LIGHT

Spring 1965 *3 shillings*

- *How I became interested in the Paranormal*

AAGE SLOMANN

W. H. POSTHUMUS - VAN DER GOOT

DOUGLAS JOHNSON

ROBERT CROOKALL

- *Proof for a Prof*
- *George Eliot & Spiritualism*
- *A Homing Portrait*
- *More Stainton Moses Sittings*
- *"Spirits" on Reincarnation*
- *Who is Peculiar?*

and other articles

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"Ending has no Place" (Life is Eternal)

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A Short Talk and Demonstration of Clairvoyance

(Continued on inside back cover)

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LIGHT exists for the reasoned and courteous examination of all aspects of Psychical Research and Spiritualism and allied matters. The position of the Editor on the issue of survival corresponds to the Policy which he shared in formulating as a member of the Council of the College of Psychic Science. The College does not necessarily endorse any opinion on any subject appearing in LIGHT. Those expressed in signed articles are the authors' own.

Time out of Mind

AN EDITORIAL

A HYMN so perennially relished at funerals of great and small that it must be considered part of the Establishment, asserts:

> Time like an ever-rolling stream
> Bears all its sons away:
> They fly forgotten, as a dream
> Dies at the opening day.

Like so many of these time-hallowed but often morbid jingles (perhaps it is their tunes that ensure their popularity and disarm criticism of their thought) it perpetuates beliefs that are neither rational nor Christian. The churches in which it is sung teach that men are "sons of God", who is *timeless*, and that at death they do not "fly forgotten". Even if it be alleged that the notion of "sons of time" can be taken to symbolise "evolution", it is completely inaccurate. The changes in matter, and mind, to which this label is attached are not created by time. Something appears to human senses to "elapse" when change and movement are seen in matter, but in the absence of mechanical checks—and even they are imperfect—the something is highly elastic. We are told the human race has taken millions of years to evolve from a simple cell or two to its present stage, yet each individual man only takes nine months or less to perform the same feat, or have it done for him. As for being "forgotten as a dream dies", some of us know for our instruction, as did Swedenborg and J. W. Dunne, that dreams do not all die at the opening day; and being forgotten by other people is not the same thing as ceasing to exist for one's self. The proverb "out of sight, out of mind" reminds us how our thought is dominated by our sense of sight and how hardly we believe what we cannot see—unless, like unseen electricity, it produces obvious physical effects or is guaranteed by some physical scientist above suspicion of dabbling in paraphysics or metaphysics.

No one would deny that duration, sequence and periodicity seem to exist in things, animals and men. They are not absolutes, however, but vary with each entity. If none of the countless rotating bodies in the macrocosm has exactly the same period of rotation as any other, the odds are that no two energy-particles in the microcosm move exactly the same either. Any inhabitants they have will therefore have differing sensations of time—or perhaps none at all.

The system of time which we on earth use for convenience of

daily affairs, based on a rotation-period of the globe which only occurs twice a year, if at all (the years, too, are changing quantities), has no sanction beyond habit. If we are fortunate—or unfortunate—enough to have no business, no social engagements and no fixed meal-times, or to live in some clime where needs are few and easily come by, we can avoid enslavement to that terrible invention (which has made possible all other terrible inventions) the clock. Prisoners confined beyond the light of day, or crews of submarines submerged for weeks on lethal missions, without communication, would also lose all sense of time without mechanical indicators. All of us, in intense pleasure or deep interest or concentration, become oblivious of it and even of the body's needs: people who feel hungry at set meal-times do so from habit, not by a real need of the body; workers do not clock-watch when they have work that gives them great pleasure or interest.

The genius, the artist, the artisan with pride in his work, the happy lover, all ignore time. The common factor in their experience, love, excludes the purely intellectual notion, time. They appear to be, and often believe that they are, in dimensions where time does not exist. Trance, sleep and unconsciousness, too, abolish time, but not necessarily *all* experience. At the other extreme, when we suffer or have nothing to do, time stretches unendurably.

In a word, time's elasticity and frequent non-existence for my "mind" means that the latter, the only certain reality for me, is not a part of the apparent time process of the physical universe, and gives me good evidence that this process is an illusion. Our clock-ridden habits of thought are further shaken when mediums or our own dreams forecast improbable events with unique details which afterwards come to pass. Even "ordinary" dreams usually provide our awareness with events whose number and quality could not be contained in the same interval of waking time: we are not incommoded or surprised till we slip back into the world of clocks. If we were not so accustomed to memory, we might realise that it, too, works in defiance of our self-imposed time conventions.

Let us confess that time as we usually conceive it cannot be a universal constant, since we only measure it by relations between external physical things. Our mind has no genuine experience of it, for our own experience is continuous present. Time is one more invention of our intellect and logic based on extremely partial sense observations, and may turn out to be a perversion that most of the time cripples our higher, less fallible faculties, the real

self that experiences and persists. (There is no need to underline once more, as we have so often done, how the absurdities of past science, religion and philosophy show the woeful inadequacy of intellect and senses unaided.) Time does not correspond to any of mind's activities. In fact, the more active the mind, the more it forgets this bothersome invention. We can perfectly well admit that, when finally free of the body and of clocks, it will have no clear perception of time. The vagueness of "spirits" as to time, their proneness to confuse present, past and future as minded on earth, is often alleged to cast doubt on their genuineness. On the contrary it constitutes good evidence that human qualities like love and creativeness, which find such difficulty in conforming to clocks and calendars here, continue timeless and deathless.

We are becoming (if we have not irremediably become) a race of clock-watchers no longer sensitive to what is creative and beyond time, but intent only on time and motion studies with materials, to produce more and more gadgets and ever higher fees, salaries and wages. Psychic studies and the dissemination of the results to the public (which is probably more ready to welcome them than are Top Men who do pretty well out of things as they are) are more than ever essential if we are not to be completely mechanised and dehumanised.

We sacrifice every day more and more to all-devouring Mammon-Moloch, whose mystique and moral code, "Time is money," appears so simple and so final. Free to live in enjoyment of the Infinite, most human minds seem to prefer death — of their own inventing. Was ever a new "trend" more urgently needed?

●

The CPS survey of members' "two best ESP experiences" brought positive answers from about 100, while about 5 per cent of members replied that they had had no experiences of this kind. A committee of the Council is studying and classifying the completed questionnaires. Conclusions and interesting cases (when permitted) will appear in LIGHT.

●

ELSIE GRASSER. Prof. Ian Steveson, M.D., of the University of Virginia, has discovered that in 1932 a successful experiment was carried out by M. Brossy, in France, and Mr. Lethem, then Editor of LIGHT, in which a British medium named Elsie Grasser gave substantially the same message as a French medium. We hope to publish an account of this. It will greatly assist if anyone knowing anything of Elsie Grasser, who may have lived at Greenwich, would kindly forward any information, however slight, to the Editor.

How I became interested in the Paranormal

LIGHT, with subscribers and contributors in many lands, is truly international, dealing with human experience that occurs among all races and transcends the greed and violence of divisive nationalism intent only on material power and wealth and maintaining itself by exploiting the fear of death.

We welcome in our survey two more contributions from subscribers abroad who can rightly be called internationalists. Mr. Aage Slomann, a Danish chemical engineer with a greater interest in psychical research, spent many years in America before becoming President of the Danish SPR. It will be seen that if Mr. Slomann is, as he says, a determinist, his determinism is not the usual materialist kind, but admits that man's actions may be determined by his soul or spirit.

Dr. Posthumus-van der Goot, a Dutch sociologist and economist born in South Africa and educated partly in Switzerland, is linked with many international organisations working for peace, that is, more harmonious human relationships. She has published many books and articles emphasising the part that women can play in this.

23. AAGE SLOMANN

MY mother was a casual churchgoer while my father was an atheist, but he did not interfere with the conventional christian education of his children. So I was confirmed at the age of 14 in 1906, but not many months afterwards I became an atheist and a determinist like my father, and have remained so until this day, though I should perhaps rather call myself an agnostic than an atheist.

I remember how I converted a schoolfriend to determinism by means of the following argument. Imagine two absolutely identical persons, A_1 and A_2 having to choose between the alternatives X and Y under exactly the same circumstances, and let us suppose that A_1 chooses X and A_2 chooses Y. In that case it seems obvious that A_1 and A_2 could not after all have been identical. If they had been, they would have made the same choice. Now if A_1 and A_2 are completely identical and their situation is the same in space and time, and with reference to the choice between X and Y, then they actually are one and the same person A, and the choice between X and Y would be "determined" by that part of his personality, his psychological and physiological make-up, involved in his deliberations and final decision. I cannot see any flaw in this argument, and it does not make any difference whether an individual is considered as a machine or a combination of body and mind, or of physical body, etheric body and "soul" or "spirit."

In the year 1909 I read Alfred Lehmann's book *Superstition*

*and Sorcery** and accepted uncritically his point of view in regard to the paranormal phenomena, physical as well as mental: they could all be explained naturally, the apparent evidence for them being due to malobservation, faulty memory, undetected fraud and so on. It fitted in so well with my own mechanistic *Weltanschauung*.

Lehmann was well acquainted with the publications of the SPR and a considerable part of the other parapsychological literature, but he had so far as I know no personal experiences with sensitives or physical mediums.

It must have been in 1911 that, thanks to a friend whose father was interested in psychical research, I got hold of a work which severely criticised Lehmann's book, viz. Severin Lauritzen's *Superstition versus the Church, Science and the Grave.***

Lauritzen, a clever engineer, was an undogmatic Christian who had become a Spiritualist through personal experiences with mental mediums and through the study of parapsychological literature, of which he knew as much as Lehmann did. As a Spiritualist he was far from naïve, and in his book as well as in his other writings and lectures his one aim was to convince official science that paranormal phenomena were a legitimate subject for scientific study.

In his criticism, which was both sharp and humorous, Lauritzen certainly appeared to have the advantage over Lehmann, since he could refer to scientists not less prominent than the latter, scientists who had seen for themselves, while Lehmann, as an armchair student of the subject, could easily find fault with any kind of reporting of experiments or sittings. Lauritzen showed how Lehmann just guessed at how, for instance, Home and Florence Cook *might have* fooled Crookes in certain of the experiments or sittings, while he ignored cases where a "natural" explanation seemed excluded by the experimental conditions.

No wonder that Lauritzen's book made an impression on me and opened my eyes to the possibility that Lehmann after all might have been wrong in his complete refusal to accept any of the paranormal phenomena in question, and I realised, perhaps for the first time, that scientists were not necessarily as objective in their investigations as they were supposed to be, being human after all, with biases and predilections, so that by selection and omission they could without too much difficulty find confirmation

* *Overtro og Troddom.* Copenhagen. Originally published in four parts during 1893-1895.

** *Overtro contra Kirken, Videnskaben og Graven.* 2 volumes. Copenhagen, 1901.

of their ingrained prejudices.

Despite the impression Lauritzen's book made upon me, my interest in the subject during the following years was only scant. Looking through my present large library of parapsychological literature I find only a few books on the subject bought in the years 1911-1919. The most important is the abridged edition of Myers's *Human Personality* (1913) dated 1917. In this connection let me mention that Lauritzen translated the unabridged edition into Danish, a gigantic piece of work; the two volumes came out in 1913 and 1914. He also was instrumental, together with Lehmann, in the foundation of the Danish SPR in 1905.

After a year in Bordeaux, I came to New York in the autumn of 1920, and it must have been in the beginning of 1922 that I called at the offices of the American SPR, where I was graciously received by Dr. Walter F. Prince. I now joined the ASPR and I also became a member of the Boston Society when it was founded in 1925. Prince befriended me and took me along to some sittings with the Italian physical medium Pecoraro in 1924* and once to a demonstration of "thoughtreading" (Cumberlandism).

When Prince moved to Boston I visited him there once, and he offered me a position as his assistant. However, I did not dare make the change from my profession as a chemical engineer to anything so insecure as a psychical researcher. Knowing Prince's fabulous capacity for work and wonderful memory and my own shortcomings in both these respects, I feel sure that I did wisely, although it meant another 30 years of chemical engineering, in which my interest was practically nil.

I returned to Copenhagen in the autumn of 1931, but not until 1942 did I join the Danish SPR. I became a member of its Council in 1950 and its President in 1961.

In 1949 I became a member of the London SPR, and it must have been about that time that I decided to devote all my spare time to the study of parapsychology and relevant subjects within psychology and philosophy instead of to my cursory reading covering half a dozen different fields. Since retiring in 1956 I have been giving practically all my time to parapsychology and my duties as honorary librarian of the Danish Society.

24 WILLEMIEN H. POSTHUMUS-VAN DER GOOT

IT was shortly after the end of the First World War, and I was about twenty. For my age I was fairly well read, even somewhat au fait with the teachings of Rudolf Steiner and *Les Grands Initiés* of Schuré. This I owed to a friend whom I had shocked

* See *Journal of the ASPR*, 1924, Vol. 18, p.404.

by remarking: "I have no need of God." The books she made me read I found interesting if rather speculative. Anyway they held no special appeal for me.

In the general literary field an American writer, Basil King, was one of my favourite authors. Another kind of favourite of us all was Nash's Magazine with its enthralling love stories!

One day in this magazine I came across an article by Basil King, describing how he had written a series of articles about spiritualism at the request of the magazine, with the conclusion that it was impossible to prove the fact of survival. After sending in his writings he met a woman friend and told her about the outcome of his reflections. She asked: "Have you ever sat with a medium?" No, he had not. "Well," she exclaimed, "don't you think you should?"

Being a thoughtful man Basil King realised she was right, and was truly fortunate in having a very convincing first sitting, followed, if I remember rightly, by several others. So he cancelled his previous articles, and in the one I came across he refuted one by one all his former arguments against spiritualism.

I thought at once: "He is right. This is simple and straightforward. Very likely that is the order of things, and the arguments against it are the same silly old objections some people are always holding out against anything new."

So I became a spiritualist by reading an article in a magazine!

In the follow-up I was lucky in several things. The first book I read was *Raymond* by Sir Oliver Lodge, whom my father knew and esteemed as a highly intelligent man. The Vale Owen books were an absolute revelation to me and have remained so ever since. With Miss Cummins's scripts and Stewart Edward White's "Betty Books", I consider them about the best I have come across. Just now I am once more realising my indebtedness to *Life Beyond the Veil,* discovering that especially Arnel has correctly outlined in simple words what a very learned Tibetan explains in several volumes published by Alice A. Bailey.

Finally, I was lucky in my decision to take a subscription to LIGHT. In the advertisements I read about Mr. and Mrs. Hewat MacKenzie's British College of Psychic Science. In their house and with their help I greatly enlarged my knowledge of the subject.

I never had any doubt about the spiritualistic claims in general, but experienced a rather unexpected difficulty in accepting any evidence for myself. Several years later I was present at a lecture by Sir Arthur Conan Doyle. He asked everyone to stand up who knew the fact of survival to be true from direct experience. I felt I had to remain seated.

One or two years later, however, again via the College, something happened to me which constituted absolute, unshakeable personal proof.

This is a little more than the story of my "first steps", but I felt the need to write and express my gratitude to those who helped me find my way. As the old term has it—and in this case I feel sure it is very true—with last year's death of Mrs. Barbara Hewat MacKenzie they now have all gone to their reward.

