The PIONEER

The Pioneer is now part of the recommended reading for the Spiritualists' National Union's education courses.

Physical Mediumship

the PIONEER

The Pioneer is now part of the recommended reading for the Spiritualists' National Union's education courses. Please reference: "Pioneer, volume, issue and page numbers"

—~—☼—~—

Volume 1, No. 5 October 2014:
169 – Helen Duncan – Trance Mediumship

Volume 2, No. 3: May 2015:
074 – Helen Duncan & John McIndoe – A Scots Materialising Medium

Volume 3, No. 3: June 2016:
097 – Looking at the Independent Direct Voice – Editor

098 – Behind the scenes at Estelle Roberts' Voice Seances – Psychic News

Volume 3, No. 4: August 2016:
130 – Helen Duncan séance during her 1944 Trial – *New séance evidence!*

Volume 3, No. 6: December 2016:
197 – Madam Victoria Duncan – The People's Journal

Volume 4. No. 1: February 2017:
002 – Leon Isaacs – Pioneer of infra-red séance photography
Britain's Greatest Seance Room Photographer – Two Worlds
Looking back at infra-red in Psypioneer

021 – My First Experiences in Trances – Madame Victoria Duncan

Volume 4. No. 3: June 2017:
094 – An Important Consideration in the early Helen Duncan test séances

Volume 4. No. 4: August 2017:
118 – Helen Duncan Seized at a Séance in 1956 – *Police searching for beards, masks and a "shroud"*
Medium grabbed and searched after cabinet is torn down
Police Use "Gestapo Methods" To Break Up Seance?
Helen Duncan's husband to sue police for damages – *She dies five weeks after They raided séance*
Editor's endnote

Volume 4. No. 5: October 2017:
160 – Unknown image of possible trumpet phenomena

161 – Letter from Harry Houdini to Dr W. J. Crawford

162 – Dr. W. J. Crawford & the Goligher Circle

165 – Ectoplasm Photographed – John McIndoe

167 – Editor's endnote

Volume 5. No. 3: June 2018:
078 – Hunter Selkirk The Northern Trance Medium and Clairvoyant
Materialised Spirit Doctor Gives Healing
Alleged photographs of Selkirk's materialisations
The Ascension of a Materialised Spirit

Volume 5. No. 5: October 2018
148 – Jack Webber – John Boaden Webber 1907 - 1940
Ectoplasm Examined – Seen and Handled by Experimenters
The Mediumship of Jack Webber – Full Face Materialisations
Editor's Note

166 – Part One: Spiritualistic Phenomena of the Past
Elongation and Shortening of Medium J. J. Morse
Elongation of D.D. Home

Volume 5. No. 6: December 2018:
178 – Part Two: Spiritualistic Phenomena of the Past
Luminous Phenomena
Florence (Florrie) Cook - Corner & Katie King Photographs
A further observation has now been made

187 – Ann Harrison – Responds to the Jack Webber article in the last issue

195 – Direct - Independent Voice Phenomena – *Could this be simulated by ventriloquism?*
Ventriloquism, Considered as A Possible Explanation of 'Independent Voice' Phenomena
"Dead" Air Hero Gives Perfect Proof of His Survival

Volume 6. No. 1: February 2019:
028 – Ernest Oaten
Corona, Corona! – John Sloan

Volume 6. No. 2: April 2019:
058 – Mediums Handle Fire

060 – Spirits Speak on the Telephone

Volume 6. No. 3: June 2019:
087 – Harry Price
Daniel Dunglas Home – "Was he genuine?"

105 – Franek Kluski
Experiments of the Polish S.P.R. with Franek Kluski
Beasts from The Beyond Story of Franek Kluski

Volume 6. No. 4: August 2019:
127 – Mrs Annie Mellon – Materialisation medium

144 – Reply to "A Spiritualistic Farce" – William Crookes' experiments with D. D. Home challenged

Volume 6. No. 5: October 2019:
174 – International Institute for Psychical Research
The Case for Real Psychical Research – by Arthur Findlay

Volume 6. No. 6: December 2019:
202 – Eusapia Palladino – Hereward Carrington

Volume 7. No. 1: February 2020:
017 – Einer Nielsen – Physical—Materialisation Medium
Einer Nielsen's Séances in Iceland 1931
Editor's note:
Séance Photos Supply Perfect Answer
Camera Shows Stages of Materialisation

Volume 7. No. 2: April 2020:
046 – Trumpet Levitation Photographed – Success of Glasgow Circle

Volume 7. No. 3: June 2020:
088 – A Question of Fraud!
Fraud – Harry Boddington
Mrs E Wakely response
Response from "The Probe"
Church Council member adds
Editor's note
The Question of Fraud
Mrs Grover Exposed
Mediums *claim* other mediums guides/controls
Medium Convicted – Clive Holmes Sentenced
Clive Holmes Appeal Fails

Volume 7. No. 4: August 2020:
125 – A Question of Fraud! – Continued … Part II
Seances at Moravia, United States
Spirit Faces
Classes of Form Manifestations
Forms With Flexible Features
Forms Without Flexible Features
Editor's Note
Spirit Forms
Katie King / Annie Morgan
Seized at a Séance – The Capture of "A Spirit." – To the Editor of the Times.
Spirit Form, Ectoplasm, etc. being Grabbed

Volume 7. No. 5: October 2020:
164 – A Question of Fraud! – concluded
Miss Wood Caught Personating A Spirit
Miss C.E. Wood Exposed
"An Exposure of Imposture" – Charles Williams and Mr Rita
The Seizure in Mrs Esperance's Circle – The Seizure Seance
Mr W. Armstrong's Report – "The truth shall make you free"
Editor's Notes
Seizures of full-form materialisations – effects on the mediums?

Volume 7. No. 6: December 2020:
184 – A Means of Spirit Communication – *Designed from the Spirit World!*
Spirit Inventions from Beyond – A Sequel to A Death-Bed Promise - B.K. Kirkby The Jobson-B.K.K. Reflectograph
Progress of the "Communigraph"
Renovation of the Ashkir-Jobson Communigraph
Full-Form Materialisations – Developments in Mrs Singleton's Mediumship

Materialisation in Holland – An Evening with Mr Singleton and Mr Kirkby

207 – Bangs Sisters
"The Bangs' Fall from Grace" – Religio-Philosophical Journal
Precipitated Paintings
The Mediumship of the Bangs Sisters
The Bangs Sisters and Fraud – Hereward Carrington
David Phelps Abbott – Magician
Editor's Note

Volume 8. No. 1: February 2021:
042 – A Supplement to the December issue:
A Means of Spirit Communication – *Designed from the Spirit World!*
Some Notes on the Reflectograph and Communigraph – December 2020 – Marc Demarest
Church of the Spirit, Skegness, 1925

Volume 8. No. 5: October 2021:
170 – Rev. Susanna Harris – American voice-medium
The Wanderings of a Spiritualist – Arthur Conan Doyle
Editor's Note:
Annie Brittain – 'The Mediumistic Trance'
H. N. de Fremery and the 'Harris Affair'
The Direct Voice And Its Problems: Notes On The Mediumship Of Mrs Susanna
Harris - W. J. Crawford, D.Sc.
Not Afraid Of Death – Psychic News

185 – John B. Conklin – An Early American Pioneer Medium
Abraham Lincoln, Spiritualism and Emancipation – Leslie Price
The Life of a Medium – Or, the Spiritual Experiences of J.B. Conklin
Emma Harding attended a séance at Conklin's residence
Emma moves way from her Orthodox faith!

196 – More on direct voice – Leslie Flint séances
Spirit Voice Fills Hall Without Microphone
Father Shone Torch On Materialisation

Volume 8. No. 6: December 2021:
210 – Leslie Flint Public Séances
Suicides Return And Prove They Could Not Die – Hanged Himself On Banisters
During "A Mad Moment"
Editor's Note:
Sinking of HMS Hood – Helen Duncan
Brigadier Roy C. Firebrace CBE
Percy Wilson – Infra-Red Telescope
The Kingsway Hall
Brigadier R.C. Firebrace obituary

223 – John B. Conklin – An Early American Pioneer Medium – concluded
Dr Walter Franklin Prince versus Simon P. Kase
The Aetiology of a "Psychical" Legend – Dr Walter Franklin Prince
Editor's Note
Abraham Lincoln Papers at the Library of Congress

Volume 9. No. 2: April 2022:
036 – Knock, Knock – Who's There?
ACD's Australian Helper
The Physical Phenomena of the Past, An Historical Survey: The Rap—"God's Telegraph" by W. Leslie Curnow, B.A

Volume 9. No. 3: June 2022:
084 – The Levitation of Daniel Dunglas Home
Editor's Note
In conclusion

Volume 9. No. 4: August 2022:
110 – Lord Dunraven's Final Words on the Levitation of D.D. Home—50 Years Later!

120 – Transfiguration Séance
The Lady with Many Faces - Extraordinary Transfigurations
The Dramas of The Seance Room
Editor's Note

Volume 9. No. 5: October 2022:
133 – In Search of Maria B. Hayden: The American Medium Who Brought Spiritualism to the U.K – By Sharon DeBartolo Carmack – Book Review

150 – Psychography – Direct – Independent Writing
Editor's Note

Volume 10. No. 1: 2023:
002 – The "Substance"
Charles Fulton Oursler – Samri Frikell
"Sir Arthur Conan Doyle Predicts Spirit Moving Pictures" – Samri Frikell
Sittings of the 25th June and 13th July 1913 with Stanislava P – kinematograph to produce an early movie film—cinematography – Phenomena of Materialisation
To address some of the points in the above observations
Phenomena with Stanislava P. – Baron von Schrenck Notzing

018 – Harry Dawson
Materialisation Phenomena
Editor's Note
Returning to the focus of physical mediumship
Psychic Physiology – Ernest Vickers
Former Lyceum Union President Passes

029 – Ectoplasm as Associated with Survival – Miss Felicia R. Scatcherd

033 – Spirits of the Trade: Teleplasm, Ectoplasm, Psychoplasm, Ideoplasm – Marc Demarest

Volume 10. No. 2: 2023:
043 – Psychic Photography – William Hope, Fraud or Genuine!
Psychic Photography Debated – Major W.R. Rose and Mr Fred Barlow
State Their Case Against William Hope's Work
Barlow Amongst Witnesses Cited – Mr S. De Brath
Mrs Mckenzie On Wm. Hope's Mediumship – Confirmatory Evidence
Outside the Actual Results
Editor's Note:

Afterthoughts On "Hope" Debate – Facts Of the Flash-Lamp - Discovery" at the British College
'Billy' Hope psychic photographer "extra"-ordinaire – Ann Harrison

Volume 10. No. 3: 2023:
098 – Helen Duncan –Regurgitation
Mrs. Duncan's Mediumship–Adverse Report after Examination by London Psychical Laboratory
Verbatim Report of Meeting Between Mr. Henry Duncan and the Council of the National Laboratory
She was famous for producing ectoplasm which was proven to be made from cheesecloth
So, is regurgitation proved as claimed in these two reports?
What can be concluded?

Volume 10. No. 4: 2023:
136 – Mrs Rose Champion de Crespigny
This World and Beyond– Foreword by Sir Oliver Lodge
I met Mrs. Etta Wriedt

155 – A Means of Spirit Communication – *Designed from the Spirit World!*
Reflectograph – Mrs Rose Champion de Crespigny

Volume 11, No. 2: 2024:
054 – What Is Ectoplasm?
J. Gilbert E. Wright
What can be noted

Volume 12, No. 3: 2024:
113 – Direct Phenomena
The Direct Phenomena of Spiritualism – Edward T. Bennett: "Direct" Phenomena in the Presence of Mrs. Everitt

"Subscribe" free to Pioneer or contact the editor – pioneer@snu.org.uk

All references to Psypioneer in these issues are archived at http://psypioneer.iapsop.com/

Special thanks to Charles Coulston for his work in sub-editing these issues – also acknowledged to Minister David Hopkins and Leslie Price for their past work in sub-editing the issues

HELEN DUNCAN – TRANCE MEDIUMSHIP

Helen Duncan was well-known for her physical mediumship, especially producing full-form materialisations. She also on occasion demonstrated psychometry and took church services. Below is a rare report on a trance address at Fleetwood Spiritualist Church,[20] given through Helen by her main control, Albert Stewart. This was published in the *Two Worlds* weekly of March 13th 1942:

BUILDERS OF BRIDGES

A trance address given by "Albert" through the mediumship of Mrs. Helen Duncan.

DURING a recent visit to Fleetwood, at which several successful seances for materialization were held, "Albert Stewart" (Mrs. Duncan's guide) volunteered to address the Sunday evening service at Fleetwood Spiritualist Church. Mrs. Duncan gladly co-operated without fee or reward. Despite the Medium's Scottish upbringing, it was particularly noticeable that never once was there a trace of a Scottish accent. The clear liquid colonial speech of "Albert" was maintained throughout the address. The following is a short summary of his remarks, which lasted about half an hour.

I can assure you that it gives me pleasure to come and talk to you for a short while. I want to assure you that I am no radiant angel but

[20] A quote from the Two Worlds, February 1st 1924: "THE Fleetwood Spiritualist Society was founded, with the assistance and co-operation of the Blackpool Spiritualist Society, in October, 1911, and rented the Old Bethel Hall in Kemp-street, for their services. The Society decided to become affiliated with the Spiritualists' National Union, and were taken into affiliation in October, 1916, and was then called the Fleetwood National Spiritualist Church, becoming registered as a place of worship and for the solemnising of marriages. The Lyceum was founded in July, 1912, becoming affiliated with the British Spiritualists' Lyceum Union in October, 1913."

Further information: In October 1922 it was decided to work for a church of our own, this was achieved in 1924. The stone-laying ceremony was on February 2nd when stones were laid by E. W. Oaten, S.N.U., George H. Mack, B.S.L.U., and Mrs. J. Butterworth, S.N.U. An impressive grand opening of the church took place on September 13th and 14th 1924. The president was Mr. C. T Batley who we can note chaired the meeting for Helen Duncan. For further information on the history of Fleetwood please contact the editor. Fleetwood Spiritualist Church: http://www.snu.org.uk/community/churches/fleetwood.html

just a humble human being like yourselves, endeavouring to be a servant of the greatest Spirit of all. Let us for a while shut out the everyday troubles of your world and spend a short time in the effort to bring your world and mine together.

If all men the world over could be sure that there is another phase of existence when earthly death takes place, what a different world yours would be! I have not —like some—spent hundreds of years on this side of life. I have lived in the same age as you, and know its difficulties. There are many in this church, myself included, who have been indifferent to the existence of a spiritual world. When life flowed on like a stream, with few rocks and cross currents, few of us ever troubled to find out whether there was anything beyond the Bridge of Death. The question never entered into our consideration. But when the current has swept away someone who was part of you, whom you loved and cared for, you were struck dumb. Sorrow roused you, and caused you to say: "I must find out whither they have gone!" There are many such in my audience. You refused to accept the idea that death was the end of all and so you have set out to find out if there is anything substantial in Spiritualism.

My Chairman (Mr. Batley) will have had far more experience in Spiritualism than I had before I came to this side of life, and I am sure he will agree with me that few people realise when they start their investigations that they must start Bridge Building. You yourself must lay foundations for the bridge which will unite your world with ours. First seek out the firmest footing you can find—it may be a small Spiritualist Church or a select circle, but you must build regularly week by week. Kind words and actions, sweet smiles and sincerity, are the stones which will help you to build your bridge. We build from our side in our desire to meet you, and then you find a medium who can form the central pillar, or keystone, and this is the first indication you have that building has been going on from this side as well as yours.

Now success depends on the strength of your Bridge, and whether it is erected on solid pillars and constructed of good material. Do not be surprised if you do not always get the results you expect—or that you do not get evidence every time you attend your church. The strongest pillar sometimes breaks, but once the bridge is completed and you have proved that your loved ones live, then, with the knowledge you have obtained, try to improve your environment. Lay out plantations on the banks of the stream, plant the seeds of knowledge you have gained, and cultivate the flowers of kindness and service. Tell out to others the knowledge you have obtained, that death is not an end but a new beginning. As I wander amongst you, I often hear people say: "Why did God punish me by taking away my loved one?" I venture to say that most of you have had such thoughts. Some day, when you come to this side of life, you will see from another point of view; you will wonder why you ever sorrowed and know that death is just freedom from a physical burden.

There are many differences in our outlook from this side, and the chief of them is that we are only attracted to those we care for. Love is the key to everything!

The more experienced of you will agree with me that many who come to investigate this question of survival have no knowledge of the fact that behind all this phenomenal evidence there are deeper teachings, deeper truths. Many of them are looking for sensation, for something which will flood them with limelight. They must learn that substantial Bridges are not sudden thrills—they are not built in a night. Bridges often take years to build on solid foundations. The true developing circle can be a valuable aid in approaching the spirit world. I know the thoughts that are going through many people's minds here: "Oh! such and such a person does not live a good life, how can *they* get in touch with anybody?" I listened to the words which were read from the Bible just now. It is a fact that the Nazarene did not take His disciples because they were good men; He took them because they could become Bridge Builders for Him. Just analyze yourself and find if you are a capable person, and just feel that those around you are there for the purpose of Bridge Building. Never mind what Mrs. So-and-So does. Get down and say to yourself, "Well, I know what I am."

You know, you people have queer ideas about what you call sin. I know what those ideas are, for I only left your world in I913. It is not the taking of a glass of beer, provided a man knows when to leave it, or an explosion which produces vulgar words (although such things are unwise and unnecessary), that constitute sin. Probably the greatest sin of all is to talk lightly of others who are not there to defend themselves. The people who cannot mind their own business, and defame others in order to distract attention from their own weaknesses, are probably the biggest sinners of all. Such conduct means bad thoughts, and thoughts are real and living things. When you think, let clean thoughts go out from you, and they will return like doves—not as vultures. If you do that you will find that the bricks with which you build will last for all time. Even after you come to our side of life your bridge will still stand and enable you to return to those you love, with comfort and encouragement.

I remember as a young man I had my opinions on religion. Many Sundays I walked the streets of Sydney and watched congregations leaving the churches. I saw their faces: some of them looked as though they had lost their all. They looked miserable, and it was no advertisement for their faith. Some were engaged pulling others to pieces. I want you to go from this church into your everyday life with smiles on your faces and kindness in your hearts: joyous because the bridge between earth and heaven is a reality.

I can stay no longer. I have just explained in a few words the message I would leave with you. Sometime we shall all have an opportunity to meet over here. It will be nice to walk the higher bank

of the stream and find joy in surveying the bridges we have built: to find them easy to cross so that we shall not have to struggle through the mud and slime of ignorance to greet the dear ones we have left. Thank you for your spirit of friendship and your attention. “God be with you till we meet again.”

Helen Duncan & John McIndoe

John (Mac) McIndoe

Psypioneer holds a considerable amount of information on Duncan's mediumship and it is strongly recommended that these pages be consulted while looking into her mediumship, as there is a lot of incorrect information and speculation given about her on the internet and in some published reports. The SNU web page, "SNU Presidents", is still not completed at present; we have profiles and information on John Venables (1901), John Adams (1905-1907), George Berry (1920-1922), Frank Blake (1938-1941) and John (Mac) Brown McIndoe (1930-1938). It can be noted in his obituary (May 31st 1958), "It was Mac who launched Helen Duncan on her career as a materialisation medium."[13]

In Psypioneer's issue for February 2015 we looked into Duncan's "Early reports of her mediumship" and found the available accounts of her controls/guides somewhat sketchy and contradictory. The early development of Helen took place in the Duncan's home circle, which consisted of just a handful of sitters, including Helen's husband, Henry, who appears to have started the circle and encouraged the development of his wife's physical mediumship. Hence the early reports of her development and her various controls/guides have surfaced through the Duncan family, for example from one of Duncan's daughters, Gena, who would marry George Brealey and in 1985 published *The Two Worlds of Helen Duncan* with Kay Hunter, originally published by Regency Press.[14]

I believe Gena was born in 1926, so she was only a small child during her mother's development of her physical mediumship in the 1920s. Gena would rely in part on her father Henry's records of his wife's development but after Henry's death circa 1967 much of the documented material was lost in a house fire. Included in the Psypioneer article is what is considered the *first* independent published report on Helen Duncan's physical mediumship, by James Souter, who came into contact with Helen in June 1929. Souter's short article states: "Guides, three in number, are good hard-headed, canny Scotsmen…" John McIndoe was present at the séance reported by Souter and this was published in *Light*, October 19th 1929.

Another independent account can now be added on the early development of Helen's physical mediumship, written by John McIndoe and published in the first Spiritualists' National Union journal, "The National Spiritualist", which was edited by SNU Secretary George Berry.[15] The valuable McIndoe account does not give the medium's name but he is without doubt talking about Helen Duncan.

---

[13] SNU Presidents' Page: http://www.snu.org.uk/spiritualism/presidents

[14] This was republished in paperback in 2008 by Saturday Night Press Publications and is normally available at the Arthur Findlay College shop and via Amazon.

[15] For details see the first issue of "Pioneer": http://www.snu.org.uk/spiritualism/pioneer

Below is the full account published in "The National Spiritualist", October issue, 1929:

A Scots Materialising Medium

Helen Duncan in 1942

Scotland has produced not a few notable mediums. Recently I was privileged to sit twice with one who gives promise of being worthy to rank with the best of them.

Mr. J. J. Darby also sat at the first seance, and his opinion as to the outstanding quality of the phenomena is similar to my own, and it is gratifying to be able to make the first published report of a sitting with this medium, in the columns of the NATIONAL SPIRITUALIST, where such matter should figure more prominently than it does.

The name of the medium is meantime withheld, she resides—somewhere North of the Tweed.

We ascended an attic stair, to an "upper room" with the ceiling so low that the writer could not stand erect. It was a hot sultry night, ventilation was *nonest* and the noise of passing traffic frequently drowned the voices from the Beyond. The medium suffered bad health for a number of years, but it has considerably improved since this phase of her phenomena began. With the cares of a house and seven children on her shoulders, there seems little opportunity for psychic development. Certainly these conditions do not seem at all conducive to psychic manifestations, especially that particularly delicate, complex, and rare type,—full form materialisation, with the materialised forms moving about in the circle talking to the sitters, in red light.

My first sitting—the 22nd at which this phase has been in evidence lasted just three—quarters of hour. It opened with prayer, a hymn, and a brief period for silent prayer, at the end of which the medium was seen to be in trance, limp in her chair, and breathing heavily. The curtains of the cabinet were then closed, the candle extinguished, and only a red lamp left burning.

