralling refinement.

CHAPTER IV

THE INIQUITY OF HUMAN SLAUGHTER

Johannes's history: a Jew born in Judea; student of Egyptian law; looking back at the past and down at the present; might have been a disciple of Christ—How the soul enters the after-world—H.D.B.'s question about the taking of human life and Johannes's answer—Another H.D.B. question: Reincarnation on earth—Johannes's talks about a younger world—The author on his great hatred—War: Centuries of darkness for war-mongers.

October 16, 1923.

MRS. TRAVERS SMITH and I continue our conversations with Johannes.

H.D.B.—I am very interested in your philosophy, Johannes, but before we proceed to a discussion I should like you to tell me a little of your life when on this earth.

JOHANNES—You must go very far back to imagine my life. I am a Jew and was born in Judea. I took a great interest in learning and I studied deeply the works of those vile peoples who preserve their dead. I am quite conversant with their people and the ideas which drove them to those dreadful practices. I studied the law of Egypt because it was necessary for me in order to understand my religion, but when I arrived at the point where I had to look back on the past and down at the present, I realized that my own religion was almost as barren as theirs, and I sickened and lost all interest in philosophy for some time. My mind is open and if I had been alive when Christ was condemned I should have been one of His disciples, because He made for progress. Our old creed was made in order to shut out ideas and growth. You may be surprised to hear this from me, but it is in reality because of my own special bent of mind that I am now in the position of one

who is possessed of collective memories. I was, in my day, considered a wise man. I have been in all the temples of my native country and I learnt most of the things that could be learnt in my day. I came to see the folly of religion.

H.D.B.—At the end of physical life on earth with death comes the decomposition of the body. Assuming that the soul, or spirit, continues to live in another sphere, does there then come a time when the soul, or spirit, dies or passes into a further form of existence?

JOHANNES—You say after physical death the body dies, and the spirit *seems* to live on. What happens after? Well, I will explain to your finite mind what concerns the infinite. When you are born you are made of three parts. One is your body. This is really only a cloak which is cast around you to protect the precious part of your personality. Then you have another covering for your spirit. This is what you call soul, or mind. They are the same. It is your intellect, or instinct, which is quite apart from that. This soul, as you call it, is entirely intellectual and is limited, in a sense, because it is governed by reason entirely. When you cast off your heavy cloak at death you enter our world with your soul wearing its cover. The period during which you preserve the covering of the soul is long; far longer than your earth life, and during that time you have many experiences in passing from one sphere to another and from one plane to another. Now the spheres are places, as you would say. They contain the souls which are still learning what must be known, and the planes are just intellectual planes. As you learn you pass on from one to another. At a certain stage of development you come to what I have arrived at. You are then able to review your work and see the path that lies behind you. Before that time your separate stages are kept apart and your memory of them is merely fragmentary. After that stage, where you still preserve the soul and mind, comes your second death. That is the period when experience is sufficient and you cast off your

soul and enter into the spirit which is mere intuition. A rest and peace incomparable with anything you can imagine.

H.D.B.—That is quite splendidly defined. Now will you tell me this: How do you regard the taking of human life, in any form—either by the individual in personal revenge or retribution, or in the warfare of nations, or by the order of the law as a penalty for crime?

JOHANNES—That is a great question. I must be heard for this is very important. I must explain first that I am not speaking of good and evil. I am speaking of wisdom and folly and, therefore, I must not be misunderstood in this matter. Man has taken upon himself a vast responsibility in attempting to cut the thread before its natural time. It is folly of the worst description. You know, I dare say, that the most severe penalty over here falls on him who takes his own life. That is, as if you ate your own body. It is exactly similar, but the eating of the body does not happen. The act that cuts the thread comes right from out the body. It is a revenge of body on soul. This is a driving back of the soul into darkness and it means a long period in which growth is impossible. You understand, perhaps, why suicide is so criminal an act. You might imagine that murder, as you call it, is a heavier sin than suicide. It is not so. It is less unwise to kill one's fellow-man than to cut the thread of one's own life. For murder is the revenge of body on body; suicide is the revenge of body on mind. You ask me about general slaughter which is brought about for a cause. I need hardly tell you that this is doubly criminal. As the man is to the crowd so is war to murder. It is not that motive of revenge exactly; it is a desire to destroy which comes directly from the flesh and crushes the spirit completely. And as suicide is more unwise than murder so civil war in a country is more unwise than war against another people. I suppose you have noticed that. Civil war brings more immediate misery than any other form of struggle. Over here we are not

without struggle, but it is not a struggle which can destroy. It can only wound. For our condition of soul and spirit is so much more protected than yours of the three-fold parts, that we cannot possibly be driven before our time into the spirit world. Now I break off into human ideas of justice. It is a very much misused term. That law which condemns a man to lose his life is only dangerous to those who judge him. I do not mean the actual persons who are paid to administrate the law, but all those who are willing that he should be killed. It is a crime, and over here those who have been so blind and mistaken as to believe they are ridding the world of a pest find that their own remorse is a worse punishment than he received. For why should one man be condemned by many? There is a type of mind on your earth which is almost completely brutal, but you should take into consideration that such a man has been arrested in his mental development. Try to think of the earth as a large place where things are manufactured and thrown out good and bad. Some human beings have really not been given their full chance because they are defective. Here it would mean for them that their progress would be slow after death, but if you in your folly cut the thread of life and fling the soul over here with a heavy wound upon it, the progress is arrested in a way that means almost complete coma for a long period. When you have reached here and have realized your stupidity you will suffer if you have condemned a man to this great stop in his spiritual life. The murderer would pay his toll in any case. You need not do more than prevent him from repeating his folly.

H.D.B.—Now I want to put to you a question, which is not mine, but that of a fellow student. Are any human beings reincarnated on earth? And, if so, is there ever in a man's existence a moment when the possibility of his former reincarnations are brought to his mind, consciously or subconsciously, in a definite form?

JOHANNES—Surely you know that you are not ever

to come here again and you were never here before, but your friends, those who are very dear to you, are old acquaintances, and you cannot get away from them even in your further states. You have been in many places, some of them more interesting than the world you are in now, and you will pass on to many more. Why wish to come back? It is getting old and dim, and you, with your vivid interests, should want a younger world to live in. You will pass on from here to a new star. One of the blue stars that are younger than the world you are in. It is far better than some you have passed through, and if you had made your life a poor thing here, as some people do, you would move backwards to a still older star than the earth, and your life would be less vivid and more comatose. It is all a matter which is in your own hands. There is no fate standing over you; you can do most things if you have sufficient desire, and if your desires turn on what is mental and not physical you will certainly move on to a more vivid and younger plane. But back to the old earth you do not go again. You are there once and never more, but, of course, there is reincarnation in a sense.¹ You might even go back into a more material body if you were foolish enough.

The sitting ended.

It was a pleasant touch of intimacy to acquire the history of Johannes on earth. I have a great liking for the spirit of this intellectual Jew.

Beyond the human problems he gives us the theory of a second death. We humans encompass the trinity of the body, soul, and spirit. We shed the body at earthly death, and after centuries of experience in other spheres we shed the soul and become purely spirit. This last stage is one at which Johannes has not arrived. It is useless for us to endeavour to comprehend this. We can only

¹ This statement of Johannes may at first appear involved, but a study will elucidate it.

assume the condition to be one merging into the godhead.

He says that suicide is regarded as the worst crime, and in that I certainly agree. It is an almost fatal weakness. It is the revenge of the body on the soul. It is the *desire* for eternal oblivion, but the oblivion which results is the horror of *conscious* oblivion without the spiritual strength to make an effort towards development. We are born with a free will. There is in us all the spark which we can fan into the eternal light. Our station in life here is of no matter, nor does any material progress count; it is how we develop the soul and the spirit that is of value.

Analysing the degrees of criminality of human slaughter Johannes states deliberately *that war is doubly criminal to murder*. That is true. And it represents the opinions I expressed so passionately and fearlessly in my war articles during 1916 and 1917 when the damned cowards in power who were organizing the slaughter were frightened to put me in prison, because they knew I was a fighter possessing a greater strength of purpose than theirs.

Political pygmies should summon the remnants of their intelligence and pause for a moment to consider. They may continue to play their miserable, material game of organized slaughter, whilst in their craftiness they slink behind in the security of their council chambers; but if they can realize that life is an eternity from which there is no escape, they may learn that by their retrogression they have sentenced themselves to centuries of darkness before they can cast out from their minds the nauseating obsession of animalism and release their thwarted souls to the freedom of spiritual growth.

Man's inheritance is the divine flame. If this inheritance is prodigally squandered in a debauchery of material cruelty during the short span of our primitive existence on this earth, then an inevitable justice will decree that the price must be paid in an æon of spiritual poverty and toil until that patrimony is regained.

Let the phrase, which I have not invented, but

which came from Johannes, sink well into the souls of every man.

War is doubly criminal to murder.

Then Johannes deals with our conception of human justice. He says that the condemnation of a man to death by law is a crime.

We humans are arrogant in our conceits. In our ignorance we regard life purely as physical and arrogate to ourselves the right to dispose of it by human laws.

No man has the right to order the cutting of the thread of life which belongs to another man.

The death penalty should be abolished. The murderer can be dealt with by restricting his liberty of action. Meanwhile he can be afforded the opportunity of realizing his crime and in doing so perhaps find his soul.

There is this to be said; there is almost always a personal motive in murder, but there is no personal motive in war. War is organized slaughter. A man sits in a foul trench and hurls a hand grenade at some unknown man, or drops from an aeroplane a bomb on some mass of humans against whom he has no personal grudge. By his hand he may destroy fine human beings from whom, in the ordinary course of events, he would meet with kindness. Is there logic, or sense, or justice, or anything but devastating beastliness in such a system? Can we dare to boast of a high civilization or pretend to acknowledge the existence of soul or spirit whilst such an animal philosophy is permitted to obtain?

This system must be smashed before we can dream of progress. It is an iniquity to the intelligence of man that this crime of war, which is infinitely worse than murder, should be recognized, acclaimed, propitiated, and encouraged not only by the corrupt governments of the world, but by the Churches, which prostitute the elementary code and by evil weakness blaspheme the great God they profess and praise, but reject and spurn. In their eyes their God is more evil than the most evil thought of the most evil man.

CHAPTER V

THE ARTS ON HIGHER SPHERES

Johannes on pain: a necessary experience—On the artist and the warrior—Jesus the greatest of lovers—H.D.B. receives philosophical confirmation—The birth at death—Art and after-life—The three branches of love—The author dismisses the great warrior with the spittle of scorn.

October 23, 1923.

THE conversation with Johannes was again characterized by its rapid and brilliant fluency.

H.D.B.—Will you please explain to us why it is deemed necessary for us on earth to suffer mental and physical pain. What is the solution of this mystery?

JOHANNES—Pain is part of experience. Surely you understand that life here and hereafter is necessary for experience. Its beauty is the beauty of contrast. Light and darkness! Joy and pain! You feel yourself that you would not have enjoyed what gives you the highest ecstasy if you had not possessed the necessary experience of pain; and even of pain of the mind, which is very much more dangerous for your soul than bodily pain. Pain is necessary if you are to arrive at sufficient experience to progress over here. And here too you will have pain and joy, but they will have different meanings for you. You must try to understand that these two gifts are the highest that can be given to you. Some of you on the earth never attain them. If you have not enjoyed perfect ecstasy and suffered absolute desolation you cannot be said to have had any real idea of the colour scheme of the universe. If you were denied suffering you would pass on here as a human being would enter life, without sight or hear-

ing. 'You would not have heard the most precious sounds in the universe. Do you imagine that when you come over here and cast away your body you will be deprived of pain? No! You will have it still, but it will be in other things than the physical illness and mental desolation as there are understood in your world by you. Do you understand that you cannot have bodily suffering, but that your mind may wound your spirit, which is more poignant?

H.D.B.—Now which earthly character do you regard as the more highly developed: the great lover or the great warrior?

JOHANNES—By the great warrior do you mean the man who is ready to fight for any cause he upholds?

H.D.B.—Yes.

JOHANNES—War typifies the eternal stupidity of physical force. The artist is the greatest of lovers, and he will always have greater and truer value than the great warrior. You may be quite assured of that. I, from my side, cannot conceive how you can be so slow of comprehension as to compare these two. The artist is the real son of God. He is the human being to whom more of the divine spirit is given. Jesus, your divine prophet, was the greatest of lovers and artists. He wove around His scheme of life, music, poetry, and colour, and if you could get near to His teachings you would see how entirely He comprehended the value of the lover and artist. I cannot tell you so much about the great warrior, for over here he is not exalted as he is on earth. He has missed the best. He has failed to arrive at what is essential and has handled what is merely an additional prop to what the lover possesses. Surely, my dear child, you cannot be so dull as to set value on him in comparison with the lover. You are a lover yourself! There is no use in asking me obvious questions. I feel as if you imagine that I am just an ordinary human mind when you set me a task like this. It is quite plain to all of you that the lover and his love rank first in heaven, as you call it. Even on earth he occupies a higher plane.

That is, his thoughts move in a different atmosphere. He cannot have any real companionship with those who are not his brothers.

H.D.B.—I thank you, Johannes, for this philosophical confirmation. Now may I ask you to describe the manner of life in other spheres. As a point of simple material interest, do the spirits live in houses, and do they walk on land?

JOHANNES—Now you come to something about which I can instruct you. It is not easy for me to speak of this to persons who have no imagination beyond the earth. I think you will understand. First, you know what the process of dying is. You know that you cast off the body and are now of two parts—mind and spirit. This is a birth rather than a death, and after that material part, as you call it, is cast off, there is a time when you need rest. We take you—we, your guides, I mean—and convey you to a place which seems dark and warm to you, where you remain passive until you feel you are able to understand and endure your new conditions. After that you pass on to one of the lower spheres for a time, where you become accustomed to that new state in which you have no body. You do not need physical nourishment any more, but you do need shelter and care, and these are provided for you. Now I know you want me to describe this. First, you will ask me if there are towns as there are on your plane. I cannot say there are. Over here there is not the same overcrowded life; that is impossible in our atmosphere, and what is more interesting for you, we live here in communities, much more than you do. Here we see the minds of others and this helps us to help each other. But never mistake my meaning. The ultimate end is to realize oneself. It is not to help others. Be quite sure: a completeness of your own spirit is what is required of you. I hear a great deal spoken of help on this side. We do help each other, but our fundamental reason is that we get mutual benefit from each other's minds. That is the root of the law which governs us.