How My Mediumship Began

DOUGLAS JOHNSON

I REMEMBER very early in my childhood, possibly when about five or six, seeing faces of people form on the wall opposite my bed. I do not recall being at all alarmed, only interested at seeing them come and go. A year or two later, I used to see and play with a small boy in our garden. He just "appeared" sometimes when I was there. No boy lived near, and when I told my parents they laughed quite kindly and said, "what an imagination the boy has!" I feel quite sure he *was* there. One day a few years later I met this spirit-child and he said: "Good-bye, you are too old for me now", and vanished. These are the only unusual experiences I can remember in my childhood, which was normally healthy apart from the customary childish ailments. I was not a nervous child and was not affected by being "psychic".

I was about 14 before I confided in anyone about this. My parents were broad-minded and allowed me much freedom, and there was no opposition from them. In any case I had an aunt who was an exceptional amateur sensitive, and an uncle reputed to be psychic. Certain friends, however, I did *not* confide in about it!

From about 15 to 18 years of age I sat with two charming friends of my parents, a stockbroker and his wife. They were sensible and knowledgeable about psychic matters, and helped to develop my mediumship enormously. They did not encourage imagination or sensationalism.

I suppose I could be said to have believed in a general way in survival, but I was never very religious even as a child. When I heard seemingly objective voices or (on occasion) saw people as solid as we are, I generally assumed that they demonstrated survival of people said to be dead, but in the early days I doubt whether I was always able to distinguish between thoughts from the dead and thoughts from those on earth.

When I am not using my mediumship I am not conscious of it

I can "turn it on" or "off" as necessary. This is an essential part of development. When I am working, I feel all senses heightened, and a sudden noise seems to hit me in the solar plexus. An "electric" feeling is a poor description, but the nearest I can think of. The conditions in which my mediumship works best are brisk and bright weather, and I must be able to sit in a peaceful room, with a relaxed mind.

I experience both light trance, when we can hear but not control the flow of words (as in a dream in which one "wakes up"), and also deep unconscious trance. I was told by a sitter who lived many years in China that during one of my deep trances she was spoken to for half an hour in Chinese, a language of which I have no knowledge.

George Eliot

A New Look at the Communications

V. S. STAFF, B.A.

IT may be wondered why I should choose to examine George Eliot's connection with spiritualism when it is clear from her letters with what aversion she looked at the subject in her lifetime. I have no new, startling discovery to report concerning either her writings or her so-called communications through the mediumship of Mrs. Piper. Nor is this an attempt to re-analyse scientifically the material that we have. It only represents the thoughts of a student and enquirer.

Nevertheless, if our study of communication has advanced at all since Mrs. Henry Sidgwick's study of Mrs. Piper's mediumship in 1890 (and, alas, it has not advanced far), it might be worth while to take this second look at the George Eliot communications and consider their significance.

In order to have a complete picture or background, it is necessary briefly to mention any acquaintance with spiritualism, the supernormal and ESP of which we find evidence in George Eliot's own life and writings. We can then quote appropriately from parts of the supposed communications as published in the SPR *Proceedings*, and finally make a few remarks about the whole difficult business of communication with those who have "died"

I was first drawn to look into this subject by a kind of hunch or "push" from somewhere, after noting that, from fairly frequent references to George Eliot and her books, it would appear that she has been more in the public mind recently. There seem to be periods in literary history when particular figures swim into orbit again after an absence—not without some reason or significance,

I feel.

In the admirable *Life* written by her husband, J. W. Cross, which was compiled from her letters and diaries, we do not find any references favourable to spiritualism. There were, no doubt, several reasons for this.

The headmistress of the school at Nuneaton which Mary Ann Evans (her real name) attended became an intimate friend and exerted from those early years a strong Evangelical influence. No doubt the personal taste of this girl with such a strong intellect was attracted towards free and adventurous thinking whenever she felt restricted by local narrowness.

A stay in Geneva following the death of her father must have been a turning point in her life: for the first time for many years she was free of home ties. She was drawn towards Positivism (the name given to the philosophy of Auguste Comte, recognising only positive facts and observable phenomena). She became Assistant Editor of the Westminster Review, as well as a life-long friend of the philosopher Herbert Spencer, and G. H. Lewis, with whom she was soon to unite her life in a very happy relationship. He led her interests away from religion to science and sociology. She was also very friendly with the Bray family: Mr. Bray was a ribbon manufacturer turned philosopher (also incidentally, an ardent phrenologist, but we are not told what George Eliot thought of that), and it was at the Bray's that she met Emerson.

Another reason for scepticism about spiritualism may well have been the limited amount of personal experience which was possible in those days. Spiritualism as practised socially meant gatherings for table-turning or lifting and so on. With the often darkened rooms, the opportunities for fraud or self-deception, the monotony of the trivial happenings, one can scarcely expect a woman of George Eliot's active intellect to be impressed. At the opposite end of available experience, there was occasionally the possibility of witnessing the phenomena of D. D. Home. We could hardly expect one straining at a supernormal gnat to swallow that camel.

Such a serious mind was bound to be severe. At the age of 21 she had taken as her motto *certum pete finem* (seek a sure end), and in a letter to Mr. Bray in 1871 she was to say: "I am a bitter enemy to make-believe about the human lot."

Here are some references to spiritualism in her letters: In one to Sarah Hennell, Mr. Bray's sister-in-law, in 1856, she writes:

"Have you heard that Anna Mary Howett, alas! has become a spirit medium? There is still enough of this folly to give a form to monomania."

And to the same, four years later:

"Thank Mr. Bray for his letter on the spirit rapping. I am glad to see him contributing his quota to the exposure of that odious trickery—I hope Mr. Bray knows that Sir David Brewster in the *Times* long ago contradicted the report that he gave his adhesion to Mr. Home and his spirits."

It must not be thought that she dismissed the subject out-of-hand. She was almost forced to deal with it in correspondence with Harriet Beecher Stowe, who wrote most earnestly, some years later, in 1869, about her husband's own experiences. George Eliot replied in July:

"Both Mr. Lewis and I were deeply interested in the indications which the Professor gives of his peculiar *psychological* experience. . . . He says 'I have had no connection with any of the modern movements, except as father confessor' . . . He must be peculiarly sensitive to the repulsive aspects which these movements present.

"Your view as to the cause of that 'great wave of spiritualism' which is rushing over America . . . a sort of Rachel cry of bereavement so far as 'spiritualism' (by which I mean, of course, spirit communication, by rapping, guidance of the pencil, etc.) has come within reach of my judgment . . . it has appeared to me either as degrading folly, imbecile in the estimate of evidence, or else as impudent imposture . . . it has even seemed to me an impiety . . . to withdraw attention from studying the open secret of the universe . . . to alleged manifestations which are so defiled by low adventurers so hopelessly involved in all the doubtfulness of individual testimonies as to phenomena witnessed."

In March 1872 she writes:

"When I am more at liberty . . . I will certainly read Mr. Owen's books. [No doubt Robert Dale Owen's *Footfalls on the Boundary of Another World*, 1860] . . . I desire on all subjects to keep an open mind but hitherto the various phenomena reported or attested in connexion with ideas of spirit-intercourse, 'psychism' and so on have come before me here in the painful form of the lowst *charlatanerie*. Take Mr. Hume [no doubt D. D. Home] as an example of what I mean. I could not choose to enter a room where he held a *séance*. He is an object of moral disgust to me, and nothing of late reported by Mr. Crookes, Lord Lindsay and the rest, carries conviction to my mind that Mr. H. is not simply an imposter whose professedly abnormal manifestations have varied their fashion in order to create a new market . . . But apart from personal contact with people who get money by public exhibitions as mediums or with semi-idiots, such as those who make a court for a Mrs. Guppy or other feminine personage of that kind, I would not willingly place any barriers between my mind and any possible channel of truth affecting the human lot."

(She exhibits the universal contradiction—believing herself unbiassed, or wishing to be so, yet setting down such a prejudiced statement!)

There is a longer statement in another letter to Mrs. Harriet Beecher Stowe, June 1872:

"It must be deeply interesting to talk with him [Professor Stowe] on his experience.

"Perhaps I am inclined under the influence of facts physiological and psychological, which have been gathered of late years, to give larger place to the interpretation of vision-seeing as *subjective* than the Professor would approve. . . . *Your* experience with the planchette is amazing, but that the words which you found it to have written were dictated by the spirit of Charlotte Bronte is to me so enormously improbable that I could only accept it if every condition were laid bare and every other explanation demonstrated to be impossible. If it were another spirit aping Charlotte Bronte . . . if here and there at rare spots and among people of a certain temperament, or even at many spots and among people of all temperaments, tricksy spirits are liable to rise as a sort of earth bubbles and set furniture in movement, and tell things which we either know already or should be as well without knowing—I must frankly confess that I have but a feeble interest in these doings . . . feeling my life very short for the supreme and awful revelations of a more orderly and intelligible kind which I shall die with an imperfect knowledge of.

"If there were miserable spirits we could help—then I think we should pause and have patience with their trivial-mindedness . . . but otherwise I don't feel bound to study them more than I am bound to study the special follies of a particular phase of human society. Others, who feel differently, and are attracted towards this study, are making an experiment for us as to whether anything better than bewilderment can come of it.

"I have not time to write more than this very imperfect fragmentary sketch of *only one* aspect which the question of spirit communications wears to me as (?at) present. At present it seems to me that to rest any fundamental part of religion on such a basis is a melancholy misguidance of men's minds from the true sources of high and pure emotion."

Apart from two more short references to the subject in letters of the same year, 1872, there is no more correspondence with Mrs. Harriet Beecher Stowe in the *Life*: one wonders whether the rebuff she received to the apparently enthusiastic accounts with which she sought to interest George Eliot in spiritualism caused the friendship to cool.

In a footnote to a letter to J. W. Cross on 12th January, 1874, we are told that George Eliot and G. H. Lewis met F. W. H. Myers that month at the Erasmus Darwins', where they all attended a spiritualist *séance*:

"The Charles Darwin family, Myers, Mrs. Bowen, Galton, etc., there. *But as complete darkness was insisted on we left in disgust.*" [G.H.L.'s diary. We note that the family of the famous biologist were "sitting" in 1874].

This all looks extremely negative.

Let us then take a look at any evidence there may be in her novels for any belief in the supernormal. There is some, I believe, though mentioned quietly and unobtrusively.

She had a great enthusiasm for music, and it had an extraordinary effect on her, so there was one kind of sensitivity.

In one of her letters, as early as 1841, she wrote:

"Does not the notion of a less laborious mode of communication, of a perception approaching more nearly to intuition, seem attractive?"

In another, to Sarah Hennell, she says:

"Assuredly this earth is not the home of the spirit."

A few years later she records in her diary her belief that we should live and teach and keep the Quakers' inner quiet. Much later, in 1875, we find her saying in the diary:

"The most thorough experimentalists admit intuition—i.e., direct impressions of sensibility underlying all proof—as necessary starting points for thought."

Elsewhere she spoke of herself in a general way as "one who works from inward conviction", and again:

"I shall go on writing from my inward promptings."

Also:

"My books seem to get so far off me, when once I have written them."

In connection with her general sensitivity, is there something prophetic in the fact that one of her books, on which she spent immense labour, *Daniel Deronda,* was written to present the Jews in a favourable light? She wrote in her diary:

"There is a great movement now among the Jews towards colonising Palestine and bringing out the resources of the soil."

It is in *Silas Marner,* accounted the most perfect of her novels in form and construction, that we find the supernormal has a place. Her hero, a linen weaver, of simple and most endearing character, had a gift of healing which roused the suspicions of country folk. The children "had perhaps heard their fathers and mothers hint that Silas Marner could cure folk's rheumatism if he had a mind". He also fell into trances:

"Jem Rodney, the molecatcher, averred that one evening as he was returning homeward he saw Silas Marner leaning against a stile with a heavy bag on his back, instead of resting the bag on the stile as a man in his senses would have done; and that on coming up to him he saw that Marner's eyes were set like a dead man's, and he spoke to him and shook him, and his limbs were stiff, and his hands clutched the bag as if they'd been made of iron; but just as he had made up his mind that the weaver was dead, he came all right again, like, as you may say, in the winking of an eye, and said 'Good-night', and walked off."

Some said Marner must have been in a "fit" but the clerk of the parish shook his head: "But there might be such a thing as a man's soul being loose from his body, and going out and in, like a bird out of its nest and back; and that was how folks got over-wise, for they went to school in this shell-less state to those who could teach them more than their neighbours could learn with their five senses and the parson.

"And where did Master Marner get his knowledge of herbs from. . . . Jem Rodney's story was no more than what might have been expected by anybody who had seen how Marner had cured Sally Oates, and made her sleep like a baby, when her heart had been beating enough to burst her body for two months and more, while she had been under the doctor's care."

"Marner was highly thought of in that little hidden world known to itself as the church assembling in Lantern Yard. He was believed to be a young man of exemplary life and ardent faith; and a peculiar interest had been centred in him ever since he had fallen at a prayer-meeting into a mysterious rigidity and suspension of consciousness which, lasting for an hour or more, had been mistaken for death.

"Silas was evidently a brother selected for a peculiar discipline; and though the effort to interpret this discipline was discouraged by the absence on his part of any spiritual vision during his outward trance, yet it was believed by himself and others that its effect was seen in an accession of light and fervour.

"A less truthful man than he might have been tempted into the subsequent creation of a vision . . . a less sane man might have believed in such a creation . . . but Silas was both sane and honest." (p.11).

"I must have slept," said Silas, ". . . or I must have had anothe visitation like that which you have all seen me under, so that the thief must have come and gone while I was not in the body, but out of the body." (p.16).

Perhaps George Eliot had heard of some character like Silas. Whatever she had heard she treated as veridical, and this phenomenon of trance is made an essential ingredient of the plot of this book. Moreover, Silas is a good man and in the story his psychic gift has no sinister significance.

There is a slight reference to animal souls by Dorothea in *Middlemarch.* She says:

"It is painful to me to see these creatures that are bred merely as pets," . . .

"Oh, why?" said Sir James. . . .

"I believe all the petting that is given them does not make them happy. They are too helpless: their lives are too frail. . . . I like to think that the animals about us have souls something like our own, and either carry on their own little affairs or can be companions to us . . ."

There is a suggestive sentence in *The Mill on the Floss*:

"A strange thrill of AWE passed through Maggie while she read, as if she had been wakened in the night by a strain of solemn music *telling of beings whose souls had been astir while hers was in a stupor.*"

In George Eliot's story *The Lifted Veil* the treatment of the supernatural is quite different: the hero and his gift are portrayed as morbid. I do not imagine that this tale is much read now, it has no claim to a place alongside her novels, it is more like a grown-up cautionary tale. The hero, who has a gift of prevision and precognition at times, is an invalid. The gift which causes him to see so deeply into the thoughts of others does not work with the girl he admires (which seems unlikely). Then his prevision occurs out-of-doors, where the present scene vanishes, he experiences an "intoxicating numbness" and darkness intervenes for a space, then after a quivering of the eyelids, he perceives daylight again. With these experiences he feels as though he had been poisoned.

When he is very unhappy, his participation in the consciousness of others is dimmed, but his prevision of external things is heightened.

This man, Latimer, is made a wanderer by fear of the approach of his gift of insight. With disease taking hold of him, this curse, as he calls his gift, "my double consciousness, came again".