It gave sufficient light for the sitters to see one another and observe what occurred, though the features of the forms would scarcely have been distinguishable when they came had they not been self luminous, with a peculiar soft radiance.

There were ten sitters, six ladies and four gentlemen, two of each of these groups were entirely new sitters at the circle, while other two of each group, including the medium's husband were regular sitters. The small sector of a circle in which we sat in two rows, nearly filled the room. Those of us in the front row were not more than four feet from the curtains. We could easily have touched most of the forms when they came out.

There were no test conditions asked for, though the medium has been stringently tested by others. Why should we want test conditions more or less humiliating to the medium, and implying doubts as to her honesty, and inevitably reacting on her, engendering feelings of resentment.

In any case no test conditions could have increased our conviction as to the genuineness of the phenomena we witnessed. They bore the hall mark indelibly stamped on them. They simply could not be counterfeited by any means I can imagine.

The forms were distinctive, varied, lifelike and noiseless in their movements, not one of them remotely resembled the medium in build. Their voices were also distinctive and quite different from the medium's. Nothing in any way suggesting trickery of any kind was observed.

During the singing of a hymn, and very shortly after closing the curtains, a voice was heard in prayer in the cabinet, and a man's face pushed the curtains apart, remained a few moments and disappeared.

The ladies in the circle commenced singing in low tones whenever the various forms returned to the cabinet.

Soon another voice is heard calling "Mother" and a young girl emerged from the curtains, came over and spoke to one of the new lady sitters, who recognised her as her daughter. She conversed with her in a low tone, apparently giving a comforting message, and handed her mother a rose, taken from a bunch placed in the cabinet.

Then another girl form of different build took her place, coming from the other side of the cabinet, and was claimed as her sister by one of the ladies. She also brought a rose with her.

A short interval, and a child's head peeps round the edge of the curtain timorously, disappears, but returns quickly, and finally the full form comes right out, apparently somewhat frightened, at first. It looked about 21 inches in height, moved gracefully and quickly, and came close up to the lady next to me. It appeared to me to be more solid, and "finished" than most of the other forms.

I need not describe all the forms who appeared. There were eight of them, one child, two young girls and an older woman, and four men. Six of them came right out in front of the curtains, and seven of the eight spoke to us. One of the controls "Donald" had quite a conversation with us. He was a well built man. By request he brought a mandoline from the cabinet, and twanged the strings. We could easily see the hand which held it, but not the one which touched the strings. Finally he handed it to a sitter. He was asked to touch my outstretched hand. This has not previously been done. He appeared to make several attempts to do so. On the last his hand was plainly visible above mine, but he failed to touch it, and disappeared very suddenly, while the medium gave vent to a groan as if in pain. At the conclusion of the sitting there was blood on her mouth and chin, and some had trickled down on her dress. This had

occurred on previous occasions when a form suddenly vanished for some reason or other.

At the second sitting "Donald" was asked about it and explained that he had come out too far. On that occasion something did touch my hand, held close up to the curtain. It had the appearance of a stump with two fingers, and was rather hard, but the contact was too brief to allow any definite opinion to be formed.

The notable features of the second seance were that there were two children right out moving in the circle at the same time. They came one from each side of the curtains. Later on by request of a sitter two apports were brought. One was a small ornament from the room below.

The other was a small brass washer, with three scratches on it for identification. It had been placed in a drawer in a roll top desk in his own house some distance away, about six weeks earlier, by one of the regular sitters, who had frequently asked, as he did on this occasion, that it should be brought. This was the first time that it was done. The owner is absolutely certain of the identity of the washer.

An unusual feature is the signal that the phenomena is being brought to a close—an arm appears stretched out, with the hand closed. The seances close with a brief prayer by one of the materialised controls, but at my second sitting while the doxology was being sung, and the medium had become at least partially conscious, we observed that the curtains were being distended in a peculiar way. It gave the impression of an attempt to help the medium who was in a state of profuse perspiration, by producing a current of air.

Lest the sceptic suggest that I and the other sitters were all simultaneously and similarly hallucinated, I may say that this account is compiled from notes written continuously by myself during the seances.

The medium is naturally psychic, of Highland blood. Her physical phenomena commenced with table movements, then voice phenomena, and finally the materialisation phase which has reached its present development in about six months. She also occasionally has had slate writing, and possesses remarkable psychometric gifts.

With a little more development the phenomena should be stabilised sufficiently to stand the strain of more public presentation, but it is most earnestly to be hoped that it will not be checked by too early public sittings.

J. B. McINDOE.

McIndoe's account of his two séances is the first *detailed* independent account of Duncan's early development in physical mediumship. Both Souter and McIndoe refer to multiple controls/guides and Duncan's most famous control, Albert Stewart, is not mentioned by name, so it appears that in 1929 he was not yet present or not in full control.

"I would sum up by quoting the immortal words of Emma Hardinge Britten, '*Spiritualism is divine, Spiritualists are human*.' "

Looking at the Independent Direct Voice

In direct voice, spirits can objectively talk with a suitably developed medium independently of the medium, rather than through a medium in a trance state. An ectoplasmic larynx is created and mostly used in conjunction with a trumpet. However, in most cases the spirit voice is not readily recognised by friends and family. As the voice box is manufactured, synthetic, the ectoplasm will retain some of the characteristics of the medium. However, the communicators will generally hold their old mannerisms, style of language, etc. as when they were living in the physical world to prove their identity. This form of phenomenon can be traced back to the very early days of Spiritualism in America.

Without doubt this phenomenon is as compelling as it is rare today. It started Arthur Findlay on his journey into psychical research in around 1918 with the direct-voice medium, John Sloan.[6] In more recent years Leslie Flint was the most well-known independent direct-voice medium, with many of his communications recorded.

Flint was able to demonstrate the direct voice while he was fully conscious, seldom going into a trance state. Flint did not speak in trance; he worked in total darkness and, unlike most mediums, he did not use a trumpet or any other physical devices to help produce the spirit voices. His ectoplastic larynx was formed on his left side and located some two feet away from the medium, where the spirit voices would speak into the manufactured replica voice box. The communicating spirit would concentrate its thoughts into the ectoplasmic voice box by lowering its frequency/vibration to produce objective speech.

Estelle Roberts is generally remembered as an outstanding mental medium, filling large halls, including the Albert Hall, on numerous occasions. Her main control/guide was Red Cloud, who would entrance Estelle and also produce the independent direct voice. In the article below, which was published in "Psychic News", July 22nd 1944, the paper's founding editor, Maurice Barbanell, questioned Red Cloud as to how the direct voice was produced. We can note from the brief description I have given of Leslie Flint's mediumship that Estelle Roberts/Red Cloud's production of the independent direct voice takes a different avenue of production.

Barbanell started the article with these words:

> *Psychic News* has published several stories of the remarkable evidence for Survival obtained at Estelle Roberts's voice seances. Red Cloud, assisted by four war victims [see footnote 7], has succeeded in giving proofs that are far more remarkable than anything previously recorded at direct-voice sittings. I thought, therefore, a statement by this guide on what happens behind the scenes at voice seances would prove of great interest. When I approached Red Cloud he said it would be difficult to convey to us happenings in a spirit world of different dimensions, but he would do his best.

[6] See Psypioneer, Volume 8, No. 12, December 2012: John Campbell Sloan (1869-1951), "A Scotch Materializing and Voice Medium".

Behind The Scenes At Estelle Roberts's Voice Seances

Estelle Roberts

"THERE are some things I can tell you," he said, " but some are impossible. Let me put it like this. When a scientist is in his laboratory, and he is testing the various elements, he is very secluded and does not let others into his laboratory.

"Well, in this new group we have formed we are experimenting still. We are experimenting along lines of electricity and ether, that we may be able to accomplish the direct voice later on without a material body, because it causes a certain amount of interference and waste. Under those conditions, in the first instance, we must be careful in our experiments.

"I have my group. In it I have a scientist who was very well known in your world in his day. He has come in since I started this new series of voice circles, which you must admit are better than the old ones. Then there are some doctors and the four boys.

ECTOPLASM

"The scientist and I gather a certain amount of ectoplasm from the medium and a little——very little—from the sitters. Some of this we have managed to keep. That is difficult for you to understand because you have the idea that ectoplasm always must return to its source. This small quantity, such a fraction, we have solidified and retained. We draw on it when we are ready and put it into the trumpet when we are using the trumpet."

"Would it be correct to say," Red Cloud was asked, "that in addition to the ectoplasm, which has gone back to the medium after every seance, there is a small proportion which has been retained by you? "

"That is right," was his reply. "It is so fractional that it is not missed. We have moulded it into a larynx, able to expostulate, so that sound can be transmuted in an understandable form to your ears."

"So you have actually constructed a model larynx," I said to the guide, "and kept it in stock, as it were, one that is not connected with the medium? "

ELECTRIC RODS

"That is what I want you to remember," Red Cloud answered. "Now, then, we use electricity from the ether. We take rods from the magnetic belt and connect them with the larynx."

"What exactly are the rods?" he was asked. "Are they made of ectoplasm, too? "

The guide said: "They are electrical. They are something like electrical waves with insulating tapes of ectoplasm over them, which we draw from the medium and which have to return to the medium."

"Is the purpose of the rods to enable the trumpet to move?" he was asked.

"No. Sometimes there is one rod, sometimes there are two rods. It depends on the conditions in operation, the condition of the body, atmospherics, etc. These affect the life-ray of electricity, as they do in your world, because we have to strike the vibration of your world."

"Is it the same kind of electricity that we have in this world?" was the next question.

"It is," said Red Cloud, "but the revolution of it is quicker until it strikes your vibration of electricity. When we have attached those rods to the larynx in the trumpet, the voices are struck on the electrical vibrations at the other end of the rods—not the trumpet end—and vibrate through the larynx, which converts them into audible sound in your world."

"At what stage does the projection of the voice take place?" the guide was asked.

"It takes place twice," said Red Cloud. "First, from the astral—we do not have to have a conductor for that, we use our own—then it strikes down to a lower vibration, and then it strikes through the electrical rod into the mouthpiece of the larynx. Hence you get the boys' voices."

HOW IT WORKS

"So two distinct operations are required to bring the vibration down to earth's level and then to make it audible? "

"Yes, for the larynx is inside the trumpet."

"And where does the spirit speaker stand, at the trumpet or the other end?"

"The other end, sometimes right at the side of the medium."

"Where the rod is connected to the medium?"

"Yes."

"Then that electrical impulse travels up the rod into the larynx and so we hear the voice?"

"Quite right."

"What does the spirit speaker have to do in order to make himself heard? Does he think, or actually speak?"

THE " BOX "

"In the voice circles, we have formed, just outside the ether, a box, or case, large enough for a man to stand in. Sometimes you have heard them say they have been asked to stand in the box, haven't you? Well, they stand there and we fix over their ears and their mouths an electric rod, and they strike on the rod through which they strike to the earth.

"But they often stand near the medium. It depends on how calm they are and on the kind of voice we want to put through. Some are more capable than others. You know that in your world you have speakers and speakers.

"But they do speak. You have to be a long time in our world before you conduct conversation only by thought. You have to use your lips to voice your thoughts—well, it is the same here. We certainly talk."

"Why are a trumpet and rods necessary? Why can't you have a larynx at the side of the medium, or build it up over the medium's larynx, and let them speak direct into that?"

EXPERIMENTING

"Now, listen. That is just what I was coming to. I told you we were experimenting. In your world there is a man I know."

Here Red Cloud was referring to Sir Ernest Fisk, one of the world's, experts on radio communication. Sir Ernest, who was associated with Marconi in his pioneering experiments, has stated that he considers one day wireless communication with the "dead" will be achieved. Sir Ernest has spoken to Red Cloud and the guide said;

"We are experimenting along his lines. Eventually, instead of using the box, the electrical machine will be built in your world by which voices will be heard directly from the ether space. We shall then be able to manifest the vibration sufficiently to strike the heavier forms of ether of your world through wireless telegraphy."

"And that will dispense with the medium?" was the next inquiry.

"Yes, later on, but not yet. You are aware that always there are voices in space. You have proved that earthly voices and music can be picked up on certain wavelengths. Well, it will come about. Tell him he is right. The time will come, just as your wireless came, but it is still in the experimental stage."

"But why can't you have a larynx over the medium's and dispense with the rods?"

USE OF TRUMPET

"We cannot at present. We would have to form certain electrical rods which might interfere with the grey matter of the medium."

“What purpose does the trumpet serve from your point of view?

“For one thing, you must have elements of conduction. We must have conduction to help hold the electricity together, something like a little cabinet to hold the ectoplasm, otherwise it would disintegrate. That is why I ask for water to be poured through the trumpet—it is a conductor.”

“So it is in cabinet form to condense and break down everything to make it audible to us?”

“Quite right. You appreciate also that we are dealing with the electrical vibrations of all the people in the room.”

“What exactly, as far as you can describe it, is it that you put over the ears and mouth of the people who speak, and why is it done?

INSULATION

“It is done, first of all, to distract their attention from what is going on round them, and also to cause them to lower their vibration just a little to touch the rods sufficiently to express themselves clearly.”

“It is really the means of enabling them to concentrate on talking to the exclusion of anything else?”

“Yes, we do not want them to be put off by the others, or by any outside noise. You have external distractions; well, we have the noise of the universe around us.”

“It is a means of isolating them?”

“Yes, exactly. It is a substance used from our sphere and not from yours at all. It is a means of insulation by a substance which you cannot understand, a form of solidified ether.”

“It seems to me similar to the kind of apparatus that airmen use to communicate with one another.”

ALL DIFFERENT

“Yes, it is similar. It is also a means of preventing the communicator from being interfered with by the conventional things of our world. You know the interference and atmospherics you get when the rays are crossed by some vehicles.”

“So the communicators talk just as naturally as they would here when they get into the box? ”

“Yes, except when they break down.”

“Does it require an effort on the part of the speaker?”

“Yes, and no. It is all according to the nature of the person and his ability to overcome self-consciousness. Every personality is different.”

“Is it largely emotional stress that makes them break down sometimes?”

“Not always, sometimes they become self-conscious without any emotional stress. Some are successful, like Henry Segrave; he has grown quite accustomed to it, like I have. But to

some, when they hear your voices, it strikes such a chord in their memory that the emotion rises and they give it up."

"Would you describe it as a difficult task for the average communicator to speak in the direct voice?"

"Yes, it is, but remember it is only in its infancy. Men like Oliver Lodge are endeavouring with their earthly knowledge to do what they can to help this subject forward."

"How far are the speakers rehearsed beforehand?"

"We have to put them through their paces."

"Do you cross-examine them beforehand?"

"Yes, but it is not done out of any disrespect or lack of love, but merely to make them practised. We put them on once or twice to see if they are capable of holding it. If they break down, we put them back a bit, but we always promise to let them come back and try again."

REHEARSALS

"Do you rehearse the evidence?"

"Yes, but sometimes if the earth person becomes emotional that immediately has the effect of causing the voice to withdraw."

"When a question is asked which the spirit does not answer, is that because that question has been unrehearsed?"

"That is true. They can sometimes answer spontaneously; it is all according to their personality. They are all keyed-up to get over what they want to say, that sometimes your questions make them feel they want to run back and find out the answers, and then it all breaks down."

"Obviously they are not completely normal while communicating, keyed up with the excitement of what they are going to say."

DOCTORS TELL

"Yes, but it is all according to the personality of the communicator."

"Is the duration of the seance determined by the amount of strain it causes to the medium?"

"Exactly. I have often said to you 'I must go away now.' That is when the doctors come and beckon to me that it is time the medium returned to her body."

"Why does the trumpet go down with a bang?"

"When we disconnect and withdraw the rods from the trumpet it has nothing to hold it up. The voice and the box are often at the medium's side. You will notice the trumpet often ends there in the box. Then the rods and larynx are removed and it comes down. It is just the law of gravitation."

"How is the trumpet manipulated?"

"It is held up by an electrical ray."

"Not by rods?"

"It is the same thing really."

"Who actually manipulates trumpet?"

"I do."

"When Bill Castello is talking to his father and mother and the trumpet goes right over to them, is that you or Bill moving it?"[7]

"I move it for Bill."

"But Bill is not at the small end of the trumpet; his voice is still striking the rod near your medium."

"Yes, quite right, that is the position. When the boys sometimes say: 'Let us get it up a bit higher,' they are all just giving a bit of power."

"So the 'transmitting station' is by the side of the medium, and the loud-speaker is the trumpet?"

"Yes, that is a good way of putting it."

"Your methods are a great improvement on the old ones."

IT MUST IMPROVE

"Yes, all things must improve. Credit must be given to the pioneers of 50 years ago, but there has never been work like that you have had in the past 20 years. Everything must go on, if it is for the good of mankind. You do not think good men are going to sit down here and forget all about their life efforts, do you?"

"Do you get any interference at the voice seances?"

"Yes. You may wonder why I do not allow my medium to have them too often. I believe she has told you the condition of the astral world is chaotic. The result is that we find, very often, there are so many wandering round our world. That is something we have to watch out for. Many men, lying unconscious in hospitals, are wandering in the astral world. If they can get to know of a circle being held, they are just like normal beings over here and they endeavour to join in. And they could do so and talk just as easily as one who is really over

[7] "As the war got into its stride my psychic career continued undiminished. In 1941, I married Charles Tilson Chowne. Shortly afterwards, our home was bombed and we moved to Oxford where I held a number of public meetings and gave many private sittings. We returned to London after twelve months. My work became intensified as the casualty lists grew bigger and more and more war victims wanted to communicate with those they had left behind.
"Among these were four young men who had died in action. They were David White and Arthur Heath of Royal Navy, and Bill Castello and Clive Wilson of the Royal Air Force. These four youngsters, having proved their own survival, were determined to help others to achieve similar success. Because of their dedication to this task, we started a private circle for the direct-voice communication. It comprised the parents of the four boys and friends and relatives of other spirit communicators who had been able to prove their identities. The sittings were free of payment to all who attended." Taken from 'Estelle Roberts - Forty Years a Medium', 1959, pages 164-165.

here for good. That is one thing we have to be careful about. It is not deliberate interference, but due to their natural desire."

"How are they attracted to a circle?"

"They just hear somehow. News travels here, too, and they all rush to see what is going on, just like any man would."

"How do you keep them out?"

"We have watchers. That is why your mediums should not work half so hard as they do."

"And yet the demand at present is greater than ever."

"Yes, but they should wait until the conditions settle down more."

"Does the one communicating hear all that is said? Do you hear what is said?"

ALL VIBRATIONS

"I can, but not the others, only the one inside the box. They cannot strike through so clearly into your world and they only get a distorted view of what is going on, if at all. You get a word here and there, but not a great deal, if you are not in the box actually speaking. But I hear it all."

"It all really comes down to a question of vibrations."

"Yes, and the greatest difficulty of all is to strike the vibration between our rate and your rate, so that the link operates between the two at the right moment. That is tricky."

"That is done by impulses?"

"Yes, 'it is purely a scientific question. You may have noticed that sometimes the boys' voices become slurred, that is, when they try to speak their words become slurred as they strike the lower rate of vibration, and it becomes sound without articulation."

"Is that why we do not always get the distinct, characteristic tones of the speaker, but there seems to be the sound of Estelle's voice in the background?"

"That is due to the striking between the two rates. If you could listen from our world you would hear their own characteristic voices, but the medium's characteristics are in the ectoplasm. It is impossible to cut that completely out."

"Yes, I suppose it is inherent in the ectoplasm, in the larynx you build."

"Yes, you cannot have it otherwise, except when I talk. I am in complete charge. After all, the boys cannot understand it as well as I do."

"Is it right to call it a larynx, is that the most suitable description?"

"We call it the articulation box."

"What happens to the larynx that is retained, the piece of ectoplasm that does not go back into the medium?"

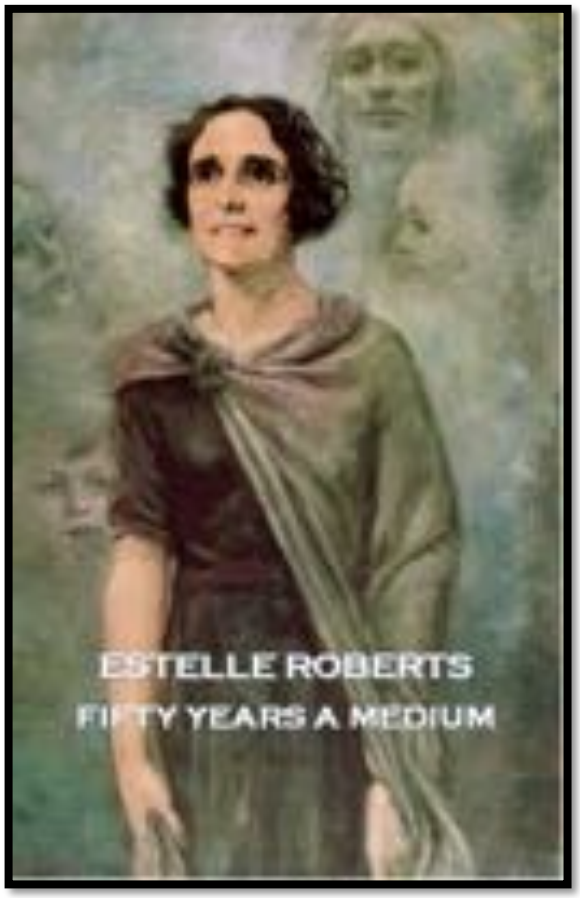
"We take it away in a little case we have, because it is solidified, not in your sense, but in the etheric sense; that is, once again, a transmutation of matter."

"With the direct voice, when the spirits speak, is that not astral projection?"

"No, the person has to be there in order to speak; nobody else can do it for them. It is not actually his voice, he is there behind it, but I suppose it is a form of projection."

"We can understand that. It is no more the actual voice than a gramophone record of my voice would be actually me."

"Yes, that is right."



Estelle Roberts - Fifty Years a Medium

Originally published in 1959 under the title 'Forty Years a Medium'. In 1969 Estelle Roberts' autobiography was brought up to date by the addition of a chapter covering her life during the following ten years.

Also available in German and Italian

Available via SNUi
http://www.snui.org/

HELEN DUNCAN SÉANCE DURING HER 1944 TRIAL

New séance evidence!