H.D.B.—That appears to me to be the philosophy of higher reason. Tell me, are the arts practised and developed in other spheres? I mean, particularly, the art of the painter and of the writer. Also are new works of literature written there?

JOHANNES—If you had asked me whether you on earth had any conception of art here it would have been appropriate. On our side all the lovers are at work, and they possess faculties which you have not. They can reach a level which would be impossible to you. You talk of arts—we talk of art. We have such close relations between mind and mind that art is almost single. It is a fusion of all yours. Of course you must understand, if you can, that there is one form of art which arises nearer to the spirit than any other, and even in your little world it realizes what the others cannot. I mean music, or sound if you like to call it so. It cannot be expressed by you in either words or colour, for it is largely spirit. It is the glory of movement, of growth. Every sound in the universe combines with other sounds and makes harmony or discord. And here, where minds are more delicate, music reaches a point which you cannot imagine. But I want to explain the relations of the arts to you. Colour and sound are very closely allied. Each sound has its suitable accompaniment of shades and tones. These are different expressions of movement. They are the pictorial expressions of the spirit. I am generalizing, for I want to tell you the place that writers take in our scheme here. They have a two-fold purpose. Their work is to explain and express the spirit through ideas which are outside themselves. They are the mediums, if you can understand that, who can receive and send forth the ideas of collective minds, and theirs is a great responsibility, for they have not acquired their power intuitively, but from other minds. It has come to them and they must be the clearing houses for ideas. Their work is a natural function to them, as the assimilation of food is to you; they work because it is part of their being, and it keeps them living as minds. Do you under-

stand? I want you to feel the relation of these three branches of love on our side. Love for the movement of the universe; love for the expressions of that movement, uniform and colour; and then third, of assimilation and a fresh putting forth of, not only the ideas of other minds, but of the translation of the meaning of the intuitive branches of art.

H.D.B.—Tell us of the functions of the painter and the sculptor on your sphere.

JOHANNES—They express the plastic idea. I mean they put into concrete form the feelings which the intuition has evoked, but this use of form and colour is very subtle. Here form and colour must express more than with you. We do not paint pictures of landscapes or of persons. We paint thoughts, and ideas, and pulsations, and we can give their forms beauty and terror, feats impossible to you. You need not, on your side, make any effort to paint or form thought, because it is hidden from you and the mystery of this is intended, because it will burst on you as a revelation and add to your joy and wonder when you come to this side.

On these words the sitting closed.

I loved the magnificent philosophy of Johannes on the vibrations of joy and pain. Only the unwise would desire to cultivate the negative smugness of earthly happiness. To rest in peace would be an appalling oblivion.

It was merely to challenge the stupidity of human values that I asked Johannes to define comparisons between the great lover and the great warrior. The so-called great warrior is a clumsy sot wallowing in the mire of earth. His mentality nauseates. Artists can seldom spare the time to sniff at his grovelling intelligence. We regard him as the pig excited by the stink of his own manure. We cannot regard such men as our brothers. We regard them as animals perpetually vomiting up the filth they consume.

The intellect of the warrior does not even possess the stimulating irritation of the louse, it is dung-like in the rottenness of its decay.

To dare to appraise such types on any plane of love or art is an absurdity. As well compare the tortoise-like trade union bricklayer to the great Architect of the Universe.

When Johannes describes the conditions of the after-life he expounds another great philosophy. It is the justification of the ego which exists in the spirit of every artist: *the ultimate end is to realize oneself.*

That is magnificent and explains the reason for our existence.

His discourse on the arts is brilliant. If any critic would care to endeavour to disturb its logic that will provide the added emotion of the laughter such an attempt would inspire.

So, to hell with earthly criticism and to all stupid earthly standard of values.

CHAPTER VI

MAN'S RUINATION OF CHRIST'S RELIGION

Johannes is asked a question about Christ and his answer—Christ as artist, lover and philosopher—H.D.B.'s question about birth-control brings a wise answer—Cremation—Is religion a ruse?—The author expresses his disgust at animal materialism—He detests gloom and loathes misery and lets loose his anger against the Church.

October 30, 1923.

AN account of a sitting at Dorincourt with Mrs. Travers Smith.

It was on the evening of the first performance of the revival of Oscar Wilde's "The Importance of Being Earnest" at the Haymarket Theatre. The management had invited Mrs. Travers Smith to be present and had requested her to obtain Oscar

Wilde's opinion on the production. As she was dining with me she could not go, but she promised to attend on the following evening. The criticism came through to her from Wilde later and is the most amusing and scathing I have read. It appeared in several of the newspapers.

There were present my wife, Mr. Charles Sykes, the sculptor, and his wife. They were interested during the evening to observe the methods of communication.

Mrs. Travers Smith and I sat together as communicators, and Mr. Sykes, Mrs. Sykes, and Mrs. Bradley as observers.

There is, I may mention, never any atmosphere of dull seriousness when Mrs. Travers Smith and I sit together. We smoke and laugh and chat about all sorts of subjects at intervals. While we were talking on this occasion, Mrs. Travers Smith's hand twitched and Johannes began.

JOHANNES—Why am I here? I have a feeling that this place is full of people. I see a great many here, crowded and looking at us. I certainly am puzzled by all these. They are people who are dressed in an unusual fashion. Why, I wonder! Have they come here to amuse themselves? Shades all of these, but I think they are the creations of someone's brain. I know perfectly well these are mere phantoms but they seem so unhappy; they want to become realities. I would do my best if they would stop staring.

H.D.B.—I should like to ask you one or two questions, Johannes. On earth many of us thinkers accept Christ and His principles of love, but in our so-called Christian religions His principles are never practised, and, so far as the world in general is concerned, such practices would now be scoffed at. Tell me, how is Christ regarded in your sphere? Do you accept him as the Son of God, or in the sense that he is a son of God as any one of us might be.

JOHANNES—I can tell you about Christ here, but you must put Christ, as you know Him, far from your mind. I speak as we think of Him. He is a son of God, so are all of you. But He has more of

the spirit than you have. He is a great thinker; a prophet also, but His ideas are not the ideas you have made use of, simply because His spirit could not penetrate the thick crust of the world's selfish lust of gain. Here there is no gain or loss. That part of the cosmos is destroyed—gone in a flash—when you leave your body. But Christ over here is an influence still, a great influence, but He has done His work in the world in a sense. I will explain that to you. His light came slowly from Him as the light of a star slowly comes to your earth. His influence at first rather added to the chaos of the world than helped it to gain the peace He preached. But gradually the change that was essentially His worked its way and He has left His impression behind Him. You understand what I mean. It has now done its work and a new era is beginning where men who are alive can do without the impossible ideal which served them for a guide in the darkness for so long. He is regarded as the greatest of the prophets over here; not as a Deity to be worshipped, but as an artist rather—a lover and a philosopher as well, for his philosophy—which is that of love and sacrifice—is as old as the world and yet He clothed it in a manner which gave it a new beauty and ecstasy for those who were able to follow His meaning. But in the course of time and even quite soon—even after He had made his last psychic impression on the world—men had entirely changed all this. It came from themselves, not from His teaching, for that is the result of the sudden and vivid flashes of light which lumine your world from time to time. These flashes cast gleams of brilliant light, but they leave behind them a deeper shadow. Here Christ is still a unity—a single influence. He shines as brightly here as He did in the world and throws light on His own particular problems. Not on the universal problem, for only the great multitude of sages, poets, artists, and lovers can deal with this cosmos problem.

H.D.B.—Assuming that the creation of human beings is part of the universal scheme, how is the

question of birth-control regarded by the higher intelligences of other spheres?

JOHANNES—Your thoughts are very stimulating. I am interested in that question because it is such an insoluble problem to you. We regard your futile efforts at controlling birth as rather amusing. How can you control the wind or sea? Can you really attempt this? Birth is a greater force than wind or sea and you may, if you like, entertain yourselves by playing with this problem, but like all material forces, it will crush you as you would crush a beetle. It is as easy for you to control birth as it is for you to control the course of the stars. The atoms you succeeded in crushing out come back here to be sent again to you and to find full production. Do not deceive yourselves about that. A whole universe is a great evolving field from which nothing escapes or even misses its purpose.

H.D.B.—Will you now please give us your opinion on the subject of cremation? It does not represent any problem to me, as I do not think it matters what happens to the body after the spirit has left it. I ask for the benefit of those who do consider it a matter of concern.

JOHANNES—I want to explain to you, my child, that you are given to conclusions, that sometimes are rather premature. In a sense you are wrong about the burning of bodies. As you know, it is a crime in my eyes to preserve the garment¹ that clothes the soul and spirit, but on the other hand, you are not quite right in believing that this sudden and complete destruction does not wound. In a sense it does. Because, as you know, there is a fragile envelope which surrounds the soul as a tissue might, which fades away shortly after death. It is a membrane as it were, and this is very sensitive immediately after death, for what you would call a few days or a week. If the body is entirely destroyed, this membrane, which in a sense

¹ A reference to the Egyptians who preserved the bodies of their dead. See Chapter IV, Book III.

is attached still to the body, is severely hurt. It suffers, and this is imparted also to the discarnate part. So you must not smile completely at those whom you call fools, who believe that the body is entirely severed from the other parts at death. It is so after a very short time, but not immediately. Before the soul and spirit leave the darkness in which they are brought after they sever from the body, this membrane has withered away from them, but not at once.

Here someone in the room interrupted by saying, "Astral Body?"

JOHANNES—No. Foolish question. It is not a body; it is a perishable thing, half body, half mental, a thing which dies soon after death, but which you may see—if you are clairvoyant—surrounding the soul.

Here Mrs. Sykes asked me if I would put a question on religion and its government, which I did in the following form.

H.D.B.—Is a religion really necessary to the high development of a high civilization; or is religion merely a ruse used by the governing classes to ensure obedience from the lower orders?

JOHANNES—You can answer that yourself if you look into your mind a little. Surely no human creature, with all his limitations, ever existed who had no religion. No matter how haughtily he held his head. Religion is merely a yearning for love and protection; it is entirely instinctive and not in the least a matter selected by governments for inducing obedience to their foolish laws. But religion has been converted into a machine, which creaks loudly in the joints, by those who hope to use it as a tool. The yearning is always there in the human child for loving protection from its Creator. But the actual use of religion as a tool is another matter. I do not quite understand which you refer to. I suppose you want me to speak of the use into which it has been perverted. No religion has ever been so utterly ruined as that taught by your own prophet. For all its spiritual

value has gone from it and it is no longer a useful tool for the State to serve as a lever for its own particular schemes. So it has lost nearly all its uses and the human child goes crying for its protector and parent, and some new form of belief must come to him. It is coming. It is going to be the realization of the littleness and narrowness of the world as you see it. It is the great religion of humility.

The sitting here ended.

Mr. Charles Sykes, who is an acutely intellectual observer, said afterwards that he regarded the rapidity and fluency of the "messages" as phenomenal.

Johannes referred at the outset to the number of phantoms crowded around and looking at us. Since they appeared to be unhappy shades I hope none of us was responsible for their presence. We all seemed perfectly happy, although, of course, happiness is merely a matter of relativity.

The theory of Johannes on creation and birth-control is quite determined. According to him we are all will-o'-the-wisps of the great scheme and only imagine that we have power to affect it. Once an atom is conceived it cannot be destroyed.

It is a theory that demands a penetrative study if we believe that soul and spirit—or thought and ideas—represent creation. In that case it is logical to assume that if our individual ideas are opposed to a multiplicity of our own progeny, apart from any question of physical prevention, procreation is annulled because our idea is consciously uncreative. It is a mental issue. If a material element is introduced that is not spirit, birth-control is a misnomer. It is impossible to control what is non-existent.

To apply the argument in a personal sense. Since I have only two children, my idea and imagination, representing my part in the scheme of creation, only extend to two children, and I cannot imagine myself possessing three children; therefore my consciousness of this is reinforced by material aids. Had I acquired a loose and vaguely compre-

hensive imagination I might have possessed forty, which, although not beyond my physical conception, is completely beyond my mental conception.

In dealing with cremation Johannes says that the physical body is still sensitive for some time after death, and that it should not be destroyed immediately. The membrane attaching soul to body suffers and this is imparted to the discarnate parts. It is right, therefore, that we should reverence the dead body for a while.

The question of cremation was of personal interest, because a year or so ago, when the after-life represented to me some vague anything or nothing, I had expressed a request to my family. Having a contempt for the world and having become disgusted by the callousness, greed, cruelty, bestiality and ferocious animal-materialism that have been exhibited throughout Europe since 1914, I desired when my end came to leave as few fragments of myself behind as possible.

My request was that my body should be cremated as soon as death was assured and that the ashes should be taken in an aeroplane to the highest altitude and scattered to the winds. I also desired that there should be no sentimental mourning by those who loved me and no flowered hypocrisies from those who didn't. I expressed the wish that on the night of the day that my ashes have been scattered to odd corners of the earth or the skies above, a dance should be held for my friends at which the women should wear their gayest dresses and the men should drink to my hygienic disappearance in the vintages of their choice.

These were my desires then and they are my desires now, the only qualification I now make is that the cremation need not be unduly hurried.

It is not a stupid egoism that impels me to record this, it is the expression of a philosophy. I detest gloom, I loathe misery. It is repugnant to me to feel that my departure should create such destructive and retrogressive emotions. This world, if we endeavoured to create the fine and fearless spirit,

could be made a world of joy, but we destroy this spirit because we permit morbidity to exist. Joy is within the soul of each of us; it is the sustenance of the gods. Our philosophy should enable us to cast out the evil spirit of gloom. If we suffer a temporary or earthly loss we still possess our own souls and the energy to enjoy ourselves.

When Johannes was questioned on his regard for Christ, his conception of Him as the fine artist, the lover and philosopher, was dignified. His teaching has served a great purpose in stirring the soul through the dark ages of the world, and His philosophy of spirit remains until to-day unshakable.

Yet, such is the evil force of man's materialism that as the discarnate spirit of Johannes the Jew says: "*No religion has ever been so utterly ruined as that taught by Him.*"

The fundamentals of His great teaching have been abandoned; His principles have been edited beyond recognition; His philosophy has been wilily adapted to suit the combination of State and Church. His simple religion of love has been distorted, blatantly used and prostituted by a material hypocrisy that staggers intelligence. His doctrine has been converted into such a machine that it no longer is a lever for either Church or State.