The impression this story left upon me was that it was a didactic piece of work in which psychic gifts were written about as she imagined them to be, not necessarily at all as they really are, and because she had such a distaste for everything supernormal, she made the whole thing morbid with a view to discouraging people from pursuing that kind of interest.

In spite of her antipathy to manifestations and her predilection for Positivism, we find her writing to her friend Mrs. Smith on the loss of her husband:

"There is no pretence or visionariness in saying that he is still part of you, almost like a bodily presence."

And to her friend Miss Hennell she wrote (in 1872):

"I have the most vivid thoughts of you, almost like a bodily presence."

It was in the next year, when she was 54 years old, that she visited Cambridge at the invitation of F. W. H. Myers and says how she enjoyed talking to him "and others of the Trinity men". She met Henry Sidgwick, Edmund Gurney, the young Balfour, and the young Lyttelton.

In 1877 she ended her journal, which she had kept for 16 years. We are therefore minus this source of information and its

possible references to spiritualism. But her husband, J. W. Cross, has this to relate of her experience of writing:

"She told me that in all that she considered her best writing there was a '*not herself*' which took possession of her, and that she felt her own personality to be merely the instrument through which this spirit, as it were, was acting. Particularly she dwelt on this in regard to the scene in *Middlemarch* between Dorothea and Rosamond, saying that, although she always knew they had, sooner or later, to come together, she kept the idea resolutely out of her mind until Dorothea was in Rosamond's drawing-room. Then, abandoning herself to the inspiration of the moment, she wrote the whole scene exactly as it stands, without alteration or erasure, in an intense state of excitement and agitation, feeling herself entirely possessed by the feelings of the two women."

This is about all we can glean from her writings and life. In the next issue of LIGHT we shall consider the difficult material in the SPR records of the mediumship of Mrs. Piper.

The "Prof"

BRIGADIER C. A. L. BROWNLOW, D.S.O.

THE "Prof.": that is how I knew him, that is how so many knew A. M. Low, free-lance scientist, inventor, individualist, educator and a kindly soul with a unique brain machine.

I first met him at Wilton in 1941 on the H.Q. of the Southern Command, and we were attracted to each other. Why he was drawn to me I know not; but for myself it was the pull of his splendid and independent mind, illuminating all subjects coming under free discussion between us. In the garden of the Old Rectory of Wilton or in his billet we would snatch at the spare moments to talk and pass the ball of thought in pleasant debates.

Our conversations were not long advanced before the subject of psychic phenomena and its implications arose. He had no idea I knew something about these things. With relish he told me of investigations he had made with Harry Price and others. He had met Dr. Julian Huxley in this field; and with a smile he remarked: "I say, do you know that Huxley once met something in the dark, a physical manifestation he could neither understand nor explain in scientific terms." He laughed and I laughed too.

Low stated that in his view psychic phenomena and so-called spiritualist manifestations were nonsense, explicable as mental aberrations of the psychologically unsound. A person had no continuing existence after death. The so-called soul or personality was but an epiphenomenon of the physical structure and organism of co-ordinated cells and molecules. No scientist would admit survival of death; adding with a smile "he would lose his job if he

did, just as a Bishop would lose his job if he did not".

I felt the time had come to unmask my batteries, and opened a surprise counter-fire on his position. He was shocked. For weeks the argument rolled back and forth, amicably but forcibly. He sadly shook his head and declared there was no proof. I replied there was no proof of our continuing personality in *life*, yet we believed that, though we could not prove it. Similarly survival of death was a belief based on experience and not a matter that could be proved. Proof could only be established within limits, but we were dealing with problems in the limitless. If a man was entitled to say there was no survival, this in no way unseated the man who believed there was. It was an individual affair based on evidence. It was the evidence that mattered. If you were ignorant of the evidence, of course you could not establish a satisfactory belief.

Our wordy battle raged in a pleasant manner until some months later when he said to me one summer evening with that peculiar charm of manner that was his: "I have just burned the script of a book I had written condemning psychic phenomena and spiritualism. I did so because of what you have told me."

Years later he came to accept the view that it was intellectually legitimate from psychic facts to believe in a spiritual continuity after death. He died on 13th September, 1956, at his lifelong and beloved home in Chiswick. When the news came, I wondered what he would be doing in the other world. I had not long to wait for an answer.

On the early morning of 3rd November, 1956, when in bed recovering from influenza, I became suddenly aware of the presence of the Prof. I was overcome by an urge to write. I seized a pencil and paper by my bedside. Words poured into my mind in a flood which I rapidly took down. This was the message:

"Tell Aggie to light my lamp. She will understand this. You won't. In the old days she used to light my lamp before I came in of an evening, waiting for me. It was a special lamp. Her light now is a spirit lamp as it were. When she lights 'my lamp' I shall be there. No tears, no regrets, if the lamp is lit. I had a special lamp at one time, another little invention. This is a test for her. I will give her another lamp—a spirit lamp to guide her on. Yes, you taught me things and these I find true. My mind is now given plenty to think about. I liked thinking—thinking was life to me. I rather dreaded death simply because if I survived I should have nothing to do! You may laugh but that is what I inwardly feared. Aggie will understand. She had a tough time but was brave. I love her. Don't be afraid to tell her that.

"It was silly of me to think I should find nothing to do after death. There is an infinite amount. It is really splendid here. All the miserable rubbish and futilities of the earth life are left behind. I hated on earth certain people of action and things which were hampering and unkind and domineering. Such cluttered me up and seemed to fetter me all the time. I often felt earthly life was futile. This was wrong. I am better able to see its purpose. The trials and troubles have a purpose for the individual like hammering out metal; it is better for hammering.

"But on the other side of the balance I had a good time. Good in my sense of the word. I exercised my brain for the good of men. My life was not wasted. No life really is wasted. One carries on here from the point left at death—a solemn thought.

"Of course, I see my mistakes. I made many. At times I was intolerant of those who did not think as I did. I look back with great love on my laboratory and home. The physical bits and pieces will, of course, be dispersed; but in 'mind', in thought they will exist. In one manner of speaking everything exists in mind. One of my mistakes, as I have said, was intellectual intolerance. I felt by thought and experiment science could lay bare all things eventually. It cannot, because man is a limited creature, very limited even now, where I am, which cannot be expressed to you in earthly terms. We are surrounded by limitations. But I am intensely alive and busy and happy. Tell Aggie that.

"Tell Aggie 'Light my lamp and keep the fire burning'. She is not alone. Tell her that."

That letter could not have come from my mind at all. There were facts in it unknown to me. I sent it to Aggie, his personal secretary, with the following covering letter:

"Dear Aggie,

"I am in bed with 'flu. Suddenly I felt the Prof. and caught his understanding smile. Then the above was given to me very rapidly. I jotted it down as it came. Hope you can read it. Hope also it means something for you. Yours sincerely, C.A.L. Brownlow."

Here is the reply from Aggie:

"Dear Brigadier Brownlow,

"*Thank you.* Your letter certainly did comfort me. It was indeed quite wonderful for this reason: in a cottage in Hampshire there is a lamp and this is where I shall be living when I have cleared up my dear Prof's papers here.

"In the cottage he and I spent many happy hours, he with his writing and I looking after him. He was always afraid of the dark and when we arrived I used to say 'don't worry. I'll go in first and light the lamp.' And this is the lamp I shall be lighting

each evening in my home. So I shall think of him as with me in thought and love, for these are indestructible and this I know he believed.

"I was going through some papers in what he always called his 'sacred tray', no one allowed to touch them; and I found this drawing (enclosed). I think it must be a sketch you made of him so I am sending it. Yours sincerely, Aggie."

The sketch was a rough, quick affair I made of him one evening at Wilton. I had completely forgotten about it. When I sent my letter to Aggie I felt the Prof. would arrange for me to have some small personal memento; but I was particularly careful not to ask Aggie nor to suggest in any way that I should be sent anything of his.

In another letter Aggie wrote: "He had an amusing little invention. It was a lamp attached to a golf stick which showed a red light when you played a wrong stroke in putting."

This may be the special lamp he refers to in the letter, viz: "another little invention. This is a test for her".

Stainton Moses and Contemporary Physical Mediums

9. Further Notes on Mrs. Guppy, James Clark, Miss Showers and Mr. and Mrs. Nelson Holmes

Presented by R. G. MEDHURST, B.Sc.

TO make this series of extracts from the notebooks of the Rev. Stainton Moses as coherent as possible, we have so far followed the plan of grouping together those accounts, scattered through the notebooks, that relate to each medium. However, the mediums must not be thought of as working in isolation. There were sometimes temporary collaborations or permanent partnerships, sometimes bitter rivalries; because of this it has been impossible to avoid taking out of chronological order Moses's dealings with certain mediums who played a subsidiary rôle. For example, his account of his final encounter with James Clark (a mediumistic protegé of Mrs. Guppy), at a sitting with Mrs. Holmes on February 27, 1873, appeared in LIGHT for Autumn 1963, p.138, while his note on the preceding sitting of February 12th (in the course of which he "detected [James Clark] in cheating") is reproduced in LIGHT for Summer 1964. It may be recalled that at the end of the report of the sitting on February 27, 1873, Moses wrote:

"J.C. [James Clark] is a dangerous and unscrupulous person, instigated, as I believe, by Mrs. Guppy to molest Mrs. Holmes. Mrs. G. is now engaged in an attempt to bedaub the characters of

Miss Cook and Mrs. Holmes. She is a jealous woman, and will stick at nothing. J.C. is her unscrupulous tool."

Another viewpoint on these events is to be found in a letter by Mr. Holmes to D. D. Home (SPR *Proceedings*, March 1964, p.58). in the course of which he alleged that Mrs. Guppy had proposed to hire Clark, together with a Mr. Henderson and William Volckman, to throw vitriol in the face of Florence Cook's familiar, Katie King. Holmes wrote:

"While reciting this horrible scheme to us, she [Mrs. Guppy] seemed fairly possessed by a legion of fiends, and her rage at Miss Cook and her 'doll face', as she termed it, was fearful to behold."

We now give Moses's account of his first visit to Mrs. Guppy's, and his reports of his first two sittings with her and James Clark:

Friday Sept. 27th. [1872] I went by invitation to see Mr. Guppy. I got to Highbury Hill Park where he lives about 5 p.m. and was admitted to a very dirty house by a still more dirty servant who, I afterwards learned, was a Venetian—and a precious dirty one too. I was ushered into a photographic Studio, Mr. G. being an amateur photographer. The place was in a rare mess. After I had time to take it all in, Mr. G. came in, a weazened, dirty little old man of most eccentric appearance. His manner is more eccentric than himself. He informed me that (poor old gentleman! he might well look dazed) Mrs. Guppy had on that morning perpetrated a baby, and that he had been engaged in photographing the 10 hours' old chick. He showed me the negative in great glee. After this he lit a pipe, having filled it with a mixture of chamomile and Turkish tobacco. In a very rambling way he told me a good deal about Spiritualism and about Hudson and spirit photos.

Then we had tea and a biscuit and he vanished for an hour or thereabouts leaving me alone. When he came back he asked me about myself and expressed his anxiety to make the acquaintance of "this new medium who was so extraordinary and at the same time a man of education and position". I recounted to him some of my experiences, and had some long conversation with him about the life hereafter. He is a shrewd hard-headed old fellow but terribly prosy. During the evening Mr. Gale came in.

The sittings with James Clark, at Mrs. Guppy's, took place early next year.

31st Jan. [1873] Séance at Mr. Guppy's with James Clark, a very powerful physical Medium. The Spirit who attaches himself to him is Dibber who professes himself to have lived as a Monk 500 years ago. He is a very powerful physical Spirit. On this occasion I had a very interesting theological conversation with him.

Wednesday Feb. 5th. [1873] Remarkable seance at Mr. Guppy's.

James Clark, Mrs. Guppy, mediums. The Séance is detailed in a letter addressed to the Medium: and appended.

University College,
London*

February 5th. [1873] House of Mr. Guppy, 2 Morland Villas, Holloway. Hands joined.

After many violent manifestations I felt myself struck in the face by a cloud of some soft fleecy substance. At the same time I heard a heavy thud on the table. Light was immediately struck. Table, floor, and sitters were covered thick with small downy feathers equally distributed over the area covered. The appearance was exactly similar to that of a fall of snow. I questioned the servant afterwards, and ascertained that these same feathers had made their appearance on a previous occasion. They had been gathered up into a sheet, and stowed away in a room on the first floor: where they were not now to be found, as the servant informed me after going to search for the bundle.

On the table, moreover, was a block of ice about 12 inches in diameter, and three inches thick, together with a quantity of snow. The ice had been removed from an earthenware pan on a verandah outside of the room in which we were sitting.

After the sitting was resumed, and hands had again been joined, a small plate was put before each sitter, and we were requested to look at them. The gas was then put out again, and we were almost immediately asked to re-light it. On doing so a large and very firmly kneaded snowball was found on each plate. The balls were larger than my clenched fist. It was necessary to remove them promptly lest the heat of the room should cause them to melt. We had been sitting more than half an hour, and, as a consequence, any snow previously placed in the room must have long since melted. I am quite sure that the circle was not broken, and that no person obtained access to the room.

W. Stainton Moses.

After the turbulent events of the next three weeks, to which we have already made reference, Moses recorded no further dealings with Mrs. Guppy. Those interested in following further the career of this lady (afterwards known as Mrs. Guppy-Volckman and formerly as Miss Nichol) will find many remarkable accounts in the contemporary literature. The somewhat lavish apport phenomena witnessed by Moses were a prominent feature of her mediumship. Miss Georgina Houghton asserts that on one momentous occasion there appeared, at a séance attended by Serjeant Cox and A. Aksakov, two live eels and a live lobster, which Miss Houghton subsequently had for dinner. (*Evenings at Home*

*Printed heading of notepaper, with Rev. Moses's monogram. He was a master at University College School.

in Spiritual Seance, Second Series, 1883, p.160).

The Rev. Moses's low opinion of Mrs Guppy's personality was shared by others among her contemporaries. Lord Rayleigh, for example, once remarked: "Mrs. Guppy I don't think I could stand, even in the cause of science and philosophy!" (SPR *Proceedings*, March 1964, p.57). On the other hand, Alfred Russel Wallace (whose sister, Mrs. Sims, had at one time employed Mrs. Guppy, when Miss Nichol, as a companion) wrote (*My Life*, 1905, vol. H, p.301):

"I was somewhat surprised at [St. George] Mivart's appreciation of the Guppys, because of the great contrast between them: he extremely refined in speech and manners, and somewhat fastidious in his acquaintances; they both rather brusque and utterly unconventional; yet he evidently recognised in them a straightforwardness of character, kindness of heart, love of truth, and earnestness of purpose, which are vastly more important than any amount of superficial polish."

Dr. Dingwall has some unpublished material bearing on the authenticity, or otherwise, of Mrs. Guppy's phenomena. It is to be hoped that this will soon be made available.

We conclude with two further passages from the Moses notebooks relating to mediums who have featured in previous issues of LIGHT. The first is a portion of a dialogue between Moses and certain of his controls ("Rector" and others), recorded in one of the notebooks of automatic script. It seems clear that this relates to the sitting with Miss Showers on March 24, 1874 (LIGHT, Spring 1963, p.26). The unqualified endorsement of the phenomena by Moses' guides is of particular interest in view of the grave doubts expressed later by Moses himself (LIGHT, Spring 1963, p.32), and Miss Showers's subsequent confession of trickery (SPR *Proceedings*, March 1964, p.113 et seq).