In 1958 a conference was organised by the College of Psychic Science in Brighton on November 28th-30th on "The Problem of Survival"; the principal speakers were Brigadier R.C. Firebrace, Percy Wilson and Professor H.H. Price. A report of part of the discussion can be read in Psypioneer, Vol. 5, No. 1, January 2009.

Helen Duncan circa 1941

Percy Wilson and his family were friends with Helen Duncan and during his 1958 lecture he wanted to put on record the circumstances relating to the Duncan prosecution. Below is a short quote relating to a séance during the trial at Wilson's house; as a result of this séance he considered "…that evidence was sufficient for us to conclude that it was safe, even in the hard circumstances of the court at the Old Bailey, for Mr. Loseby to offer the judge and jury a personal demonstration when he opened his evidence for the defence. That offer, as you will remember, was refused."

Further information of the Duncan trial can be found in the "Pioneer", Vol. 2, No. 4, July 2015: "The Effect of the Vagrancy Act (Part III) – The Work of the Spiritualists' National Union" – Helen Duncan in Court – Was Helen Removed by the British Intelligence Services? – Eighth Day – Monday 3rd April 1944 – Sentences

The quote below is taken from *Light*, vol. LXXIX, No. 3438 – Spring 1959:

EVIDENCE FOR SURVIVAL

The Historical Significance of Physical Mediumship

By Percy Wilson, M.A.

Séance During Trial

During the trial one of my sons, Geoffrey, acted in the court as a messenger for the defence, and when it was half-way through, after prosecution evidence had been given, we arranged (it was a Friday afternoon) that he should collect Mrs. Duncan straight from the court at four o'clock, take her to Holborn Viaduct station, bring her through to Wimbledon and then by taxi on to my house. This he duly did. She had had no opportunity of going anywhere else from the court on the way. And I had my usual home circle gathered there. So, we gave Mrs. Duncan a good tea, I don't advocate this before a physical circle, but there was a reason for it on this occasion because we included some really good red jam in it, thanks to the regurgitation theory of Harry Price. Shortly afterwards, we went upstairs to my own seance room and held a seance. I was seated next to the curtains of the cabinet, and there was a red light behind me on the ceiling. (I could not see it but it was shining behind me, so that my eyes were not inhibited by it.) In the course of the seance Mrs. Duncan stood up and ectoplasm poured in streams, in ribbons, from her nose and her mouth, on to her massive bosom, curled up in a ribbon on her bosom, and dropped to the ground; and then, as she was standing with her arms akimbo, I suddenly saw it leap up two ways to her hands. I was within a yard of her with a light above my head and I saw everything that happened. Shortly afterwards the whole mass of ectoplasm disappeared in an instant. I could not tell you when: it was there and then it was not. It just disappeared.

The prosecution (John Maude, KC, and Henry Elam) concluded on the second day of the trial, Friday March 24th 1944, the day the above séance was held at the Wilsons' home at 3 Sheridan Road, S.W.19. It can be noted below that in fact there was a second séance at the Wilsons' house on Monday March 27th 1944, the third day of the trial, the day Charles Loseby and J. Simpson Pedler began their defence. The sitters named are Mr and Mrs John McIndoe (former SNU President), Joseph Newton, Mrs Lyon, Percy Wilson's sons, Laurie and Geoffrey, and a nurse. It may appear the nurse was the daughter of one of Duncan's co-defendants, Christine Homer, whom McIndoe refers to below as a court witness on March 28th.

This new valuable document was given to the Britten Memorial Museum & Library by Linda Smith, President of Norwich Spiritualist Church;[6] Linda is the mother of Tanya Smith, the General Manager of the Arthur Findlay College. The typed séance report was found in David Dutton's old papers; David was born circa 1917 and first took to the Spiritualist platform in 1941 at Croydon Church (where he lived for some years), becoming a well-known and respected orator. He became well acquainted with the Wilson family with his involvement in "Psychic Press Ltd"; Percy Wilson was the Chairman from 1956 to his passing in 1977. "Psychic Press Ltd" published "Psychic News", ran a bookshop and published books, including Arthur Findlay books. "Psychic Press Ltd" was formed to finance the newly-formed "Psychic News" in 1932 by Maurice Barbanell and Jack M. Rubens, who received shares for the part they played; Findlay put up the necessary money

[6] Norwich Spiritualist Church, affiliated to the Spiritualists' National Union: http://www.norwichspiritualistchurch.org.uk/html/pictures.html

and so controlled the company. In 1965 the charity, "The Spiritual Truth Foundation", was founded; David Dutton was the Chairman, the trustees included Laurence Wilson and Maurice Barbanell, and the Foundation is still going today.

NOTES MADE AT SEANCE HELD WITH MRS. HELEN DUNCAN AT 3 SHERIDAN ROAD, S.W.19. ON 27TH MARCH 1944

Albert:[7] It's difficult for me to get the amount of power I would like to get. I have got a person here who I am going to try and build. It's for the gentleman towards the back (Joseph Newton). It is a gentleman who passed with abdominal trouble – kidney. Neither old nor young. George.

(A form appeared but dropped down very quickly)

Albert: Did you notice his moustache? (Mrs. Lyon – the sitter nearest the cabinet – "I caught a glimpse of it") George is not his name.

(The form again appeared at full height but, unable to retain the power, soon dropped to the floor again)

Albert: The next form is for the lady in the corner (Mrs. Lyon). Go out, sir, do not stand in here.

(Tall figure appeared, bowing his head and turning it from side to side slightly.)

Albert: Did you notice he wore a turban of some kind? (Mrs. Lyon: "Yes and he had a small beard and moustache") I have now got a child here. (Mrs. Lyon: "Please come out; I know who you are") It is a coloured child.

(Small form appears but quickly sank down. Then a bunch of ectoplasm on the floor came out of the cabinet reaching forward until it reached a point almost level with Mr. McIndoe, sitting two places from the cabinet)

Albert: They are not holding.

(White bunch on the floor again – rose up high as though trying to build a form, curtains closed and then opened again but the form sank to the floor).

Albert to Mr. McIndoe: What on earth possessed you to pick this day? (McIndoe: "Because one or two witnesses are going in tomorrow and we don't want the other side to say they only saw Mrs. Duncan seven or eight years ago")

(Curtains opened. Large white expanse of ectoplasm shown which covered the medium, Albert to medium: Stand up. Then ectoplasm was seen coming from the region of the medium's mouth in a thick fold which went down to the floor and up again towards the edge of the cabinet.

After ectoplasm had disappeared, Albert walked Mrs. Duncan right out of the cabinet. (Mrs. McIndoe: There's nothing to be seen in the cabinet")

When Mrs. Duncan was back in cabinet and curtains closed Mrs. McIndoe said "Somebody is pulling at my chair")

Albert: I am going to show it is quite a solid material. (Big knock heard). May I ask a favour of one of you young men. (Laurie Wilson). I want you to stand up and then I

[7] Albert was the main control of Helen Duncan for around twenty-five years.

am going to ask you to put your foot on a rod that will come out, to prove to you that no cloth could do what this is going to do.

(Laurie stood up and moved forward from his chair about four feet. He was then about four feet from the cabinet. He put his right foot on the white rod which had come out in front of him. Suddenly he staggered backwards. The rod had pushed upwards, nearly throwing him off his balance. After the seance he said the rod had been about 9" above the floor and when he put his foot on it he pressed it down and inch or two. When it pushed up under his shoe it forced his foot up to about the height of his thigh which threw him back off his balance. The rod continued to move upwards and disappeared over the top of the curtain. Of its nature he said afterwards that it felt like cylindrical tube of perhaps 4" or 5" diameter with a hard core of 2" or 3" and soft covering.

During séance Laurie described it in these words "It felt soft and spongy as would a thin steel rod, thickly bound round with cotton wool". Albert: Would not you say it was like rubber?" Laurie: Perhaps like sorbo rubber.)

Albert: I am going away now but I know that I had to produce something and I had a reason for doing that. Mrs. Duncan sat in that court all day today and was escorted here by an outsider. (Geoffrey Wilson). You did not let her out of your sight did you young man? (Geoffrey: "No") You are quite sure she was not swallowing something. ("Yes"). There is my reason that I did that. I did not want to let Mr. McIndoe down and I have not done so. I want to say "God be with you till we meet again". And by the way, Nurse, I still adhere to my prophecy. That is all and I will now say Au revoir.

(Mrs. Duncan in a very few seconds came out of the cabinet, still partly under control. Lights raised. Mrs. Duncan's eyes were open but had a staring expression)

Reference to a strong "steel" rod can be noted on another occasion almost two decades earlier, involving the original small Duncan circle, which would be around 1926, prior to the introduction of Albert. Then under the direction of Dr. Williams, he is the least-known control but it appears he was the first in laying the foundations of the home development circle at the Duncan residence, introducing the direct voice. The quote below is taken from "The Two Worlds of Helen Duncan", by Helen's daughter, Gena Brealey, and Kay Hunter, published in 1985 (reprinted in 2008), page 52:

As he spoke [Dr Williams], out through the curtain surrounding the corner of the room which served as Helen's cabinet, came a substance not unlike cheesecloth or butter muslin. The material continued to flow until there seemed to the sitters to be at least ten yards in a soft pile in the room. Henry [Helen's husband] asked if he could touch it and was told he could. He said afterwards that it was dry and soft to touch. The other sitters remarked that there was no odour. Throught the opening of the curtains they could see Helen sitting in her hard-backed chair, and the ectoplasm flowing from her nose and ears. They were amazed to see the substance flowing down the front of her dress on to her lap, then down on to the floor and out to the centre of the room. The curtains were drawn together, then the substance started to recede until the entire volume had gone back into the cabinet.

There now appeared a rod about three feet long. It came all round the sitters and stopped at Jim Murray. Dr. Williams told him to take hold of the rod and bang it on the floor. When he had done this, he was asked if the rod felt solid.

"Solid as steel," he replied.

He was then told to place the rod so that it rested on two chairs two feet apart, and to sit in the centre of the rod. He did as directed and was lifted up above the heads of the other sitters, who were asked to stand up and check that there was no rope or anything else holding Jim up.

The sitters were very careful in their examination of any spirit phenomena. Joe Souter and Frank Murray stood on chairs to make sure nothing was holding Jim from above. The voice asked if they were certain there was nothing holding Jim up so high, "no material substance", as Dr. Williams called it. He then thanked them, and told Jim he would be lowered, and would they please watch carefully.

Jim was lowered gently to the floor, the rod disappeared, and Jim was left standing in the middle of the circle. Dr. Williams' voice then said, "I will leave you for the present. Good-night, and God bless you all."

During this stage of development much phenomena was witnessed–voices, lights, and the continuing development of the ectoplasm, which at times resembled a spider's web, and at other times solid steel.

Helen and her husband, Henry Duncan

MADAME VICTORIA DUNCAN

Helen Duncan needs little introduction as a materialisation medium. Without doubt the best resource of researched original material on Helen Duncan is the free online journal, "Psypioneer", edited by Leslie Price; details are on the index page. We have noted in the "Pioneer" that Helen Duncan occasionally took Spiritualist meetings, with a trance address given through Helen by her main control, Albert Stewart; please see Vol. 1, No. 5, October 2014, "Builders of Bridges".

However, it is little known that Duncan wrote about her experiences in her own weekly column, "My Second-Sight Secrets", published in "The People's Journal" of Dundee in 1933. In part what we would commonly refer to today as an "agony aunt", Duncan referred to herself as a "counsellor and friend" in psychic matters; she would also work in a role as "Psychic Detective", revealing some of the "Disappearance Cases I Have Solved".

Below is published one of her cases in psychic detection published in "The People's Journal", Saturday November 11th 1933, page 24:

> MANY people have consulted me, often as a last resort, in their anxiety to trace relatives who have disappeared. I have been remarkable successful in solving mysteries of this kind.
>
> A young Glasgow woman visited me, expecting that I would provide her with confirmation of her husband's death by drowning. On the contrary, I was able to tell her that he was alive and well, but I had to add that he had become involved in trouble which was to lead to police action.
>
> This young woman was accompanied by a lady friend. She told me she had called regarding her husband, who was missing, and who, she had good reason to believe, had committed suicide by drowning.
>
> "He was acting queerly for some time prior to his disappearance," the young woman told me, and I feel sure he won't come back."
>
> "You have already taken clairvoyant advice in regard to this matter," I said to her, and she agreed.

"And you were told your husband was dead; that he had been drowned in a quarry hole."

"Yes, out at G—." She mentioned the name of the disused quarry on the outskirts of Glasgow.

"Then, why come to me?" I asked.

Motive for Leaving Home.

The young woman hung her head, but suddenly she raised it and said, "Oh, two heads are better than one, aren't they?"

"The head has nothing whatever to do with clairvoyance," I replied. "The messages I received do not come from my brain in the ordinary sense of the word. I do not think back or think forward. I see."

Observing that my client was becoming flustered, I hastened to add, "But don't let us worry about these things. I shall help you to the best of my ability. Have you brought any article belonging to your husband with you?"

"Yes," she said, with relief in her voice, "I've brought a linen collar; the collar he took off just before he went away. Will that do?"

"Splendidly," I replied.

As soon as I received the collar into my hands I sensed that the man who had worn it was still alive, and I told my client so, adding, "I do not like to say that I am right and that someone else is wrong, but I certainly must tell you that your husband is alive. He had a motive for leaving home," I proceeded, but the young woman interrupted me saying, "Oh, no, we were perfectly happy, Mrs Duncan."

"This has nothing to do with his home life or his domestic happiness," I explained. "He had a motive for going away. Wait a minute. I'm getting it. Didn't he act as a treasurer for an employees' holiday fund?"

My client nodded.

"There was a sum of about £50 in the fund?"

"I cannot tell you the exact amount," she said.

"He had spent some of the money and taken the remainder with him."

"I know he was treasurer of the fund, and that the money was yet to be paid out, but I don't think he has been spending any of it."

"Well," I said, "I wish to assure you that your husband is not dead. He is living at—" (I mentioned the name of a village on the outskirts of the city.) "He is afraid to communicate with you just now in case he should provide the police with a clue to his whereabouts. You have had a visit from the police, haven't you?" My client nodded.

"And they asked you if you had been in touch with your husband, and you truthfully replied that you had neither seen him nor heard of or from him since he went away."

"That is so," she replied.

"Your husband has a sister who lives not very far from where you stay, but you have not called on her."

"No, we are not on speaking terms."

"In a few days your sister-in-law will call on you to say she has had a communication from your husband."

"Well, I think if he is going to write to anyone it will be to me."

Arrested By Detectives.

"Your house is being watched by the police, and he will not write to you. Your husband will return home, but—and I do not like to tell you this—he will almost immediately be taken into custody on a charge of appropriating the holiday fund to his own use."

"If only he comes back," she replied with emotion, "everything will be all right. We will make up the money somehow."

"That is an honourable thought," I said, "but I regret to say you will find it impossible to make good the loss of £50. You will try hard nevertheless. He will go before the Court and be found guilty and sentenced to a short term of imprisonment. But do not grieve too much over it. This will be a lesson your husband will never forget, and, so far as I can see at the moment, your troubles will be over."

A fortnight or so later my client's companion appeared at my consulting room.

"Did you see it in the paper?" she asked me.

"See what?"

"About the sentence on—," she explained.

I then recollected the visit of her friend and what I had predicted in regard to her husband, but had to confess that the court case had escaped my notice.

"It all came out as you said," my visitor stated. "The exact amount of the money missing was £50 18s. He wrote to his sister and she went over to his wife with another letter he had enclosed for her. In this letter he said he was returning home that night. Detectives were watching for him, and when he returned about midnight they followed him upstairs and arrested him just after he had entered the house."

Some more examples of Helen Duncan's psychometry (a psychic way of seeing through touching the object) and clairvoyant consultations in the next issue.

Leon Isaacs

Pioneer of infra-red séance photography

By the 1930s infra-red film and filters, etc. became generally available and would potentially lift many of the barriers of seeing inside the dark séances and recording the phenomena. One early pioneer of infra-red séance photography was Leon Isaacs. Below is a profile of Isaacs by Philip Paul published in the "Two Worlds", August 25th 1956, page 7:

BRITAIN'S GREATEST SEANCE ROOM PHOTOGRAPHER

AS fleet of eye as a popping flashbulb and as quick in movement as a snapping shutter, he looks back upon 23 years of darkened rooms and unflagging patience in quest of a dual end—to commune with the "dead" and to capture upon his photographic plates irrefutable evidence of those meetings.

He has emerged from these years of seeking with an unchallenged reputation as Britain's leading seance-room photographer and an unparalleled collection of pictures of the "miracles" contrived through (and, alas, sometimes by) well-known and obscure members of the mediumistic fraternity.

Against this background of unceasing exploration stands a story of personal courage and fortitude. For more than half his life he has struggled against agonising ill-health. Sometimes he has had to leave his cameras or the dishes in his dark room to lie prostrate on the floor in order to gain relief from his pain.

Tragic passing

Tragedy struck at him through the death of his wife, whose physical life was extinguished beneath the wheels of a runaway bus. He arrived home at the end of a day's labours to learn that the parting of that morning had been their last upon earth.

Even a case-hardened member of the Society for Psychical Research has described him in print as "a charming and sincere Spiritualist." He refutes the description—happily, not in reference to his charm or sincerity but with regard to the final term. "I am not a Spiritualist," he says. "I am a psychic researcher."

Fifty-four-year-old Leon Isaacs was born in Rochester, Kent. He was one of five children. His father was a Hebrew minister and, naturally, he was provided with a strictly orthodox religious education. "But by the time I was 15 I had begun to think myself out of it."

Because of accident

On leaving school he was apprenticed to the trade of photo-engraving. For 20 years it was his profession. Countless hours of bending over the intricate work, combined with lifting heavy weights of metal, caused a curvature of his spine. Only now, after years of osteopathy and spiritual healing, is he finding freedom from its effects.

In 1937, he was offered a post as a studio photographer with the "Daily Mirror." He accepted at once. There followed many happy years of creative work. He left the "Mirror" in 1952.

His interest in matters psychic began when he accidentally found a copy of a Spiritualist weekly newspaper. In it was an advertisement by Marylebone Spiritualist Association. Intrigued, he joined the Association and set about learning all he could by reading books by Sir Oliver Lodge, Sir William Crookes and authors of comparable calibre.

Two years later, he attended a seance in North London at which Mrs. Perriman was the medium. A Scots voice spoke out of the darkness, informing those present that the communicator had been a Glasgow photographer. Leon was told that he was to begin taking pictures in physical circles, using infra-red materials.

This convinced them

At another seance of that period, where Mrs. Henderson was the medium, he saw the materialised form of a "dead" relative who was entirely unknown to anyone else present.

"I was convinced of Survival." Leon remembers, "but I wanted to prove it for others." Among mediums with whom he worked were Jack Webber, Colin Evans, Harold Evans and Ronald Cockersell (now Ronald Edwin).

The last named recently published a book in which he confessed that many of the effects presented at his seances were faked. He also stated that Leon had been deceived.

Comments Leon: "He was not fraudulent all the time, but I was not taken in by his tricks. I made no comment at the time because it would have frightened him into stopping the sittings. I might then have lost some of the genuine effects.

"I had him at my home after the book was published and asked him to tell me what was fraud and what wasn't. He was completely confused about it and couldn't remember what had been genuine and what otherwise."

Disaster averted

Beside his experience of direct voice and materialisation. Leon has had remarkable evidence and accurate prophetic messages through mental mediums. Foremost among these, he names Vout Peters. Bertha Harris. John Lovette, Gordon Higginson, Lilian Bailey and Eileen Blaschke. Twice his changes of residence have been predicted—and twice during the war the homes he vacated were blown to pieces soon after his departure.

He has experienced various spontaneous phenomena in his own bedroom. At a direct-voice circle, his wife communicated and told him to set up a camera beside his bed. She would then awaken him one night and he could secure a picture of her. Leon arranged his infra-red apparatus on the left of the bed, with a release mechanism to enable him to make an instantaneous exposure. Months passed.

He heard a voice

Then, one night, he awoke with a start, to see a solid-looking figure, draped with veiling, silhouetted against the window. "I spoke to the figure and asked it to come to the other side of the bed, where I had focused the camera. I closed my eyes to compose myself and heard a voice speak to me. But when I opened my eyes the figure was gone.

“Shortly afterwards, at a sitting with a clairvoyant, my wife told me she had materialised, but I couldn’t see her face clearly and she seemed to fade away. Since then, at odd intervals. I have heard a few words spoken, in an objective voice, beside my bed. Sometimes, there has been a weight as though someone is sitting on the bed beside me.

“Two months ago this happened and I woke up and said, ‘Can you touch my hand?’ Then there were half a dozen firm touches on the bed covers. I was the only occupant of the house at the time and we have no domestic animals.”

When we research

One of Leon’s endeavours is to “maintain an even keel on this difficult subject of Survival.” In the matter of seance experiments, he is convinced that Spiritualists qualify as highly as psychic researchers. “In fact, Spiritualists get better results because they treat mediums as sensitives, which is always a better approach than the cold, scientific way.”

Equally, he believes that “it is very difficult to get evidence of Survival. It is no use going to six mediums and then giving up in despair. It needs great patience.”

Looking back at infra-red in Psypioneer:

Isaacs was not the first to photograph phenomena by the *new infra-red process*. It can be noted in Psypioneer, Vol. 8, No. 5, May 2012, "Infra-Red photography and the Physical Mediums", that Mr S.G. Donaldson (he married the well-known physical medium Kathleen Goligher) photographed Helen Duncan in the séance rooms of the Belfast Spiritualists' Alliance, Belfast, on Sunday June 5th 1932. The report, with the photograph shown, was published in "Psychic News", June 18th 1932. In the same publication on April 7th 1934 the paper published a photograph of the medium Mrs Dorothy Henderson, possibly taken by Leon Isaacs, stating, "The photograph, the first of its kind, was taken in the dark, using the new infra-red ray process…"

Although this may seem a contradiction to the Donaldson photograph, Helen Duncan did not work in total darkness, so both are valid reports. The editorial in the issue stated (as republished in the Psypioneer issue given above):

INFRA-RED RAYS IN THE SEANCE ROOM

THE remarkable photograph taken with the infra-red ray process in Mrs. Dorothy Henderson's seance room last week opens up tremendous possibilities.

It means that, in co-operation with the spirit guide in charge, Spiritualists should be able, in future, to obtain a permanent record of psychic phenomena which occur in the dark.