How dare the Churches presume to use His name after their disgusting cowardice and their refutation of His principles during the time the world was writhing in its blood-bath? Did they speak one word? Did they not support by word and deed this disgusting cruelty? They lost their chance. Weak and decadent they exposed their materialism. The soldier found them out and in his filthy trench he used the name of Christ only as an imprecation.

And during the years that have succeeded this human cataclysm their weakness persists. Thus, holding the Church in contempt, whilst appreciating the philosophy of love that Christ preached and endeavouring to understand the incomprehensible God of the Universe, one seeks the communion of one's own soul in a solitude that is not disturbed.

CHAPTER VII

THE RAPIDITY OF THE DISCARNATE INTELLIGENCE

The telepathic theory annihilated—Three posers for Johannes—"Seeing into one another's mind"—Johannes does his best to answer a "really stupid question"—The unsolved riddle of creation—Explaining a ghost—The spirit of Astor—Is the lover punished?—The after-life of politicians—A spirit's view of Poincaré—H.D.B.'s contempt for human cattle.

November 2, 1923.

TIME after time in this book I have annihilated the telepathic, or subconscious mind theory, which has been so often and so loosely advanced by sceptics as an explanation for psychic phenomena.

The telepathic argument, however, might be advanced with reason on many forms of automatic writing, and though this method of spirit communication will, in my opinion, lead to much progress in thought, it is more difficult to establish as being genuine.

It was, therefore, as an experiment that I wrote to three of the most eminent literary men in England. Without telling them that I was engaged on psychic research, I asked each to put to me in question form some unsolved problem of the universe.

What I really required was to obtain from them questions on matters of which I knew little or nothing in order that any answer I might receive could not be accounted for by the telepathic theory.

Each of my correspondents is of international repute; one is a playwright, one is a professor and lecturer, and the third an editor. Two out of the three questions I received were such that I would never make an attempt to answer.

It was on the morning of November 2, 1923, that I sat with Mrs. Travers Smith at Chelsea to make the experiment.

H.D.B.—I have three problems to put to you, Johannes, which were sent to me by three persons. The first is this: "We are all conscious of the principles of unity and variation, or universality and individuality working side by side in our world; where is the point of interaction, or meeting place, between these two opposites?"

JOHANNES—I must give you an illustration from this side first. Here universality of thought is our rule for development. We can enter into the thought of all your ages and we use this cosmic consciousness, as you sometimes call it, for the development of soul, but understand that development of the individual soul is the aim and object in life in your world and in ours. Your thoughts get clouded in your limited sphere, but underneath it all lies the knowledge that the soul as a unit is the important matter. All your universal thought goes for one object. Over here, as I have told you, we live more in communities than you do. Chiefly because this gives us more scope for the exchange of thought. In your world you would ask: "Where do these two touch?" I say, as far as possible, in your dim outlook; you try to develop the principles which are clearer when the body leaves mind and spirit free. We understand individual thought better because we can see into one another's mind. In your world it is quite another matter. There is confusion and misunderstanding, but lying below it all is the subconscious idea that the soul, as a unit, is developing itself through others. I assure you that you are now, at this very moment, obtaining clearness and mental strength from the ancient nations of the filthy peoples who preserved their bodies. They had a knowledge of good and evil, formulated far more definitely than you do. Thoughts that have been built up during countless years, you are now reaping the benefit of: the thoughts of Greece and all other

nations. On that matter I would like to be plain. I am a Jew, as you know, but I admit that what you have received from the Greeks is more important in your development than what any other nation has given you.

Here we had to stop as my hand could not keep pace with the words.

JOHANNES—Is there anything further you would like to ask me on this subject?

H.D.B.—The question is not mine and my mind is not quite clear or quick enough to determine what to ask in reference to it. Let me put the next question to you. Perhaps I should tell you, Johannes, that this second inquirer mentions in his letter that he is not much interested in God or immortality, because he is persuaded that both are highly improbable. The problem he is interested in is this: "Is the universe like a clock running down, which will presently cease to 'go' through the equipartition of energy?"

JOHANNES—Now you have asked your first really stupid question! That is the feeling of a very finite and limited intelligence. This person has too much intellect. It has clogged him to such an extent that his spirit must be fainting. If I were to begin on this I could easily write you a long book, but as you put it as a question I must reply in a very general way. Of course there was a beginning. There is no doubt whatever on that point, but even we guides who have arrived at collective memories do not understand the great primal cause yet. We shall in time, when we become more intuitive. As to the running down of the clock: the universe is an ever turning, ever changing wheel. It revolves, and as it moves suns and moons are extinguished, and on their ashes new stars and planets arise. It is the ever moving, ever creative mass that seems to revolve. Not an atom is wasted; no matter how small. That is its rule. You, in your sphere, have no idea how the universe economizes. I have to speak in this way because, as I have told you, I am not yet conscious of the first cause, but I would like to

throw some light on the clogged brain of the individual who sent me such a question. It is difficult to realize after all the ages that souls are sent into the world who use their intellectual powers to clog their intuitions. I do not want to say anything unfriendly about this poor man. Maybe he is trying to find the truth.

H.D.B.—My third question does not interest me in the slightest. It is: "Why, or how is it, if there are ghosts, which presuppose a fourth dimensional sense—which again scientifically is inconceivable as yet—do we hear of such things as haunted houses, etc., whereas in the Tower of London, the place *par excellence* of historical ghosts, still intact from Norman times, are such phenomena not seen or studied. There, if there are ghosts, they must lurk. Yet we hear of nothing but commonplaces."

JOHANNES—Now first I must explain to you what your ghost is. It is a phantom of your own brain, as you might say. It is not spirit: nor is it matter. It is a part of the intellectual life which has left its impression behind, and only those who have the intuitive faculty highly developed can see these forms. Do not delude yourself by imagining that the ghost you might see in the Tower would be the same as a form which might appear after, or at the time of, death. Where the disintegration is taking place there is a mixture of conditions. These forms are partly intellectual, partly spiritual, and partly material. The ghost which haunts the house is another matter. It is possessed by some idea or thought. It is the creation of that idea, and it wanders about, generally attached to some definite locality. Do you understand now the difference between apparitions? Well, now you ask me why hauntings attach themselves to certain places and not to others, especially those places where they might naturally be found. The reason of this is just the extreme vitality of the idea. A prison or a lunatic asylum are the last places to be haunted. Because there hope and vitality have waned. It would be far more probable that a murderer would

haunt the spot where his victim was killed than the place where he was put to death by your foolish justice.

MRS. TRAVERS SMITH—Why then is Holyrood Palace haunted by Mary Queen of Scots?

JOHANNES—She was not there as a common prisoner. Her thoughts were strong and violent. You would find love rampant in that place, while in a common prison love dies and sickens, because love feeds on gentleness. And hate joins hate and dies. It cannot exist in narrow surroundings; it wants the fire and ecstasy of evil to help its development. Lovers and haters, artists and men who carried the swords at their side might appear—or rather their emotions might—in certain places, but those who are confined, whose days are colourless, could not have the strength.

The sitting ended. The time occupied over these questions was only a few minutes and the answers came instantaneously without a second's pause and with easy fluency, *and with such extraordinary rapidity that it was only with difficulty that I could keep pace.*

I have not the faintest intention of arguing on the logic or on the degree of intelligence contained in the replies. That does not concern me. But what I *do* maintain is that these questions did present a difficult test.

The telepathic theory could not possibly apply, since neither Mrs. Travers Smith nor I had any opinion on the subjects dealt with.

The answers, whatever their quality, came from somewhere—certainly not from any subconscious self, because, thank God, I have not worried myself about any of these three problems!

One can imagine the state of mind of either orator or writer suddenly confronted with a philosophical or a scientific poser and requested to give an immediate reply with not one second allowed for reflection. It is any odds that he would first of all ask that the question should be repeated in order that his mind

could grasp it, and then, if he essayed a reply, his effort would be slow and stilted.

In order to pursue this experiment further it was arranged that a second test should be made. On this occasion Mrs. Travers Smith acted as recorder with Miss Cummings as medium and receptor. Miss Cummings is an automatic writing medium. She was of course not present during the sitting between Mrs. Travers Smith and me. Her control is a Greek named "Astor." This spirit of an ancient man has a different philosophy on earth-problems from that of Johannes.

This difference in philosophy must not be used as an argument for or against the evidence of an after-life. It does not represent contradiction, but affirmation. We do not become infallible in the second life; we retain our own intelligence, memory, and philosophy which are developed according to our spiritual progress in the higher spheres. To anticipate that all intelligences are the same and think the same would make a dull and an unemotional sphere. Therefore, the Greek philosophy is retained and developed higher, just as the Christian philosophy may be realized into a completeness.

To make the situation and the method employed in this test perfectly clear, it should be remembered that Mrs. Travers Smith took my place as questioning communicator and recorder, and Miss Cummings acted as the mediumistic dictator and receptor.

MRS. TRAVERS SMITH (*putting the first question*)—We are all conscious of the principles of unity and variation, or universality and individuality working side by side in our world. Where is the point of interaction, or meeting place, between these two opposites?

ASTOR—Universality is a term that is frequently misapplied. It is a term I would define as the aggregation of all primal causes. It is essentially the mystery of life as viewed by us spirits and by you mortals. We can grasp the meaning of the word individual. We cannot grasp the meaning of

the word universal so far, but I can at least interpret for you its meaning as far as it may be applied to my long experiences of vaster worlds than yours. With us the whole must always be a combination of many parts. These must mingle and blend if we as entities of mind and spirit are to exist. With you mortals there is the disturbing factor of your garment—the body; if you are to seek universality you must apparently seek it through displacing some other particle. I mean by that some other human being. It is necessary in your world for even the righteous man to injure another if he is to live. He injures him all unconsciously by taking what might be his share. There is, in short, for your beneficent philosopher the problem of right and wrong which he can never lead to a meeting place. Tell this learned gentleman not to strive to attempt this impossibility. Let him know that right and wrong cannot meet and mingle and exist. The one destroys the other. The point of meeting between these two? There is none; there is only the beating and breaking of the one against the other. It is the lesson to be learnt on earth. It is your torment and penance that these two can find no point at which to meet: they must be resigned to that. It is in the suffering brought about through the continual friction between these two opposed elements that you obtain your experience. I know that Johannes believes there is a mingling and blending. There is only the mingling and blending of minds, there is no mingling in the passions which rule men rather than the mind. In the perpetual conflict of desire you are condemned on earth to battle continuously. Desire is the ruler of your being. It must be so, therefore you can never hope to find a real point of contact between the individual and the community. In so far as the matter pertains merely to mind, you can meet and mingle, but in all that is material there will be ceaseless conflict; it is the law of your nature. You have terms for certain idealists: you call them Socialists or Communists—they are well intentioned individuals who wander in

a wilderness of ignorance seeking always that meeting place for the individual and the community, not recognizing that they must tear men asunder, remove spirit and mind from the body if they would accomplish their dream. The individual and the community can have no point of meeting in this world in the material sense. In the spiritual sense only can they meet and blend. Desire forbids unity. Desire might be described as your God of War; it will preserve this ceaseless conflict between human beings.

MRS. TRAVERS SMITH (*putting the second question*)
—"Is the universe like a clock running down which will presently cease to 'go' through the equipartition of energy?"

ASTOR—Not as far as I know. The universe is so ordered that as a whole it is eternal, because all its innumerable particles die and are re-born. They each and all give it that eternal certainty. They cannot cease in their continual passing and re-passing from one form to another, so the world cannot die. Your earth will pass away but another will spring up and bear upon it this ceaseless succession of life in a myriad forms—all so similar yet not the same. The man who asks this question was limited in his imagination. He could not see that through continual change in the parts you attain permanence of an infinite kind for the whole.

MRS. TRAVERS SMITH (*putting the third question*)
—"Why, or how is it, if there are ghosts, which pre-suppose a fourth dimensional sense—which again scientifically is inconceivable as yet—do we hear of such things as haunted houses, etc., whereas in the Tower of London, the place *par excellence* of historical ghosts, still intact from Norman times, are such phenomena not seen or studied. There, if there are ghosts, they must lurk. Yet there we hear of nothing but commonplaces."

ASTOR—The question of a childish mind. A simple creature I should call the questioner. The phantom is merely the thought form cast away by the person who has died. It is an actual thing.

The sensitive individual can see it by assisting in its production. The sensitive treats it as you might treat a balloon: he fills it with air and so gives it shape and the visibility necessary for the mortal eye, but the mind and spirit of the dead person are not in this shape. Phantoms are summoned by thought and desire through a medium; that is, if the desire and thought are sufficiently intense. Phantoms sometimes appear spontaneously; that is because some tremendous emotion mingled with terror of mind gives them the necessary elements whereby they can be shaped. The Tower you speak of as a place that is not haunted. That is natural. It was a prison, I understand. It was a place where the brain of the prisoner was dulled by the miserable monotony of his lot; he reached the passionless state of despair. Despair is not an element which can be built into a phantom.

I do not desire to express any criticism of the replies that were received. I think that the experiments are worth recording.

I resumed my sitting with Mrs. Travers Smith and again got into touch with Johannes, as there were two questions of my own that I wished him to answer.

H.D.B.—Let us presume that during a man's lifetime he has physically and mentally loved, either in marriage or without it, a plurality of women; always with kindness and with a care that they should not suffer, in any preventable way, for having loved him. By this I do not mean love-making in the promiscuous animal sense, but I do mean completely with every sense. Is this regarded as an offence or a foolishness for which he will be required to pay a penalty in his after-life?

JOHANNES—Not by any means. The explanation of this is very simple. It all comes from the nature of the man. Some men are made like the strings of a lyre; they must be played on by many fingers, which will bring out many different readings of the music. It is quite permissible in the growth of the soul to admit many different qualities to the making

up of it. These women give him something, altogether make what he calls woman, and he gains and loses by his nature. This man will never seek the one and true affinity, but he will gain by diversity. She, the woman, may suffer. That is inevitable in the course of his wanderings among women. But if he cares for her, protects her and gives her a certain portion of his mental part, he has done her no wrong. She will have gained too. Over here no penalty awaits him except that his affinity is not yet born as a single soul, and he must wait before the other half completes him.

H.D.B.—What sort of sphere do politicians like Poincaré go to when they pass over? By this I mean the type of politician in any country who would ruthlessly be responsible for the physical death or mental misery of large multitudes of human beings.