Sunday March 29. 1874

Q. We were talking much of that materialization last night*. Can you tell me about it?

A. It was doubtless a great proof of power. The spirits concerned derived help from many sources, and they were successful in their endeavours.

Q. It *was* a case of materialization.

A. We have not before witnessed one so complete. Such are rare as we have told you. And the conditions are precarious.

Q. Can you tell me how it is done?

A. The process would not be intelligible to you. It is by attracting magnetically that which is given off by the Circle and holding it temporarily in contact with the Spirit body so as to form a temporary envelope. Your ideas of matter and spirit hamper you there. The Spirit body in such spirits as readily materialize the form is in a state but little advanced from that which is perceptible

* The phrase "last night" evidently refers to the discussion of the materialisation, not to the séance itself.

to your senses. You are aware that a spirit body without any materialization is perceptible to you when in contact with you. It is sufficiently material to be perceptible to you, to cause a sensation of contiguity, and to draw from your body vitality causing that part to feel cold. This is not the case except in those spirits who are nearest to the material plane. Such readily attract to themselves particles of the human organism and hold them magnetically in contact with the spirit body. Then ensues what you call materialization. The body is rarely completely formed: only such parts as are necessary being materialized. And when we have seen the face materialized it has been the face only.

We derive this information from those who were with you on the occasion. We ourselves know very little of the question.

Q. Then a spirit can appear with only a head and bust for instance: or with an arm, or a leg.

A. Such might be, just as you might cover one part of your body only. But it is rare, and we did not think that in your country such was ever done. It will become more frequent now that they have overcome the first difficulties.

Q. It is a tremendous fact. I saw the lungs working, and heard the heart beating.

A. It may well be. In such a case it would be.

Q. Now about the clothes. Can they be materialized too?

A. It might be. It is frequently the case: as you have seen. This you cannot understand until you revise all your ideas about matter. Wait with patience, and you will know all. But the time is not yet.

Q. I certainly don't know much yet.

A. We believe that the spirits who do this are working under the direction of exalted intelligences who strive to bring home the truth to certain who cannot take it save thro' this grosser medium—It will be long before the experiment is perfected.

Q. Can you tell me why that particular spirit stood so much from me, and John King so little.

A. The Medium was deriving very much of her power from you, and for that reason was in close rapport with you, and would not be retarded by your nearness. In the other cases there was no rapport nor did we allow you to be used in any way. Hence the difference.

Q. Could the materialization take place if I were in the Cabinet.

A. We are not able to say. It might be, but the Chief would not permit the experiment.

Q. Might I have gone into the Cabinet to see the Medium?

A. No harm would have ensued.

Q. A strange circle does not seem to affect Miss S.
A. The spirits who control her are on a plane so near your own that they are not sensitive to the influence.
Q. A spirit becomes more sensitive then as it progresses. We were talking much last evening and Mr. C. F. was much struck with the idea of God and the progress of the Spirit which you have given me. . . .

The second passage that we shall quote here is Moses's report of his first sitting with Mrs. Holmes. This was inadvertently omitted from LIGHT for Autumn 1963, where the accounts of five later sittings with this medium are reproduced. A further sitting, in which Florence Cook took part as a joint medium, is quoted in LIGHT for Summer 1963. Some account of events after the return of Mr. and Mrs. Holmes to America is given in LIGHT for Autumn 1963, p.130.

Sunday September 21. 1872.

Séance with Mrs. Jennie Holmes at 16 Old Quebec Street. Oxford Street.

Present, the Editor of a Hull Newspaper (Mr. Gale), his two friends (one for first time at a séance) and myself and Mr. Holmes.

As this was my first experience of the phenomena given thro' Mrs. Holmes I record more minutely what occurred.

Mrs. Holmes is a middle-sized woman, of thick-set apearance, with a round face. She speaks with a strong Yankee accent, and "guesses", "calkilates", and "reckons" freely.

Mr. Holmes is a tall, spare man, silent and reserved in manner, speaking at rare intervals with a strong Yankee accent. His face is shaven with the exception of a small moustache. He looks cute, and appears to be frightened of "spirits".

Whilst waiting in the room, which by the way, is a large, handsomely-furnished drawing-room rather inconveniently full of furniture, opening into a bedroom, I got into conversation with the Hull Editor. He asked me if I had had any experience. I replied by telling him in a very hasty way of some Douglas experiences especially the Cross. He at once said, "Oh! I have seen an account of that in the Medium". I said, "The account is mine". Then, he said, "you are the M.A. of the Medium". I admitted the soft impeachment, and my friend rose with great effusion and expressed his sense of honour, etc., at seeing in the flesh the author of what had struck him so much. I was amused, and especially when he spoke of the L'pool Mercury letters in terms of great admiration. He introduced me to his friends as "M.A. of the Medium" and afterwards to Mr. and Mrs. Holmes, who received me with great deference, Mrs. H. expressing her pleasure at making my acquaintance.

Whilst I was talking to Mrs. H. her husband was going about in a stolid, business-like way, arranging the room, and bringing out the musical instruments. The centre of the room was cleared, and five chairs were arranged in a semi-circle. On a card table by the wall were placed two guitars, a violin, two handbells, a tambourine, five small bells lashed to a piece of steel so as to form a sort of fairy bells, and two hoops. These latter were the hoops used in the Ring Test, and I examined them with great care.

The smaller of the two was a ring of round iron about $\frac{1}{3}$ inch diameter, or less than my little finger. The size of the ring would be about an eight-inch diameter. I found by the resonance of the metal that there was no joint in the ring, nor any flaw.

The other was an ordinary tambourine hoop made of wood, and hooped outside with iron. I examined the joint of the wood, and the make of the iron hoop: the parchment, of course, was removed. It was exactly what it appeared to be, a perfect wooden hoop, surrounded with a smaller iron band, both without a flaw in the joint.

By this time the circle was placed. Mrs. Holmes put me in the middle as the one presumably possessed of most Mediumistic power. On my right was the Editor's friend who had been at the séance on the night before: Mr. H. at the extremity on the right. On my left the Sceptic and next to him the Editor. The circle was very positive. The negative element was completely absent, and the power evoked was at times very strong indeed.

Mr. Holmes held matches and a very small lamp. Both the hands of the sitters at the extremities were grasped by those who sat next to them.

The light was no sooner out than a row was heard amongst the instruments. The guitar was violently thrummed and all were thrown on to the floor.

I have omitted to say that before the light was put out Mr. Holmes sealed up the doors by gumming paper over the joint. I inspected this, and the room throughout, looking into every corner, under every sofa and chair, and into every cupboard. I affirm that no human being save ourselves was in the room, and that no one could possibly get in without breaking the seal across the door. I also tied the Medium's hands firmly in front of her and lashed her to the back of the chair.

The instruments having been replaced, we were requested to sing. "Shall we gather at the river", and "There is a land of pure delight" were sung. Constantly throughout the evening we were asked to sing, and the manifestations were decidedly better when we did sing. Occasionally an accompaniment was played on the

guitar or tambourine, especially when Mrs. Holmes sang, which she occasionally did in a clear loud voice, which would have been pleasant but for the twang.

"Dick" the physical manifesting spirit floated the guitar round the room, touched us, and thrummed it very violently. We were obliged to ask him to be moderate as he would alarm the house.

"Rosie" the spirit of a little Indian girl came and spoke to me in a little childish whisper, putting her little hand into mine. It felt like a tiny baby-hand, soft and warm. She departed at the age of four, 13 years ago.

When I said her hand was tiny and soft, she came close to me, leaned on my knee and whispered. "Yes, me not like Dick. He got hand, Oh! so, so big. Just like big plantation chief".

(She calls men chief, and woman, squaw.)

A light being called for the Medium requested me to examine the rope as Dick had retied her. I found on examination that the hands were firmly lashed together so that the cord cut into the flesh: instead of being before her as I had put them they were at the back, and secured most firmly to the back of the chair. She could not move one step, and must have suffered from the tightness of the ligature.

During all this time I watched the Spirit lights flitting about. Mrs. Holmes sees the forms very clearly, and I found that my vision was reliable from its coinciding with hers. I noticed at one time seven spirits engaged in manifesting, and I found that Mrs. Holmes could see my own spirit guides behind me. She described them as a man, a woman, and a child. The man tall and commanding: the woman stoutish and medium-sized, the child quite little. She also described me as sitting in a perfect cloud of light, with phosphorescent streams darting from my hand. This accurately represents my own sensations on this and other occasions. Afterwards other information on this head was given by the Controlling Spirit "Belle" which for convenience I insert here. She said that my power was very strong, so strong that the manifesting spirits were obliged to be very careful how they used it, lest it should cause alarm. She described my spirit-guides as Mrs. H. had done, adding that the man was a very fine commanding figure, with beautiful brain development, and of very striking mien.* She especially thanked him for allowing the manifesting spirits to use my power which had been so valuable. She said that I had rarer and stronger power than she had yet seen. There was a spirit present, she said, who wished to thank me for what I had done

* The following sentence is written on the opposite page: He, she said, was my Inspiring Spirit: the other my Guardian.

for Spiritualism.

"Rosie" now entranced the Medium and spoke in a little childish voice, occasionally singing, and using Indian words, and broken English throughout.

After some playful remarks, I thanked her for touching me: she said: You very strong chief: Oh! so strong: no hard to touch you. She then asked me to come up for the ring test, saying that the Medium had been sitting all the afternoon and they wanted to do it only once, and that with someone from whom they could draw power to supplement the Medium's power. Accordingly I went to the table, and under Rosie's direction, ascertained the position of the rings on the table. She then guided my hand over the Medium's face and arms, and catching hold of both my hands asked me to shake her. I did, so that if any ring had been concealed on her arms I'll warrant I'd have made it jingle. There was none however, and I again made sure that they were on the table. Rosie now asked one of the Spirits to touch me, and I felt a hand playing over my face, hair, hands and arms. The company sang, and I became conscious of a bright spirit light on the table. After some three or four attempts, my arm began to quiver and in a moment I felt the tambourine ring—wood hooped with iron —placed on my arm, not on the Medium's but on my own. I distinctly felt my arm go thro' it on one side—the matter yielding —and come in contact with the hard wood on the inside of the ring. It was done in a moment, but my mind was prepared, and the sensation was clear. As the ring went over my arm I felt the outer contact as of velvet, and my arm passed gently thro' it: when it was on it fell upon my arm, and the wood felt as it usually does.

After this my right-hand neighbour went to the table, but the Spirits would not give the ring test again. Mrs. Holmes described a little boy—departed son of the sitter—trying to touch his father, and three times the child succeeded. The father knew the boy by description, and by a sign which he gave.

Whilst he was at the table I grasped Mr. Holmes' hand, and he shivered violently, complaining that the power which passed through me to him was overpoweringly strong.

After this a Spirit tried to shew itself, and produced a spirit-light about the size of a saucer. Once I saw faint indications of one side of a face; but they were only faint.

"Belle" the Controlling Spirit—an Italian girl—came into the room bringing a fresh cooling breeze with her. This is always the sign of her advent.

She now closed the séance by an address delivered in a very

measured clear tone. She wished us good-night, expressed the pleasure it gave her to manifest: prayed that God might bless the signs given: prophesied the coming of the time when darkness should be no longer necessary: explained why a dark séance was necessary as yet: spoke of me and thanked me, described my spirit friends behind me, and said that the power had been so great that the manifestations would have been greater, if it had been less. She had been obliged to warn the band (24 in number) that they must be careful how they used it, lest it got beyond their control. She concluded with a beautiful prayer.

Rosie said good-night too, and took a piece of money from between the lips of my neighbour. She expressed her admiration for "shiners", and he said he would give her one if she could fetch it. She did, and put it on the table. It a large piece of Portuguese money.

I have been particular in recording this séance, because I am anxious to record the varieties of phenomena obtained by different Mediumship.

In this case we had no movement of articles other than the tambourine and bells and guitar. At H. and W's [Herne and Williams's] the physical manifestations are more obstreperous.

The voice here was weak: at H. and W's very loud. The passage of matter thro' matter occurred only in the ring test. Mrs. H. on being questioned said that that test was of the rarest occurence and required the most harmonious and perfect conditions. She had very rarely obtained it. Yet in three weeks I obtained 60 instances. Once she had had a very large stone brought into the room: and once a picture from a house some 100 miles off. It was recognised by a sitter as belonging to himself. But this was exceedingly rare with her.

During the evening I was entranced for a short time. The manifesting Spirits, on being appealed to, said my own Spirit-friends had done it, and would bring me out all right. I fell on the floor, and remained in trance, as I was told, about 5 minutes.

Mr. Holmes suggested to me that I had the power of healing: why, I don't know: but I record everything I can remember.

When "Dick" was going round the circle with the tambourine touching us on the knees, the Sceptic put out his leg to try and trip him up. Dick cried out "What for leg up?" and put a hand-bell on the Sceptic's toe, much to his astonishment.

The candles being re-lighted I examined the seals on the doors and found them intact. There can be no doubt that the room was without mortal occupant except the Medium and 5 sitters.

The Ring-test is the great point in this séance.

Rebirth according to "Spirits"

R. CROOKALL, D.Sc., PH.D.

THE charge of imprecision has been levelled at "spirit communications" concerning reincarnation (with the implication that this means either that the "communicators" were non-existent or that reincarnation cannot be true). For instance, in his (otherwise) excellent book entitled *After-life* (Rider, p.120), Dr. William Wilson stated: "The French 'spiritualistic home' is built upon re-incarnation, whilst the Anglo-Saxon spirit [presumably purported spirits of Britons and Americans] as constantly denied the truth of this belief."

"Communicators'" statements regarding reincarnation can be divided into five groups.

(a) Unqualified denials of rebirth

These I found in two books only. The first, Dr. Carl Wickland's *Thirty Years Among the Dead* (Spiritualist Press Ltd., p.420) carries little weight on this subject, for all the "communications" seem to have emanated from "earthbound" souls and these are often ignorant, unreliable, or both.

In 1921 "Questor Vitae" (Oswald Murray) published a series of "communications" under the title of *The Process of Man's Becoming* (Duckworth) and continued them in 1924 in *The Spiritual Universe*. They were said to be received by telepathy (from "beings in supernal States" who had to use relays of "lower" discarnate souls). The teachings communicated are identical (apart from the terminology used) with those received by Geraldine Cummins from "F. W. H. Myers" and published in *The Road to Immortality* and *Beyond Human Personality* (Ivor Nicholson & Watson, 1932, 1935) except that whereas the latter accepted reincarnation (for a minority of men), the former did not. Murray (op. cit. p.103) considered that his "communicator" indicated "the futility inherent in the theory of reincarnation", when he said: "By projecting a life-current, I can enter into *your* own immediate surrounding spheres astral or etheric [bodies]. *I* can enter into the knowledges, and even the experiences of the same as to what each of you have gained and what you have passed through. So I need not enter again into an external embodiment of my own to gain the knowledge which is now mine own".