This photograph was obtained, using the new Ilford infra-red filter and plates, and a Sashalite lamp.

The flash takes place behind the infrared screen, and enables an instantaneous exposure to be made. All that is visible is a very dull red flash of light as the exposure is made.

It should be quite possible, where mediumship is strong enough, to obtain perfect photographs of materialised forms. Sitters would then have records of the appearance of their beloved "dead."

The new process will be of value to trumpet seances as it should be quite easy to obtain photographs of trumpets levitated in the air.

This photograph, the first of its kind, was taken in the dark, using the new infra-red ray process, at a seance with Mrs. Dorothy Henderson, seen on the right in trance. Eclipsium is just visible on the medium's lap.

The infra-red process is an excellent aid to the Spiritualist movement, as it will help to make the chances of fraud very unlikely. It will also dissipate the old bogey of "Oh, it happened in the dark!"[1]

[1] The former SNU President, then editor of the "Two Worlds", in April 1933 received serious concerns that Mrs Henderson was fraudulent. These did not appear to go to the Spiritualist press; however, later in July/August 1936, under the editorship of Oaten, serious allegations against Henderson were published.

In the 1956 article on Leon we can note:

"I was convinced of Survival," Leon remembers, "but I wanted to prove it for others." Among mediums with whom he worked were Jack Webber, Colin Evans, Harold Evans and Ronald Cockersell (now Ronald Edwin).

I personally became interested in Ronald Cockersell/Ronald Edwin after reading his book, mentioned by Isaacs, "Clock without Hands" (1955). In Psypioneer, Vol. 9, No. 6, June 2013, various fraudulent mediums were featured, some being exposed by infra-red photography; it was noted that the next issue would cover the self-confessed fraudulent medium Ronald Edwin Cockersell, whose photographs, taken by Isaacs, had caused a sensation at the time. Coincidentally, when I started my research I received some correspondence from a Mr David Chester and it was through his researching his family history that he found the name 'Ronald Edwin Cockersell' mentioned in Psypioneer. David was able to supply additional family information.

The article "Ronald Edwin Cockersell Fraudulent Medium – Genuine Psychic?" was enhanced by "Psychic News" supplying Psypioneer with quality séance photographs, including those of Isaacs.

Ronald Cockersell committed suicide in 1968

For the full story see Psypioneer, Vol. 9, No. 7, July 2013

Colin Evans

The name of Colin Evans was also mentioned in the Philip Paul report on Leon Isaacs. In Psypioneer, Vol. 10, No. 8, August 2014, there was a lot of detailed information on the photographic techniques of séance room infra-red photography employed by Leon Isaacs and others.

It was noted in the article's conclusion that there were numerous "sweeping statements" accusing Colin Evans of frauds but these may well be unfounded and in need of further research and more explanation.

Image below:

In some of those taken on earlier dates when the spirit guides were apparently a little uncertain of what risks they could take with the infra-red light, the trumpet is quite close to my face—"shadowing and shielding the actual ectoplasm extruded from the medium, against the direct rays of the infra-red light," as one guide explained—but still evidential enough. My hands were, of course, held usually, and there was no projection or handle on the trumpet, but it had a band of luminous paint on the trumpet by which as many as three hundred people on several occasions (six hundred, once, at the Conway Hall) were able to follow its gyratory movements in the air up to the moment when the photograph was taken, so that no doubt can arise as to whether, in my trance, I might have been in some way supporting the trumpet against my face.[2]

[2] "Levitation of a séance trumpet. Photograph on the left by Leon Isaacs, and on the right by Dr. Nandor Fodor, courtesy International Institute for Psychical Research."

The Isaacs article makes no mention of Isaacs' work with the transfiguration medium Mrs. Elizabeth Frances Bullock, or that Leon Isaac was the official photographer at the International Institute for Psychical Research. In 1934 Mrs Dawson Scott, J. Arthur Findlay and Shaw Desmond had founded the International Institute for Psychical Research (IIPR). Initially its séance rooms, laboratory, etc. were established at 16 Queensberry Place, London SW7, the London Spiritualist Alliance (LSA).[3] At this time Arthur Findlay was the LSA President; today it is known as the College for Psychic Studies, still located at the same premises.

Psypioneer, Vol. 8, No. 6, June 2012, reported on Elizabeth Bullock, a pioneer of public transfiguration séances, who cooperated with researchers in infra-red photography. Below is quoted from the issue from the year 1935:

INFRA-RED CINEMA FILM OF MRS. BULLOCK'S TRANSFIGURATIONS

PSYCHICAL Research history was made last Friday (February 22nd), at the International Institute for Psychical Research, London, by the taking of an infra-red cinema film of the transfigurations of Mrs. Bullock, the Manchester Medium.

In the presence of a small group (a doctor, a physicist, a chemist, the Research Officer and two ladies), the Medium passed into trance. Her face was illuminated by four powerful reflectors enclosed in light-tight metal boxes behind infra-red filters. The visible light, however, was so dim that Mr. Leon Isaacs, the honorary photographer of the Institute, standing two yards away behind the cine-camera, could only see a red blur and had to be given, for start and stop, signals by the Research Officer, who was peering into the Medium's face. At the rate of 24 exposures per second, the camera recorded the changing of Mrs. Bullock's face into that of a Chinaman.

The Chinaman, apparently, was disconcerted by something. He disappeared soon and "Mooney," an African control, came and asked that the Medium's earrings should be removed, as the Chinaman dislikes wearing them. The request was complied with and the Chinaman came back.

There were other unidentified facial representations which are available for study. Two infra-red and two ultra-violet "stills" were also taken.

The only complaint made by "Mooney" was about the whirring of the cine-camera, which caused the Medium discomfort, but she stood the trying moments with admirable courage.

[3] Further, as announced in *Light* on August 17 1934, page 439: "The International Institute for Psychical Research has secured premises at 21, Harrington Road, South Kensington, S.W.7. They consist of a seance room, office, dark room, workshop and washing room. Alterations are being made to fit the premises for the Society's work. The services of Miss May Carter have been secured for the Secretarial post. The Society hope to begin activities at an early date." Later, in 1939, the IIRP amalgamated with the British College of Psychic Science (BCPS), forming the International Institute for Psychic Investigation (IIPI).

The end piece of the film was immediately cut off for a trial development. The pictures came up sharp and distinct. Mr. Isaacs had no hesitation in declaring that the cinema record was quite successful. It will stand more than life-size projection, promising thereby an excellent chance for a searching study.

The images below are not credited, so it is uncertain whether these were taken by Leon Isaacs. They were published in the "*Two Worlds*", April 15th 1950; Elizabeth Bullock died in 1965, aged 79.

The same issue of Psypioneer refers to Queenie Nixon, who publicly demonstrated transfiguration throughout the country and was a familiar face at the Arthur Findlay College. In 1967 D.M. Hosley captured infra-red photographs of Queenie's transfigurations.

I believe the set of photographs were taken at Batley Carr, West Yorkshire, in September 1967. Hosley was a technician in the psychology department of the University of Leeds. Queenie's album is now an exhibit at the Britten Museum & Library at the Arthur Findlay College.

Queenie died in February 1989 at the Royal Hospital, Chesterfield, in Derbyshire. She was 71.

MADAME VICTORIA DUNCAN

It was noted in the previous issue that it is little known that Helen Duncan wrote about her experiences in her own weekly column, "My Second-Sight Secrets", published in "The People's Journal" of Dundee in 1933. Duncan referred to herself as a "counsellor and friend" in psychic matters; she would also work in a role as "psychic detective", revealing some of the "Disappearance Cases I Have Solved". In the last issue one of her cases in psychic detection was published; I noted at the end of the article that there would be some more examples of Helen Duncan's psychometry (a psychic way of seeing through touching the object) and clairvoyant consultations in the next issue.

However, I found a more valuable article in "The People's Journal", November 18th 1933. The early development of Helen's physical mediumship is somewhat contradictory in the various biographies about her development; these were looked at in Psypioneer, Vol. 11, No. 2, February 2015, "Helen Duncan: Early reports of her mediumship". The article below gives a first-hand account of her trance mediumship and her control of two years, Matthew Douglas, and the introduction of Albert Stewart.

In the "Two Worlds", September 30th 1932, James Leigh interviewed the alleged materialised form of Albert, republished in Psypioneer, Vol. 6, No. 2, February 2010. Albert refers to "Matthew Douglas" as "Marklew Douglas":

> "When were you first brought into contact with the medium, and what attracted you?" was the first question submitted him. His voice, coming from the head of the form—personally, I was unable to distinguish the features—was both clear and pronounced.
>
> "It is a most difficult question to answer briefly," he said. "When I had resided on this side a number of years, I was approached by a person interested in establishing communication with earth, and I was asked whether I would like to participate in a series of experiments. The man who addressed me was called Marklew Douglas. 'You seem to be very clever in making things,' he said. 'Probably you would be useful,' I was shown the process of building materialised spirit forms so that they become visible to people in the material world. Douglas suggested that I might possibly have the gift of moulding the

Artist's impression of Albert Stewart

substance—which I call psychoplasm—into recognisable forms, and at his invitation I consented to conduct some experiments.

"I made many attempts, with varying success. Sometimes I was more successful than at others, but I persevered with the work. Later I discovered that I was not to make the semblance of a human form at all. I had only to clothe the thoughts of the people who presented themselves for materialisation. My task was simply to clothe the thought-form with psychoplasm so that it should become, for a short period, tangible and visible and 'real' to your senses.

"It was this work which brought me into contact with Mrs. Duncan. For her I have the highest regard; and I am grateful to the Higher Powers that this channel has been opened out to me, so that I can occasionally render strength and comfort to those who suffer the temporary loss of loved companions."

It can be noted that what is generally referred to as "ectoplasm" in the quote above is called "psychoplasm" (on other occasions Albert also used the term "the substance"). When Helen was tested in the early 1930s at the London Psychical Laboratory, the research department of the London Spiritualist Alliance (today the College for Psychic Studies), the researchers called it "teleplasm".[9]

J. Arthur Findlay in his book "The Torch of Knowledge", referenced in the previous issue of Pioneer, stated, page 95:

We call it ectoplasm and our friends on the other side mix it with what they call psychoplasm, a composition of their own, and the finished product they call teleplasm. As teleplasm it can be seen and felt, and it is by means of this teleplasm that they manifest their presence to us earth people.

[9] See Psypioneer, Vol. 9, No. 3, March 2013: "Spirits of the Trade: Teleplasm, Ectoplasm, Psychoplasm, Ideoplasm – Marc Demarest".

My First Experiences in Trances

By Madame Victoria Duncan

I HAVE already told you my experiences at materialisation seances after I had begun serious investigation of spiritualism. This week I propose to tell you of incidents that occurred at trumpet seances, which was the next stage in my progress as a spiritualist.

It was from the "other side" that the circle to which I acted as medium was advised to secure and utilise a trumpet. The reason given was that by means of a trumpet the spirit intelligence would be able to communicate more evidence.

Its use, we were informed, would enable the spirits to conserve their energy and thus ensure communications from a great number of persons who had passed on. It was added that the new method would involve less strain on the medium.

Having been instructed to exclude all white light, we began our first "trumpet séance" in utter darkness, but so that any movement of the trumpet would be visible we had the top and bottom of it painted with luminous paint. The trumpet, by the way, was in two sections, which fitted telescopically.

Trumpet's Peculiar Movements.

We had not long to wait for the first movement of the trumpet. I confess I was somewhat startled when it rose at a great speed from the floor.

After a momentary pause it moved in a circle with amazing rapidity. In its progress it seemed to graze the head of each sitter. Next it soared close to the ceiling, where it remained stationary for a few moments before descending as quickly as it had risen.

As soon as the trumpet came to rest invisible hands removed flowers from their vases and gently touched the heads of several of the sitters.

Voices were heard. They sounded as if they came over a telephone wire, not as if the speakers were in the room.

At the outset a strange sort of buzz came from the mouth of the trumpet, but this cleared to a certain extent, and the words became fairly distinct and intelligible.

The first voice we heard claimed to be [that of?] the controlling intelligence. He gave [the?] name of Matthew Douglas and stated he was a native of Kirkcaldy. That a gentleman of that name did at one time live in Kirkcaldy we were able to confirm at a later date. He urged us to continue our trumpet sittings and promised some wonderful manifestations if we did so.

For some time afterwards we sat regularly twice a week, and, at Matthew Douglas's suggestion, we widened the circle by bringing in more friends.

A Joyful Answer.

Just before one of the seances my youngest boy contracted measles. It was a serious attack and he was really very ill. In the circumstances I decided we must abandon the seance, but I found it impossible to get in touch with all the people who had been invited to attend. I sent word to as many as I could and decided I would crave the indulgences of the others when they arrived.

This I did, whereupon one of the guests remarked, “Why, Mrs Duncan, this is the very time to hold a seance. Let us ask if the boy is going to get well.”

“All right,” I agreed. My husband and I and four guests were standing in the bedroom where the boy was sleeping. The room was lit by incandescent gas.

Suddenly I felt something drop at my feet. I looked and saw a snowdrop. Next instant a snowdrop fell on the bed. You may imagine my feelings. I concluded these to be signs that the boy would not recover.

In an overwrought condition, I said “Let’s hold a seance. I must find out what is going to happen, whether it be good or bad news.”

We adjourned to the next room and sat in darkness. One of the little circle, having offered up a prayer, asked, “Is Mrs Duncan’s boy going to be all right?”

How relieved I was when the answer came in the affirmative in form of three very heavy raps on the table in the centre of the room. So loud and pronounced were the raps that it seemed as if they had been registered with a heavy sledge-hammer.

Lifted from the Floor.

Then came a sound which was like the flapping of the wings of a large and powerful bird. Right round the room the bird seemed to fly. When the sound ceased the voice of one of the sitters broke the stillness.

“Oh,” she exclaimed, “see what I’ve got – a flower. It was placed in my hand.”

“Oh, I’ve got one, too,” shouted another of the sitters.

The gas was lit, and it was discovered that in the hand of each of the circle had been placed a snowdrop. We then examined the table, on which the heavy raps had been registered, and found that not the slightest mark had been made.

I felt tremendously bucked up by this seance. I was certain my boy was going to recover, and in this I was not disappointed.

By the way of an experiment it was decided to rope me to a chair to see if this would in any way interfere with the manifestations. This done the lights were extinguished, and in the darkness the trumpet was seen to move about the room just as it had done previously.

The controlling intelligence then instructed us to light up the room, and when this was done it was seen that my bonds remained intact.

“Remove the bonds. Do not put out the light; just turn it down low,” was the next instruction we received, and no sooner had this been complied with than I had a feeling that the floor was receding from under me. I understand one has the same feeling when rising in an aeroplane for the first time.

At a loss to explain my sensation, I asked the sitters, “Did any of you feel any difference in the floor?”

There was a chorus of negatives, to which I replied, “Well, I did. I feel it yet. The floor seems to be going farther and farther away from me.”

“It is imagination on your part,” a member of the circle suggested.

“Is it my imagination?” I remarked derisively, “Look now. I cannot touch the floor with my toes. The floor seems to sinking under me.”

“There is nothing to worry about,” interposed my husband. “You are being lifted up. Keep perfectly calm.”

By this time I was fully a foot from the floor, and I felt greatly alarmed.

“Great goodness,” I exclaimed. “They might let me fall. Think of my weight in this easy chair.”

“There is no fear of their letting you fall,” said my husband, “you will be all right.”

“Will I?” I countered. “I’m not risking it,” and with that I slid forward to the front of the chair and dropped down. The drop gave me a good shake up.

What was even more alarming, however, was the fact that no sooner had the chair been relieved of my weight than it flew right over my head to land without a sound on a big table in the centre of the circle.

Went into Trance.

The chair was lifted by two male members of the circle and returned to its original position. Then from the trumpet came a voice telling us to extinguish the light. When this had been done we heard a noise which indicated that the rope with which I had been bound to the chair was being gathered up by someone.

This was confirmed when, from the trumpet, came the voice of Matthew Douglas, telling the circle that the medium was to be tied by spirit intelligences.

Quite clearly we heard the handling of the rope. I realised that my hands were being tied, and then consciousness left me.

When I regained consciousness I had the feeling of waking from a short sleep. I imagined I had just “toppled over” for a few seconds whereas I had been “away” for nearly half an hour. My hands and feet were benumbed.

“Have I been asleep?” I asked the circle.

“No, you have been in a trance,” one of the sitters replied.

“What has been happening?”

I had no recollection or knowledge of what had taken place from the moment I felt the rope on my hands. Here is an account of the seance as given to me by several of the sitters.

They had heard the handling of the rope, and next the trumpet began to circle round the room.

When the movements of the trumpet ceased a voice said, “Put up the light. Good-night.”

The gas was lit, and I was found bound to the chair and in a trance for the first time since I had begun my investigation of spiritualistic phenomena.

The sitters carefully examined my bonds. They found that the roping had been most methodically carried out. For a time they were at a loss to discover the knots, but eventually they were located under the chair. They were three in number, and were unmistakably the work of an intelligence who had had seafaring experience.

The unravelling of the knots took a considerable time, and it was during this operation that I awoke to what was going on around me.

First Real Trance.

This experience, of course, was only a partial trance, and now I propose to tell you of the first occasion when I went into a complete trance, that is to say, from the beginning to the end of the seance, and when I awoke to find that I had absolutely no recollection of what had taken place in the room.

The sensations I experienced as I was falling into the trance were unforgettable. I felt as if I were going to faint, yet I felt as if I were rising into the air, not dropping as one feels when in a fainting condition.

When I became normal again I was convinced I had just recovered from a faint. I imagined I had been unconscious for only a few seconds, and was amazed when I was informed that I had been in trance for almost an hour and a half.

Visitors from the "Other Side."

As I have explained, I had no recollection of what had transpired, and for details of the seance I was indebted to the sitters. Many voices were heard, and from the "other side" several visitors had come to comfort relatives in the circle.

The last to appear was the mother-in-law of one of the sitters. She had passed on in a village in Fife only a week previously, and the ailment to which she succumbed was made plain to every member of the circle. Unfortunately I, for the time being, took on the woman's health condition, and when I awoke I was feeling far from well.

A gentleman, whose wife had passed on twenty years ago met her again, and he was extremely happy because of the experience.

"Are you sure it was her voice you heard?" I asked him.

"Certain, absolutely certain," he replied with sparkling eyes. "You see she mentioned things that were known to no one but ourselves. She spoke of money that I had invested in a small business and asked me if I was still getting a return for it."

A lady told me her husband had come to her and spoken about a book she had given him as a present. She said to him, "But that book has disappeared out of the house."

"Oh no" came the reply. "I lent it to Major –"

The lady made inquiries and confirmed the message she had received from her husband. The book had been in Major – 's possession for nearly two years. It was very valuable, and she was glad to get it back, especially as it was a memento of her husband.

Another lady was told by her husband to consult a certain doctor, who was named, in regard to a pain in her chest. "You will require to undergo a major operation," he explained, "but do not hesitate. There is no cause for fear. I shall be with you."

The lady acted on this advice, and three weeks later she underwent a serious operation, from which she made a splendid recovery. She told me she felt her husband very close to her when she lapsed into unconsciousness under the anaesthetic.

Visited by Investigation Committee.

After this I went into trance regularly. One night whilst I was attending a meeting of the Spiritualist Church, of which I had become a member, a gentleman approached me and asked for an invitation to the next seance to be held in my house. He was not a member of the church, but I knew he was interested in spiritualistic phenomena, so I at once complied with his request.

A day or two later I was asked to give a test sitting for the committee of this Spiritualist Church, who proposed to send an investigation committee to my house for the purpose. I agreed to this, and was surprised when the gentlemen I had invited to the seance proved to be a member of the investigation committee.

This was explained by the fact that he was an intimate friend of a committee-man of the Spiritualist Church. The deputation numbered seven, the majority of them being professional men.

"Isn't it strange that after you had invited me here I should be asked to act on this committee?" the gentleman remarked to me.

"It is rather strange," I replied.

The committee brought with them two ladies, and I was asked if I had any objection to their examining my clothing in an adjacent room before the seance commenced.

I said I had no objection, and the ladies carried out a very rigorous search of my clothing and person.

I was then conducted back to the room in which the seance was to be held, and placed in a chair, after which they encircled me with paper streamers. These were placed round my hands and feet in such a way that even the slightest movement would have broken several of the strands.

Shortly after the light was extinguished, I went into trance. At the conclusion of the seance it was found that not a single streamer had been broken, and the investigators, one and all, expressed their satisfaction with the results obtained.

A New Controlling Intelligence.