JOHANNES—That is a criminal offence. One of the worst, and those men are sent back. Their growth is arrested and they have to become almost children again if they are to arrive at any stage of development of mind. Now I want to explain to you. What you call spheres are localities. Of course, they are different from your world. They are more or less imaginative. They are states of thought or imagination. A man such as you describe will be sent back to a realization of his ignorance and must humbly wait and learn from those who have been in a position which was on your earth quite obscure. Because such a man as this is really dominated by one thought; all the others have ceased to grow. He is a mental deformity.

The sitting closed.

The last two questions came from me quite spontaneously. They represented the light and shade of human life.

We lovers of intelligence and haters of hypocrisy and misery know our valuations, but it is worth while to confirm our standards from the point of view of other spheres.

Let us take the imposed human standard and laugh it to perdition.

The prescribed code of the miserable and hypocritical rulers, which is meekly accepted by the herd of fools, is that it is evil to love and be loved by a woman in the sweetness of passionate ecstasy, that it is good to be "patriotic" and blind and shatter human lives, and that it is right to blast the lives of lovers.

Such acceptances are despicable. They nauseate, sicken, and revolt the mind so that one walks through the world with a horrified contempt for the human cattle who inhabit it.

Despite the complexities with which mankind surrounds life, the supreme philosophy is simple. Love and kindness form the highest education, and cruelty and hardness are the devastating crimes of retrogression.

CHAPTER VIII

A DESCRIPTION OF THE SPIRIT LIFE

The end of physical desire—When the soul breaks away—Visits to the after-world—Johannes describes the spirits—Man is an embryo, an insect—The author's desire for fresh adventures, "until the flickering spark within me burns into the flame of knowledge."

November 14, 1923.

AT this sitting with Mrs. Travers Smith my questions to Johannes were framed in such a way that he might give me as much information as he desired about the conditions of the spirit existence on the plane he occupies.

H.D.B.—Is it a fact that a person, soon after death, is the same in every respect as he was before, except that he is bereft of his physical body, and that he possesses the same desires and inclinations, but that his desires are greatly intensified?

JOHANNES—This is not a question which can be

answered in a few words. You ask first when a man dies is he quite the same other than his physical body has separated from him? No. He is not quite the same because immediately after he has left his shell he becomes more or less mentally vivified. Everything is more intense to him. You ask about his desires. They are, in a manner, dead; that is, in the sense he had them on earth. They are entirely subdued for the time. It is not true that they separate from him as his body does. Quite the contrary. He carries them with him to his resting-place. But he is, at the time of the breaking off of the body, almost unconscious of them. They do not leave him at once or for a long time after he is dead. They remain with him and gradually dissolve, as it were, or rather change into something different. You know I told you that sex exists over here just as it does with you, but desire in that sense is changed. There is not that physical longing any more. The desire is for the perfecting of one mind with the other, which is a very different matter. At the moment of death the soul finds itself entirely unconscious beyond the feeling of sinking away. That is all. After that a period of rest, during which one is in the position of a sick person who is nursed and tended and kept from excitement and disturbance. There is no sudden change, except the great change of the loss of the physical body. This gives a sensation of nakedness and terror which is like a child's terror. It is really a second birth.

Here there was a slight pause.

JOHANNES—I forgot to mention one point. There is a third kind of body. It is merely memory and matter as I told you before. It is partly physical, partly belonging to the soul. This is cast off at death and only endures a very short time after. You must not suppose this is a body of desire. It is a shell like the physical body, and sudden destruction of the physical body hurts this shell.

Here Mrs. Travers Smith and I had a discussion on some points. We were suddenly interrupted by Johannes.

JOHANNES—I want to tell you that you must understand that a man is not bereft of anything whatever except his physical body when he dies, but he is changed because the desires and aspirations which come through the flesh have no longer that medium. Is that plain to you?

H.D.B.—Yes. Is it true that a great number of people do actively and consciously function in the spirit world during the time that the physical body is asleep on earth, and that they then come into close communication with the departed spirits of those they loved during earth life?

JOHANNES—Yes, it is true, but not quite as you probably think. In deep sleep it is not uncommon for human beings to pass over here and even to hold communication with those they loved. But you must not imagine the place in which they meet is the same as the sphere in which the discarnate souls live on. It is a meeting-place, or where the soul is sent immediately after death; a between-place as it were, where the atmosphere is not impossible for either the dead or living. This meeting and communing is not quite as you meet and commune in your sphere. You have talked of angels since you were a child, and also of spirits above the earth and atmosphere. These are really the organizers at this side, and there are some who help these meetings and speak almost as an amanuensis might between the living and the dead. In sleep the communication is very much nearer than that between you and the dead. It is clear and more convincing, and when this occurs it refreshes the sleeper. But it is not actual meeting in your sense. It is spiritual communication; the communication of minds discarnate for the moment, for in sleep you are frequently discarnate. It helps you when you pass on here. The experience is not entirely new and, as in life, you are sometimes conscious that something is not a new sensation, so when you die you find that the sensation is not entirely new. You have been without the body before in sleep.

H.D.B.—Would you give us some description of

the life on your sphere, and describe, if possible, the appearance of the spirit and the clothes—if any. Also, tell us of your studies and whether various languages are spoken—if they are acquired easily, and whether thought progresses quickly.

JOHANNES—I can tell you something about these points if you give me your full attention. First, I shall speak of the spheres and planes. You all talk of spheres on our side; so do we, because we can find no other word. These spheres are localities, but your inhabitation of a sphere comes chiefly from your own plane, which is a mental state. In every sphere there are several planes. That really means that you are living over here much as you live on your earth. On your earth you are living in different planes also. The drunkard and glutton is not on the same plane as the philosopher and artist. You understand that? These spheres are states of development, and as you proceed to the higher spheres you are becoming more and more mentally fitted for them. If you were flung from earth to one of the highest spheres the shock would be appalling. You would not be able to stand the intensification of your own sensations. So you begin on the sphere which your own mental plane has fitted for you. Your senses, after you pass over, are intensified, and you must gently grow accustomed to your new state. That is the first thing you must learn. The senses are all different even in our lowest spheres. Eyesight is more vivid, you see colours in a manner which is impossible on earth. Light becomes what would have been blinding to you, and darkness and shadow are more pit-like. Hearing in the same way becomes intensified. You can hear the movement of your own sphere, as it were, and music becomes a new sensation. So many different tones are added: even the sound of growth comes up towards you, unconsciously perhaps, but if you listen you can hear it. Touch too, is more delicate: your finger-ends are more serviceable to you in life than you have any idea of, but here your touch, which seems to you to be a mere physical

attribute, is so delicate that it almost conveys mental ideas to you without the help of the actual mind. This intensification of the senses is your first impression, and it gives a sense of intoxicating delight after the first shock. I feel it very difficult to explain the actual life to you. Conditions are different. You must understand that here there is a great deal which is perfectly natural and not acquired, which while you are alive is only acquired with great effort. You begin on a much higher level. As for language, there is only one tongue here. Development proceeds very rapidly, and a plurality of languages hinders you. I know, however, that it will be hard to make you feel what I mean when I say that while our language is the same, our ideas actually form a language of their own. I mean that you understand people in your own plane much more easily than those on higher or lower levels. The actual language, however, is the sound by which we make each other understand, and is the same for all. Now you ask me about clothes and appearance. Some stupid people believe that the soul is a fluid, that it has no shape, and streams about. That is absurd. Every soul has its own form. It has formed itself during the earth life, and it comes to us as it made itself. We seemed to each other to be men and women as you are; and as to our garments, we do wear garments which convey the same impression as yours. They are merely veils for the mental part, something that gives clothing and appearance to the mental form; but you need not believe that when you pass on you live so differently as you expect. These garments are not made in the market as yours are; they really proceed largely from the idea of the individual. They help to demonstrate the mind as yours do. You ask about houses. That is very difficult to explain to you. We live much more in communities, and many of our houses are large places where persons of the same mentality keep together for mutual help. Now I must tell you that this word *help* means that each is gaining from the other.

Here there was a pause, which my aching hand needed.

JOHANNES—Do not delude yourself about all this. You are a small embryo which is sent first into your world and later through a series of worlds much more intense and vivid than the one before. You are really an insect which has many different developments, and you are given your portion of the spirit of life merely to create more of it for yourself to give it stature and dignity, and bring it to its full development. Each individual is only part of the whole. Can you imagine a tiny cell imbued with a small portion of life-force? When you come over here you have gone such a short distance that you are not much more than a tiny cell, and your work is to expand yourself, to build up a spirit which will become more intuitive as you pass on; more guided by the spirit—not the mind. When we talk of work over here, that is our work. It is as natural as food is to you, and here you are given the best means of developing that spirit. You may write or paint, or speak to your fellow-men, or make music—whichever you are best suited for—but it all goes for one purpose, for the building up of the portion of spirit within you. Your Christ said many things that sprang out of His own innate knowledge. One about the talent. You know what He meant—surely not a mere earthly talent, but the building up of a spirit from the spirit.

It is impossible to review the statements of Johannes on the life on his sphere, because the plane is one beyond our imagination.

That the life there possesses all the attractions of emotions which become intensified is alluring.

His arguments have intelligence. The process of our development must surely be gradual. We are merely infants. We have so much to learn. We shall have to go through centuries of experience and acquisition of knowledge before we can presume to imagine ourselves fitted for the intensified stage of the higher spheres.

The assumption that we live our first puny lives on

an excessively material earth and think that we are qualified to reach a culminating point and immediately enter a seventh heaven is not in accord with the aspirations of refined intelligence. It would not be desirable even from the point of view of missed experience and thwarted emotion. The theory of immediate transition to a culminating arrival is crude and inartistic. It is a clumsy desire which spends its thrills too quickly. It is the arrogance of a low intelligence.

I have sought every possible experience in life, excepting only the experiments which I have felt intuitively to be foul and retrogressive. I have no wish for the emotion of fresh adventures to cease. If the prospect in front of me is that of soaring beyond this small world into the unknown realms of the universe, I shall open my eyes to a new and magnificent vista.

There is no child born that does not desire to live through its experience. That is instinctive. So then do I desire to complete my knowledge of this plane and go on and on through other spheres until the flickering spark within me burns into the flame of knowledge..

CHAPTER IX

MENTAL INTERCOURSE BETWEEN TWO WORLDS

An exhilarating day—Why the spirits come back—Earth children—Esoteric intelligence—The hidden God—Foretelling the future.

November 27, 1923.

IF one refers to Chapter IX of Book I it will be found that the events recorded there happened on the same date as the short philosophical discourse with Johannes recorded here. It was an exhilarating and complete day. I had spent an astounding morning in Hertfordshire, the afternoon was occupied in discomfiting stupidity at St. George's Hall

(recorded in Chapter XII), and five o'clock tea was taken with Mrs. Travers Smith in Chelsea, followed by a discussion on the esoteric intelligence; later on a humanly emotional argument after dinner at Dorincourt, lasting until eleven p.m., and then, in splendid solitude, working until the early hours of the following day on creative writing. My mind was so furiously alive that it was only grudgingly I conceded to it the necessary sustenance of sleep, surrendering the hours of consciousness to refresh me for new adventure.

At this sitting with Mrs. Travers Smith I had made a note beforehand of two questions I wished to put to Johannes.

H.D.B.—Will you explain to me, Johannes, why does the spirit care to find mental intercourse with people of the earth after it has left the earth life for a higher plane?

JOHANNES—That is obvious to you if you think a little. When the spirit passes on here it retains its earth memories for a time. It may at first suffer from complete oblivion because of the shock of the tearing asunder that drove it across here. But when it has recovered itself it retains its memories of earth and for a time it suffers from great loneliness; you must try to imagine the state of the new-born soul here, gradually beginning to use its senses. It is like a child learning to walk. It is hampered by its accentuated hearing and seeing. It actually suffers from this acceleration of its energies, but all the time, as a current flowing beneath the surface, its earth memories are there, and it has the natural longing for those who were dear to it. It is this which drives it to every possible opening which can let in light on the continued existence of those it loved on earth. Do you mean me to speak of the desire which drives a spirit as advanced as I am, or is it the personal side which puzzles you?

H.D.B.—I should like to know why it is that you should desire mental intercourse with us?

JOHANNES—That is easily explained. At my stage we are given earth children in charge, and we must

of necessity hover about your atmosphere, and we are told further that we may tell you as much as you can follow and understand if you care to listen. We are interested in our children. They are given to us to help and teach, and some are difficult scholars. They prefer to remain deaf when we try to impress them. My child (Mrs. Travers Smith) has listened to my teaching, and gradually I shall increase her powers and her knowledge until a still more experienced guide takes her in charge. Then I shall be sent to another earth child whose mind is suited to me, for we guides are always chosen because of the harmony of mind between ourselves and our children.

MRS. TRAVERS SMITH—Why was I not sent a musical guide since music has so great an appeal to me?

JOHANNES—You will have one before long.

JOHANNES (*referring to H.D.B.*)—Now why does he take such a keen interest in me? He has guides of his own who are in harmony with him.

H.D.B.—I take an interest in you, Johannes, because of the rapid and intelligent answers you give to my questions.

JOHANNES—I can speak quickly because your brain gives me a chance. The material is like quicksilver, ever moving and dividing, and able to pass rapidly from one subject to another.

H.D.B.—Is there an esoteric intelligence in the spirit world governing or guiding other spirits? And if so, how is it regarded by lower intelligences under its care?

JOHANNES—Do you mean by this a first cause—a god?

H.D.B.—Yes, or an assembly of intelligences.

JOHANNES—I should like to explain the whole scheme, but that would take a long time. There is an infinite number of grades of intelligence here, and beyond that intuitive intelligences more advanced than we are. As to the angels and archangels you speak of, you are reasonable in supposing that the esoteric intelligences above your ordinary mortal life exist and organize our schemes over here. That is

so. The great first cause which you call God is still hidden from me; I do not expect to enter into the understanding of Him until a much later period. Here in my sphere we have rulers and generals, as you have, who are better fitted for their task than your supermen are, because they have certainty where you have uncertainty, and we acknowledge their power and obey. You understand that these are the sons of God, and have passed through their full experiences. They have proved the heights and depths that they may be fitted to rule over those who are merely ascending the mountain or remaining in the valley.

H.D.B.—Can you foretell the future with regard to earth matters?

JOHANNES—Can I foretell or can it be foretold?

H.D.B.—Can you or any other guide foretell it?