This argument seems to be unsound. First, the fact that one "need not" does not necessarily mean one "does not". Secondly, the main object of life, whether involving reincarnation or not, is presumably to develop the Soul, and this is not achieved by

the acquisition of knowledge but in overcoming one's own (apparent) limitations and in serving others, matters which cannot be had at second-hand and without personal effort. Nevertheless, Murray's "spirits" deny rebirth.

(b) More or less doubtful "communicators"

The Rev. G. Vale Owen (*Body, Soul and Spirit,* Hutchinson, 1927, p.46) found that, while those spirits who were on "the first few" spheres affirmed reincarnation, others denied it. Then he asked "more advanced" spirits: these were "very reticent" and, he said, "I surmise that there is a great truth underlying it, but that the time is not yet ripe for us to know it, owing to our present limited capacity of understanding".

"J.V.H." (*Death's Door Ajar,* Rider, 1934, p.229) reported differences in opinion on the part of different "communicators": while one said that "everyone within his own group knows that they had reincarnated", another avoided the issue and considered that no one "should wish to return to earth". When this latter opinion was put to a member of the former group, he replied there was no choice: "A human spirit must clothe itself again and again with a physical body till it has learned all the lessons which earth can teach it. . . . The law which governs return is as wise as every other natural law".

"J.V.H." concluded, "It seems that spirits reincarnate from all the various levels of the spirit-world. We hear of some coming back who have not progressed beyond the kindergarten stage, while others may be in high places of spiritual advancement. Sometimes these latter become leaders of men. . . . "

Lord Dowding (*Lychgate,* Rider, 1945, p.98) gave a summary of the "communications" he had received regarding reincarnation, but later (*The Dark Star,* Museum Press Ltd., 1951, p.46) modified what he had said. He stated: "Short-term reincarnation is a good deal more common than I had supposed when I wrote *Lychgate.* I think that this quite often happens when children die in infancy; and perhaps adults, too, often yield to the compelling pull of earth, especially if they have led very material lives. This short-term reincarnation is much easier to prove than the long-term variety, because a child may often bring back memories . . . which are capable of verification! "

(c) Reincarnation can be only partial

It must be remembered that incarnation (and therefore re-incarnation, if indeed, it occurs) is always partial. Hence a number of "communicators" have likened the whole series of earth-lives to the turning of a wheel. "Julia" (in W. T. Stead's *After Death,* Stead's Publishing House, 1897, p.149) said, "There is not a total

plunge into matter. . . . The Ego always has its vital principle on this side. The hub of the wheel is here, but the spoke is incarnate. . . . We are fashioned spoke by spoke until we can all be fitted into the perfect round. A spoke may be reincarnated again and again. Sometimes it is never again passed through the gateway of birth".

"Philemon" (*Letters from the Other Side*, Watkins, 1919, p.16) made a similar declaration, *i.e.*, that the Ego or Spirit can be compared to the hub of a wheel and "our varying personalities" are "rays from the Central Self—the 'Higher Self'." Later (p.99) he held that reincarnation is "not a necessity. . . . Hopelessly perverse souls may be given the chance of rebirth, but it is tantamount to starting all over again". Still again (p.132): "Reincarnation, as taught, is not true, yet pre-existence is a truth".

Mrs. C. A. Dawson Scott (*From Four Who Are Dead*, Arrowsmith, 1926) received two different "communications" on this matter. "S" (p.54) said, "We have no information here as to whether souls reincarnate". "H.D.L." (p.139) felt she had existed previously in "Eastern lands". She said, "I can't tell for certain . . . besides, it's only a bit of me! Could *parts* of us have been in existence elsewhere?"

(d) Statements that rebirth applies to everyone

Kate Wingfield's "communicator" (*More Guidance from Beyond*, Philip Allan & Co. Ltd., 1925, p.23) said, "One incarnation is not enough. . . . The higher spirits are not reincarnated. A person in his last incarnation has an intuitive knowledge of spiritual things".

"Scott" warned Jane Sherwood (*The Psychic Bridge*, Rider, p.60) that the problem of rebirth is "complicated" and has "many ramifications". Later, (*The Country Beyond*, Rider, p.75) he spoke of "many earth-lives whose records are buried deep in the unconscious mind" and of what happens when a discarnate soul eventually enters "the higher astral" (presumably in what Theosophists would call the Causal Body): he said, "The great perspective of past lives begins to open up". Still later (p.77) he gave a whole chapter on "Return" and said that we mortals "are involved in a series of recurring lives by means of which we shall attain to the perfect expression of the unique personality-meaning which is our special contribution to the whole".

Mrs. Rhys Davids (*What is Your Will?* Rider, p.66) was told that "on deceasing to the next world" (i.e., after "the third death"), "return to earth life was no more needed", but "the next step after earth life, I believe, for the majority, will be for a long time no more than a temporary going home 'for the holidays'." Later the "communicator" stated that "an indefinite number of times"

is a fact. He continued, "Albeit the majority, *in the next world*, have no fixed conviction on the matter, my informants were men of higher worth and were themselves in no doubt about it. Some were developing a growing power of reminiscence of former lives: this belongs to a third and worthier world. . . ."

In one of the most remarkable books in the whole of psychic literature (now unfortunately out of print), namely, *The Survival of the Soul*, by P. E. Cornillier (Kegan, Paul, Trench Trubner & Co. Ltd., 1921, p.18), an uneducated artists' model, Reine (in hypnotic trance) told Cornillier that he and his wife had known each other in a previous life. Later, a "communicator" named "Vettellini" gave Cornillier much information through the entranced Reine. It included predictions (in 1913) of the First World War and the downfall of the Kaiser, *i.e.*, some, at least, of what he said was true, or became true. Cornillier pointed out that "Hudson", a "communicator" of Admiral Moore, cited in his book *Glimpses of the Next State* (Watts & Co., 1911), made "flat denials" of reincarnation. In point of fact, this is an overstatement. On p.146 of Moore's book, the "communicator" was reported as answering one question, "Is there such a thing as reincarnation?" with: "Not in the Theosophy sense, yet in another", and a second question, "Is the progression a series of births?", with: "That is a punishment . . . a criminal comes back . . . but not necessarily on this planet". Moreover, Admiral Moore added a note to the effect that these replies were made "towards the end of a sitting" when the psychic power was low, under which conditions statements may be vague and unreliable.

However, "Vettellini" (*op. cit.*, p.340) did answer Cornillier's enquiries as to why different "communicators" gave different answers to one and the same question. Cornillier stated: " 'Vettellini' says that first we must take into consideration the enormous difficulty in communication and the consequent frequency of errors, and the ignorance of the greater number of spirits who communicate. They continue to give information on subjects in which they have no proper knowledge, just as they did in their lifetime. You must remember that it is extremely rare for high spirits to communicate. However, it may happen that even an evolved spirit denies reincarnation. Entering astral life with the firm conviction that this theory is an error, having himself no further need to reincarnate, and finding himself in the high spheres where questions of this order are no longer discussed, he may easily persist in his convictions for a while".

"Vettellini" (*op. cit.*, p.381) pointed out that "On earth, many people, though intelligent, cling to erroneous opinions: *e.g.*, how

many are there among the so-called intellectual élite of mortals who entirely deny all psychical phenomena! It is the same in the life after death".

"Vettellini" was quite aware of the matter which Murray's "communicator" thought was alternative to and excluding the possibility of, reincarnation: he did not so regard it. He (*op. cit.*, p.103) said, for instance, that relatively "high" spirits can foresee the future events of mortals by contacting their "astral bodies", or "doubles", when the latter are released, *i.e.*, uninsulated by the physical counterpart (in deep sleep)—"all events exist in the astral long before their realisation on earth and spirits are able to take cognisance of them by 'reading' the currents and fluids!"

According to "communication" from "Vettellini" (*op. cit.*, p.160), the length of time between incarnations varies and is usually related to the spiritual development: "inferior" spirits return, on an average, after 15-20 years in "the astral" while "those of 'higher degree'" return after about 40 years. But certain tasks, etc., may either advance or retard reincarnation. "Vettellini" (*op. cit.*, p.209) stated that there is no hard and fast application of, no universal rule applying to, reincarnation: "It is indeed the general law that spirits of a good evolution continue to advance in the Astral ['Paradise'] while inferior ones have need of re-incarnation for progress. But there are infinite modifications of this law, arising naturally from the infinite diversity of spirits. The directing spirits invariably seek to hasten evolution, and, when they deem it advisable, they do not follow the rule."

Later (*op. cit.*, p.223) "Vettellini" said, "There are periods during which spirits inevitably reincarnate. . . . Even those of fairly high evolution cannot always escape this influence". Spirits of "high" type can choose to return (as teachers, etc.) or to close their series of earthly lives.

In U.S.A., "Judge Hatch", communicating to Elsa Barker (*Letters from a Living Dead Man*, Rider, 1914, p.98), said that whereas earth-life is chiefly an objective life, the after-life is chiefly subjective, and continued, "That is why most of those who lived in Western lands (where the idea of rebirth is unpopular) come out here with the fixed idea that they will not go back into earth-life. Hence most of them still reason from that premiss. . . . Those who do not believe in rebirth cannot for ever escape the rhythm of rebirth, but they hold to their belief until the tide of rhythm sweeps them along with it and forces them into gross matter again, into which they may go quite unprepared, carrying with them no memory of their life out here. They carry out here the memory of the earth-life because they expected so to carry it.

Many Orientals, who have always believed in rebirth, remember their former lives because they expected to remember them. . . . I believe that many children carry over into earth-life memories of their lives out here, but that those memories are afterwards lost by reason of the suggestion constantly given to children that they are newly-created 'fresh from the hand of God,' etc.".

(e) Statements that rebirth applies to some but not all

1. *Rebirth affirmed, but without clear specification*

"Hilda", communicating through Geraldine Cummins (*Travellers in Eternity,* Psychic Press Ltd., 1948, p.191) said, "Reincarnation is true for some and not for others".

The "communicator" of Marjorie Livingston (*The Elements of Heaven,* Wright and Brown, 1928, p.96) stated that when progress is "normal", reincarnation is "frequent", adding, "But there are those who retrogress during earth-life, though these, in fact, seldom return. . . . In a word, reincarnation is not an automatic law. Man does not gravitate back earthward in a predestined cycle of existences, yet nevertheless he does return if a useful purpose may be served thereby. And it is not always for his own interests that he returns".

The "communicator" of A.L.E.H. (*Fragments from my Messages,* Women's Printing Society, 1929, pp.27, 28, 29, 31, 39, 68, 82, 191, 193) made a number of references to reincarnation. He said that "immature souls" who, after death, "face the scroll of their past lives" and then "pass into a state of sleep" returned to earth again: "Souls certainly must desire to return to earth or they would not return. But they desire it because they know they are not fitted to go on. . . . This often happens, but it is not by any means a universal rule [Compare 'Vettellini']. Death is an initiation for those who do not return to earth-life. They will not lose a body, but their covering will be like light . . . [Compare 'Myers']. I am told that for the very ordinary and crude soul there are 28 incarnations. But for many there are only seven. . . . Souls who hate an idea of physical life again . . . choose to advance more slowly through the seven spheres of probation and do not reincarnate". He stated that, "Beyond the spheres of Probation are the Spheres of Contemplation and beyond these the image of Eternity".

M. H. Collyer and E. P. Dampier (*When We Wake,* Rider, p.150) admitted: "We have never received any definite pronouncement on reincarnation. To reincarnate does not seem to be necessary or even usual, so far as our particular group teaching goes".

In Germany, Fr. J. Greber (*Communication with the Spirit*

World, Felsberg, 1932, p.86), a Roman Catholic priest was told that "Most human spirits must go back to earth repeatedly".

2. *It is chiefly those who die in infancy and early childhood who reincarnate*

"A.B." (*One Step Higher*, The C. W. Daniel Co. Ltd., 1937, pp.110, 115) was told: "We have schools of thought here which are widely varied. Some believe that we have all been through the earth-experience many times, and others contend that this is impossible. . . . I will set down the results of my investigations. Reincarnation is the exception and not the rule. The cases in which it must happen are: First, where the desire is strong enough to draw the soul down again to a compression of itself for any reason whatever. When the soul comes to its true life, after death, it has expanded, its consciousness is widened; if it is to return to earth, it must be compressed again. . . . Secondly, it may have left work unfinished. Thirdly, it may be that it is so much part of its own family that it desires to return to that family again and enjoy the familiar surroundings. This is an exceptional case. . . . If the soul desires with great fervour to return to earth it can do so. Again, if the soul has only reached the stage of birth or early childhood, it may well wish to complete the experience. Indeed, the larger number of reincarnate souls belong to this class. . . . There are cases in which there have been many returns to earth and in such cases affinity and love is the explanation. Memories of former existences are not necessarily proof of reincarnation. There is an ancestral memory [*i.e.*, both personal and ancestral memories are true.] My opinion is an opinion, no more".

"Claude" (*Claude's Book* by Mrs. Kelway Bamber, Psychic Book Club, 1918, p.30) at first said, "People here [on the Third Plane, 'Paradise'] vary in their opinions just as they did on earth. I am told that souls are sometimes reincarnated in order to gain further experience. . . . Families, friends . . . reincarnate together very often as they require the same experiences". In his second series (*Claude's Second Book*, Methuen, 1919, p.39), this "communicator" stated that "old souls" [*i.e.*, those that are spiritually-developed by numerous earth-lives] "only return to earth when desirous of doing so." A "young" soul [*i.e.*, one who is spiritually-undeveloped] is obliged to undergo rebirth.

"Heslop" communicating to his wife (*Speaking Across the Border-line*, Charles Taylor, 1912, p.58) said, "Reincarnation is a large and complicated subject. I can only tell you what I have myself experienced, or heard from higher spirits, and believe to be true. I think it is incorrect to state that all must come back to earth. When anyone has entered into any spiritual knowledge

during mortal life, they are never reincarnated except by their own special desire. If they are undeveloped and animal in the earth-life, they frequently return there in spirit-form, as earthbound spirits. . . . It is not necessary to pass repeatedly through the earth-life in order to progress. I will not say no one has ever reincarnated, but I have never yet met anyone who has".

W. T. Stead (*The Blue Island*, Hutchinson, 1922, p.148) was told: "In this [mental] sphere you will again come in contact with your whole record. . . . You will be given the *choice* of returning to earth again: reincarnating. If your record does not qualify for *choice* in this matter, either to return or to continue, you will be directed. . . . The spirits who have revealed this 'Return-or-Stay Sphere' and are purified . . . become impersonal".

Later, Stead (*Life Eternal*, Wright & Brown, 1933, p.52) was told that the Theosophical idea of reincarnation (in which all are obliged to return to earth) is not true—"Those who reincarnate do so through their own desires . . . by far the larger proportion of souls continue their development on our side and do not reincarnate. . . . Those who spent the earth-life badly may desire to return, in fact they often do—but they cannot be forced to do so. . . . The majority do not return. . . . The mistake is to speak of return to earth as a law or necessity, whereas it is a matter of choice".