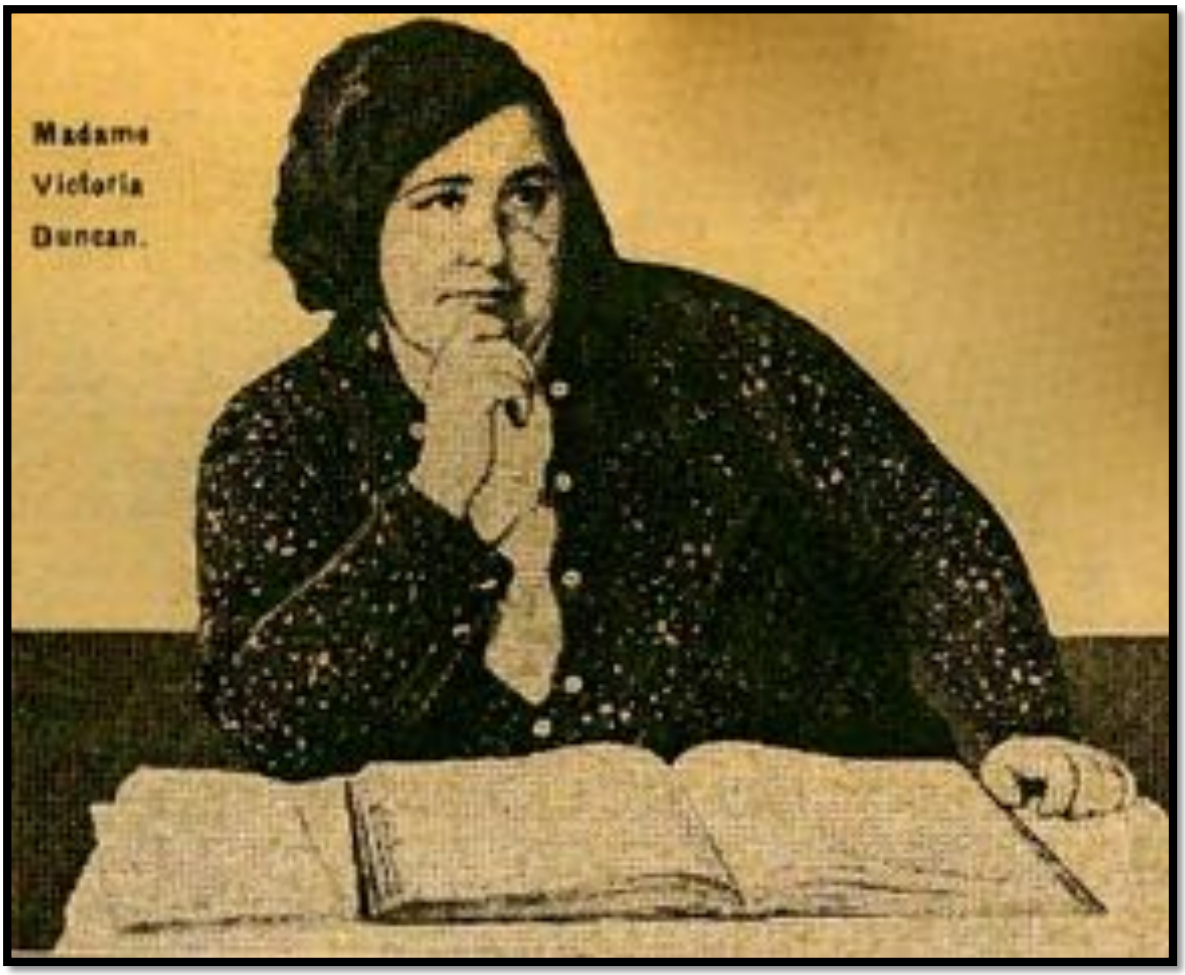
Naturally I inquired as to the nature of these. I was told that several manifestations had taken place. A sister-in-law had appeared to one gentleman, to another a son, while a third had seen his wife. The best manifestation of all was of a little girl who had appeared and spoken to her mother and father.

For fully two years I acted as medium for seances conducted on the foregoing lines, and then came a change where Matthew Douglas intimated that he was leaving us and that another controlling intelligence would take his place. The reason for the change, he explained, was that we might be enabled to obtain a different kind of phenomena.

Matthew Douglas's successor proved to be a Colonial Scot, who gave the name of Albert Stewart, and who explained that he had passed on in Sydney, Australia.

He further informed us that prior to emigrating to Australia he lived in Dundee.

Albert stated that he emigrated as a youth of 18, and had passed on 17 years later. On his instructions we used a red light at our seances, and presently we were getting some remarkable phenomena.



AN IMPORTANT CONSIDERATION

In the early Helen Duncan test séances

In early 2015 I tried to establish when Helen Duncan's main control, Albert Stewart, who would serve Helen for around a quarter of a century, first took over full control of the medium. My main agenda at the time was to try to find some explanation as to why her previously independent recorded *full-form materialisation* mediumship was not apparent in the early scientific test séances at the London Spiritualist Alliance (today it is known as the College for Psychic Studies). The LSA research department was called the "London Psychical Laboratory" (LPL).

From October 1930 the first series of test séances were conducted with Helen Duncan by the LPL, and later (in a different building) by the National Laboratory of Psychical Research (NLPR), starting their séances in May 1931. These series of test séances at the two institutions would damage the name of Helen Duncan for the rest of her life.

The name of Helen Duncan at the start of these test séances would not have been generally known outside Scotland. The initial séances with the LPL later led in March 1931 to Duncan being engaged under a contractual agreement for a series of regular séances, commencing on March 13th, exclusively for the LPL, with the Duncans temporarily moving to London from Dundee at the expense of the LSA.

During the initial séances in 1930 at the LSA Helen and her husband Henry met the director of the National Laboratory of Psychic Research, Harry Price. The NLPR laboratory was then situated on the top floor of the LSA. At the end of December 1930 the NLPR moved a short distance away. On May 4th 1931, apparently without the knowledge of the LSA, Duncan sat for the NLPR, effectively breaking the contract with the LSA. Duncan would sit for the NLPR on five occasions (the final séance on June 4th), resulting in the LPL bringing their contractual agreement to an end on June 12th 1931.

Both subsequent reports were very unfavourable towards the medium – owing to the analyses of "ectoplasm" and the suggestion of "regurgitation" mentioned in both reports.

My 2015 research to establish when Helen Duncan's main control, Albert Stewart, first took control was not straightforward, as until October 19th 1929 there are no independent reports on Duncan's mediumship and her development. The biographies, etc. had to use the Duncan family information, which is very contradictory and generally unreferenced. My initial conclusions were published in Psypioneer, Vol. 11, No. 2, February 2015; below is quoted from this issue:

Early reports on the development of Helen Duncan's mediumship and of her controls/guides are somewhat sketchy and appear contradictory in the published accounts of recent years. These accounts are:

Alan Crossley *The Story of Helen Duncan*, 1975, reprinted 1999

Gena Brealey The *Two Worlds of Helen Duncan*, 1985, reprinted and revised in 2008

Manfred Cassirer *Medium on Trial – The Story of Helen Duncan and The Witchcraft Act*, 1996

Mary Armour *Helen Duncan, My Living Has Not Been in Vain*, 2000

Malcolm Gaskill *Hellish Hell Last of Britain's Witches* 2001

Nina Shandler *The Strange Case of Hellish Nell*, 2006

Robert Hartley *Helen Duncan The Mystery Show Trial*, 2007

The development of Duncan's physical mediumship took place in the 1920's. A circle formed on Thursday nights, and the first sitters according to Brealey (Duncan's daughter) were Helen's husband Henry, brothers Jim & Frank Murray, and Joe Sauter. The circle was halted, according to Brealey, due to Henry having a heart attack; when it resumed, it included another sitter Mrs MacLain.[11] This made a total of five sitters, but Crossley adds another unnamed lady (p.19).

It is difficult to say when the circle began. Crossley gives the early part of 1926, however, this does not fit in with Brealey's account as Crossley states Henry and Helen were married in 1918, and three years later Henry had his heart attack. This would mean the circle had begun in the early 1920's (Brealey states her parents were married on May 27th 1919, Cassirer, Hartley, Shandler & Gaskill give 1916 but the general date remains as May 27th),[12] Hartley states the home circle began in September 1925 but there is no direct reference to this account.

The first circle control was "Dr. Williams," agreed by: Gaskill, Armour, Shandler, Brealey, and Crossley. Gaskill states "Matthew Douglas" followed Dr. Williams "… a deceased gentleman of Kirkcaldy, advised the circle to invest in a trumpet, …" He continues: "After Matthew Douglas came the spirit of 'Donald', a controlling intelligence they all found unbearably lewd, not least Henry, …" (p.81); only Gaskill states this actual order of controls.

Cassirer and Hartley state the first control was: "Matthew Douglas". That Donald followed Dr. Williams is stated by: Crossley, Brealey, Shandler. Gaskill states: Dr. Williams recalled Donald and replaced him with Albert Stewart. Hartley further adds (p.30), "He [Stewart] organised the séances from the spirit side of life initially along with another spirit control Dr. Henry James Williamson, another Scot, purported to be a former Unitarian Minister from Mint Street, Dundee. Henry claimed to have verified these details." It can be noted in the previous issue of Psypioneer "Seven Sittings with Mrs Duncan L.S.A. – 1930-1" at the fifth sitting, on 28th November 1930:

[11] Known as Mac, or Auntie Mac, to the children.

[12] Lis Warwood confirms: "I have found the marriage record for Helen Duncan – she married Henry Duncan on May 27, 1916, when both were just 19 years old."

> The control declared himself to be not Albert, but Henry James Williamson, and that he liked everything but stubborn men and women. Albert, however, presently reported that the new control was no good, and that he would take the control over.

The development of full form materialisation is again uncertain; for example, Crossley states on p. 27 that it was after Albert and Peggy had arrived:[13]

> "The materialisations had by now developed from small, jelly-like forms to full human figures capable of independent thought and speech."

Hartley states on page 30:

> "Fully formed human figures that could speak and think independently were produced at her seances. This coincided with the appearance of a control named Albert Stewart in 1929".

Brealey gives a vivid account of full materialisation when the circle was under the control of Donald page 53:

> "He [Donald] would begin the seance by opening the curtains of the cabinet, standing at one side while the entranced Helen sat in her upright chair. He would then ask the sitters if they could see them both, after which Helen would be asked to stand up, sit down, walk around the room, then return to sit again on her chair in the cabinet while Donald remained beside her chair …

The circle members around this period were asked by Donald to invite two or three visitors to the weekly circle so evidence could be given to a wider audience:

> "By this time materialisation was a regular occurrence. As each materialised spirit appeared, Donald could give full name, cause of so-called death, and date of passing."

As we can note, no firm, referenced information can be gained as to when Albert Stewart first took full control of Helen Duncan. Robert Hartley speaks of "the appearance of a control named Albert Stewart in 1929" but there is no reference or information given.

However, it does appear that full-form materialisations were being produced by Duncan. In February this year my appetite was again awakened when I found an article by Helen Duncan, "My First Experiences in Trances", republished in Pioneer, Vol. 4, No. 1, February 2017. In the article Duncan mentions only two controls; firstly she states, "The first voice we heard claimed to be Matthew Douglas and stated he was a native of Kirkcaldy […] He urged us to continue our trumpet sittings and promised some wonderful manifestations if we did so."

Duncan further stated:

> For fully two years I acted as medium for seances conducted on the foregoing lines, and then came a change where Matthew Douglas intimated that he was leaving us and that another controlling intelligence would take his place. The reason for the change, he explained, was that we might be enabled to obtain a different kind of phenomena.
>
> Matthew Douglas's successor proved to be a Colonial Scot, who gave the name of Albert Stewart, and who explained that he had passed on in Sydney, Australia.

[13] Page 27, reprint edition, 1999 – page 34, first issue, 1975.

Unfortunately, no indication of the date is given. The first published independent report previously mentioned was by James Souter, published in "Light", October 19th 1929. The report notes that Duncan "is a remarkable trumpet Medium, but what is more important is the materialisations which have taken place since she developed this type of phenomenon in March of this year." The short report states:

> The forms build up clearly and distinctly (as many as fourteen have manifested at one sitting); they speak clearly, giving their names and other convincing particulars, answer satisfactorily all questions put to them, they handle objects both light and heavy play musical instruments. They have brought articles from other rooms and other houses at a distance apart. The Guides, three in number, are good hard-headed, canny Scotsmen who know what they are about, carry out their part with precision and dignity and have a right sense of their responsibility. Mr. J. B. McIndoe, of Glasgow, and Mr. Herbert Hill,[14] president of the Bon Accord Spiritualist Church witnessed these materialisations and were so impressed that they have invited Mrs. Duncan to give a series of séances in Glasgow.

John McIndoe, SNU President 1930-1938, would give the first detailed independent report on two sittings he attended. He published a report on the Duncan mediumship in the SNU journal, "The National Spiritualist", October issue, 1929; this was republished in "Pioneer", Vol. 2, No. 3, May 2015.

John Brown McIndoe

The article does not mention Duncan by name, McIndoe records:

> "The forms were distinctive, varied, lifelike and noiseless in their movements, not one of them remotely resembled the medium in build. Their voices were also distinctive and quite different from the medium's. Nothing in any way suggesting trickery of any kind was observed"
>
> "Soon another voice is heard calling "Mother" and a young girl emerged from the curtains, came over and spoke to one of the new lady sitters, who recognised her as her daughter. She conversed with her in a low tone, apparently giving a comforting message, and handed her mother a rose, taken from a bunch placed in the cabinet.
>
> "Then another girl form of different build took her place, coming from the other side of the cabinet, and was claimed as her sister by one of the ladies. She also brought a rose with her"
>
> "I need not describe all the forms who appeared. There were eight of them, one child, two young girls and an older woman, and four men. Six of them came right out in front of the curtains, and seven of the eight spoke to us. One of the controls "Donald" had quite a conversation with us. He was a well built man. By request he brought a mandoline from the cabinet, and twanged the strings. We could easily see the hand which held it, but not the one which touched the strings. Finally he handed it to a sitter. He was asked to touch my outstretched hand. This has not previously been done. He appeared to make several attempts to do so. On the last his hand was plainly visible above mine, but he failed to touch it, and disappeared very suddenly, while the medium gave vent to a groan as if in pain. At the conclusion of the sitting there was blood on her mouth and chin, and some

[14] Scottish District Council: Aberdeen Bon Accord National Spiritualist Church, Room No. 2, Shepherd's Hall, Union Terrace, Aberdeen. President: Herbert Hill. Hon. Secretary and Treasurer: Mrs Bowman, 4 Claremont Place, Aberdeen.

had trickled down on her dress. This had occurred on previous occasions when a form suddenly vanished for some reason or other.

"At the second sitting "Donald" was asked about it and explained that he had come out too far. On that occasion something did touch my hand, held close up to the curtain. It had the appearance of a stump with two fingers, and was rather hard, but the contact was too brief to allow any definite opinion to be formed.

"The notable features of the second seance were that there were two children right out moving in the circle at the same time. They came one from each side of the curtains. Later on by request of a sitter two apports were brought. One was a small ornament from the room below."

It can be noted that Souter and McIndoe refer to multiple controls/guides; however, Albert Stewart is not mentioned by name. It may appear that in October 1929 he was not yet present and not in full control or named!

A critical point of observation may have been overlooked!

It may well be assumed that at some unspecified date later than October 1929 Albert Stewart was to take full control of Helen Duncan. We have seen that the history of the alleged controls is far from precise, with many contradictions. The most precise, on the surface, would be the independent reports by former SNU President John McIndoe, who mentions Donald as "one of the controls", which does give some consistency to the various reports that Albert followed Donald. However, the medium in her own words contradicts this by stating quite precisely that after two years with Matthew Douglas Albert followed. The truth is at present not within our grasp.

What is clear is that full-form materialisation was in force and vouched for by the independent reports regardless of who the control/s were – which was not demonstrated at any of the test séances of 1930-1931.

At present, it seems that the name 'Albert Stewart' did not appear (at least publicly) until around August 1930 in an article by Harvey Metcalfe. The preliminary reports from the London Psychical Laboratory did start with satisfactory encouraging results for the investigators, for example as published in "Light", May 16th 1931:

The production of "ectoplasm" has taken place at all sittings but varies in quantity from time to time. The ectoplasmic emanations usually issue from the mouth of the Medium.

The substance is as a rule white, but may be sometimes described as grey or slate colour, and a few times has appeared a dark brown. It is motile and seems to possess a sort of vitality. It bunches, folds and unfolds, divides into portions and joins up again.[15]

The "ectoplasm" has been produced in such quantities that the Medium when standing up has been covered over the head, round the shoulders, and over the whole of the body down to the feet. On two occasions it was produced while the Medium stood under the light.

[15] The second sitting at the LSA on October 30th 1930 records: "Sir Oliver Lodge went up to the medium and held the substance in his hand, and he and the sitters saw it gradually with a slightly wriggling motion withdraw, sliding slowly over his hands towards the position of the medium [and] disappear while he was holding it." The full report is published in Psypioneer, Vol. 12, No. 2, March 2016.

The Medium came out of the cabinet with no "ectoplasm" showing and stood under the red light at a distance of about eighteen inches; the mouth opened and the substance was seen gradually forming on the tip of the tongue until it resembled a cherry. It afterwards swelled up in the mouth unfolded and hung down about eight inches from the mouth. The substance moved slightly and remained for about one minute; then it began to retreat into the mouth, and gradually disappeared until the mouth, wide open, was seen perfectly empty. The Medium, still in trance, then backed into the cabinet.

It was clearly observed that, during the emergence and disappearance of the substance, no movement of the Medium's throat, neck or body was apparent. No muscular contractions suggesting swallowing or vomiting occurred.

It should also be realised that when the substance retreated into the mouth, it diminished at the tip of the tongue into the likeness of a cherry as it at first appeared.

The cherry-like mass disappeared into a small point and finally vanished altogether. None of the substance appeared at any time in the pharynx.

Sometimes, when large masses of the substance begin to lessen in bulk, it appears to melt away first at the edges.

Throughout all the sittings with both laboratories the phenomena were generally *ectoplasmic formations*; they did not reach to full-form materialisations, with different independent voices of materialised forms – including children's voices or trumpet phenomena, as the quoted independent reports suggest. Only the Metcalfe report of a séance on August 20th 1930 names the alleged Albert Stewart, so we know from this date that he was operational and using Mrs. Duncan.

The séance was held in a house, possibly at the Duncans' home in Dundee. It is apparent that Albert's practice of showing his medium and himself standing together at the beginning of each séance had begun by the report republished in Psypioneer, Vol. 11, No. 2, February 2015. It can be noted in the report that other materialisations with Albert were being produced in the circle.

An Important Consideration – In Helen Duncan's Early Test Séances

Although the exact dates are not established we *know* by the independent October 1929 reports that Albert was not the main control and may not always have been active.

We also know he was the last control to take over!

This may go some way to explaining why there was a decline or drop in the phenomena exhibited to the researchers! It was because Albert (on the present known information) would be basically out of the development/home circle, as the most prominent full-form materialisation mediumship, etc. through Helen Duncan was exhibited by Donald and Matthew Douglas over some years, not by Albert.

HELEN DUNCAN SEIZED AT A SÉANCE IN 1956

Police searching for beards, masks and a "shroud"

On November 10th 1956 the "Two Worlds" reported that Helen Duncan had been grabbed in a police raid at a private seance in Nottingham on October 28th, this time not because the medium was breaking the Vagrancy or Witchcraft Acts, as they were changed/repealed six years previously, in 1951.[5]

Here is Helen Duncan inside the cabinet. An infra-red photograph taken before a materialisation seance.

POLICE RAID HELEN DUNCAN SEANCE

Medium grabbed and searched after cabinet is torn down

NOTTINGHAM police broke into a Helen Duncan seance last week, grabbing the medium, searching her, taking flashlight pictures in a series of happenings "reminiscent of an American gangster film," says our correspondent.

They shouted that they were looking for beards, masks and a "shroud" which they alleged were the fraudulent means by which she produced her materialisations. But they found nothing.

The seances were held in the home of J. Timmins, a physiotherapist and healer. On the Saturday night a patient, later discovered to be a policewoman, attended with a man she said was her husband, but who was a policeman in disguise. Nobody materialised for them.

When it was all over and they were chatting over a cup of tea with the rest of the sitters they said how wonderful the sitting had been. These two people had also booked for the Sunday night seance for themselves and for two friends.

[5] The image shown is said to be an infra-red photograph. This is interesting, as I am aware of only one other image of Duncan using infra-red photography, which was in Belfast in 1932 by Mr Donaldson. Please see Pioneer, Vol. 4, No. 1, February 2017. We can note in the image shown that Mrs Duncan is in in her later years, but it appears it was not taken at the residence of Timmins in Nottingham, as they used the corner of the room where Duncan was seized.

In many of Duncan's seances the cabinet was in the corner of the room, with a makeshift cabinet comprising a curtain-pole and two curtains. We can note in this photograph that it seems to be a purpose-built room, not using a corner, and the cabinet is suspended from the ceiling.

Law interrupts

After this seance had been in progress for 20 minutes, banging was heard on the outside door accompanied by the bell ringing. Albert, her control, who was speaking through the medium, asked Mrs. Timmins and Mrs. G. Hamilton, the medium's friend who had accompanied her, to take care of Helen Duncan.

When the door was opened the police came in. According to Timmins' account they made a dive over the sitters in the front row and tore down the curtains which formed a cabinet in a corner of the room.

Then two policewomen grabbed the medium while policemen took flashlight photographs. By this time the lights were put on. One policeman ran downstairs to admit other officers, among them an inspector.

Mrs. Hamilton and Mrs. Timmins tried to pull away the policewomen who had started to search Helen Duncan. They said they were looking for the "shroud." This presumably referred to the white mass of ectoplasm out of which figures usually materialise at her seances.

Mrs. Duncan, as part of her normal seance procedure, wore black undergarments—she never wears white to prevent confusion with the ectoplasm.

The inspector ordered everyone to stay where they were. Then he changed his mind, told them to go to another room and not to leave until their names were taken.

Mrs. Duncan's burns

In all this excitement Timmins forgot to ask the police whether they had a search warrant. He insisted, however, that every sitter should be searched, but the inspector said that if he interfered with the proceedings it would be his duty to arrest him.

Timmins went over to Helen Duncan and saw that she was ill. Later there were two burns on her stomach. She was controlled by Albert, who asked for a doctor to be called. The medical man arrived within five minutes.

Seeing how ill the medium was, he obtained police permission to take her to a bedroom where he treated her for shock. Even then the policewoman insisted on accompanying him.

The doctor was then allowed to make a search. He said he found nothing on her that could have produced any fraudulent results.

The police questioned Mrs. Duncan for about one and a half hours. In turn, every one of the 20 sitters was questioned. All the time the police kept asking for masks, beards and shroud.

Timmins and the others replied that the seance proceedings had been genuine and that no matter how much the police searched they would not find evidence of fraud.

None of the sitters left till 11.45 p.m., about two and a half hours afterwards. Even then the inspector later telephoned Timmins to ask if he could arrange a seance with Helen Duncan at which he could take another photograph by infra-red or otherwise.

If this proved to be genuine, he said he would drop the case and they would hear no more about it. It was suggested by him that the flashlight photographs had revealed nothing that could be construed as incriminating.

Timmins replied that the police had no evidence of fraud against Helen Duncan. In her present condition he was sure the doctor would not sanction another seance, as the police had already done her a lot of harm.

A police search of the house and the luggage of both the medium and her companion revealed nothing.

The police returned again two days later to question Helen Duncan and Mrs. Hamilton. Again and again they asked the medium to "come clean," to tell them where she kept the beards and moustaches with which the forms had appeared—this time there was no mention of any shroud.

The police suggested that as she was "getting old" they would "make it easy" for her. When they left they said she might be charged under the Fraudulent Mediums' Act of 1951 because they alleged that one materialised figure which came for a policewoman was that of a man who was still alive.

If the medium were charged, said the police, Timmins would also be prosecuted with aiding and abetting.

The following week the "Two Worlds" continues these dramatic events:

POLICE USE "GESTAPO METHODS" TO BREAK UP SEANCE?

ON Monday, four days after *Two Worlds* printed exclusively the account of Nottingham police raiding a Helen Duncan materialisation seance, grabbing the medium and searching her, the story was printed by most of the leading national newspapers. Some published headlines across six columns.