JOHANNES—Guides have made a special study of the science which permits them to look along the line. They are as important to us as your astronomers are to you, but they are more certain than your astronomers, who frequently arrive at conclusions without sifting the right line of evidence. They get in a wrong tract, whereas we cannot. I mean those among us who care to use this power. Your clairvoyants have guides who have made a special study of the reading of the future. I have found it interesting, but I devoted my time to the large scheme of things and have not taken that special study enough in account. Astor can read further ahead than I. I do not find it as interesting as he does. He, of course, comes from a country where in the temples divination was used. In my land we used only one or two simple forms of this.

The sitting, which lasted five minutes, ended.

The reasons given for the desire of mental intercourse between the spirits on another plane and human beings on this earth are logical and acceptable. It is only natural that spirits which have recently passed to another plane should desire to communicate with those they loved on earth.

In addition to this, according to Johannes, certain guides are appointed in the spirit world to give us knowledge. They may tell us as much as we can understand. Therefore it depends upon the intelligence of the human beings as to the extent their minds are capable of receiving.

My question on the esoteric intelligence that may exist on other spheres was concisely answered.

It is an arrogant presumption for us babes of the earth to imagine that we shall arrive at a full comprehension of the scheme of existence until we have acquired centuries of experience and knowledge in the higher spheres.

CHAPTER X

THE PROBLEM OF ETERNITY

Three questions from the author's son—What happens when the spirit has reached the pinnacle?—Johannes on religious creeds—Faith does not grow by the wayside—Einstein's theory of Relativity—Life on other planets—A joke that brought a sane answer.

January 1, 1924.

THERE had been a gap of over a month since my last sitting with Mrs. Travers Smith. She had been away travelling and I had been occupied by other work.

It was fitting that we met again to open the New Year.

I had in my notecase a letter from my son Dennis, which he had written to me a week or two earlier from Downside. This letter contained three questions.

H.D.B.—I want to put to you, Johannes, three questions at the request of my son Dennis. The first is: If, in after-life, we go on progressing, what happens when we have achieved the pinnacle?

JOHANNES—I can reply to that very easily, because

it is a matter which concerns the second death that occurs later to the soul. The highest pinnacle of knowledge is achieved when the mind has arrived at a rightness which permits it to pass into the air and be dissolved. Then spirit alone exists. It passes into the intuitive existence and there knowledge is of no service. Life becomes a life of intuition entirely.

H.D.B.—Have you passed through the stage of the second death?

JOHANNES—No, after two thousand years I have arrived only at the stage of collective memories, but not yet at the stage of intuition. I could not guide a human being if I were purely spirit. I have much to learn still.

H.D.B.—The second question Dennis wishes me to put is: How can eternity be explained?

JOHANNES—My dear sir, eternity is about you and around you always. It is the circle that is an apt symbol. It is the ever creating, ever moving mass that will ever change but never cease to be. That is what you call eternity. It is not the everlasting life of the soul alone, but the everlasting existence of the universe. This will always be the same so far as we know. It cannot disappear so far as knowledge is given to us.

H.D.B.—The third question from Dennis is: Does God expect initiated Christians to conform to the creed of the Catholic or other churches?

JOHANNES—Really I cannot follow you here for I do not quite grasp your creeds. It is not essential for any person who is alive to conform to any creed. Creeds are given you because they are useful props for those of you who are too weak of sinew to stand alone. Otherwise there is no value in a creed. But creed involves faith, which is of value to the soul; more value than any of you can possibly understand. It is not a matter of real moment whether faith takes the shape of a creed or not. The main point always is the actual shaping of a belief in the soul. It helps both soul and body, and wonders could be wrought on the earth if faith were a plant which grew easily

by the roadside. Unfortunately, it is not so. Faith is a growth of care. It is a rare exotic.

H.D.B.—Here is a question that has suddenly occurred to me. Will you tell us how you regard Einstein's theory of Relativity and whether his theory applies to other spheres.

JOHANNES—It does apply on other spheres, for there what affects you affects them also. You are only a part of the whole. You see until Einstein came forward with his idea you were applying yours in a very ignorant manner, for this feeling that light darted forward and pierced the darkness was, of course, absurd. Einstein has caught the idea much more clearly than any of his predecessors, but he has not been able to see the whole, for someone is going to give you a great deal more which will arise out of Einstein's discovery. Light is a more subtle essence than you imagine, and the position of the planets will vary very much before you are able to count the actual distances between them. There are many forks in the bend of light, and besides this the eye is deceived by the luminosity. It cannot actually count the distance because the eye, as it is when you are on earth, is still a very imperfect instrument. Einstein has put you on the track of the science of light which will now go forward. But it will be a very long time before you reach any valuable knowledge of a science which is still young. It is only just born and what has to come is difficult and involved because you will have to guess at the truth by reason of this defective sight of yours.

H.D.B.—You know, Johannes, that neither Mrs. Travers Smith nor I know anything whatever about Einstein's theory of Relativity.

JOHANNES—I know. I have a perfectly clear mind on this subject. I could talk to you about it for a very long time. But as it is I hardly know where to begin. It involves so much careful training of your minds. I cannot help feeling amused at human discoveries. They seem so simple over here. It seems to me that Einstein is in the same position as

the human being who discovered that the world was round. His theory is quite as elementary. But when that idea was first suggested men held up their hands in astonishment. Light is going to be one of the most exciting points for the scientific men of the future. They will gradually begin to understand that the stars are not in the least as they were pictured by men before Einstein's time. The whole map of the heavens will change, and the values of rays will be understood as they never have been before. The directions of light will alter again and again.

H.B.D.—Can you tell us whether life exists on other planets? Are they inhabited?

JOHANNES—Surely you know there are other worlds such as yours. You are one stage on the journey. There are other stages. I have told you, my child, that the younger stars which look blue to you are the more advanced habitations of the soul. The older stars are less vital and those humans who have not developed what was given them on your planet are sent to those dimmer worlds where they can develop better as things go slower there. When your communicators talk to you of incessant work, they mean that the vitality of their existences is increased by living on a younger and more vital planet where things necessarily go much faster than here. You understand that, I think.

Here the sitting ended.

In dealing with the first question of the pinnacle of progression Johannes again refers to the second death, when the soul and mind have acquired all knowledge and then dissolve into pure spirit. Life then is all intuition.

The emotions of this condition are impossible to conceive. If one could essay the attempt, it is perhaps the merging into the supreme, where it is possible to watch the whole revolving wonders of the universe at a glance.

As for eternity, that has always been beyond the comprehension of the human intellect. Our minds

cannot realize it. It is the first wonder of childhood and the last wonder of life.

Yet, relatively it is less difficult to comprehend eternity than to imagine there is no eternity. Take the alternative of a complete NOTHING.

We cannot attempt to realize what NOTHING means. Let anyone try to imagine this. No world, no skies, no stars, no universe, no life, no soul, no spirit, no sound, no movement, no atom, no particle, no space, no vacuum. NOTHING. The reflection staggers and confounds the mind far more than the problem of eternity. For eternity we do experience in a sort of way, whilst Nothing does not exist.

The question I put to Johannes on Einstein's theory of Relativity was a suddenly conceived joke. Life is very short and there is a multitude of subjects of which I am entirely ignorant. Einstein's theory is one. With deaf ears I had heard it casually and superficially discussed but that is all, and that was what prompted me to put the question, but I am not ashamed to say I did not even know to what his theory applied or anything whatever about it.

Therefore it was amusing. At the same time it was a remarkable test.

Where does the ridiculous theory of telepathy come in here?

Neither I nor Mrs. Travers Smith understood anything of the subject and yet the reply was given in a second and with marvellous rapidity. How is it possible to account for this?

The pencil script of this sitting with its lightning scrawl is an interesting curiosity.

CHAPTER XI

THE APPROACH TO ETERNAL TRUTH

Oscar Wilde on the author's book "The Eternal Masquerade": garish collection of brilliantly coloured rags; refreshing ancient oddments; history in a fresh costume mumming its way through an infinite number of royal dummies; the value of the epigram; this person . . . has not lied as sincerely as we could wish—H.D.B. teaches Wilde a lesson—Johannes sums up his philosophy—The besetting sin of man—World without fear—The wretched slothful spirit of Oscar Wilde.

January 7, 1924.

THE final sitting, so far as this volume is concerned, took place with Mrs. Travers Smith at Chelsea. I was getting desperately tired, not of the study, which is the most fascinating theme the mind can conceive, but of the physical effort of varied studies which had exhausted me.

On this particular morning Mrs. Travers Smith telephoned me and said that she had received an amusing communication through from Oscar Wilde in which he had criticized my book "The Eternal Masquerade."

Since Wilde had exhibited his savage, but artificially flowered wit at the expense of Hardy, Meredith, Shaw, Bennett, Moore, and Joyce, there was no reason why I should expect to escape his icily satiric castigation. Not, of course, that it could affect me, except to inspire the humour of interest.

Mrs. Travers Smith handed me the script containing his criticism. Here it is:

OSCAR WILDE—The inward man is entirely swamped by man's outside. This is a garish collection of brilliantly coloured rags which have the sadness of cast-off and worn-out ideas about them. But here I find added to this dimness a bright polish, almost as brilliant and oppressively clean as that

which used to decorate the foot when I trod the pavements of Bond Street. It has the effect of the long dead fancy ball. For faded perfumes hang about the garments, and all the faded passions also. They really have become almost too dim to be recognized; but from their delicate decay I get an essence. It is the mixture of spirit and heavy scent, I think. It is the modern method of refreshing ancient oddments and presenting them to the public with an attitude which savours of the market place. It seems to me that history has caught on an entirely new colour. It used in my time to consist of volumes bound in gloomy black and used to pass away those hours so completely misspent in the schoolroom of our youth. Now I see it in a different light; for here it marches along, and in each successive chapter of the work before me I see history in a fresh costume mumming its way through an infinite number of royal dummies . . . (*a pause*). But I must continue a little longer. For I should like to speak about the marvellously modern mind which compiled this book. It seems to me that the author has persuaded himself that he is at the same time an historian and a critic of fashion. Do I mistake him? For if he considers himself a writer of the epigram I fear the gentleman had better withdraw the work. Dear lady, surely you, who have a mind full of humour, can understand the exact value of the epigram. You cannot mistake any imitation for what flows from the mind entirely freely. The epigram is the child of a mind which takes delight in setting the truth before its audience in the garb of a lie. This person, who has striven with all his being to become an epigrammist, has presented the lie in the garb of truth. He has not lied as sincerely as we could wish. I feel that as I was considered by the public to be a creator of epigram that it is only fair to advise this gentleman on the subject. Let him always be sure that at the basis of what he says there is truth, that is, as far as the public estimates that virtue, and let him send it forth clad as the lie, that is, the perfect and conscientious lie, not the lie taken lightly. For as I

have said in one of my works, the lie should be nothing if not conscientious.

I think that Wilde's criticism is quite amusing and the criticism certainly savours of the Wildean form of expression. His post-mortem literary reviews are interesting because of that. They are, in fact, infinitely more alive than the revival of his antiquated plays.

He has stimulated me to reply to him, with the brevity of the flash of lightning which dispels the shade.

Without advancing the argument seriously, one could here assume the survival of personality. For again Wilde displays his colossal egoism and his cultivated snobbery when he regards himself as "considered by the public to be the creator of epigram." From which it is apparent that in his lazy ignorance Wilde had never even read William Congreve. Any one scene of Congreve's plays contains more epigrams of quality than the whole of Wilde's Victorian insignificancies of still-born wit. Wilde was of the ephemeral type that sparkled for a while in the hey-day of hypocrisy and died out—died out both spiritually and mentally. He is still obsessed by the decorated lie. He is dated by the generation, which he typified so evilly.

If it were he speaking, it is evidence that his development has been stationary. He remains so bemused by the world of thought that has leapt past him that he still clings to the ill-conceived and taudily gowned lie in preference to the naked but perfectly formed elegance of truth.

It is unchivalrous to torture a soul in dimness, but even the shades must be taught their lesson. I had the misfortune to witness a performance of "A Woman of No Importance" two years ago. It was pathetic in its puerility. Again when "The Importance of Being Earnest" was revived it was found to be unrevivable. Such plays are of no use; they are lifeless. They evidence the decay which already existed in the mind of their perpetrator.

After the amusement of reading Wilde's opinion of me, it was a relief to get into another atmosphere.

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Before opening the sitting to converse with Johannes I showed Mrs. Travers Smith a schedule of all the various subjects that had been discussed with him.

JOHANNES—I am glad that he has come again. It gives me a chance of speaking.

MRS. T.S.—Did you hear all that H.D.B. said with reference to his book?

JOHANNES—I heard all that he said to you. I expect him to give my ideas to the world. Would he like me now to sum up, in a sense, what is to come as far as I know it?

H.D.B.—I should be very pleased if you would, Johannes.

JOHANNES—I am quite sure that this book will be of value because my philosophy is one which will fit in with many ideas which are not strictly Christian and it will make appeals to those who do not believe. I feel quite confident that this will arouse an interest in people who have never listened to our words before. Because—listen to this carefully—it is impossible to get any truth out to you unless through a mind which gives us some foundation for our own thoughts. You can understand that where there is any definite prejudice of a narrow outlook we cannot get the truth into words, because the mind will not take the impress of our ideas. You and my child (Mrs. Travers Smith) are open-minded, therefore the impress is definite here.

H.D.B.—Will you tell me which method of communication you regard as of the most value? The sittings held in a séance with several people present, where physical manifestations take place, or the sittings such as those we hold with you which are purely mental?

JOHANNES—I am equally interested in both forms of communication for one would be absolutely useless without the other. We, on our side, are

discussing this question as earnestly as you are, and we believe that it is essential in order to bring conviction to the world to perfect the use of what you call ectoplasm, for, my dear sir, you know as well as I do that the eye brings more conviction than the ear. It is, as a matter of fact, a coarser instrument. The ear is more closely connected with the mind. But for the foundation of our communications with the world it is more important that the eye should be convinced in the beginning. I believe in the course of a few years there will be an immense increase in ectoplasmic forms. This is our first care over here, for you know that very few on your side are willing to listen to our philosophy, and even if we find a ready audience for our discourses we cannot always find a suitable instrument. The instrument causes great confusion of thought, both on your side and on our side. I want to explain to you further that this confusion is greatly increased by some communicators who have to call in the aid of the guide at all sittings. Then the guide is a bridge and has to bear the approaching parties from each side. He gets confused by the call from here and from your side as well, and often the communication is a combination of the words of the communicator from our side and the thoughts of the medium on yours. For the medium cannot completely exclude his own thoughts. They will come rapping at the door and push in, in spite of the resistance on the medium's part. We are now discussing how this difficulty can be overcome. It is a very great stumbling-block, for we often find you reading half your own ideas and half our words, and all this rather injures our efforts as you can imagine.