"Myers", communicating to Geraldine Cummins (*The Road to Immortality*, Ivor Nicholson & Watson, 1932, pp.38-9) pointed out that the after-death period that is spent in "Paradise", which he called "illusion-land", is a "resting" period in which the Soul makes no advance since satisfactions come "without difficulty", "without struggle"—the Soul "merely dreams back in order that he may be able to go forward once more in his journey". After this rest-period (p.54), "Certain Soul-men desire to return to earth . . . these, then, become incarnate again. But the majority of Soul-men slough their Etheric [Soul] Body and put on the shape [the Spiritual Body] which is a degree finer". [Compare "A.L.E.H."]. "Myers" (p.62) correlated further advance for those ("the majority") who do not reincarnate with the idea of Group Souls: "Many Soul-men do not seek another earth-life, but their spirit manifests itself many times on earth and it is the bond which holds together a group of souls, who act and react upon one another. . . . We are all distinct though we are influenced by others of our community. . . . I shall not live on earth again, but a new soul, one who will join our group, will shortly enter into the pattern or karma I have woven for him on earth".

Again, "Myers" (*op. cit.*, 1932, p.89) spoke of "primitive", *i.e.*,

spiritually under-developed, souls who weave "hatreds" into the patterns of their lives and necessarily meet those emotions again on "the third plane" ["Illusion-land"—"Paradise"]. Such souls are made to reincarnate.

In a later series of "communications" given to Miss Cummins (*The Road to Immortality*, Ivor Nicholson & Watson, 1935, p.76), "Myers" said, "Those human beings who live almost wholly on the physical plane must be reborn in order that they must experience an intellectual and higher form of emotional life . . . "animal-men" almost invariably reincarnate. Some of the . . . Soul-men also choose to live again on earth. But metempsychosis does not involve a machine-like regularity of return. . . . The majority only reincarnate three or four times, though if they have some human purpose to achieve they may return as many as eight or nine times. No arbitrary figure can be named. We are only safe in concluding that in the human form, they are not doomed to wander over the space of fifty, a hundred or more lives. They do not gather any proper shape or experiences from the few earth-existences that are allotted to them. . . . However, even if we run the race of life on earth six times we touch but on the fringe of human experience. It is not necessary for us to return to earth. . . . We participate in the life of our Group-Soul. Many belong to it and these may spread themselves in their journeys over past, present and future. . . . I have not, at any time, been a member of the yellow races, but there are souls in my Group who have and I may, and do, enter into every act and emotion of their past chronicles. Through our communal existence, I perceive and feel the drama of the earthly journey of a Buddhist priest, of an American merchant, of an Italian painter, and if I assimilate the life thus lived, I am spared the living of it in the flesh. . . . You preserve your identity but . . . gather the wisdom of the ages through love which has a gravitational pull and draws you within the memories of those who are akin to your Soul, however alien their bodies may have been when they were on earth".

"Myers", it should be noted, makes no claim to omniscience and is prepared to admit "errors" if he meets souls with wider experience who say otherwise, but he certainly does not think that the soul passes through many births and deaths through "many centuries".

The orthodox Christian Church teaches that eternity is decided by each soul in accordance with the nature of a single earth-life (an idea which may represent an unwarranted deduction from the parable of the tares, etc., that was intended to emphasise the

importance of, but not claim exclusive importance for, the earth-life). On the other hand, "Myers" in England, (and "Vettellini", in France) held that spiritual progress is possible in the after-life. He said, "There is no set law concerning reincarnation. . . . A soul that, for the first time, enters a material body is usually spiritually related to some member of its Group and . . . may take on the karma of the older soul. The latter has, perhaps, experienced four or five incarnations. It has not yet gained all the terrestrial experience necessary to its spiritual evolution. It acquires it, however, in two ways: (1) through its entry into the Group-memory and (2) through its psychic connexion with the young soul who takes up the karma, the pattern created by its previous earthly life or lives. . . ."

4. *It is both (a) the spiritually developed and (b) the under-developed who reincarnate*

"Imperator" (*Spirit Teachings*, Fowler, p.43) said that reincarnation "is not true as generally held". He continued, "It occurs sometimes when an exalted spirit wishes to return to benefit mankind; it also happens when a spirit was so wicked that it sank to the lowest sphere . . . to be, at some future time, reincarnated. People born in poverty and vice, with few opportunities for good, will have their education in the other world." Later (p.46) he said, "Great spirits are sometimes incarnated and reincarnated, but this is the exception and not the rule." Finally (p.58): "Reincarnation in the sense in which it is popularly understood, is not true. Certain great spirits, for certain high purposes, have returned to earth and lived again amongst men".

Mrs. G. Vivian, B.A. (*Love Conquers Death*, L.S.A. Publications, p.156) was told: "Reincarnation is not the rule—it is the exception. It may be chosen by the soul if important work on earth has been left unfinished or if the life on earth did not provide the inner experience necessary for further development. Some highly developed souls choose to return in order to help the earth spheres. Some souls return to seek to be with their affinity".

Conclusions

If we may credit the statements that have been made by the "spirits", cited above, we have the following facts, all of which appear to be at least reasonable.

(1) There are various possible sources of error in such statements, *viz.* (a) "earthbound" souls may be ignorant and unreliable; (b) people who died with a fixed idea against reincarnation, even though not "earthbound" (in "Hades"), may transmit their (erroneous) earth-views; (c) apart from, and in addition to,

(a) and (b), "communications" that are transmitted through a medium whose psychic "power" has become exhausted (*e.g.*, towards the end of a séance) may be unreliable.

(2) The statement that there is a definite difference between French and British "communications" concerning rebirth (the former invariably asserting it and the latter usually denying it) is unfounded. The supposed difference therefore has no implication either as regards possibility of rebirth or as regards the nature of the French and British "communicators" concerned.

(3) The existence of reincarnation seems to be categorically denied only by (a) certain "earthbound" souls and (b) by Oswald Murray's "communicators". However, "Vettellini", P. E. Cornillier's exceptionally reliable "communicator", offered an explanation of the latter: he said, in effect, that "spirits" such as these had died with fixed ideas on the matter. (This also seems to occur in relation to the after-death "sleep"—see the writer's *The Supreme Adventure*, James Clarke & Co. Ltd., pp.53, 59, 77, and *During Sleep*, Theosophical Publishing House, 1964).

(4) Most of the "spirits", whether in France, Great Britain, U.S.A. or Germany, state that reincarnation is a fact.

(5) Nevertheless, they commonly maintain that reincarnation has been taken too rigidly—that people have fewer earth-lives than has often been thought. Many "spirits" insist that, "There is no fixed plan": but "Vettellini" stated that (subject to the latter proviso) spiritually-undeveloped men (*i.e.*, materialists, sensualists, etc.) may return after 15-20 years, while spiritually-developed men return after about 40 years. The "communicator" of "A.L.E.H." said that the spiritually-undeveloped man may need 28 incarnations, whereas "many" people need only seven. According to "Myers" (who did not claim infallibility) "the majority only reincarnate three or four times"; under special circumstances they may come back eight or nine times. "A.B." was told that, though reincarnation occurs, it is "the exception and not the rule". Two points on which many are agreed are that (a) it is the *desire to reincarnate* which results in the return to earth and (b) this often includes the *desire to continue with one's own family and personal friends.*

(6) Apart from the latter point (which would presumably apply to people of average spiritual development), many "communicators" (*e.g.*, Lord Dowding's, "Heslop's", "A.L.E.H.'s", "Philemon", "Stead", "Myers" and "Imperator") state that the spiritually-undeveloped, *i.e.*, materialists and sensualists, are particularly liable to reincarnate.

(7) Several "communicators" (*e.g.*, Lord Dowding's and

"A.B.'s") also state that souls who die in infancy or early childhood tend to return.

(8) It is commonly held (*e.g.*, by the "communicators" of Kate Wingfield, Cornillier, Mrs. Rhys Davids, "A.L.E.H.", Mrs. Vivian, Mrs. Kelway Bamber, "Heslop", "Stead" and "Imperator") that after the "Etheric" (soul) Body has been shed (at "their third death") *i.e.*, after a soul has attained a high degree of spiritual development and is inhabiting the Causal ("spiritual") Body, a man does not normally return. Nevertheless, he may choose to reincarnate in order to help those who are still struggling on earth. Such "teachers", etc., tend to remember their former earth-lives.

It only remains to be said that exaggerations and too-rigid interpretations of facts are not confined to matters such as these. They are, of course, by no means unknown in medicine and the biological and psychological sciences. Moreover, in the latter, there is a possibility that was denied to the "communicators" cited —we refer to the possibility of comparing notes and modifying statements accordingly. When the highly complicated and difficult nature of the subject is taken into consideration, we may conclude that, by and large, "spirits" have not done badly on this subject of reincarnation. There is general agreement that it is a fact but the process does not follow "rule of thumb".

Psychic Gleanings in Gloucestershire

CATHERINE WASHBURN WESTALL

1. Monks at Leonard Stanley

IN 1949, the English Press showed considerable interest in the monk or monks who were frequently sighted in the Anglican parish church next to the old priory in the village of Leonard Stanley. Gloucestershire reporters interviewed elderly residents and quoted at least four who attested to the appearance of a monk in the church. A cousin told me that the vicar of that period, Canon E. Saleby, said that he felt very well acquainted with the monk, as he had seen him so often. He called him "his friend".

In the summer of 1959, I visited the church, also the priory, now occupied by a private family who were most cordial in allowing me to see the house and farm. The priory, in use as a farmhouse more than a hundred years ago, was the scene of "The Laying of Mr. Brown", published in LIGHT in March, 1957. This building has had more than its share of ghostly inhabitants. A friend, "Ellen", told me that about 1922, she saw a woman looking out

of the priory window. She looked quite solid and normal, but it turned out that she was not.

The church, which seems large for the present community, felt cold and empty, although the day was warm and sunny. The moment I stepped into the chancel, however, there somehow seemed a sense of life. Possibly this is a common reaction, as the chancel is usually the centre of the life of a church. It would be interesting to know whether others feel this at Leonard Stanley, for there may be added cause. Years ago, the activities of the death-watch beetle had made the gallery unsafe. It was torn out, of necessity, and the walls of the nave were in a torn-up condition for some time. Ellen, who spent her youth in the village, believes that the monks were disturbed by the destruction of part of their church and very likely of their graves.

When Ellen was in her early teens, and with no thought of ghosts in mind, she saw a monk walking toward the church. Supposing that he was a visitor, she brought the monk's presence to the attention of the Vicar, who was outside at the time, but had not noticed him; she said she expected that he wished to see the church.

The Vicar looked, saw no one, and denounced the girl severely, even taking up the matter with the aunt with whom she lived. Nothing was more deplorable than to make up such a tale. She must go to church at a special time which he designated. She did this, perforce, but facts were still facts. A little later on, the Vicar saw two monks! Greatly agitated, he called the doctor. Was he losing his mind? The doctor calmed him by telling that he was very highly strung, and that he must take more rest. I asked Ellen how she knew what the doctor said.

"Because," she replied, "the Vicar's children listened outside the door!"

Evidently the Vicar thought the matter over, for, to his eternal credit, he came to Ellen and told her that he, too, had seen the monks. No longer was she in disgrace.

Another cousin, Claudine Witchell, wrote me from Bussage at Christmas of 1949 of another "sighting".

> "Mrs. J.G. (her niece), who lives at Thrupp House, had a friend from Newcastle staying with her. She left her in her car just outside the church. When she came back, her friend said, 'Oh, I thought that window in the church was a door, as I saw a priest go in'. J. asked her to describe him; and she said he had something on his head like a hood! This friend had never heard about the 'Hooded Monk'."

2. *The Portrait Came Home*

WHEN "Ellen" was a child in Gloucestershire, her aunt often took her with her when she called on friends. One family, consisting of the parents and three grown daughters, lived in so charming a Victorian home that the Ellen of today still recalls many details of their mode of life.

To the child, the daughters seemed rather alike and old. During the afternoon they always retired to their rooms, coming down to tea when fetched by the maids. There, in softly-rustling silk dresses, they waited on their elderly parents with every thought and care. Ellen sat fascinated by the gentle art of tea-making with a silver spirit-kettle, and the ritual of warming the fragile cups—while the servants moved around silently.

The eldest daughter, Grace, interested Ellen most. There was some inexplicable rapport between them of which probably both were aware. One day, when Ellen was about fourteen, she noticed that Grace was absent and inquired for her. The atmosphere became tense and awkward. No answer was given, but after tea, a maid came in and announced that "Miss Grace" would like to see Ellen.

Grace was lying on her bed in a darkened room. She held Ellen's hand and asked her to listen carefully. She told her that she could not live more than about six months, and that she was worried to think that she had done nothing with her life. Therefore, she had resolved to go to London to devote the remainder of her life to the blind. She said that she did not wish Ellen to make the same mistake that she had made, and devote her life to those who did not really need her. "We are put into the world for a purpose, and we must find and work for that purpose." She ended by saying, "I am telling you this because I am afraid for you, and you will never see me again here".

Ellen never did see her again. Grace died about six months later, having worked for the blind almost to the last. Ellen never heard her name mentioned again in that house. Her action had been resented as she had foreseen. Ellen considers it possibly chance that her own life-work is in Blind Welfare, in which she has been engaged for more than twenty years; but she also realised that the idea may have taken root when Grace spoke of her decision.

Years passed. The other two sisters married. The son of one became a famous barrister. Ellen did not know what happened to the family. The house became a hotel.

Thirty-six years later, when Ellen was living in another part of England, she visited the hotel with friends. The proprietor, a

north country man, was delighted to show them the house, now filled with furniture of which he was proud, but which rather appalled these guests, who well remembered the appropriate décor of the past. Coming down the stairs, Ellen noticed an oil-painting of Grace, and expressed surprise that the family should have sold the portrait with the house!

The innkeeper told a strange story. While going about the country picking up furniture at auctions, he had visited a sale-room in Exeter. There his wife (who claimed to be psychic) had seen the picture, to which she immediately felt an odd attraction. She insisted that her husband buy it at all costs. In order to humour her, as she was ill and could not sleep, he said that it would cover the large patch on the wallpaper on the stairway, and so save the expense of re-papering the whole area. On the next day, no one bid for the picture, so the innkeeper got it for a few pounds. After he had returned home, he found to his astonishment that the picture *exactly* covered the patch on the wall. Since the patch was large, the proprietor was delighted with the service that the painting rendered. Besides, the portrait was good—that of a young woman with steady eyes, which watched everyone who came down the stairs.

Soon after the purchase, the wife died. Before long, it happened that the barrister, grandson of the original family, was a guest in the hotel. He had to attend the Assizes, and he could not obtain accommodation in his usual hotel. As he had been brought up in this house, he must have been keenly interested when he noticed the portrait of his aunt on the wall. He questioned the innkeeper as to how he had got it. The owner disputed the fact that it *was* his aunt, but the young man insisted. To prove his point, he said that the signature of the artist was under the frame. They lifted the picture down and examined it. There was the signature, exactly as Grace's nephew had indicated. Had Grace herself directed the return of her portrait to its original position?

(This account is factual apart from the name of "Ellen", whose real name has been given to LIGHT.*)*

Was it Psychokinesis?

ANNE SLOWGROVE

MR. HANS HOLZER, the American author of *Ghost Hunter*, has recently been visiting "Stately Homes", in pursuit of ghosts, all over Europe, but during his all-too-short stay in England, he found time to visit the Paraphysical Laboratory in the New Forest, where we are trying to devise scientifically controlled experiments

to detect paranormal effects. We have had the most promising results with a random-flashing lamp. This consists of a torch bulb with a built-in bi-metal strip which flashes randomly when the heat of the element causes the make-and-break contact to function. The rate of flashing can be controlled by varying the current in the bulb. In a series of experiments over the last few months, various operators have tried to influence the rate of flashing by "willing", but so far I appear to be the only successful operator, scoring over 86 per cent correct calls.