The medium is now in Edinburgh's Western General Hospital, "obviously the result of these terrible happenings at Nottingham," says her husband.

A "Daily Herald" reporter was told by the hospital that she was receiving treatment for diabetes. A "Daily Mail" reporter was told that she was "comfortable." A "Daily Telegraph" reporter said that immediately she returned home she became ill. A "News Chronicle" reporter said she suffered so badly from shock that she was now "very ill" in hospital.

A police official denied to the "Daily Express" that there was any rough handling and said, "The matter is still under consideration."

This followed its account that John Timmins, in whose house the police raid occurred, said, "I protested to the police about the manner of the search."

Several newspapers stated that Spiritualists were angry over the police interruption while the medium was in trance and "are protesting against what they call Gestapo methods."

"Surely my wife will have a champion from among the thousands to whom she has been the humble means of bringing solace and comfort in their hour of sorrow," says the medium's husband, who refers to her "terrible and ignominious ordeal" at the hands of the police.

He understands, he says, that the papers concerning the case have been sent to the Director of Public Prosecutions. Meanwhile an attempt is being made to get a question asked of the Home Secretary in the House of Commons.

A Taunton Spiritualist says that three years ago, after Helen Duncan had given three successful materialisation seances in that town, they were visited by the police and "found ourselves in the midst of investigations which went on for six weeks."

Their home was turned upside down. Nothing material was found and the matter was "shelved as no cause for complaint."

Typical of the sentiments expressed in letters and telephone calls we have received is the following.

"Shocking methods"

I WAS so shocked by the inhuman treatment meted out to Helen Duncan by the Nottingham police that I feel the matter must not be allowed to rest there.

The police acted illegally, and overstepped the bounds of their duty in manhandling a woman, who is presumably innocent until proved guilty. They also apparently accused her of fraud.

These shocking methods on the part of the police should rouse the whole Spiritualist world to action.

If illegal and brutal methods such as these are to be tolerated there will slowly be no freedom in anything. Heaven knows what will be the results on Mrs. Duncan's health, through shock.—J. Allen, l5 Sunderland Terrace, London, W.2.

Further, the "Two Worlds" continues its coverage on December 15th, 1956:

Helen Duncan's husband to sue police for damages

She dies five weeks after they raided seance

BY MAURICE BARBANELL

HELEN DUNCAN'S husband decided, on my advice, when I saw him in his Edinburgh home last Saturday, to bring an action for damages against the Nottingham police. They raided and broke up the medium's last materialisation seance, while she was still in trance, five weeks before she passed on.

Helen Duncan died on December 6th 1956

The family lawyer had urged Henry Duncan to institute proceedings and vindicate his wife's name. But Duncan was concerned, among other problems, about the costs. I told him not to worry. The Movement, I said, would be behind him.

He then telephoned the lawyer and instructed him to take the necessary legal steps. They will also press for a public inquiry into the police conduct.

After discussing all the issues involved with Duncan, I was delighted to find the whole large family unanimously agreed on these steps.

Helen's passing, two days earlier, at the age of 59, ended what many Spiritualists regarded as the martyrdom she had endured since 1933, four years after her psychic career began, when she was convicted and fined for fraud in an Edinburgh court.

"The verdict was against the weight of the evidence," said the SNU's exponents' committee, an opinion endorsed by the Union's next annual general meeting.

Eleven years later she was convicted under the notorious and antiquated Witchcraft Act of 1735 and sent to prison for nine months. In the opinion of leading Spiritualists this was a gross miscarriage of justice.

Up to the court

Now that legal proceedings against the police are being instituted it will be for the court to decide to what extent Mrs. Duncan's passing was due to the raid.

"MEDIUM'S DEATH BLAMED ON RAID" was the "Daily Express" headline last Saturday. "TWO BLAME SHOCK IN TRANCE FOR MED1UM'S DEATH" was the one used by the "Empire News."

Her death certificate cited "diabetes and heart failure" as the causes.

The family maintained, "There can be little doubt that the police action hastened her death.

"Despite long ill-health." They added in their statement, "she continued to put Spiritualism before self and personal discomfort, which mattered little in the furtherance of what she believed to be her duty."

Even when Helen was in Holloway jail in 1944 she had constant medical attention for diabetes, angina pectoris and valvular disease of the heart.

The Rev. Thomas Jeffrey, a Church of Scotland minister who conducted the cremation service last Monday, has described her as "Scotland's Joan of Arc." His conviction of Spiritualism was partly based on attending her seances for about 15 years.

"The shock suffered by the police interruptions at a private seance on October 28, 1956," said the family, caused such mental suffering that she was not the same woman from that hour. We feel that her faith in human justice was so shaken that there was nothing more to live for."

"Come home to die"

When Mrs. Duncan left home, the family told me, "she looked well, with colour in her cheeks." After Nottingham, she looked as if she had "come home to die, with all the world's cares on her shoulders."

Ever since her return home Helen had constant medical treatment, both in hospital and at home.

Her shock was increased a few days before her passing when Nottingham's Chief Constable wrote her saying that all the papers in connection with her last seance had been sent to the Director of Public Prosecutions. His letter was surprising, as there had been no communication between them.

Henry Duncan described the letter as "cruel—after a month's lapse to send this to her, knowing the state of her health."

She had to have medical attention for shock after the police broke up the seance while she was in trance, grabbed her and shone white flashlights on her. They searched her and subjected her to 90 minutes' questioning.

Spiritualists who were present described the raid as "Gestapo-like" and "reminiscent of an American gangster film." But a police officer denied that anybody had been handled roughly.

Though Mrs. Duncan, her luggage and the house were all searched—the police said they were looking for false masks, beards and a shroud—nothing incriminating was found.

I was able to give Henry Duncan a spirit message from his wife when I called. On the previous night in Glasgow, Margaret Lyon, the healer who is also clairvoyant, told me that Helen wanted me to give her love to "Hen," the nickname she always used for her husband.

Though it was only a day after her passing, she had met her beloved daughter, Nan, and had been greeted by Albert, her chief control at all her seances, who had sustained

her through all the dark hours. Finally, Helen commented that the spirit world was even more wonderful than she had hoped.

Margaret knew about Helen's passing before the news was published. On the day of her death the healer was conscious of the unmistakable odour of the ectoplasm, as she had experienced it at the many seances Helen had given in her home.

The Duncan family were delighted to get the message. The husband, the three daughters, the two sons, and their husbands and wives are all Spiritualists—Helen's extraordinary mediumship convinced them long ago.

And their behaviour was impressive. They were performing all their household duties with a calmness of demeanour that was admirable. They were a magnificent example of how Spiritualists should behave when faced with bereavement's acid test.

Soon after I arrived, Henry Duncan quoted his lawyer's opinion that he had excellent grounds for action against the police. Henry—I have known him and his children for 25 years — sought my opinion on instituting proceedings.

In view of the long controversy that had raged round his wife's mediumship, he asked, would he have the Spiritualist movement behind him? I assured him that the overwhelming majority would support him.

As a typical example of his wife's selflessness, he said that when she came home she was worried about whether news of the police seizure had caused anxiety to her family.

"I can't leave you"

Soon after the raid, and before she returned to Edinburgh, Helen's astral form appeared to him. "What's wrong?" he asked. Sobbing, she replied: "I was going to leave you, but I can't." This he understood to mean that she fought against dying.

He recalled a statement she had often made: "I will never live to see another trial." I reminded him of another saying, prophetically fulfilled: "I will survive those who accused me." She named these antagonists who had all passed over.

I was surprised to see her coffin. It seemed too small for the body of a woman who weighed 20 stone when last we met. But, I learned, her weight had gone down to 12 stone towards the end.

Helen was one of the most remarkable mediums to appear on the Spiritualist scene. Her seances, held in good red light during the past 27 years, must have been attended by thousands. Many of them testified to seeing loved ones materialise and hearing their typical voices.

This accumulated evidence from apparently solid forms, who reproduced their earthly bodies, included their speaking in foreign languages that the medium did not know.

Mrs. Duncan always insisted that she be searched by women sitters before every seance.

—~—☼—~—

The article continues about her trial at the Old Bailey, which does not concern us now…

Editor's endnote:

Without doubt this is one of the most disturbing stories in our history; Charles E. Loseby, her defence barrister during her 1944 Old Bailey trial (assisted by Mr. T. S. Pedler), was appointed by the Spiritualists' National Union solicitor, Godfrey A. Elkin. Loseby from his Guernsey home was outspoken after the Nottingham police seizure and the death of Helen Duncan, stating in law that any person who by "gross negligence accelerates the death of another is guilty of murder. I personally, therefore, am satisfied that Helen Duncan was murdered."

One of the most important functions of "Psypioneer", and now of the Spiritualists' National Union's publication "Pioneer", is to present the CORRECT FACTS concerning Spiritualist history, etc.

In the first of these articles concerning the seizure of Helen Duncan I removed the footnote at the end of the article which stated:

> **Footnote.** Helen Duncan was convicted wrongly in the opinion of Spiritua1ists—a few years ago under the old Witchcraft Act. It was this conviction that led to Spiritualists campaigning to change the antiquated law that robbed them of religious freedom. The Fraudulent Mediums' Act was the result.

This conviction in *fact* had nothing to do with the *campaigning to change the antiquated law.* The petitioning of Parliament had been in progress since the arrest of Henry Slade, shortly after the first imprisonment of a Spiritualist medium, Francis Monck, under Section 4 of the 1824 Vagrancy Act. The British National Association of Spiritualists (BNAS) 'Spiritualists' Defence Committee' was the first to challenge the Conservative government's Right Honorable R. A. Cross, Secretary of State for the Home Department, as to the rights of Spiritualist mediums in November 1876.

In 1916 the Spiritualists' National Union, under their President and Vice-President, Ernest Oaten and James J. Morse respectively, set up the "Spiritualist Parliamentary Fund", which was inaugurated at the July AGM; it was this fund (under later name changes) which would pay for all of Helen Duncan's court costs.

"Pioneer" has published in six parts, beginning in Vol. 2, No. 1, January 2015: *The Effect of the Vagrancy Act – The Work of the Spiritualists' National Union*.

Recap on the police raid:

The above articles hinge on the police raiding the private residence of Mr and Mrs Joe Timmins, violently breaking up a private Helen Duncan séance, grabbing the entranced medium, taking flashlight pictures and searching her and the premises. The police shouted that they were looking for beards, masks and a "shroud" which they alleged were the fraudulent means by which Duncan produced her materialisations. But they found nothing. It was later found on the previous day's séance held on Saturday October 27th that an undercover policewoman (PC Cutts) with a man she said was her husband attended.[6] They both booked for the Sunday séance and for two friends.

At the Sunday séance, after twenty minutes banging was heard on the outside door accompanied by the bell ringing; according to Joe Timmins' account:

[6] Joe Timmins' account is published in "Helen Duncan: My Living Has Not Been in Vain", by Mary Armour, 2000 pages. On pages 77-88 Timmins states that he was aware the lady was a policewoman, as he had previously treated her for a foot condition; she had recently married Mr Cutts.

> "… they [Cutts and three others] made a dive over the sitters in the front row and tore down the curtains which formed a cabinet in a corner of the room. Then two policewomen grabbed the medium while policemen took flashlight photographs. By this time the lights were put on. One policeman ran downstairs to admit other officers, among them an inspector [Detective Inspector Smalley]. Mrs. Hamilton and Mrs. Timmins tried to pull away the policewomen who had started to search Helen Duncan. They said they were looking for the "shroud." This presumably referred to the white mass of ectoplasm out of which figures usually materialise at her seances."

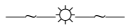
The sitters were ordered into another room and detained for about two and a half hours after the raid; Timmins forgot to ask the police whether they had a search warrant. He insisted, however, that every sitter should be searched, but the inspector said that if he interfered with the proceedings it would be his duty to arrest him.

Duncan was clearly ill and still allegedly under the control of Albert Stewart; Albert asked for a doctor to be called, who arrived within five minutes. The doctor obtained police permission to take Duncan to a bedroom and she was treated for shock, accompanied by a policewoman. The doctor searched Helen; he found nothing on her that could have produced any fraudulent results. The police questioned Duncan for around one and a half hours and searched her and her companion's luggage.

The inspector later telephoned Timmins to ask if he could arrange a seance with Duncan "at which he could take another photograph by infra-red or otherwise."[7] According to Timmins, the inspector further said that, if this proved to be genuine, he would drop the case and they would hear no more about it. It was suggested by him that the flashlight photographs had revealed nothing that could be construed as incriminating.

Two days later the police returned and again questioned Duncan and her companion, Mrs. Hamilton, asking the medium to "come clean", to tell them where she kept the beards and moustaches with which the forms had appeared—this time there was no mention of any shroud.

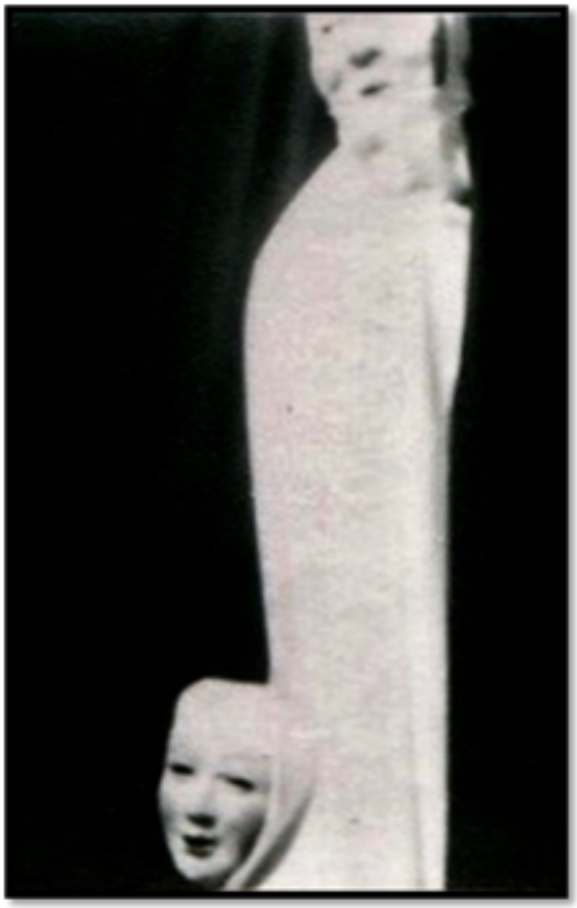
Helen was warned she might be charged under the Fraudulent Mediums Act of 1951 because they alleged that one materialised figure which came for a policewoman was that of a man who was still alive. If the medium was charged, Joe Timmins would also probably be prosecuted for aiding and abetting. Shortly after Duncan ended up in Edinburgh's Western General Hospital she died five weeks later from diabetes and heart failure on December 6th 1956 at her home in Edinburgh.



[7] This comment may suggest that, as well as flashlight bulbs, infra-red was used; it would be of interest to know whether these photographs are still archived by Nottingham police at present; I am looking into this.

What can we make of these unprecedented events under the Fraudulent Mediums Act of 1951 – which led directly or indirectly to Duncan's death?

It may be considered by some that this is reminiscent of the police undercover officers in the previous seances in 1944 and the seizure of the medium – resulting in Duncan being sentenced to nine months' imprisonment under a clause in the Witchcraft Act.



The police raid in 1944 at Portsmouth showed that no incriminating evidence was found; this was also the case at Nottingham. At Portsmouth the sitters asked to be searched; the police refused. This appears to be the case at Nottingham. We can note that Timmins "insisted, however, that every sitter should be searched…" Timmins was told not to interfere.

One can only speculate as to why at Nottingham there was such a police presence, including four undercover officers and a Detective Inspector. A month later, a few days before Duncan's death, Nottingham's Chief Constable wrote to her informing her that all the papers in connection with her séance had been sent to the Director of Public Prosecutions.

As no material, incriminating evidence was found, all that remained was the undercover police testimony that one materialised figure which came for a policewoman was that of a man who was still alive.

The photographs shown here were taken at a Helen Duncan séance on March 8th, 1939 in the Cheltenham area. It was common for Duncan's materialisations to show beards, etc.; we can note the gentleman has a rather well-established moustache. Depending which side of the fence we sit, some could suggest the faces are mask-like. The figures are shrouded, so one can understand why the police were *searching for beards, masks and a "shroud"* if Duncan was considered a fraud.

But, of course, no such items were found. The images are part of the Britten Museum & Library, housed at Stansted Hall.

Nothing is noted in the reports about payments made to Duncan. The undercover police officers witnessed two séances and booked for two friends on the evening of the raid. This was Duncan's income, so no doubt fees would change hands. If

the police had previous evidence of any fraudulent activity on an ongoing inquiry and of money being taken, this could put their action into a better perspective. [Duncan's fee[8]] Any pre-existing evidence would not be revealed until the inquiry was completed and charges brought forward. Duncan died before any charges existed.

Malcolm Gaskill, in his book, "Hellish Nell", makes reference on page 352:

> "… it is likely that either the Director of Public Prosecutions or the Chief Constable contacted the Home Office, because on 15 November Helen Duncan files from 1944 were called up from the archive."

As noted, Nottingham's Chief Constable wrote to Helen Duncan a few days before her death informing her that all the papers in connection with her last seance had been sent to the Director of Public Prosecutions. So, for whatever reason, it appears the police were once again out to get Helen Duncan and the prosecution was ongoing to her death, but, unlike in 1944, holding a séance in 1956 was perfectly legal.

Maurice Barbanell makes a valuable comment in his column, "All Worlds Are One", in the "Two Worlds", November 17th, 1956, as quoted below:

> THE medium was warned privately by us some months ago from information received that the police were after her again and that she should be on her guard.
>
> It behoves her, and the organisers of her seances, to take rigid precautions to ensure that nobody attends her sittings unless they can be vouched for. They should be on their guard against agents provocateurs, police officers in disguise, seeking material for a prosecution.
>
> The methods invoked by the Nottingham police, described as "reminiscent of an American gangster film," must have had their origin in some "complaint." This may be genuine or, as in the past, due to the malice of vested interests, too often belonging to opposing religions that wish to destroy mediumship.
>
> THE Nottingham case has been referred to the Spiritualists' National Union and the Spiritualist Council for Common Action to see if any legal or constitutional issues are involved.
>
> It must be pointed out, however, that Helen Duncan no longer works under the aegis of the SNU, having withdrawn from that organisation. Neither were the Nottingham seances held in a Spiritualist church where, if there is police interference, the cry of religious freedom can be raised.

Regarding the break between Helen Duncan and the SNU which resulted in the suspension of her certificate in 1945, the full story is published in "Pioneer", Vol. 2, No. 5, September 2015: "Why did the S.N.U. remove Helen Duncan's diploma in 1945?"

The reasons behind the police raid and whether or not a prosecution would have been undertaken against Helen Duncan if she had lived remain a mystery.

[8] Timmins, in his statement referred to in footnote 6, gives the details: "We usually have about eight sitters who pay from 10-11 shillings, then many of our personal friends who come free …" Duncan received free accommodation, etc. and kept all the fees paid.

To conclude, Malcolm Gaskill raises a few interesting points on page 356 of his book:

> The drive to remember Helen Duncan, and to see justice done, started from the moment she died. Within a week, *Two Worlds* was inviting contributions to a memorial fund and the Home Secretary, Gwilym Lloyd George, was pestered until he replied that the matter had to be taken up with the Chief Constable of Nottingham. In the end the fund money was not spent in the intended manner. Henry, a man crumbling inside, was being cared for by Gena and was in no state to organize his own affairs, let alone a lawsuit. In any case his solicitor, who at first had been optimistic about their chances, now advised him to drop the case due to insufficient medical evidence to suggest that the police had caused Helen's death.
>
> In addition, Percy Wilson was concerned that if the case was made *sub judice*,[9] it might hold up action and comment in other quarters. Mr Timmins dropped his action too, announcing piously that turning the other cheek was behaviour more befitting a Spiritualist. Why Helen Duncan had been raided again after all these years therefore remains a mystery. There were no rumours of conspiracy, as in 1944, and probably local police simply heard about the seances, perhaps after receiving a complaint, and intervened to protect the public. That said, prosecutions under the Fraudulent Mediums Act were very rare.
>
> And there is one final intriguing piece of evidence: the Anglo-French landings to reclaim the Suez Canal, which involved the Secret Service, were the largest British seaborne military operation since D-Day. The coincidence — and it is surely no more than that — is stranger because the police raid occurred less than thirty-six hours before the assault against Egypt began.

Victoria Helen MacFarlane & Henry Duncan married on May 27th 1916

[9] Under judicial consideration and therefore prohibited from public discussion elsewhere.

The book also gives illustrations of handwriting by Dr W. J. Crawford while alive, and after his death produced by psychic means.

Other items of the Lyceum Union donation include glass slides, including the images shown below of a young man apparently moving a trumpet by means of ectoplasm, in what may be an attempt at producing direct/independent voice. The glass slides are numbered but on this item the corresponding reference has not yet been located, but hopefully it will be found to identify the medium.

"Pioneer", Vol. 3, No. 2, April 2016, published "Houdini & Conan Doyle – Story of Strange Friendship and an Historic Quarrel". It was Sir Arthur's wife's mediumship in 1922 that would instigate an irreparable breakdown in the friendship of Harry Houdini and Conan Doyle.

This sent Harry Houdini on a mission for the rest of his life to prove Spiritualism a fraud; he died on October 31st, 1926.

This public hostility, however, was not always the case, as shown in a letter dated June 24th, 1920 to Dr W. J. Crawford, which appears on one of the glass slides.

Below is the glass slide followed by the text:

Days Agency
1 Arundle Street
Strand
London
June 24th 1920

Dr. W. J. Crawford
1 Brookvale Terrace
Sydenham
Belfast

Dear Dr Crawford,

As promised am writing to let you know that I have witnessed mlle Eva in a successful sitting. She manifested the other night, after a few blank sittings, but your medium must be a great deal more powerful, according to your report.

Sir Arthur tell [sic] me he thinks that the power comes from the womb, it certainly is a wonderful affair and there is no telling how far all this may lead to.

I am returning to America shortly and wish you would please let me have one or two snap shots to take back with me.

I suppose you heard Prof Hyslop has passed away. My permanent address in America is

278 West 113th Street
New York City U.S.A.

and if there is anything that I can do for you over there and if it is in my power will attend to same for you. Kindest regards best wishes

sincerely yours.