H.D.B.—Can you tell us how long spirit communication has existed between your world and ours?

JOHANNES—The communication from this side to yours has been established from the very beginning in different forms. Of course this particular method is the most highly developed and far more difficult

for us than any other. You may ask why so many persons can accomplish a little of this writing and why they have so many difficulties and disappointments, and further why sometimes they are injured by their communicators. It is really for want of a guide that these injuries occur. Not because they are in touch with evil influences, but more especially because the ignorant influences which use them cannot handle the mind as it should be handled. It is infinitely difficult to use a medium of the mind without hurting it. We guides keep those away who would use our children roughly and tear the precious consciousness that must be used as long as life endures.

H.D.B.—What I would like to know is this. If spirit communication has existed through the ages, do you consider that it has been developed or has progressed to a finer degree to-day than at any other time?

JOHANNES—I have already said that spirit communication has been established from the beginning, but it has not been recognized as it should because added to it in the mind of early people was the sense of fear which is an entirely artificial sense. It should not exist. It was set up against all this because it was essential that man should be ready to take the spade in the morning and concentrate his mind on the conscious world around him. Evolution has been very slow as your time goes, but the result of evolution through many centuries is that now it is less important for man to occupy himself entirely with his spade. Thought is a more useful tool than the actual thing created for the daily need. In this way your studies are beginning to become really an acceptable asset to those who are alive. As time goes on thought will become more and more a reality to you. After a comparatively short time you will establish as a scientific fact that thought creates vibrations, and that will open up a new vista for us. Really that advance is very close to you. As it is you have made progress through the fact that thought is now recognized as a marketable

article. We have always to approach you through the mouth first, because of your feeble condition that demands nourishment of the material nature. Now you come to recognize it is a scientific fact that it exists, and is what you term reality. A thing which can be used for almost any purpose since it has created every material thing in your world. Then I say that your communications will become more easily arranged and more convincing and you will have made a considerable step forward.

H.D.B.—Whilst you were talking, Johannes, a thought occurred to me. You made a reference to the sense of fear. I regard fear as a man's devastating instinct. Could we not create a beautiful world here if we could banish fear from our minds?

JOHANNES—My dear sir, you live on fear if you only knew it. Undoubtedly your world would be a more beautiful place if fear were extinguished. But consider the result. Your world would not continue without it. It is the whip, or goad, which stirs man to attempt all that is really worth while. You cannot overvalue it. It has many forms, but the fundamental form is the fear of extinguishing the spark of life, which may be done in many ways, but none so effectively as shutting off the channels through which the actual food that nourishes man comes to him. Fear compelled Adam to use the spade and fear gives you all that you enjoy at the present moment. You may have inherited much, but all that you have has come to you through fear. Do you understand the immense value of what you despise?

H.D.B.—Your reply comes to me as a complete surprise. It is somewhat confounding. Not because of its logical exactitude as applied to earthly emotions, but because it is opposed to my conception of what this world might be. By this I can only assume that since you have said that fear is an entirely artificial sense then one must suppose that it is only natural for it to function in this entirely artificial world. (*A slight pause.*) Another question has

suddenly crossed my mind because of something Mrs. Travers Smith and I discussed before this conversation began. It is a personal question. What is your opinion of Oscar Wilde? Tell me how you regard his life on earth, how he is regarded on your sphere, and what sort of existence he now leads?

JOHANNES—I am indeed pleased to have your question. I have been wishing to speak about him, for at all times when he wished to come here I opposed him. I have a very deep contempt for him. First, as he was when he was alive on earth, and now when he has cast off his body. He cannot even yet cast it off completely. Its wretched particles, decayed as they are, cling to him still. In life he had every cause to become spiritual. He had inherited a tendency, unhealthy to a point, which drove him to practices which caused his ruin socially, but for his spirit this was the best possible chance of revival. A curious mind his. Teeming with ideas, all of a kind that worked for his downfall. For he had no thought of the man within him, which was absolutely cramped by his egotism, choking him to a point in which he could not spread his soul at all. And after this great chance came to him, he let fatigue overcome him, and gluttony and that lassitude which is so hopeless a failing in man.¹ So when he arrived here he was really half-dead. His body clung to him still and even now he comes here and speaks again at this table, in half-tones of envy, because he cannot shake off the lassitude which ruined him in life. He has never given his vital part a chance, and, though he cannot flatter himself that he is a great sinner, he may reasonably be said to be one of the most completely slothful souls that have come to our side.

H.D.B.—Tell us what sort of condition he now exists in.

JOHANNES—He was sent to a less vital sphere, and now instead of trying to rouse his energies he stands

¹ After his release from prison Wilde sank back into gluttony and lassitude on the Continent. This I obtained from personal friends.

there wailing at his conditions. And so he will stand for many a year yet.

H.D.B.—There is one last question I feel that I must put to you, Johannes. It is one of infinite significance. You know that I realize the value of faith, knowing that without faith nothing can be achieved. No inventor could make discoveries unless he had faith in his ideas which eventually become materialized and accepted. How then does faith apply to psychic studies and ideas?

JOHANNES—It is the most important point of all.

H.D.B.—How then is it possible for us to accept the protested faiths of the various religions of man, whilst their ministers support, and encourage by their acceptance, the iniquitous evil of war?

JOHANNES—Yes, I think I understand your difficulty. Religions—creeds I should call them—are absolutely necessary for the greater mass of human beings. But why, you may ask, reasonably, when God's creatures are there to teach without these dogmas of man? The reason is that a sign or symbol of the whole must be given to the human being, in order that he may preserve an ideal which takes him a short way on the road of faith. The danger in all religions is that they destroy themselves in that they embody doctrines and permit matters to exist which are contrary to all human reasoning. And yet this symbol must be there, because man must always be a creature of the moment, and he cannot do better than to form any kind of faith while yet he is alive. I should like to speak of this question of war, for I have explained that it is the *besetting sin of man*. Religion veils this crime as the act of heroes. It cannot do otherwise, for it is powerless to work against the temper of a nation. But you must not believe that because it cannot crush out the worst of evils that religion is not an essential part of man. It is best for him to try to keep a light in front of him when he is walking along a dark corridor, even if the light gutters at times. And so it is with the mass of people in your world. They have so little light that

even the guttering candle of the Christian faith is the only thing of beauty that is opened to them. Therefore do not despise it too deeply. You, who can lean on ideals of a finer nature, need not be merciless to those who require the paper flower because they have not a garden in which they can grow the rose. I do not defend any of your creeds, knowing as I do that they embody war, deceit, and avarice. But they also embody a little faith, and that must be taken as the nearest approach to the eternal truth.

It is almost impossible for me to convey the extraordinary effect of this purely mental sitting. It was all so amazing. The actual sitting occupied considerably less than an hour. Writers will understand and appreciate the significance of this.

The philosophy of Johannes is so explicit that I do not think it is necessary for me to review it. It was chiefly the expression of himself with interpolations on my part. He dealt with the degrees, the valuations, and the progress of psychic phenomena. He explained the necessity of physical demonstration, which, he says, is essential to convince the world. He dealt with the emotion of fear in such a surprising way as I could never have dealt with it. He poured contempt on the gluttony of Wilde, delivered a brilliant essay on faith, and displayed a fine tolerance of the various creeds of man which was beyond that which I could conceive in my present state of indignation at their application.

Humility does not exist in my nature so far as material standards are concerned, but I do feel the quality of humility when I record the great words spoken and conceived by a higher intelligence than mine. It appears that the prince of knowledge on this earth is merely a suckling at the breast of the universe.

If during the stress of this study I have achieved faith, that alone is of inestimable value. To use the last word of Johannes as recorded in this book, it is "the nearest approach of the eternal truth."

BOOK IV
THE PITIFUL NEGATIVE
AND
THE SUPREME AFFIRMATIVE¹

CHAPTER XII

THE CASE FOR THE SCIENTIFIC SCEPTIC

The casual attitude of scientific men—Six weeks to solve a riddle known only to God—Our author takes delight in chastising an American investigator—Mr. Malcolm Bird and the broken thread—Spiritual circus—Mr. Bird and his grandmother—The peg of stupidity—A mean little American hustler—What happened at the Mr. X test—A scandalous decision.

December, 1923.

THE various experiences recorded here represent the result of nine months concentrated investigation and study of the greatest problem in life. If so much can be discovered in so short a time, is it not reasonable to assume that the road to vaster fields of knowledge is now within sight?

This accumulated evidence proves, in my opinion, beyond all doubt that it is possible for human beings to communicate with the spirit intelligences of another world.

Some of our great scientists have already accepted this fact. It is now for science as a whole either

¹ It should be noted that the logical and philosophical summary contained in Book IV was written before Valiantine came to England. The results of his visit, briefly and coldly recorded in Book II, confirm in an amazing manner every word that appears in these concluding chapters.

to offer some natural explanation for the phenomena or to devote its energies to the study and development of it.

Apart from the spiritual value, the communication with higher spirit intelligences may prove of material value to our world, and when this new branch of science is recognized, the studies and experiments must be made by men of sensitive intellect.

It is useless and foolish to approach the subject with preconceived ideas and prejudices. Excluding Sir Oliver Lodge and Sir William Barrett, both of whom have given years of patient work to psychical research, the attitude of many other scientific investigators has been painfully casual and painfully stupid.

It is this ridiculous attitude, showing a miserable mentality, that takes me to the early part of 1923 when Mr. J. Malcolm Bird, the associate editor of the *Scientific American*, was appointed by that newspaper to investigate psychic phenomena. A trip to Europe was arranged for him, and Mr. Bird allowed himself a schedule of six long weeks—February 10 to March 28—to get inside the riddle, the solution of which is known only to God.

Every assistance was given him in England and on the Continent by Mr. and Mrs. Hewart McKenzie of the British College of Psychic Science, and by others interested in psychic research. This is a courtesy which is always extended to *bona fide* students and investigators.

Mr. J. Malcolm Bird took notes of the séances he attended and has since published them in America in a book which he calls "My Psychic Adventures." His adventures in Europe consist of less than ten experiences and in not one instance is he able to discover any deception. His attitude throughout, however, is prejudiced and deliberately antagonistic.

The book is worth reviewing and analysing, because it represents the mentality of the great majority of sceptical materialists. And in chastising Mr. Bird I chastise the herd.

As a scientific study his book is puerile and value-

less, as a psychological work it is stupid, and from the literary point of view it is dull, ill-written, and vulgar.

In his occasional moments of honesty, Mr. Bird damns himself completely. He states that, as representing the *Scientific American*, he confines himself to one problem, which he is foolish enough to regard as the major issue. He says that he can regard only as evidential "the occurrence of physical phenomena." He therefore places a supreme importance on the lowest possible form of intelligence or manifestation.

By this statement he proclaims himself as one of the stupid herd which also includes many spiritualists, whose minds are so undeveloped that they can only be impressed by what they can see and feel.

Whenever Mr. Bird's mind is forced to contest mental phenomena it collapses ignominiously. With him the physical only provides emotion. His estimation of mediums is affected by this, and he is unable to appreciate mental values. He protrudes a flashy survey of the obvious as a study of a subject that demands deep and intuitive thought.

In one chapter, in which he describes phenomena of insignificant intellectual interest, he waxes quite enthusiastic and, against his will, he is thrilled. The chapter is headed "A Brilliant Session with Powell." But it is necessary to point out to Mr. Bird that the conception of brilliance designates the intelligence of the appraiser. What may be brilliance to him may be boredom to others.

With avidity he describes at great length how he tied up the medium Evan Powell so that he could not move.

Physical phenomena occurred and Mr. Bird forms the opinion that "Powell is the best of the English mediums." But even this concession is affected by the material thread of doubt. He roped Mr. Powell's body to a chair and tied his thumbs together with a thread which he sealed with wax. At the end of the séance, during which he describes the physical manifestations as remarkable, he finds Mr. Powell

still securely roped. Whilst he is releasing him from his bondage he notices that the sealed thread is broken and is very annoyed that he did not happen to observe the act of breaking it. He makes the illuminating remark on the thread: "I have revolved this incident in my mind more than any other episode of my stay abroad."

Splendid! One pictures poor Mr. Bird spending sleepless nights thinking about the thread. There is no necessity for pity, however, as later in the chapter he acknowledges that he doubts his own arguments.

As far as I know, Mr. Evan Powell is a genuine medium; certainly he succeeded in impressing Mr. Bird. That is where he and I differ on standards. Physical phenomenon does not appeal to me because it has no mental value. It is not on this plane that we can arrive at a higher intelligence.

Mr. Bird writes about a séance which he attended and at which the medium was Ada Bessinet, of Toledo, Ohio. I cannot express any opinion of Miss Bessinet, since I have no knowledge of her, but she is written of as a medium of repute. He confesses himself astonished at the physical phenomena which took place. Singing and direct voices were produced, but he deliberately refrains from giving an analytical survey or any attempt at logical explanation. This is a sheer exhibition of weakness. He maintains an evasive attitude, saying that when he chose to sit on one chair he afterwards wished he had chosen another, so that from some other angle he might have more carefully observed those things he fails to explain. He appears to be befogged and consumed by doubt. Time after time he confesses himself as beaten, and he endeavours to relieve this by occasional touches of ponderous humour. He elatedly pounces on one insignificant trifle which might be regarded as doubtful and magnifies it to the disregard of a whole mass of evidence which he finds is inexplicable.

Some mediums, who are not independent of money, naturally receive fees for their services.

Mediums must live, just as Mr. Bird must live. But Mr. Bird is exceedingly offensive in referring to this point. He says that he has heard "that Miss Bessinet averages thirty-five dollars a week in fees, which seems to him pretty good pay." Here the real niggardly mentality is indeed shown, especially when bricklayers in America earn one hundred dollars a week.

The attempt to discredit genuine mediums because they accept fees and the stupid assumption that spiritualism is a money-making game is iniquitous. Why shouldn't they be recompensed for their time and for the devotion of their lives and powers to the study? The Archbishop of Canterbury receives £10,000 a year as the medium of the Church, although Christ was content with infinitely less.

From personal experience I can state that the genuine mediums are not mercenary or material and have a profound respect for the spiritual issue. During my investigations the total amount I paid in fees comes to less than £20.