Mr. Holzer and his wife arrived with tape recorder and two cameras at 2 p.m. on September 15th, 1964. We had tried to work out a programme to save time, but Mr. Holzer had his own ideas as to the film he wished to make, to be included in a documentary film to be televised in the USA later this year. As we doubted that any real results would be obtained under the scrutiny of the cameras, we had intended merely to carry out an experiment and then explain what should take place. When it came to the point, however, all went extremely well.

Mr. Holzer began his recording by explaining to his future audience the purpose of his visit, i.e., an attempt to record an actual PK (psychokinesis) experiment; then he asked Benson Herbert to summarise the aims of the Paraphysical Laboratory. Mr. Holzer added that 100 years ago, the ability to make physical events occur "to will" would have been regarded as witchcraft.

I then carried out a series of 12 experiments in which I called out at 15 seconds intervals "quick" or "slow", denoting a guess at whether the light would flash more or less quickly during the subsequent 15 seconds. As I find the flashing light distracting, it is concealed, and a light-sensitive cadmium sulphide cell picks up the flashes and transforms them into audible clicks through a loudspeaker. The clicks were tape-recorded, as were my calls, for later checking.

The most surprising thing about the experiment was that on checking the results, we found they were as good as any of the previous trials carried out without the distracting presence of a television camera. In fact, it was often possible to hear the rate of clicks altering in accordance with my calls.

This, of course, may have been merely precognition and not PK. However, other experiments with geiger-counter, and coin-tossing, cards, etc., appear to show that I do not posses any discernible precognitive faculty. There is, therefore, some reason to suppose, after over 100 experiments (which of course need many repetitions to corroborate the results) that some PK faculty is operative in the random flashing experiments.

Who is peculiar?

A Review Article J. H. M. WHITEMAN M.A., M.MUS., PH.D.

Very Peculiar People, by E. J. Dingwall (University Books, 1962)

This is a collection said to be of five "portrait studies of the queer, the abnormal and the uncanny", first published in 1950 and now reprinted. Greatest interest and value attaches to the concluding 40-page account of Eusapia Palladino, the story of whose eventful life unfolds vividly through the early sittings in Naples to the investigations in Milan, Warsaw, France, Cambridge, Genoa and Paris, the Carrington-Feilding-Baggally series (1909) and the disastrous American visit of 1909-10. As with the other studies in the book, Dr. Dingwall's painstaking research and thorough documentation command admiration.

A less impressive feature, springing perhaps from a desire to increase the book's popular appeal, but in effect decreasing its scientific status, is the stress laid on the queerness and insolubility of the problems, "so complex and obscure that any real understanding of them can hardly be said to exist". Thus "D. D. Home still remains a puzzle which no longer seems capable of solution", and in the case of Eusapia each of the possible solutions "seems more unpalatable and improbable the more it is examined" (p.178). Yet surely it is clear enough today from stenographic records and photographs that paranormal phenomena did frequently occur in the séances. Dingwall repeatedly admits it, as when he says of the Courtier sittings in Paris, "One result of the committee's inquiry was to establish without any shadow of doubt that many of the phenomena were objective and not due to any kind of hallucination on the part of the observers" (p.199).

It is a pity that the Appendix to this chapter has not been brought up to date by the mention of Hereward Carrington's detailed report on "The American Séances with Eusapia Palladino" (1954) with stenographic notes. Dingwall states that he consulted with Professor R. W. Wood, who had prepared elaborate X-ray detection apparatus for use at these séances, and says, "For some reason that has not been explained, this apparatus was never used". Carrington, however (op.cit.), gives the reason: Professor D. S. Miller had refused to allow the experiments to be carried out. As Dingwall mentions, Miller had already committed himself, in a sensational press article, to the opinion that previous reports as to Eusapia's genuineness were "monuments to a grovelling imbecillity of judgment".

I must pass over three of the other "portrait studies", in connection with which Dingwall produces a vast amount of out-of-the-way evidence, in order to give fuller attention to the first and longest, which is an interpretation of Swedenborg along the lines of rationalistic psychology. It amounts to a sustained attempt to explain Swedenborg's experience as an unusually well-co-ordinated "hallucinatory system". He had "grotesque visions which he mistook for reality". His concepts of correspondence are "grotesque". "utterly ridiculous", and "mixed

up with a complex of hallucinatory experiences" (p.17). "His introspection and self-analysis were coloured by the basic premises which he refused to examine" (p.28). His hallucinations led him to declare that "his soul was, as it were, out of the body and in the other world" (p.33). "In the world of matter he was a grown man; in what he supposed to be that of spirit he was back in the nursery at Brunsbo" (p.55). "I do not believe that Swedenborg's own point of view regarding his experiences . . . can be maintained. Indeed, I think it is so weak as scarcely to deserve serious rebuttal" (p.20).

Anyone familiar with modern studies of mystical and out-of-the-body experience can of course use the same phraseology and reply that Dingwall's case against Swedenborg is "well-coordinated" but rests on "grotesque" misconceptions, and is consequently "so weak as scarcely to deserve serious rebuttal." Dingwall has evidently received criticisms of this kind; for he says of his case, "I cannot hope that it will be greeted with anything but contempt and pity by Swedenborgians, Roman Catholics and others who believe that they possess a very special knowledge of the origin and meaning of the mystical experience and allied states" (p.25). The question is not, however, one of emotional reactions, nor does "the interpretation" depend on "the basic beliefs of the analyst" (p.28) as if it were a matter of personal idiosyncrasies. It is on the contrary a matter of straightforward scientific investigation, free from limitations of view due to unrecognised "basic premises". The difficulty is that Dingwall and others who think as he does are sincere in believing their case a reasonable one, and Dingwall appears also to have consulted with Swedenborgians and failed to get satisfaction. It seems therefore desirable (especially in view of the claim on the jacket that the book offers "a new understanding of Swedenborg") to meet sincerity with an equally sincere attempt to show precisely where arguments for the "hallucination theory" fall to the ground.

The chief "basic premise" of the theory seems to be the identification of the *real* and *physical* (or *material*) and the complementary identification of the *unreal* and *subjective* (or *mental*). This amounts to Lockian Dualism, as opposed to the hierarchical views of Plato, Leibniz and, in fact, of all religion, which sees an "objective reason" (Logos) in the "intelligible world" disclosed as creative substructure to the "outer" worlds. That Dingwall is a Lockian dualist appears from his treatment of "hallucinations," which come in the category of the "subjective unreal", while no room is left for experience which is neither subjectively unreal nor physical (how he accounts for veridical psychical phenomena is a mystery). Hallucinations are either "external", as when the physical is imitated but the "actual basic" is lacking (p.23), or "internal", as in hypnagogic vision and "the bulk of the experiences of religious mystics and visionaries" (p.25). Naturally, if we begin by postulating only two types of non-physical experience (apparitions, subjective fantasies), nothing remains of the claims of Swedenborg. However well supported by other observers, his claims to other types of experience must be ruled out as self-delusion.

Dingwall tries to justify his denial of the *real non-physical* category of experience (and thus of out-of-the-body experience, existence of spiritual "worlds", knowledge of the Higher Wisdom, the Vision of Archetypal Light, and so on) by likening Swedenborg's experience to the persistent apparitional visions of J. Tennart (b.1661), C. F. Nicolai (b.1733), L. Staudenmaier (b.1865) and "Mr. Grünbaum". He supposes that the experiences of these men being purely hallucinatory, the same therefore applies to Swedenborg. But here again is an assumption of either-or dualism, this time of *normal* versus *hallucinatory*. This entanglement of hypotheses provides no solid basis and would not be accepted by mystics. Everyone, it would be maintained, is liable to character disturbances in which lower spiritual phenomena are presented; and in extreme cases of "dissociation", without alignment with the Higher Wisdom, these may become terrifyingly out of control. The essence of mysticism is the unification with the Higher Wisdom through self-discipline, and consequently control of the lower forces and emergence of a higher-level manifestation of "objective spirituality". The question therefore is, how far each of these men had travelled to knowledge of the Higher Wisdom and "objective spirituality".

In spite of Dingwall's remark about people "who believe they possess a very special knowledge", this kind of question is comparatively easy to answer. He would probably be surprised at the large proportion of his acquaintances who would admit to occasional knowledge of a spiritual or psychical objectivity, neither physical nor imaginative, and how many would confess a dependence on the "Higher Power" (I estimate a good 50 p.c. of my acquaintances). To such people it is clear that the self-induced apparitions of "Mr. Grünbaum", for instance, taught him virtually nothing of spiritual control or elevation, and it is not surprising that he eventually abandoned his terrifying experiments because "he had had enough". On the other hand, to suppose that Swedenborg "faked" his convincing accounts of the Higher Wisdom and states of spiritual release, while all the time his experience was only of the fixed apparitional or hypnagogic type, is in my opinion fantastically implausible.

On a very different level from Dingwall's unsatisfactory picture of Swedenborg's character and experience is his balanced survey of the diverse accounts of his presumed veridical psychical knowledge. While none of these satisfy the canons of evidence demanded today, and all have been embroidered in the course of time, Dingwall agrees that "it certainly seems likely" that Swedenborg acquired information supernormally.

Book Reviews

Museum Piece, by James Laver (Andre Deutsch, 25s.)

Mr. Laver's anecdotal autobiography is well worth reading. To be curator of a museum department is not the most adventurous of occupations, but outside his duties he has led an extraverted social life in widely varied cultural fields; his anecdotes, especially of the

theatre world, are good and in character. His manners—a welcome change from those of so many memoir writers—are as discreet as his taste; casting, some readers may feel, too discreet a veil over his own interior life. There is one chapter on the occult, a subject which Mr. Laver approached by reading every book on the subject in the London Library in order to beguile his war-time train journeys; this led on to his undertaking a life of Nostradamus—hardly the passionate approach of a Myers. Nevertheless he has had his own precognitive and "guided" happenings, has telepathically attracted mediums' attention and has experienced evil at a physical séance; he came to a shrewd assessment of Aleister Crowley in his final phase; he received an illumination in a Scunthorpe cinema. His comments on the occult are fair, if a shade distant. The reader gains the impression that he has never had any intention of becoming committed by his own experiences in the occult field.

PAUL BEARD

Letters from Mother. A Family Biography In Two Worlds. Edited by Edmund Bentley (Psychic Press. 12s. 6d.)

This is a simply-told story of how the mother of a large family began, after her death, to control the hand of a daughter on earth, giving her details of the passing, of the relatives she found waiting for her, and of their happy life on the new plane of existence in which they are now living. Although not the highest plane to which they hope ultimately to rise, their surroundings are beautiful, and the lives they are living are joyful and useful.

Lesley May, the automatist, lives in South Africa, where her husband runs a garage and motor service station. She seems to have had no idea that she possessed any psychic ability until after the death of her mother at the age of eighty-two. Then one day, she and her sister were "doodling" with pencils. "We were curious to discover if there was any truth in the practice, or any independence in the movement of our pencils." Suddenly Mrs. May's hand was controlled and she began to write.

Many "deceased" persons purported to be using her hand, the chief of the communicators being her indomitable mother, Ethel McLean, who had taken part in pioneer activities in South Africa, some seventy to eighty years ago. Mrs. McLean had ruled her large family with firm, but kindly, governance during her earth life. Now, from the Beyond, it appears that she is advising and directing it still.

The pleasant, happy life she depicts in these "letters" should be a great comfort to those who have lost their dear ones, or who dread the transition for themselves. Not everybody can accept the genuineness of automatic writing, and in many cases, perhaps in most cases, it is undoubtedly much coloured, to say the least, by the medium's own ideas. In this instance, one must hope that the matter does truly come from the departed Mrs. McLean and the other members of her family who use Lesley May's hand.

The book is edited by Edmund Bentley, whose own works on psychic things are known to many.

CHRISTINE CHAUNDLER

Obituary

Sir John Swayne, K.C.B., C.B.E.

Lt.-Gen. Sir John Swayne, my friend of more than forty years, died in December. He was a distinguished soldier of whose military career others have written. We met after the First World War in Karachi where he was serving as Aide-de Camp to General Braithwaite. He had the misfortune to be taken prisoner early in the war and spent years in a prison camp. I like to look back and think that whilst we were in Karachi we worked together and then sat for the Staff College entrance examination.

Later he and I with our wives entered on our first experiments in the psychic field. It was from these early table experiments that our interest grew and was to continue for life. His concise and lucid brain was ideally adapted to experimental work and enabled him to observe and report without prejudice. We worked together on the "Manor House Report" a record of experimental work under strict test conditions with psychics. He was largely responsible for the drafting of the report on behalf of the College of Psychic Science.

I look back on those days with a happiness born of true companionship. He had an instinctive understanding of the psychic, and a sympathetic approach to sensitives which greatly aided experimental work.

I feel that he will continue this work from, as he has expressed it, "the other side of the fence". His interest and knowledge and, I venture to say, a community of ideas, will bridge the gap.

To Lady Swayne we of the College would offer sincere sympathy in the passing of her husband, a friend of more than fifty years.

R. C. FIREBRACE

C. C. L. Gregory, M.A.

On November 24th, 1964, C. C. L. Gregory went to post a letter and did not return. I went to see what had happened and found him dead, killed by a car. He would have hated to grow old. He was 72, and unbelievably strong and active. This summer he broke a wrist at tennis and printed a number of *Cosmos* with his arm in a sling. I am deeply grateful for the experience of having lived with him.

We met over 12 years ago when he was Chairman of a Conference on Psychical Research. Bill Roll introduced us. I had been persuaded to attend rather against my inclinations, as the subject did not greatly interest me. At that Conference my whole life—emotional and intellectual—became transformed.

Among other things I learned that C.C.L.G., who had been Director of the University of London Observatory (for the creation of which he was responsible), a scientist all his life, had taken part in an investigation of the physical medium Rudi Schneider; as a result of this prolonged investigation, itself a repetition of a lengthy French piece of work, professors of the University of London had voted psychical research a suitable subject for academic study. Shortly afterwards that university accepted its first doctoral thesis in this field.

Clive's father was a parson, his mother a witch. He became sceptical of all things religious at an early age, the Darwin-Wallace theory of evolution being his chief intellectual ammunition against the religious background of his home. He rejected Wallace's Spiritualism out of hand, whilst retaining the greatest respect, indeed reverence, for him as a savant, naturalist and investigator. Later in life he was more inclined to regard survival of death as possible, but he never considered it his business, or that of any man of science in the present state of knowledge, to concern himself with the question.

As a young man he was undecided whether to become an astronomer or a doctor. He finally decided in favour of astronomy, but physiology, healing and psychiatry remained a life interest, and he had two training analyses (Jungian and Freudian). He was a natural healer, though when this began to interfere somewhat with his academic work, he had to take steps to curtail some of his healing activities.