Signed Houdini

Within a month of receiving this letter from Houdini Dr W. J. Crawford was dead. It can be noted in the "Encyclopedia of Occultism & Parapsychology":[4]

> Crawford committed suicide on July 30, 1920. Four days before his death he wrote, "I have been struck down mentally. I was perfectly all right up to a few weeks ago. It is not the psychic work. I enjoyed it too well. I am thankful to say that the work will stand. It is too thoroughly done for any material loopholes to be left."

William Jackson Crawford was born in New Zealand in 1881, according to the above publication. He was an engineering lecturer at Queens University, Belfast, Ireland. Houdini's letter would be referring to Crawford's work with the Goligher Circle. Around 1914 he began to investigate the physical phenomena of Kathleen Goligher and the group around her, known as the Goligher Circle. His investigation continued until his death in 1920.

[4] *Encyclopædia of Psychic Science* by Nandor Fodor, LL.D., prefaced by Sir Oliver Lodge, published in 1934 by Arthurs Press Limited, London. This was later updated in 1966 (The Citadel Press, Secaucus, New Jersey), with the involvement of Leslie Shepard. Thanks were due to Maurice Barbanell and the staff of *Psychic News* for providing research material for the compilation of its Foreword, February 1966, by Shepard. Today it's called *Encyclopedia of Occultism & Parapsychology* and is based on both the *Encyclopedia of Occultism* by Lewis Spence, London, 1920, and Fodor's *Encyclopædia of Psychic Science,* substantially revised and supplemented by new material written by Leslie Shepard.

'Encyclopedia of Occultism & Parapsychology' continued:

From his research, he developed a set of speculations on the scientific laws behind the phenomenon of telekinesis (now known as psychokinesis or "PK"), which he presented in his books, "The Reality of Psychic Phenomena" (1916), "Experiment in Psychic Science" (1919), and published posthumously "The Psychic Structures in the Goligher Circle" (1921).[5] During his research, he converted to Spiritualism, though his theories played down the role of spirits in favour of a psychic force.

Harry Price, in his book, "Fifty Years of Psychical Phenomena", published in 1939, gives a fair overview on pages 82/3:

THE GOLIGHER CIRCLE

Still another young woman was the centre of a circle formed in Belfast to develop the telekinetic and other phenomena of an Irish family named Goligher. Kathleen Goligher and her three sisters were all mediumistic, and the other members of the family (father, son, etc.) formed the 'circle.'

The manifestations attracted the attention of Dr. W. J. Crawford, a lecturer in engineering at the Municipal Technical Institute, Belfast, and he decided to make a prolonged study of the dynamics of telekinesis as demonstrated by Kathleen Goligher and her sisters. The séances were held usually at Mr. Goligher's house or occasionally in Dr. Crawford's own home. It is with the utmost difficulty that an investigator can adequately control one medium; but Dr. Crawford considered that he could properly immobilize a room full of mediums and their relatives, in darkness or semi-darkness, and this fact is one of the great weaknesses of Crawford's many reports of his experiments.

Crawford sat with the Goligher circle for six years until he committed suicide on July 30, 1920. There is no evidence that his death was connected with his psychic investigations. He concluded that the raps, levitation of the table, etc., were accomplished by 'cantilevers' made of teleplasmic 'rods' or extrusions from the lower portion of the medium's body, and made many experiments (described in detail in his books) in order to confirm his theory. He also concluded that one end of the teleplasmic 'rods' was used for making the raps which were frequently heard, the intelligence behind the raps coming from the medium herself. He even obtained impressions of the 'pseudopods' or 'arms' in various plastic substances. Finally, photographs of the alleged 'psychic levers' were published.

Shortly after Crawford's death, Dr. E. E. Fournier D'Albe visited Belfast with the intention of continuing and confirming Crawford's experiments. He had twenty sittings with Kathleen Goligher and duplicated many of Crawford's tests. His report was

[5] Available to read on-line or to download, including the illustrations.

published in 1922 and is completely negative.[6] He stated that all he saw—and photographed—could be explained in terms of normality and his findings created something of a sensation, coming as they did after Crawford's so very positive results. Miss Goligher (now married) rarely exercised her mediumship after the adverse report, and the case will remain one of the many interesting psychic mysteries.

Dr. W. J. Crawford

Despite Fournier D'Albe's adverse report Crawford's findings were acknowledged by Charles Richet, who records some of Dr Crawford's work in his "Thirty Years of Psychical Research", published in English translation in 1923. Richet notes on pages 431/2:

> "Decisive value must be given to Crawford's experiments. Next to those with Eusapia and Home, they are the most complete on record. Professor Sir William Barrett, who was present at one of these séances, verified that the table moved without contact and that there were raps inexplicable by usual mechanical causes."

Professor Sir William Barrett was a founder member of the Society for Psychical Research. His report with the above quote is in the Proceedings of the Society for Psychical Research (PSPR), lxxvii, page 335.

What is most interesting, generally speaking, is Kathleen Goligher; while in the process of exhibiting ectoplasmic structures, during the whole séance she is not in a trance state but fully conscious throughout and observing the phenomena.

It is stated in the above Harry Price quote, "Miss Goligher (now married)". Kathleen married psychical researcher and pioneer of infra-red photography in the séance room, Mr S.G. Donaldson.

"Pioneer", Vol. 4, No. 1, February 2017, "Looking back at infra-red in Psypioneer", shows the first infra-red photograph of Helen Duncan taken by Donaldson in the séance-rooms of the Belfast Spiritualists' Alliance, Belfast, on Sunday June 5th, 1932. Price also stated, "Goligher (now married) rarely exercised her mediumship after the adverse report …"[7]

Kathleen (née Goligher) Donaldson

It can be confirned in the article which follows that the now Mrs Donaldson had not sat on a regular basis for some years. The article was written by an experienced investigator into physical phenomena, SNU President (1930-1938) John B. McIndoe. See also "Pioneer", Vol. 2, No. 3, May 2015, "Helen Duncan & John McIndoe – A Scots Materialising Medium"; it was McIndoe who gave the first detailed report on Helen Duncan and brought her to public attention.

[6] *The Goligher Circle*: May to August, 1921, London, 1922. [This is available to read on-line or to download illustrated]

[7] Kathleen Donaldson 1898-1972, died aged 73.

Below was published in the "Two Worlds", June 12th, 1936, front page and page 370:

ECTOPLASM PHOTOGRAPHED

A RECENT SITTING WITH KATHLEEN GOLIGHER

BY J. B. M'INDOE

John B. McIndoe

MRS. DONALDSON (Kathleen Goligher), whose phenomena were the subject of prolonged and thorough investigation some twenty years ago by the late Dr. W. Crawford, of Belfast, has not sat regularly for a number of years; but she has not lost her powers, and there can be little doubt that with regular sitting the phenomena witnessed by Crawford would be repeated, and perhaps amplified.

The adoption of recent scientific discoveries to Psychic Research make possible investigation on lines not open to Crawford, and would certainly confirm his conclusions as to the reality of the phenomena, and probably throw a flood of light on the nature of ectoplasm and psychic structures.

In recent years I have sat twice with Mrs. Donaldson, and the main phases of the phenomena recurred. The last occasion was on April 10th, 1936. The sitting was at Mr. and Mrs. Donaldson's house, near Belfast, where I was a guest, and was a more or less impromptu affair, arising out of a conversation on infra-red photography at the dinner-table.

An hour or two later, Mrs. Donaldson, with her husband and myself, went to an attic-room, where Mr. Donaldson had rigged up the apparatus for infra-red photography. The source of the infra-red rays was a 1,500-watt lamp inside a box, with artificial-silk reflectors, and infra-red screens, so arranged that only reflected rays were projected towards the medium. The rays were focused on the floor, in front of the medium's chair. The infra-red rays source was on the floor, so that the rays were horizontal, the box being about 5 feet from the medium's chair. The camera was at right angles to the path of the rays, about 4 feet away. Focusing of rays and camera was done on a white handkerchief on the floor, placed where the psychic structure was expected. Ilford infra-red plates were used.

Two photos were taken. No. 1 had 8 seconds' exposure, and is reproduced here. No. 2 was taken a few minutes later, and had only about 5 seconds' exposure, a creaking floor-board having been mistaken for a signal to stop. It was insufficiently exposed.

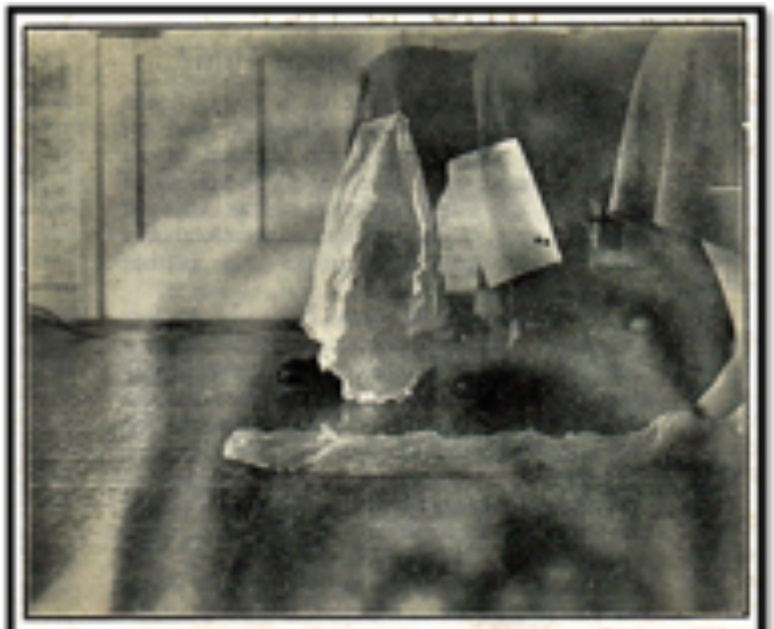
Mrs. Donaldson sat in a wooden chair, her feet firmly on the floor. At no time did she show any sign of trance.

Mr. Donaldson operated the camera and the infra-red apparatus.

I sat facing the camera, my chair at right angles to Mrs. Donaldson, on her right hand, and close to her. During most of the sitting her hands rested on her knees, and my left hand rested on them, so that I should have been able to detect any muscular movement of arms or legs. I observed none, nor could I detect any muscular reaction when knockings occurred, either in hands, feet, or head of the medium.

The knockings, however, were very faint. They were the signals by which communications came, and directions where to take photos. In order to get some possible basis for comparing the texture of any psychic structure which might appear I had pinned a white handkerchief and a sheet of white notepaper to my knees. These are plainly seen in photo.

The sitting was in the dark. A certain amount of light, however, came when the infra-red rays were in use. Soon after the sitting began faint taps were heard. They sounded to me as if from below the medium's chair. They indicated that photos could be attempted where this signal was given. This came a few minutes later. The result was a photo of a psychic structure emanating from the medium's feet, and fully 18 inches long. (The second photo shows a similar but shorter structure.)



The above photograph shows the flow of ectoplasm from the medium's feet (right) and the handkerchief and paper pinned to the observer's knees—note the difference in texture and reflection.

Two nebulous irregular bands will be noticed near the left of the print, apparently rising from the floor and curving over in the direction of the medium. Somewhat similar formations appear in the second photo, but in it they are not as distinct (perhaps due to under-exposure), but they appear to originate from or near the medium, curve downwards along the floor, and then upwards, finishing in a vertical direction. But it should be observed that the vertical height represented in the photo is little over 18 inches.

What those curves mean I cannot say. I can find no normal explanation for this. Those familiar with Crawford's work may remember that in the first photo of a psychic structure which he obtained, it appeared to emanate from the body of one of the circle, Mr. Samuel G. Goligher, and terminate in the medium, Kathleen Goligher's, chest. (Obviously, the terms emanate and terminate may be reversed.)

After the photos had been taken I put my right hand, palm upwards, on the floor, and asked for taps on it. None occurred. I placed a sheet of notepaper on my hand, still on the floor, and requested taps on that. Still no taps came, but something which gave me the impression of having a blunt, rounded end, about an inch in diameter, gave a decided horizontal push against the side of my hand nearest the medium. Whatever it was it felt warm, which surprised me. I immediately felt the toes of the medium's slipper; they were colder than what had pushed my hand, and seemed to me to be more pointed. I am positive the medium's feet did not move; my left hand on her knees would have detected it had they done so. Then I placed two half-crowns, one on top of the other, on the floor, and asked that they be struck together or displaced. Neither took place.

Later, I placed a handkerchief over them and asked for it to be removed, while keeping my hand in contact with it. Nothing appeared to happen. Soon afterwards the sitting concluded, having occupied little over half an hour. When the light was turned up, the handkerchief was found about 5 feet from where I had placed it, apparently tossed there.

At no time was the psychic structure visible, though the rays coming through the infra-red screen allowed the white handkerchief to be seen.

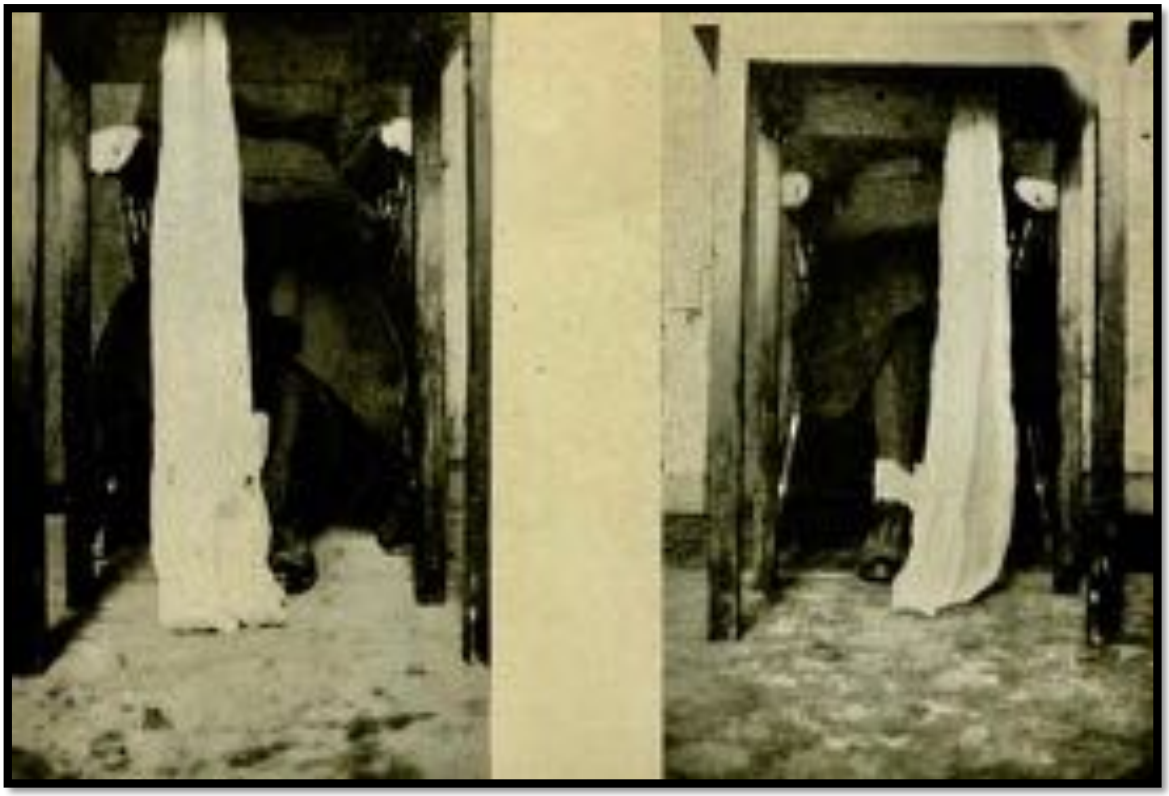
The above account has been checked and agreed as correct by Mr. S. G. Donaldson, so far as it concerns matter of which he was personally cognisant.

Editor's endnote:

There appears to be a more balanced conclusion of disagreement between researchers than may appear on the surface. Dr Crawford was criticised for having inadequate controls and lack of precautions against fraud and accused of self-deception, and it is claimed that his experiments were not convincing. Criticism was also made of Crawford's reluctance to admit other researchers into the Goligher circle. A researcher of note is Hereward Carrington, who had researched Eusapia Palladino and Mina Crandon (Margery). He added to the criticism of Crawford, although he did not sit in the Goligher circle.

Carrington noted that the photographs taken by Crawford looked "dubious in appearance". This is currently found under the heading, "Critical evaluation", in the entry for Kathleen Goligher on Wikipedia! This is an example of how we must use these websites with caution and as a dubious guide only. Carrington did say, as referenced by Wikipedia, that the photographs taken by Crawford looked "dubious in appearance" but if another quote was used from the same article, it could act in the positive! "Genuine phenomena were probably seen here also, and were observed and studied by Dr. Crawford."

To read in context all research, I believe, is of upmost importance to evaluate what is actually meant. The photographs below of the ectoplasmic structures are taken from "The Psychic Structures at the Goligher Circle" by Crawford, published in 1921 and not part of Carrington's book. The quotes are taken from "The Story of Psychic Science", published in 1930, "The Case of Kathleen Goligher (W.J. Crawford's Investigations)". Carrington concludes:



We have not, unfortunately, space to enter into the details of this theory of Dr. Crawford, and describe the many tests he devised in order to demonstrate its correctness. His books are filled with diagrams and figures, and are of extreme theoretical interest. The theory was also advanced that 'raps' were frequently made by means of this psychic arm, which tapped the floor or other object upon which raps were heard. Dr. Crawford placed trays of clay and putty on the floor of the room, and asked that raps be made upon this, in order that impressions might be obtained of the psychic structure doing the rapping. These impressions were obtained, and a number of photographs of these impressions have been published in Dr. Crawford's books.

Shortly before his death, Dr. Crawford succeeded in obtaining a number of flashlight photographs of the 'teleplasm' issuing from the body of the medium, and supporting the table. These were published in his posthumous work, Psychic Structures at the Goligher Circle. It must be admitted that they are dubious in appearance; at the same time, we do not know what curious forms genuine ectoplasm may take, and many of these have a striking resemblance to the photographs obtained in other cases—Eva C., Margery, etc.

In estimating the value of Dr. Crawford's work, two facts must not be lost sight of: (1) That, with rare exceptions, no other investigators had an opportunity to check-up his results, since outsiders were rarely admitted to the sittings. (2) That all the members of the family sat in the circle, and the medium did not sit alone with her investigators, as has been the case with practically all other mediums in the past. Because of these facts, doubt must always exist as to the validity of Crawford's conclusions. Further, Dr. E. E. Fournier D'Albe obtained a long series of sittings with the Goligher Circle, in 1921, and arrived at a completely negative result (see his book, *The Goligher Circle*). His conclusion was that no supernormal phenomena had occurred in his presence, throughout the entire series of sittings. It must be stated, on the other hand, that the methods of investigation and conclusions arrived at have not met with complete approval even by skeptical critics of the evidence. And there the case stands—for after the publication of Dr. Fournier D'Albe's book the medium refused to give any more sittings, and the case is apparently closed.

What may be the ultimate truth regarding it, we shall probably never know. Certain it is, however, that Dr. Crawford's tests are among the most ingenious ever undertaken, and I think it may be said that, in view of the undoubtedly genuine phenomena witnessed in the presence of Home, Palladino, and other mediums of this type,—genuine phenomena were probably seen here also, and were observed and studied by Dr. Crawford.

This article started with a letter from Harry Houdini in apparent conviction of mediumship sent to Dr William Jackson Crawford, to whom he wrote to affectionately as a friend. In 1924 Houdini published "A Magician Among the Spirits"[8] and on pages 173/4 (Ayer Co. Pub. reprint, 1998) Houdini states:

> While at Mr. Feilding's[9] home in London I had the pleasure of meeting this Dr. Crawford and talking with him for several hours. During the talk he showed me pictures of what he claimed was ectoplasm exuding from different parts of Kathleen Goligher's body and told me he was going to use them in a forthcoming book.
>
> "Do you honestly believe that everything you have experienced through your contact and experiments with the girl is absolutely genuine?" I asked him.
>
> "I am positive in my belief." he answered.
>
> After he had gone Mr. Feilding turned to me and asked:
>
> "What do you think of Dr. Crawford?"
>
> "He seems mad to me," I answered.
>
> "Houdini, you are mistaken," he replied.
>
> Nevertheless I do not think that Dr. Crawford was the right man or had the right sort of a mind for an investigation. To me his credulity seemed limitless. E. E. Fournier d'Albe's report of Dr. Crawford's seance with the Goligher Circle coincides with my judgment. In a communication addressed to "Light" in August 1922 d'Albe referring to his own tenth seance says:
>
> "I found to my surprise that I could myself with some little management, produce the phenomena with my feet exactly as I had observed them."
>
> Dr. Von Schrenk-Notzing charged d'Albe with entering his investigation with "prejudice against the genuineness of the Goligher phenomena." This d'Albe denied, ….

Finally, two interesting articles appeared in Psypioneer, Vol. 9, No. 12, December 2013: "Five Experiments with Miss Kate Goligher by Mr. S. G. Donaldson" and "The Confession of Dr Crawford – Leslie Price".

The five experiments were undertaken in 1933 and the images recorded by infra-red; please consult the article for the reports.