Mr. Bird in his impudent, scampering study is not concerned with mental factors; he avows that the only demonstration which would be likely to convince him would be some form of physical phenomena. Yet when, at some vulgar séance, which he describes, held by some simple people in the suburbs (no fees) where tin-cans and drums and four-legged stools and metal horns jumped about the room, he even then did not seem to like it.

Such miserable and irritating exhibitions would nauseate my conception of spirit intelligence, but strangely enough this was exactly what Mr. Bird said he wished to see demonstrated. He contradicts himself. It is difficult to know what his particular form of culture does desire. He professed at the outset that he would only regard psychic horse-play as his spiritual circus, and then he appears to be disappointed because the clowns are not sedate and dignified.

Mr. Bird is a dull dog; he is attracted throughout

by the bare bones of the physical, and when he secures them is astonished to find they possess no sustenance.

These exhibitions of physical phenomena sicken intelligent students. What can we learn by such manifestations, whether genuine or not? No new philosophy or advancement of thought can possibly be obtained from it. As a substitute for any accepted religion it would be disgusting and absurd. Could any physical manifestation of tinkling bells ever presume to replace, for instance, the spiritual illusion of the Roman Catholic Mass?

Directly Mr. Bird leaves the physical and endeavours to study or explain the mental aspects he flounders hopelessly and makes a pitiful exhibition of himself.

In one passage he says that the majority of personal messages consist of "my darling. I am so happy to communicate with you. I am watching over you. What joy it gives me. I must go. Come again." Then a few pages later he says: "The wealth of detail is often staggering and far beyond the possibility of being accounted for by guesswork, and *could not be known by the medium.*" By which of these does he stand?

Apparently he has no departed relatives with whom he would like to get into communication for a personal test. Or, if he has, they, perhaps quite rightly, evince no desire to get into touch with him. He raves incoherently about telepathy and the subconscious mind whilst he rushes through the round of his appointed séances. At one he almost thinks he recognizes the description of his grandmother, and then because he can't be sure he becomes extremely irritable and treats the whole subject with unworthy carelessness. At a later séance he admits that the description of her does tally, and he is so intrigued that he proceeds to excessive lengths in the retailing of this incident until one feels quite relieved that he has found something even though it is nothing more than his boresome grandmother. He does not record that

she said anything to him, so apparently they both treated each other with silent contempt.

When Mr. Bird got back to America, however, the silent spirit apparently relented, for he relates in stolid seriousness that at some séance he received a sweet but simple little message written on a slate and signed "Grandmother." It is pleasant to find that Mr. Bird is human. Adamant as he was, a woman got him in the end, even if it was only his grandmother on a slate.

Mr. Bird is the materialist in excelsis. He airily dismisses mental evidences with the parrot-cry of "telepathy." This is the consuming bug of his mentality. There is no elasticity in his mind; his ideas are narrow and fixed; his comprehension is limited, and he exposes his weakness when early in his book he says deliberately: "I shall insist on extending the telepathic hypothesis to the bitter end." He may find a "bitter end," but how can a scientific investigator hope to make discoveries or assist progress if he approaches his study in such a prejudiced and antagonistic frame of mind?

If telepathy, or the subconscious mind, is the only argument that can be advanced to account for mental phenomena, will the scientist explain why a medium suddenly, at a given moment, can provide the power for the subconscious mind to be read? This demands a scientific explanation which has never been attempted. It is as undiscoverable as the mysterious power of spirit communication. Mr. Bird's evasion of this point is illustrated when he says of the subconscious mind that "in our present crude state of knowledge we need not attempt to define it." Where is the logic then in advancing a theory which cannot be defined to combat the evidence of the actuality of spirit communication which is definite and conclusive?

The time has come when the telepathic theory must be abandoned. How is it possible for spirits to give evidential information on subjects that are non-existent in the minds of the medium and the sitter?

How can the scientists explain the marvellous

phenomena of the direct and audible voice of the spirit?

I have held long and intelligent conversations on personal matters with several spirits, and the voices have been clear and audible to all the others who were present. And other distinguished men and women, whose probity is beyond question, stand by me.

A voice speaking from space in a room is at once proof of both physical and mental spirit intelligence, and completely destroys any suggestion of telepathy or subconscious thought. Mr. Bird is forced to concede that the hypothesis of ventriloquism does not explain the few and not very interesting experiences he had in hearing the phenomena of the direct voice. He admits that the ventriloquist cannot work effectively in the dark and cannot deceive the ears as he does the eyes by getting the audience to look in the quarter from which he wishes to infer the sound is coming.

Despite these admissions he adheres to the theory of telepathy until it becomes an obsession which carries him to the borderline of lunacy; in the end he is left limply hanging on to it whilst the waves of knowledge sweep past, leaving him to perish on the peg of his own stupidity.

It is to the eternal credit of the few great scientists that they have devoted their brains to the solution of this vast problem of proving the continuity of the existence of the spirit after bodily death. Their research has been long and patient, and the results that they, as pioneers, have already attained are of inestimable value to the spiritual and philosophical welfare of the world. That this miserable-minded, illogical, insular, and mean-spirited American hustler should dare to imagine that by a scheduled tour of a few weeks on psychic experiments he is justified in pronouncing judgment is ludicrous. That he should presume to express his opinions—with such vulgar aggression—is an insult to the intelligence of the great minds which are beyond his understanding.

Instead of attempting to explain away any scientific problem, his book is obviously written as a journalistic stunt, and, possessing no faculty whatever for real writing, he set himself out to obtain as much cheap copy as he could acquire, which he adorns with even cheaper scepticisms.

The description of his experiences are precisely what one would expect from such a mentality. Why should he expect to arrive at anything? No spirit of intelligence would ever be likely to desire communication with him.

His positive and negative comments are ridiculous and valueless. His positive acceptance of trifles is absurd and displays the extent of his ignorance. Only occasionally is he humorous and then it is unconscious, as, for instance, when he says: "I cannot make my mind a blank without a struggle." Evidently the struggle *has* taken place without him being conscious of the fact.

That such a book should represent the investigations of the *Scientific American* is a grave reflection upon this organ.

In a July (1923) issue of the *Scientific American* there appears a lengthy account of three test séances held to investigate the genuineness of a medium whom they refer to as Mr. X., but who in reality is George Valiantine.

It appears that the journal had offered 2,500 dollars to any medium who could prove genuine psychic phenomena.

Valiantine was persuaded by some of his friends to submit to the test. He did not seek the appointment himself, nor did he display any anxiety to secure the prize, but he was anxious to prove that he possessed genuine powers.

Such tests are always bad, especially when money is at stake. I consider that when this subject is treated on a material basis it is bound to be detrimental to the results.

Before the three New York test séances were held, Dr. Gardner Murphy of the Columbia University and Mr. Kenneth Andrews of the *New*

York World went to Wilkes-Barre to conduct two experimental tests with Valiantine. These two Wilkes-Barre experiments were successful, and Dr. Murphy and Mr. Andrews were impressed.

The subsequent test sittings were held in New York City, at the offices of the *Scientific American*, and the committee of judges consisted of cold, hard, sceptical, and antagonistic examiners. The report of the proceedings was written by Mr. J. Malcolm Bird in a prejudiced and unfair manner, in the course of which he again contradicts himself and uses many illogical arguments.

Under adverse conditions, in an atmosphere of freezing materialism, phenomena was manifested which the Committee entirely and completely failed to explain.

During the first two séances held on successive days *eight* distinct spirits manifested themselves and spoke to the assembly. Grudgingly it was admitted that each voice was different and quite distinguishable from the other. Mr. Bird refrains from recording the conversations. His excuse is that the voices "came with a suddenness that was well calculated to startle the sitters into momentary inability to observe clearly." This is the confession of a poor intelligence for a scientific investigator.

He says that "*considerable* phenomena had been produced," but he deliberately avoids giving one description of the phenomena. Immediately later he contradicts himself with: "It has been found that even with a *poverty* of phenomena, we could not remember the sequence of the séance sufficiently well."

Why could not he remember the sequence? Any intelligent mind can not only record a short sequence of the occurrences of two hours, but can memorize the gist of a dozen conversations practically word for word. If Mr. Bird's memory is so pathetically limited, how can we possibly accept his verbose version of all the insignificant incidents which the tentacles of his warped intellect fastened on as a refuge from the devastating assault of the incomprehensible.

Befogged, ill-humoured, and disquieted by happenings beyond their sphere of comprehension, some members of the Committee remembered on the second day that they lived in the land of material efficiency. So they summoned the aid of a dictograph.

It is funny. They bought, or borrowed, their dictograph and installed it surreptitiously and concealed it from the eyes of the medium, lest the spirits might become malignant when confronted by this epitome of progress. A stroke of genius this; like Bottomley instructing God to send him a cable in a *John Bull* code.

The dictograph, being mechanical, was faithful, and one may deduce that though soulless, it was impartial. Phenomena occurred again on this second test, quite remarkable phenomena with manifestations and spirit voices in conversation: but although it is conceded in the *Scientific American* that "a remarkable running account of the séance was recorded," not one word of this record is published, nor is a solitary explanation advanced of what happened.

By this time, having experienced two séances, both utterly inexplicable, the Committee awoke to the fact that something drastic must be done if they were to preserve their determined opinions; even Mr. Bird became nervous of the results of the test.

Before the third sitting they engaged carpenters and electricians and fixed up mechanical appliances, unbeknown to the medium. The chair in which Valiantine sat was arranged so that any movement he made would be recorded by electricity in the next room. This contraption was hastily constructed under the spur of desperation.

Despite this checking and, perhaps, disturbing contrivance, again phenomena occurred. There were many manifestations. Spirit voices became audible, and as Mr. Bird is forced to admit, he held a *long* dialogue with one of the medium's guides whose voice came from "high in the air."

Now this committee, largely of sceptical materialists, discovered that the full weight of the medium was not registered on the chair for *fifteen* seconds at

one period and at odd times varying from one, three, six, nine, and fourteen seconds.

On this ridiculous and flimsy endeavour at explanation the Committee discredited Valiantine. This scandalous decision was based on an insignificant point which neither proved or disproved anything whatever. The incident serves merely as an exposure of the stupidity or the bitter determination of this section of pseudo-scientific, sensation-mongering, and pot-boiling journalists.

Without giving this great question any study whatever they have the audacity to ignore all that their puny minds cannot grasp and proceed to fasten on to some vague straw to save their faces. . . .

By the slip of over-emphasis Mr. Bird naïvely discloses the fact that if the weight resting in the chair was less than one hundred and twenty-five pounds it would record the medium as being *out* of the chair. It does not require an infant's intelligence to realize that it is impossible for anyone to sit for half an hour without moving. The inclination is to change one's position slightly in order to relieve the tension of one's muscles, and, further, when one is listening intently to catch a sound or to follow a voice one leans forward involuntarily. With one's hands on one's knees, almost the entire weight of the body is easily sustained independent of the chair upon which one's thighs may be resting, and the slightest movement will reduce the weight by half. It has also been scientifically proved that when phenomenon is manifested that the ectoplasm emanating from the medium's body has in some cases reduced his weight by as much as sixty pounds. There are many scientific books written proving the reality of ectoplasm.

The mentality of such investigators is despicable. On a figment of their material conception they will thrust aside a mass of evidence which to them is the uncomprehensible.

In display type the *Scientific American* had the effrontery to exhibit what they termed "The Deadly Parallel," which merely records that the full weight

of Valiantine was not registered on his chair for a few odd seconds.

They pronounce an adverse decision although considerable phenomena occurred and voices were heard from high in the room and from other places, and these voices talked with Bird and others, and the conversations continued ten and twenty times longer than the seconds of the "movement" recorded.

The medium conversed himself with the spirit voices. Their sentences, it is admitted, practically joined.

Mr. Bird's contradictions throughout are lamentable. In one place he says the conversations were short and consisted of a sentence, whilst later he refers to the "long conversations" he had with the "alleged spirit voices."

I know what George Valiantine has proved. I know that the *Scientific American* has proved nothing. The latter clutched at the straw of momentary movement and has the impudence to assume that this is damning evidence. It cannot even coincide the few moments of the movement with the beginning of the long *periods* of phenomena. If the medium moved for a few seconds, why shouldn't he remain registered as out of his chair for the whole period of the phenomena? That would be certainly more explainable.

To be personal again: will Mr. Bird explain why he shows a *guitar* on his diagram and then ignores the musical phenomena he cannot explain. This is a very amusing exhibition of his carelessness as a recorder.

On such a ridiculous report this Committee had the audacity to say that their finding was that "they" rejected the genuineness of the mediumship of Valiantine.

With my knowledge of the phenomenal discoveries that have been made through the mediumship of Valiantine my finding is that most members of this Committee were imbeciles.

They have endeavoured to assert their opinion and

I will assert mine; it is that they were asses. Their dictograph was scrupulous, the weights and measures of their scales were fair, but their birdlike aggression would not stimulate the saliva of a castrated cat.

Mr. Richard Worrall, who was present, declared himself to be disgusted and distracted by the investigations. He said in the Press that he considered that "not only was the treatment of Valiantine cruel, but it was unjustifiable for the simple reason that the tests were not completed."

There is another important point that Mr. Bird deliberately avoided to mention. Valiantine wore, on his wrist, two luminous bands which shone in the dark and which could be seen all the time. *These never disappeared.* How can this be accounted for since their contention can only be assumed to be the absurd theory that Valiantine walked about the room for some considerable time whilst the chair designed to register Valiantine's weight only recorded that the full weight was not registered for a few odd seconds?

The *New York Times* gave a four-column discussion of the subject in December, 1923, six months or so after these tests, also articles by Sir Arthur Conan Doyle and Mr. Bird. Sir Arthur ridiculed the findings of the Committee, while Mr. Bird admitted that four of the Committee believed that under certain conditions spirit phenomena would probably occur.

Sir Arthur gave by hearsay some particulars of my Arlena Towers experiences with Valiantine, and in his summary said that "the Committee was, of course, bound to judge by its own experiences, but the public may take a broader view, and I claim that the experience of Mr. Dennis Bradley is far more weighty in the favour of Valiantine than the Committee's."

It is significant that Mr. Bird, in his reply to Sir Arthur, evaded this issue.

As a psychologist, observer, and student, I regard myself as possessing more knowledge and experience than most of the Committee of the *Scientific American*. I am convinced that Valiantine is one

of the greatest mediums in the world and that he was shamefully treated by the findings. It seems to me that the *Scientific American* was more concerned with the preservation of its 2,500 dollars than with investigation. Such an attitude is destructive to science and prostitutes progress.