Retiring from the University Observatory in 1950, he began to devote himself to his life-long dream—unitary scientific theory. He and I jointly wrote *Physical and Psychical Research* (1954) in which we argued the case in favour of such an integrated cosmology. This was a resounding failure—no one wanted to integrate anything. It became clear that if we wanted unitary theories and neutral methodologies we should have to devise and discover them ourselves. We acquired a beautiful and ramshackle house in the country, set up an Institute for the Study of Mental Images, and asked for co-operation from a large number of persons. They all turned it down flat—neither investigation of subjective experience nor unitary theory were wanted.

In 1957 we published the first number of Communications of the I.S.M.I., containing the outline of O-structure theory, and circulated this, among others, to all Fellows of the Royal Society. It did not raise the slightest ripple of interest. In 1959 we published a book called *The O-Structure* which, in spite of some initial enthusiastic reactions in letters, similarly hardly stirred a flicker of interest. Late in 1959 we acquired second-hand printing equipment and learned to print. From December, 1959, to the end of 1964 we wrote, printed and circulated a monthly journal, *Cosmos*, which stirred up a certain amount of dust. But as for our basic undertaking, to provide an overall cosmological theory in the Pythagorean manner, to unify the quantitative and the spiritual, there was only very little interest and less understanding.

In 1963 we printed a translation of Prof. L. L. Vasiliev's *Experiments in Mental Suggestion.*

Clive was a man of total integrity and unbelievable tenacity. I can hardly call him "courageous" because, so far as I could see, he was never afraid. (I was, often.) He was formidably critical, endlessly kind, helpful and patient (sometimes too much so, I felt), incapable (unlike myself) of bearing a grudge, and utterly unambitious. I have never met anyone more full of life, enthusiasm, energy and love.

ANITA GREGORY

College News

RUBY YEATMAN

OUR very active Spring Session opened with a lively discussion between the President and Mrs. Ena Twigg on "Mediumship". Mrs. Twigg, as expected from such a gifted and knowledgeable sensitive, was at no time at a loss to reply to the President's questions, all of which were so framed as to elicit information helpful to all who listened—and the lecture room was filled to capacity. When the discussion ended, the occasion was made a social evening when a goodly number of the College Council and members and their friends met one another and enjoyed the refreshments provided.

This session also saw the beginning of an Introductory Course on Psychic Science. The first of the six weekly lectures was given by the President, on "What is it all about?" Mrs. Hankey, former Principal of the College, spoke next, on "Mental Mediumship", followed by the Vice-President, Mr. Harold Vigurs, on "Physical Mediumship". Next Mrs. Goldney, M.B.E., a Council member of the Society for Psychical Research, spoke on "Experimental Telepathy". The fifth lecture was on "Evidences for Survival" by Mr. W. V. Blewett, B.Sc., a College Council member, and another Council member, Mr. K. Mcfarlane, J.P., "summed up" in the final talk.

The Tuesday evening and Wednesday afternoon lectures and demonstrations were well attended. Amongst the speakers we were privileged to welcome to the College platform was Professor G. Wilson Knight, Emeritus Professor of English Literature in the University of Leeds and the author of numerous studies on Shakespeare, Byron and other poets. Professor Knight spoke on "Byron and Spiritualism", a subject which appealed alike to Spiritualists and lovers of poetry. We extend to Professor Knight our sincere sympathy on the passing of his brother, W. Jackson Knight, who lectured so brilliantly here in 1963.

The lecture on "The Coming Science of Man" by Mr. Ian Gordon Brown, International Trustee of the Lucis Trust and former industrial psychologist, was one which attracted an audience well sprinkled with young people. Mr. Brown is an experienced and delightful speaker, and his subject makes an especial appeal to all forward-looking people.

Miss Elizabeth Jenkins, the author of, amongst others, those two outstanding books on the Elizabethan era, *Elizabeth the Great* and *Elizabeth and Leicester*, shared her intimate knowledge of this period of English history with her audience in her talk on Dr. Dee, Magician to Elizabeth I. Nearly everyone knows of Dr. Dee, the alchemist, but few realise he had a definite knowledge of mediumship Miss Jenkins enlightened her audience on the many-sidedness of this unusual man.

At the end of February we had the pleasure of welcoming to our platform for the first time another distinguished writer, Mr. Arthur Calder Marshall, speaking under the title of his book, "No Earthly Command", the fascinating account of the life of a Vice-Admiral in the Navy who became a padre in the London Dockland area and

whose everyday life became an inspiration to all those with whom he came into contact—this as the result apparently of "no earthly command".

In February also we had the pleasure of listening to Mr. Donald A. Nickelson speaking on the Life and Work of Mrs. Gladys Osborne Leonard, the famous trance medium. Mrs. Leonard's name is familiar to all who have any knowledge, however small, of Psychical Research, but Mr. Nickelson added much to accounts already given of this celebrated sensitive's outstanding achievements. Mrs. Osborne Leonard is a member of the College and although she cannot now undertake the journey to London, nevertheless she keeps in touch with us by correspondence and as a subscriber to LIGHT.

In March another famous medium, Mrs. Lillian Bailey, visits the College to talk on her personal psychic experiences. It is but rarely that Mrs. Bailey is able to fulfil such an engagement and we are all looking forward very much to her visit. On March 23rd Mrs. K. M. Goldney, M.B.E., will speak on "Physical Phenomena" a subject that has a perennial attraction for everyone interested in Psychic Science. Mrs. Goldney, ever generous to share her vast knowledge of psychical research, has just lectured on Telepathy in our Introductory Course. To close the lectures for the Spring Session, Mr. Douglas Hunt, the author of that best seller, *Exploring the Occult*, will speak on April 6th on the subject of his book—an occasion not to be missed.

A word of appreciation for all those mediums who have given the College their co-operation for demonstrations during recent months:—Mr. Bo-Goran, Mr. William Elton, Mrs. Dora Lindsay, Mrs. Jessie Nason, Mr. George McAllister, Mrs. Ivy Scott, Miss C. Burnet-Smith and Mrs. Marjorie Staves.

It is invidious to single out any one person, but both Mrs. Ivy Scott and Mrs. Dora Lindsay were especially successful in giving evidential messages to a number of young people who came to their meetings to learn something of the nature of clairvoyance and clairaudience. Members of Council are much in demand as speakers to various associations and groups, and these talks are followed up by an invitation to their members to visit the College. Invariably great interest is shown in the work of the College and in its library, which is regarded as the finest of its kind in Great Britain.

For a number of good reasons, the Council decided against holding a College Fair in 1964, despite the record profit of £719 from the 1963 Fair and the importance of this to College finances. Heavy repairs, on top of a 1963 balance-sheet deficit of £900, called for special effort—and it was forthcoming. An appeal from the President to all members brought in a magnificent total of over £1,250, which will greatly ease day-to-day anxieties in maintaining the work of the College.

March 8th 1964 was the eightieth birthday of Miss Mercy Phillimore, for 39 years Librarian, then Secretary, of the London Spiritualist Alliance. The Council and College presented Miss Phillimore with a cheque as a small token of their esteem.

Correspondence

ESP Mechanical Aids

Sir, I am naturally interested in Mr. Benson Herbert's account (LIGHT, Winter, 1964) of a *Second TV Table Séance*, since he appears to be following similar lines of enquiry to some of my own, accounts of which have appeared in earlier papers or books on dowsing, ESP, etc., and I hope to say more in two forthcoming books on *Psychic Science* and *Radiesthesia*, respectively.

Commenting briefly on Mr. Herbert's conclusions, items 1-4 and 6 appear entirely acceptable, provisionally, and 5 seems to be very probable, assuming sub-conscious control of table movements by one or more of the sitters, plus occasional pick-up of stray thoughts (*via* ESP), as in his item 6, over shorter or longer ranges.

Item 7 (effect of intermittent flashing light) reminds one of certain hypnotic techniques, bearing in mind that hypnosis tends to facilitate ESP, etc. For instance, the subject may be made to stare at a bright (steady or else wavering) light or monotonous design, or else to listen to some equally soothing (say, droning or intermittent, but regular,) sound. Any of these aids the induction of artificial lethargy and hence, if combined with "mesmeric" suggestion by a strong-willed operator, eventual hypnosis, somnambulism, automatism and so forth.

While testing an elaborate electro-medical treatment set (from Vienna) for a London institution in about 1934, I came across yet another way of inducing hypnosis—a purely electrical one. This consisted in the creation of monotonous "rocking" sensations when very weak AC at a very low frequency was passed through the ears (and cranium) of the subject. The foregoing methods are to be preferred, however, since this one is uncomfortable and even dangerous, unless extreme caution in expert hands is observed.

Anyhow, in the original Austrian tests it was found that such electrically generated hypnosis caused first-class clairvoyant and ESP ability in some subjects, who could clearly "see" words and diagrams held behind their heads (and elsewhere) when heavily blindfolded. In my laboratory at Oxford we briefly confirmed the effectiveness of this technique, but were unable to follow the matter up in detail.

Conductors and Phenomena

As for the possible significance of dry wood (as being a poor conductor of heat and electricity—*not*, of course, a perfect non conductor) in PK and similar psycho-physical experiments. I am again in agreement with Mr. Herbert. Here, we are on pretty firm physical and radiesthetic ground, though one cannot cite all the available evidence of sensitive persons (whether "mediumistic" or else simply radiesthetic) being allergic to the proximity of metals and other good conductors, that tend to reflect radio waves and also create cosmic ray "secondaries"—both being detectable instrumentally.

Metals also possess other electromagnetic characteristics of a sort liable to create local physical fields, or else distortions of pre-existent fields with which one may be concerned in radiesthetic and

allied investigations. Such facts have been known since at least the time of Paracelsus, Mesmer and Cardan, followed by, say, Reichenbach, Maxwell, Boirac, Baraduc and then, still later, Abrams, Regnault, Boyd, Eeman, Drown and the rest of our modern radiesthetists and associated investigators.

T. B. Franklin and I satisfied ourselves through prolonged physiological and instrumental work (1936-56) that metalwork in general and certain elongated conductors in particular were deleterious in many radiesthetic and psycho-physical experiments—as most dowsers have long maintained. Note, too, that "sensitives" commonly feel more restless and uneasy in modern buildings full of metalwork and machinery, etc., as compared with the "far more restful" old-time houses in which woodwork predominated. Heavy clays, some denser forms of stone and radioactive deposits can be no less disturbing—for demonstrable radiesthetic reasons.

If, therefore, it can be further shown that metals, etc., likewise tend to be inimical to ghostly phenomena, ESP, PK and so forth, then one may suppose that the same factors in these materials are operative, as in radiesthetic and radionic work. Nor is it beyond the bounds of possibility that incoming "signals" from psychic (incarnate or discarnate) agents should be perturbed or even screened off by metals. Note here, relative to the idea of using an all-metal room and appliances, that the late Dr. W. Boyd of Glasgow—whose "Emanometer" (radiesthetic and diagnostic) technique was fully confirmed many years back by an expert electro-medical investigation committee (on which perapsychological interests were represented) set up by Lord Horder—very carefully metal-screened everything in order to exclude electrically all unwanted outside and stray radiesthetic influences. In this he was, apparently, most successful.

Dry wood, on the other hand, is a pleasantly "natural" and "neutral" material (like the dowser's whalebone rods) for both musical instruments and other special devices requiring sympathetically resonant qualities, or where a dielectric is needed in some "psychic condenser" field. One knows, too, how reactive all such instruments and appliances (including "radionic" ones and dowsers themselves) can be to incident weather changes and even to certain powerful electromagnetic fields. They also "go out of tune" (cease to be sympathetically resonant) when long disused, owing to some sort of molecular disalignment in the wood, etc., of which they are made. But for such purposes it seems that metals and also various modern synthetics are by no means so well suited—for purely physical reasons.

I am satisfied that radiesthetic and "radionic" experiments can be of real assistance in "psychic" investigations which border upon the physical domain: raps, PK, simple forms of supposed ESP. A tilting table is merely a crude alternative to the rod of a diviner who unconsciously uses parapsychological (as distinct from radiesthetic and physiological) methods in metagnomy.

Frocester, Glos. J. CECIL MABY, B.Sc., A.R.C.S., F.R.A.S.

The Ghost Club

Guest of Honour at the Annual Dinner, charming and gifted medium Douglas Johnson, expressed his delight at again visiting the Ghost Club after an interval of eight years. Other speakers were A. Peter Underwood, FSC, Chairman; Leonard J. Kingston, MA (Oxon.), FHCI, Hon. Treasurer; and Dr. C. S. Nicholson, DPH, Council Member. A comprehensive exhibition of psychic apparatus (kindly loaned by The Metaphysical Research Group, Archer's Court, Hastings); works of art with psychic inspiration by Lucius Spencer and a chart depicting the Club's activities during the past year, were on view in the foyer. Those present included Dr. Paul Tabori, Ph.D, BA, Vice-Chairman; Miss Muriel Hillier, DSNU, Hon. Secretary; Cyril R. Wilkinson, Council Member; Sir George Joy; Mrs. P. Osborne; Colonel and Mrs. T. A. W. Bolland.

In January, Mr. Eric E. Wookey, MC, LDSPS, long-standing member of the Ghost Club and Council Member of the SPR, addressed a crowded meeting on "The Problem of the Poltergeist", recounting in detail representative cases and exploring two possible theories: the evil influence and the unconscious human element. In February, Miss Frances Hedderly, FBPS, President of the British Phrenological Society, addressed the Club on "The Science of Phrenology". Future meetings include a visit to the Club by Captain C. A. E. Harwich, who will speak on his personal experiences of witchcraft and black magic in East Africa.

Arrangements for visits to haunted houses during the summer months are in active preparation. Details of the Ghost Club can be obtained from the Hon. Secretary: Miss M. A. Hillier, DSNU, 41 Croham Road, South Croydon.

Books Received

Books indicated in this list may, within the imitations of space and time, be reviewed in future issues. All books can be obtained from the CPS Book Sales Service.

The Bewildered Man's Guide to Death, by M. H. Tester (Psychic Press, 3s. 6d.)

From Hegel to Nietsche, by Karl Löwith (Constable, 55s.)

One with the Universe, by S. J. Southam (Regency Press, 7s. 6d., $1.50)

Parapsychology, by J. G. Pratt (W. H. Allen, 25s.)

Philosophy, Theosophy, Parapsychology, by J. J. Poortman, (Sythoff, Leyden, fl.12.50)

The Science of Wisdom, (vol III, The Fire of Knowing), by C. J. Toyne (Sidgwick and Jackson, 15s.)

Theurgy, the Art of Effective Worship, by Mouni Sadhu (Allen & Unwin, 30s.)

CORRECTIONS: Misprints occurred in our last issue as under:

p. 182, line 38. Read: of what could be labelled

p. 217. Obituary of Mr. J. A. Findlay. Date of birth: 1883.

p. 224, line 3. For "to" read "of".

JUNE

TUESDAY, 1st at 7 p.m. — MRS. DORA LINDSAY
Demonstration of Clairvoyance

WEDNESDAY, 2nd at 3 p.m. — MR. LAURIE WORGER
"The Three Aspects of Christ"

TUESDAY, 8th at 7 p.m. — DR. MARTIN ISRAEL
"Living Dangerously"

WEDNESDAY, 9th at 3 p.m. — MRS. ALICE GILBERT
"Here Into There (A Summary of Experiences after Death)"

TUESDAY, 15th at 7 p.m. — MRS. ROSE-MARIE PARRY
"The Future of Man as seen by Teilhard de Chardin"

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