This is the usual attitude adopted by investigating committees, and the atmosphere is calculated to prove so disturbing that spirit manifestations of any real interest are unlikely to occur. If we accept spirit intelligences as existing on a higher plane from that of our earth, it is foolish to imagine they would assent to remain at our beck and call, and ridiculous to expect them to materialize in a frigid atmosphere of a company of materialists.

The right mental attitude to cultivate in psychical studies and observation is the clear, unprejudiced, open mind, not the determined mentality of the prairie ox.

I wish to make it clear that this chapter was written by me in December, 1923, and *before* George Valiantine came to England. The amazing mass of accumulated evidence recorded in the presence of many of the most brilliant men and women in this country is published earlier in Book II and furnishes wonderful proof of Valiantine's mediumistic powers.

I repeat that the *Scientific American's* treatment of Valiantine in June, 1923, was iniquitous. Its attitude is a menace to scientific progress, and until its "experts" are able to approach this vast study from an entirely different mentality it had better remain silent and leave the pursuit of knowledge to higher minds.

CHAPTER XIII

THE DAWN OF A NEW ERA

The author addresses his readers and takes farewell of them—The foolish mind of the herd—"Physical phenomenon is a baby's rattle in psychic science"—A hint to the Churches—When the herd wakes up—"My own philosophy"—"I KNOW."

January, 1924.

I DEMAND your acceptance of after-life on the proofs that I have given you.

Life on earth is a phase.

We live and develop after death.

Our spirit is eternal.

Our bodies are the shells of our souls, and they are cast off at the moment when we are born again, when we set forth on a spirit life of loveliness.

That is the scheme of eternal life.

Retrogressive theories must be annihilated in order that the field may be cleared for this new thought.

The fact of an after-life and the actual communication of discarnate spirits with humans on this earth plane must be accepted.

This new knowledge is the true philosophy.

How are we to determine its application to science, religions, races, and art? And beyond all to individual comprehension?

I disregard the foolish mind of the herd, which is doomed to centuries of experience before it can hope to arrive at intelligence. In the herd class I place blatant materialists, roasting their toes in security; destructive scientists, inventing their poisonous gases in protected laboratories; elaborately but diaphanously clad ladies of uneasy virtue, warming their suburbans, spouting their platitudes by gas fires; emotions in artificially heated chambers; smug hypocritical politicians, plotting the extermination of their fellow-men in the foul atmosphere of council chambers.

All these represent the animal element of

inhumanity. They spend their days burnishing their swords for glittering prizes, but the glitter reveals their decadence.

The future will show that spirit communication is inexplicably connected with the scientific as well as spiritual elements.

This is the only explanation of the function of the medium.

The medium is the instrument, or receiver, by which the voice of the spirit communicator becomes audible. I have proved that these voices are heard and that long and intelligent conversations take place, but how this phenomenon is achieved is unknown. This audible communication is made possible by some form of wireless we do not understand. In this I am supported by the spirit of W.A. and others who refer to the delicacy of the vibrations.

It is quite possible that there is an etheric current extending to other spheres. In making this contention, it must be remembered that had we been told of the marvels of wireless ten years ago we should have laughed the prognostication to scorn.

The mystery is not yet explicable. I am not a scientist, but I find it extremely difficult to understand how it is that I can sit in a room in my house and listen to a voice speaking in America; and this reality has only been evidenced during the last year.

Since I claim to have established by indisputable proofs actual and audible communication with recognizable discarnate spirits existing in another world, I do not think there is any more to be gained by the ordinary physical phenomena such as the moving of objects and the materialization of forms. Physical phenomenon is a baby's rattle in psychic science.

It must also be considered that it is possible by wireless for electric bulbs, without any connection, to be lighted by induction and kept burning for a length of time and to sit in one room and accurately play the piano in the next room. If these marvels can be achieved by human manipulation, it is likely

that all purely physical phenomena alleged to be produced by spirit powers are likely to become more and more suspect. Only mental phenomena will be accepted in the future.

If the survival of the spirit after bodily death is accepted and the medium is regarded as a sort of living physical instrument, it is safe to assume, since we know that a human message can be sent seven times round the world in a second, that by some similar means messages can be transmitted and voices heard from another sphere beyond the earth.

Directly the world accepts the fact that such communications are possible the scientists should combine together to study every means of communication, and a thorough search should be made for persons possessing mediumistic faculties. These persons should be fostered and developed in the way best suited to the strengthening of their powers. Their services should be utilized for the advancement of humanity in science, art, philosophy, and culture.

If it is possible to communicate with higher intelligences on other spheres and eventually to arrive at a higher philosophy, the pathway of knowledge will be limitless.

I believe that the greatest development of all will be the direct *individual mind communication* with spirits. This in individual cases has already been achieved. In many human beings there exist normality and supernormality. Genius is always supernormal and is accepted as such. No artist can tell from whence his inspiration comes. It just comes and in a flash. The inspiration, or conception, of the idea of great paintings, great sculpturing, great music, and great literature comes suddenly as a mental vision or sound. These may be the messages of a higher and kindred intelligence.

It is nonsense to expect that a spirit acquires a super-intelligence immediately on his departure from this earth. There is probably an infinity of degrees of intelligences on the next plane as there is on earth,

and one must concede as far as actual and audible communication is concerned that there exists a multitude of far higher intelligences than ours. From what I have gleaned the spirit life appears to be as natural in many ways as life on earth. The actual personality, thought, and characteristics which have been built up during earth life are developed to a higher degree because all material ideas have been relegated to insignificance.

We are all spirits on earth oppressed by the physical burden of our bodies; there is no sudden overwhelming change when the body dies. We do not immediately become gods. Why should we, since it is only at death we begin our real existence! Who can define the mind? Our bodies live in action, but the mind is unseen. It is absurd to argue against the continued existence of the mind.

It would be as logical to say: "I cannot see your mind therefore I do not believe you have a mind or are capable of thinking." The body is an automaton. Since we are told that the development of the spirit is a matter of eternity, it is not natural for us to expect the spirits to speak to us with God-like intelligence.

It would be foolish of the churches to disregard this new leap into knowledge. In the near future they will have to believe, and it will be for them to decide the changed form of their various religions. In truth, our archbishops and bishops will have to teach after-life. The church, as a church, will not like it. Her offices have lived by driving the herd. But the herd will wake up.

I was educated as a Roman Catholic, and the artistic beauties of this form of worship have still a great appeal to me. The attitude of the Roman Church towards spiritualism has been dogmatically antagonistic. She has been wise enough not to deny that communication with spirits is possible, but she has discountenanced and discouraged it by the contention that only evil spirits communicate with human beings. This is also the attitude of many

persons who suggest that communication with spirits is unhealthy and morbid. The Roman Catholic Church has great power, and her authorities have designed an autocratic government of the minds of the millions who conform to her creed. I will agree with the authorities to this extent that spirit communication in its present stages is not advisable for the great bulk of people whose intelligences are undeveloped. It involves a great mental strain which can be borne only by the strongest of minds. In addition to this, the actual possibilities of achieving communication are so difficult and so rare that it would be extremely difficult for a great multitude to receive individual proofs. Therefore, the Roman Catholic Church has possibly been right in advising her adherents not to seek individual disturbance on so thin a thread.

Religion is necessary to man, and whichever form may be practised, the fundamental principles do work for the good of humanity.

Religion is necessary in our public schools. I cannot conceive Downside, Beaumont, Stonyhurst, Eton, Harrow, and Winchester conducted without the discipline of religion.

It would be absurd because of this new knowledge of spirit communication to disturb the religions which have existed through the ages. It is merely, therefore, a matter of acceptance and application.

For two thousand years, despite her rigid autocracy, and the alternating phases in which she has suffered oppression and then on a rising tide has exhibited her own vicious cruelty, the Roman Catholic Church has furthered an artistic culture which survives.

Her very sensuality is creative and makes a wondrous appeal. Beethoven, Weber, Haydn, Mozart, Gounod, and all the great composers have given to the Catholic Church the divine inspiration of their music, just as so many of the world's greatest painters and sculptors have paid tribute with their art.

The gorgeous vestments and the jewelled caskets

are made to adorn the interior of wonderful cathedrals and chapels. It would be stupid vandalism to attempt to destroy this great edifice, simply because a new knowledge of spiritualism has been given to the world, which is, after all, merely a completion of all religions and of the instinct which is born within the soul of every man.

My own philosophy may be of no account, but I give it for what it is worth. I cannot, and never will, accept any church or creed that does not proclaim as the first rule in life "*that war is a worse crime than murder.*" Whilst churches countenance this iniquity I only feel nauseated at such a hypocritical and blasphemous negation of the law of God, the principles of Christ, and the love of humanity.

The world must begin to learn. Despite all material progress, we are but poor human sucklings at the fount of wisdom for the nourishment of the knowledge of eternity.

Surely it is possible for man to realize his insignificance and even the insignificance of this earth planet when he endeavours to comprehend the extent of the universe. At Harvard University a star cluster has just been measured and proved to be six trillion miles away from the earth. Light and wireless waves travel at the terrific speed of 186,000 miles per second, and it takes the sun's rays eight and a half minutes to reach the earth. Then consider for one moment that, travelling at the same rate of 186,000 miles per second, it has taken the light from this starry cluster we now see one million years to reach the earth. This will give us some glimmering of the infinity of time, and should enable us to realize that the few thousand years of knowledge acquired by humans on this earth plane is relatively a mere fraction of thought.

The only thing that is stupendous about man is his blatant conceit. Viewed from the higher intelligence this miserable speck of a planet—a mere fragment of the universe—can assume no more importance than a minor hell inhabited by a multitude of savage infants.

We must learn to achieve a new comprehension of eternity.

Relatively, we have no understanding of either time or space. We must shed our arrogance and realize that the boasted progress of our civilization has achieved practically nothing of value in thought. All that we have learnt on earth we have learnt to abuse, but we need not despair because our first pukings have been so pitiful. A few thousand years is but a moment of eternity. We are embryos in the scheme and when we are strong enough to venture our first few steps towards knowledge we shall learn to abhor our primitive indecencies. We must remedy our dysentric weakness, which is materialism, before we can presume to understand the divine spark of the everlasting spirit.

When a higher wisdom comes to the world, it will be found to consist of a perfect simplicity. The virtue of life should be love. The work of life should be the expression of oneself and the development of one's personality. There should be no such doctrine preached as the fear of God, which is an insult to His great intelligence. And it should be realized that Hell and Heaven are the visions we create in our own souls.

The materialization of such miracles as wireless and electricity have been rendered possible by the mediumship of thought. Thought is of the spirit and it is the creative instinct.

What are we all but indefinable specks of protoplasm, which by the thought of man and the love of woman have grown from an atom into living personalities with untold powers for good or evil.

From this miraculous speck in which the spirit is contained the body we inhabit is materialized. Throughout life on earth our minds develop and our thoughts create and invent more and more materializations which in their turn decay, for the material part of ourselves is perishable, but the spirit and soul and mind are eternal.

Is there a man so arrogantly foolish that, whilst

unable to explain either the mystery of creation or the inventions of man, will dare to deny that the spirit does not continue to exist after the shell of the body is cast aside?

It is the obsession of materialism that is the curse of the world.

War is an animal bestiality inspired by cowardly but subtle rulers for the purpose of gaining material possessions.

The accumulation of wealth and the vulgarity of material power is accorded a sychophantic reverence, whilst art and love and refined philosophy are derided as of little value.

Matter decays and this ghastly acceptance of the doctrine of materialism can result only in decadence. That is why our world is in such a parlous condition.

Civilization stands at the cross-roads. A material fog has blurred the sign posts. One road leads to the Hell of Destruction, which is war, and the other to the Kingdom of Knowledge, which achieves peace. The scientists stand coldly in the centre as directors of human traffic. Their thought will determine the way for the shivering herd. If the road to Destruction is chosen then heroism will become feeble when faced by scientific slaughter. If the road to Knowledge is chosen, then humanity, weak and gasping, will find refreshment and a new virility.

Whichever way the scientists may choose to direct I disregard their decision, for I know that within the great and incomprehensible purpose of human life there exists a higher wisdom than we can conceive. We humans are given free will to develop to a certain point, but when the whole scheme of human thought is threatened, then from the higher intelligence is sent a counteracting influence.

That is why this new force of spiritualism is coming. It will come as a great wave which will sweep aside the foolish designers of material rule.

This book is but a prologue.

Yet the curtain must be rung down before the comedy and drama and splendid fantasy of real existence even starts.

I care nothing whether my audience represents a world of fools, who look askance, or whether there may be a few wise men who welcome the emotion of a finely decorated Truth.

I am no missionary. I have merely played a part of a looker-on in an astounding mental drama. If I sought to impose my views upon the herd, that would place me on the plane of vulgar leaders who seek to prostitute thought.

I have plunged into the depths and I have risen to the heights. I have endured the agonies of mental pain and I have laughed in the ecstasy of joy.

I care naught for the world's opinion, because it cannot offer an opinion; for ten years it has only exhibited a mentality of foul devastation.

In this book there is contained the outline of our after-life. This outline has been given with certainty from the actual sources in the direct and audible voices of spirits.

What Church and what prophet has ever offered so much?

What actuality have any of the great prophets of the past given beyond vague and indeterminate utterances?

What actuality can any of the churches offer?

Is there any tangible vision by which the churches can define the conditions of after-life, beyond a nebulous sort of existence or the hope of an unemotional peace? Intellect can only look askance at such a prospect and seek some clearer vista.

I give evidence of a hereafter infinitely more alluring than any yet given to man.

By some strange chance I have been enabled to probe the hidden depths of knowledge. Part of that which I have found is recorded here. And that is all that I am prepared to concede.

Those who wish to make the discoveries of value in life can do so if they sacrifice. But that is no concern of mine.

The splendid comprehensiveness of the higher intelligence of other spheres is alluring. The philosophy achieved can afford to smile upon this world's hypocrisy.

Love, irrespective of the laws of man, is the refinement of creation.

Hate is the foul thought leading only to destruction.

Love or Hate? It is a matter of choice. Both represent the spiritual and the material elements.

In the great problems dealt with in this book I record merely the *facts*, and then philosophize. I present the balance and leave it to my readers to form their own opinions. That is a matter for their study.

The quest I undertook has reached a conclusion.

I no longer rely upon beliefs.

I *know*.

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