[8] This is available to read on-line or to download illustrated

[9] Hon. Everard Feilding

HUNTER SELKIRK

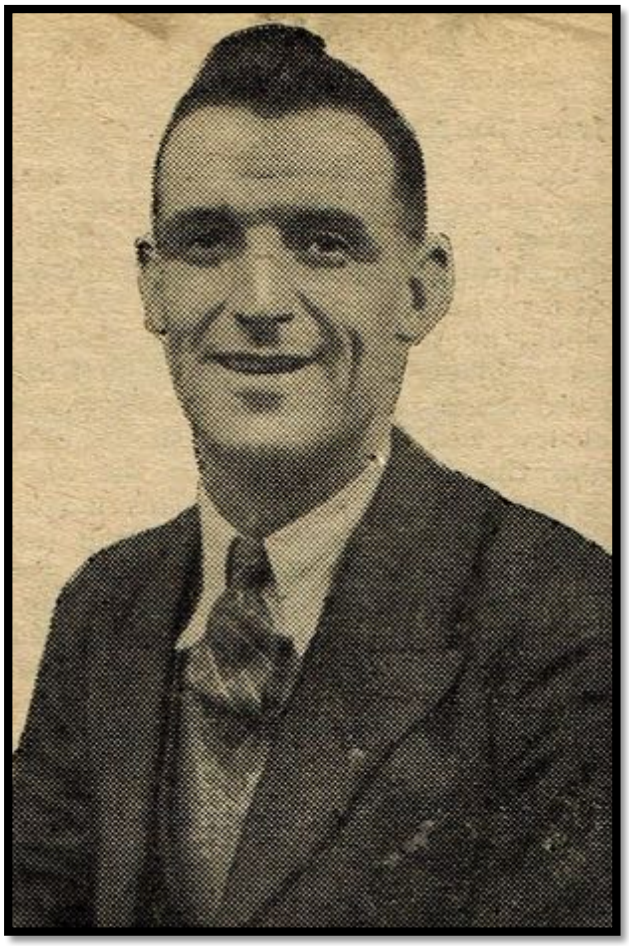
1900 - 1965

The name Hunter Selkirk is little recognised today unless you have had association with Craghead SNU Church, where his name is still very much alive. The Selkirks were very much involved in the history of the Church. This is clearly seen on the church website under the section, "History of our Church". On January 1st 1933 Craghead National Spiritualist Church was opened for the dedication of the religion of Spiritualist services. Later Hunter was its President for 13 years and his brother Jack for two years. In 1983 the church came into sole trust with the Spiritualists' National Union – please see its website.[3]

Much of the available information on Selkirk's mediumship appears to come from a book by Harry Emerson. Originally published in 1946, it describes the author's experiences with the medium; in 1984 it was republished by Craghead SNU Church. Other independent reports were published in the "Two Worlds"; below is taken from October 6th 1944, pages 270-71:

HUNTER SELKIRK

The Northern Trance Medium and Clairvoyant



ONE of the most popular and successful mediums in the Northern Counties is Mr. Hunter Selkirk, of Craghead, Durham, who has spent over twenty of the 44 years of his life in demonstrating the fact of human survival and the possibility of communion between the spirit world and this. Tall, dark and muscular, Mr. Selkirk is a collier working at the coal face, as was his father before him. He ventured to suggest in fact that cutting coal was even less exhausting than taking large propaganda meetings. That is perhaps due to the fact that when upon the platform he puts his whole energy into his work.

In a recent chat I learned that he was born in the neighbouring town of Pelton, Durham, and his parents were connected with the Church of England. From the early age of six he became accustomed to visions of spirit people. These occasioned no surprise. What did surprise him was the fact that other people did not see as he did. He later found that his visions were denizens of another world. When he was ten years of age his father was killed in the terrible explosion at the West Stanley Colliery and his mother was left to bring up a family of nine children. Life was hard, luxuries unknown, and education facilities small.

[3] Craghead Spiritualist Church: http://www.cragheadspiritualistchurch.btck.co.uk

A week after his father's death, Hunter saw him clearly standing at the bedside. He appeared in his pit dirt just as at the moment of death. His father impressed him with the care of his mother and gave him some advice. On telling his mother of the incident he was told he had been dreaming. Mrs. Hunter, however, must have taken the matter seriously for she told the Vicar, who decided that the boy's spiritual welfare needed supervision and drafted him into the Church choir. He often saw spirits in church and frequently received premonitions concerning worshippers who were about to pass over, and this peculiarity has become a regular part of his psychic life.

At 14 years of age, young Selkirk went into the coal pit to work, and there, with a brief break, he has laboured ever since.

Asked when he began to take a serious interest in Spiritualism he told me that when he was about 18 years of age, he decided to go to a New Year's dance at the Hedley Memorial Hall. On the way to the hall, however, his father appeared to him in the street, and said he was to go back, He took the advice, but hearing that a Spiritualist meeting was to be held at the same hall on the following Sunday, he decided to attend and see what it was like. The speaker was Mrs. Lovatt, and in the course of her clairvoyance she gave young Selkirk a striking description of his father with full details of his death. "You have seen him" she said, "and he asks me to say I want you to do the work this woman is doing and to help others as I am helping you. Cast thy bread upon the waters and it shall return to thee."

Mr. Selkirk became a regular attendant at the local Spiritualist society and sat in the developing circles, where his clairvoyance steadily strengthened. Subsequently he joined a "home circle" at the home of Mr. Barker, and this continued for seven years. He soon became entranced, gave evidential messages and delivered long addresses in the trance state. A good deal of physical phenomena also occurred, raps were heard, pictures moved, tables and other objects were levitated some feet away from him, materialised lights appeared, and these phenomena have characterised his mediumship ever since. Many people can testify to materialised forms having appeared at his circles—though he is not fond of physical phenomena and would much prefer those of mental type.

His first public meeting was at Green Street, Sunderland, over 20 years ago. There was a large audience, and he spoke in the deep trance state but gave no clairvoyance. The effort was so successful that he has been on the platform ever since. He soon added clairvoyant demonstrations to his trance addresses, and has received thousands of letters of thanks from sorrowing people to whom he has proved beyond doubt that their loved ones still live. Many years ago he joined the Craghead N.S. Church, and has been its treasurer for some years. He says that the loyalty of the northern folk have made his work a pleasure. He and the loyal band of workers have built a splendid brick church at Craghead which houses some 250 people. During the war the government have taken it over and the congregation meet in the Temperance Hall, but they are looking forward to a speedy return home, and increased activities.

Most of Mr. Selkirk's work has been confined to the Northern Counties. His work in the pit prevents long journeys, though he has paid occasional visits to London and Glasgow. Whilst the war lasts he refuses to be absent from the pit, but hopes when the world becomes sane, to take up public work over a larger area.

Mr. Selkirk recently gave splendid evidence at a large meeting addressed by Lord Dowding at the City Hall, Newcastle. Still a young man, he should have many years of useful service before him for God and the spirit world. All his brothers and sisters are Spiritualists, and his brother Jack also promises to follow in the footsteps of his elder brother.

The Northern Counties have produced many remarkable mediums and none more sincere and honest that Hunter Selkirk, whose happy, jocular, almost care-free temperament, makes it a joy to know him.

—~—☼—~—

Hunter's physical mediumship also included healing. One of the medium's guides/controls, simply named 'The Doctor', was known to materialise at the séances. Pioneer brings this to attention, as it has touched on another medium, Isa Northage. She was a physical medium and during her healing sessions her spirit doctor would materialise in full view of the sitters and the patient to perform his operations – he cured by removing growths, clots and bone splinters, etc.

Isa's doctor was called 'Dr. Reynolds' – please see Pioneer, Vol. 3, No. 2, April 2016: "Spiritualist Healers of the Past – Isa Northage". (The series also looked at psychic healers as opposed to spiritual healers). The article published below by Grace W. Boyers DSNU, unfortunately, does not go into the healing side in much detail; it is taken from the "Two Worlds", May 9th 1947, front page and concluding on p. 147:

MATERIALISED SPIRIT DOCTOR GIVES HEALING

NORTHERN SINGERS STAGGERED BY PHYSICAL PHENOMENA

On the 17th March, 1947, a seance was held at the Craghead Spiritualist Church. There were nine sitters, present, and the medium was Mr. Hunter Selkirk.

Four of the sitters formed a well-known quartet of male voice singers, and after a very earnest prayer by Mr. J. Selkirk, the proceedings commenced with musical renderings beautifully sung by the quartet. After a short time the guide of the medium gave us greetings, assuring us that the conditions were good, which was subsequently well borne out.

With little or no delay there then began a succession of visits from those who normally now live in another sphere. First came Topsy, a lively, and thoroughly confident young girl, who was obviously very much at home and delighted to be with us. Her completely materialised form swept through the curtains, and she chatted briskly to all and sundry, with a quip and jest typical of any English youngster in high spirits on earth. She explained that her frequent appearances throughout the seance helped to regulate the force used for the production of the materialisations. She certainly carried a bright and happy influence through the evening, like a recurring theme song.

Lost her Earthly Disabilities

To one sitter came his mother, whom he acknowledged gladly, and with whom he carried on a conversation for some minutes. She spoke of the fact that she had quite lost her earthly disabilities, and of her happiness at being there. Close together, they stood in full view of the watching sitters. Hardly had she disappeared, when other fully materialised figures followed in quick succession.

Bobby, a young local lad, whose accent was so typically that of the district, caused much amusement. I found this contrast of voice and accent especially entrancing, and evidential, particularly as Bobby was succeeded by Jimmy, a Cockney boy as different from Bobby as could be imagined. Both exhibited a freedom in their movements, and entertained us with their special brands of humour.

A Spirit Kiss

Of deep interest to one sitter was the appearance of his brother. This young man came forth from the curtains, a tall, upright figure, bareheaded, and eager to make himself known to his brother. Giving his correct name, he shook hands with my companion and asked to be introduced to me. I was formally introduced to an individual in the ordinary conventional way our society demands! He kissed my hand with old world courtesy, then drew my head into the crook of his arm to implant a kiss lightly on my forehead! The soft drapery, clothing the arm, swept like gossamer over my face, delicate and slightly warm, but the touch and behaviour was that of a very real and alive personality.

To his brother he gave much evidential matter, which, by nature of its family reference, should remain private. It was, however; enough to cause the sitter to feel a little stunned by the visit. The complete naturalness of the visit, coupled with the fact that this was the first appearance of the brother since his passing many years ago, drew from the sitter renewed comment on the wonder of the phenomena, and it left a deep impression on many which is not likely to be forgotten.

Thunder Struck and Staggered

A former member of the quartet was a surprise visitor to the singers. Two of the number were attending a seance for the first time, and were, in their own words "thunderstruck and staggered" at the solid appearance of a man whom they had known some time before as one of their number. The visiting friend sang a little with the quartet as he retired, after thoroughly satisfying them of his identity.

To one sitter there came the tall and commanding figure of his guide, with whom he carried on a long conversation regarding his future work.

An unusual feature of the seance was the forceful presence of a French doctor, a guide of the medium, who all this time was in deep trance within the curtains. The doctor insisted on giving treatment to one of the sitters, who acknowledged that the guide certainly knew where the trouble was, and that, in his own words, "the power was terrific, nearly lifting me off my feet." This statement is remarkable, in view of the fact that he was talking of a materialised spirit doctor, not a man still in earthly flesh! This is a problem for those who maintain that the spirit people are but shadows or figments of the mind of either sitter or medium.

One Significant Word

To me personally, there came through the curtains a nun, a woman with whom I have been familiar all my life. Anyone who remembers a previous article of mine might remember that I mentioned the appearance of this woman at my bedside when I was a child of five, and whom I have seen frequently many times since. She spoke to me on this occasion of family things, and personal hopes, making use of one significant word. This meant nothing to anyone there whatsoever, but to me at that time it conveyed definite evidence of the knowledge, those we call our friends in spirit, have of our affairs on this side of life.

Disappeared above Sitters

Towards the end of the seance Topsy returned and came round one side of the curtain, took the seat offered her by Mr. Jack Selkirk, swung her legs free of the floor for a few minutes, then came into the centre of the semi-circle to chat with us for a short while. She then took upon herself a more gracious form of a spirit progressed, and her childish irresponsibility gave place to a wise philosophy, with which she slowly drew the seance to an end, finally disappearing *above* us.

Prayer and thanks concluded a wonderful evening.

In all, there were no less than nine fully formed materialised forms, several of them making more than one appearance, most of them free of the curtains some time during their visit. It would be difficult to believe they were anything but what they claimed to be—visitors from another sphere, so closely in touch with our own as to make their contact with us only a matter of the right conditions. If that were not enough, then the evidence they brought of their separate individual selves is further testimony of their memory and continued regard for those they love and seek still in this earth life.

Additional Notes of Seance

By JACK SELKIRK

The Apollo Quartet, Mr. Todd, Mr. A. Todd, Mr. Swarm, and Mr. Hetherington, came from South Shields. The sitter who received his mother was the tenor of the quartet, Mr. Hetherington. After they had ended their private talk she asked him to sing, and as he stood and sang that beautiful old hymn, "Abide with Me," she knelt in the centre of the circle in prayer. Something happened near the end of this séance which has never happened before in any of our seances, Topsy and the quartet were singing, "The End of a Perfect Day," when a beautiful, snow white dove flew out of the top of the cabinet right over the heads of the sitters, it did this twice, then came and perched upon my shoulder, cooing and fluttering its wings; once it touched my cheek with its bill. As the last note of the old song lingered in that little room, Topsy rose slowly towards the top of the cabinet, with the dove fluttering around her. It was something I shall remember for a long time.

—~—☼—~—

Another reason Pioneer brings the above article to attention is because in a recent donation to the Britten Museum & Library by the Lyceum Union are contained two rare lantern slides of Hunter Selkirk's materialisations, one being 'The Doctor', referenced in the above article. There are no details given about this photograph, apart from "Hunter Selkirk and his well-known French doctor guide".

This second photograph is taken at the same unknown location as the image of the Doctor; the images of the two young ladies are said to be "Iza and Nellie the flower girl – guides of Mrs. Cook a member of the Selkirk circle. Photograph taken June 7th 1932". This suggests the other image will be around the same date; it also gives the name Bob Ellis? Maybe the photographer is a circle member or totally unrelated.[4]

[4] If we look at ectoplasm through the heyday of materialisation, there are similarities in its make-up, in procedure almost like a design of a phase of development; but given that it is physical phenomena, it is of course open to normal means, i.e. both can achieve the same effect.

I believe this image shows Hunter Selkirk and his circle, or maybe a general séance

The article below gives a good overview of a Hunter Selkirk séance. It is taken from the front page of the "Two Worlds", July 4th 1947, concluding on page 210. The photograph shown was published within the article:

THE ASCENSION OF A MATERIALISED SPIRIT

WONDERFUL PHENOMENA DRAMATICALLY DEMONSTRATES THE TRUTH OF SURVIVAL

—~—☼—~—

On Monday, June 16th, a small group of Spiritualists met at the Craghead Spiritualist Church to sit with the well-known north country medium, Mr. Hunter Selkirk. (The proceeds of his seances go to the Church Building Fund, and he has raised £100 during the last six months. The Church will be paid for in the Autumn!) To sit for the phenomena of materialisation is a very serious undertaking for any medium, but Hunter Selkirk appears to regard the matter as nonchalantly as any other incident in his daily routine. He arrived at 6-20 p.m., gay and lighthearted, and enjoyed a cup of tea and a smoke before the seance, which began at 6-30 p.m. Quite informally he stubbed his cigarette and, in his working clothes, walked over to a chair in the corner of the room, and speedily passed into the trance state. The chair was situated in front of the space to be used as a cabinet. So far the curtains were not drawn. Quietly and quickly a group of about twelve people followed and gathered round him in a roughly formed semi-circle.

Good Vibrations

When all were settled, Jack Selkirk, the medium's brother, offered a very sincere invocation. Then Zuru, the medium's guide, gave a few words of welcome to the members of the circle, after which he lifted the chair (still under him) and stepped backwards into the corner, requesting the curtains to be drawn in readiness for the seance. Before allowing the materialised forms to appear he passed the remark that the vibrations were very good. During the phenomena that followed, from a visitor's point of view, the super-normal happenings that took place were more evidential than the conversations which ensued between some of the forms and the sitters. One or two

A MATERIALISED SPIRIT VISITOR AT HUNTER SELKIRK'S SEANCE

spirits had been before several times, and were quite at ease when talking to their earthly friends, but as the conversations were more in the nature of seance re-unions, there was no special attempt at establishing detailed evidence in these cases.

Spirit Levitated.

At the commencement of the manifestations a pillar of ectoplasm seemed to form at the parting of the curtain. This, in the dim red light, seemed motionless for a time and then quite suddenly took on the human characteristics of a young vivacious girl named Topsy, whose mission seemed to be that of cheering everyone into a happy and lighthearted frame of mind. She quite knowingly explained that the motive was primarily to create good conditions for successful phenomena. Having raised the vibrations, she said that she was going to be levitated. "Hold hands everybody!" she exclaimed suddenly, and as we did so, the lower end of her ectoplasmic skirts moved outwards and upwards until her body was bent and suspended at shoulder height in mid air!

Topsy's Mission.

In this position she passed a witty remark about being "neither up nor down." She looked as if she were reclining in an invisible hammock. Then she dropped again, more quickly, and the sound of her feet could be heard as she touched the floor again. Topsy is one of the regular band of spirit helpers who work with Hunter Selkirk, in their joint mission to provide convincing evidence of spirit return, and she was just as much at ease in her ectoplasmic garments as Hunter had been a few minutes previously smoking his cigarette, and her loud voice rang and resounded throughout the room. Her witty remarks would be heard quite plainly in the church although the seance room door was closed.

A Tall Nun.

A much taller figure, that of a Nun, appeared and beckoned one of the lady sitters to come and stand close to her. She informed this lady that she was constantly with her and had assumed the role of spiritual guardian from her childhood days, and was now delighted to have the opportunity of seeing her in material form. The tall Nun then turned to the lady's husband and thanked him for his earthly guardianship in more recent years, and as a sign of loving affection kissed his cheek, returning a minute later to that world of spirit from whence she had come. The husband explained later how, when the nun had gone, he had regretted not having asked for her name—his wife being almost speechless with wonderment at her unique experience to think of this important detail.

Mind Reading.

With this question on the fringe of his mind he awaited the appearance of the next figure to ask for this information. It was Jimmy, Selkirk's Cockney guide, who immediately asked this gentleman if he wanted to ask a question! Taken by surprise, the gentleman asked for the Nun's name. "I'll ask," said Jimmy. "I won't be a 'crack'." Re-appearing, after conferring with his spirit colleagues, he informed his enquirer that the "lidy was from Spine (Spain) and her nime was Juanita." He then explained how the Nun's aura blended with that of the sitter and because of this she was able to carry out her work as spirit guardian. Jimmy then broke into song and sang his party piece—'The Lambeth Walk' with which he was joined by the members of the circle. (Jimmy had been killed during one of the blitzes on London during the recent war.) A further

materialised figure claimed contact with another member of the circle, but appeared to be under great difficulty in the more dense earthly conditions, yet conveyed great anxiety to establish his identity.

North American Indian Healer.

Zuru then intervened and announced that a giant North American Indian guide had come to speak to Mr. Aikman, and asked him to prepare himself to see a very big man and not to be afraid. Everyone gasped when a colossal figure, very tall and powerfully built, appeared and beckoned Mr. Aikman towards him. The atmosphere became distinctly colder as this mighty figure emerged. When asked for his name, he informed his earthly friend that it was 'Dawn'. In a heavy, deep, and sonorous bass voice he exclaimed, "Me bring you strong power. Me help you because you worth it." (Mr. Aikman suffers from ulcers in the stomach which has a weakening effect upon him). After he had conversed a little longer, and taken his departure, Topsy reappeared to brighten up the vibrations again. "Has he gone?" she asked mischievously, which made everyone laugh, and recover from their spell-bound attitude arising from the appearance of the "Thunderstorm," as Topsy called him. She then told us that he was a tribal chief and still conversed with his tribesmen in "a Redskin river valley."

Family Reunions.

A spirit called Willie Wilkinson then appeared and held a conversation with his father, who was present. Prior to his transition (March 3rd, 1931) he had been organist at Kyo Laws Choir, Annfield Plain. This was his sixth appearance in ectoplasm, and he told his father more news about his musical activities on "the Other Side." The next reunion was between Mrs. B. M. Mather and her spirit husband. He referred to his sister, who passed over ten months after him, and her baby which had been left behind. "Isn't he a fine chap?" he said. "If only things had been different," he added regretfully, inferring the fact that they had not been blessed with children. A cultured spirit gentleman then beckoned another sitter to him. He was a smaller man than the medium, with a definitely smaller face, on which there was to be seen a typical 'van Dyke' beard. His name was Dowell Todd of Sunderland, a former President of the Northern District Council. He gave a personal message for a former colleague.

Spiritual Transformation.

Upon his departure, Jack Selkirk commenced singing a hymn, during which Topsy put her head through the curtains and said, 'Jackie, desist! You sound like a lost sheep upon the mountain—one little blare!" The atmosphere was changed again into one of gaiety and laughter. She became more serious however as the seance drew to a close, and said that she would now be "transformed into what I am" (an older and very wise person in spiritual reality). "If, in the days to come," she said to the sitters, "you need a friend, your call shall be heard where I am now going. I shall now throw off my physical garments and assume my spiritual ones, as you will all do some day."

Ascension of Spirit Form.

She then asked us to sing a farewell hymn and as we complied with her request she began to ascend before us. She looked beautiful as she began to rise, without any visible means of support, into the space above us. As she reached a level near the top of the cabinet, and well above our heads, she slowly assumed a horizontal position and returned to her medium through the top of the cabinet. She was apparently already dematerialising, as it was noticed that her body partly penetrated the metal rod supporting the curtains. This was indeed a wonderfully convincing and beautiful sight, which left no doubt in our minds that we had been experiencing the "communion of spirits and the ministry of angels."

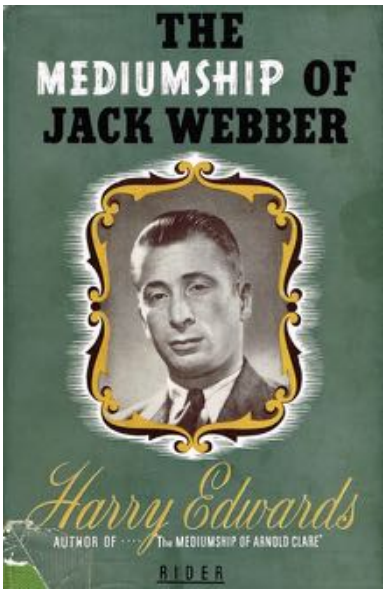
JACK WEBBER

John Boaden Webber

1907 - 1940

"At Birmingham twenty-six roses were apported into the circle through closed doors and windows and were distributed to the twenty-six sitters.
(The number of people sitting was not determined until the very last moment).

"Psychic News," July 8th 1939"



Webber's life was short. His prime public work as a physical medium was achieved over a fourteen-month period from late 1938, producing numerous photographs of his psychic phenomena by flashlight and infrared photography. His mediumship at the time was well covered within the Spiritualist press, the "Two Worlds", "Psychic News", etc.; today his mediumship is kept alive in Harry Edwards' book, "The Mediumship of Jack Webber", published in July 1940 shortly after his death on March 9th 1940, aged thirty-three.[2]

Edwards first encountered Webber in Hendon, London in April 1938; he notes in his Foreword in 1939:

"…over four thousand persons witnessed the phenomena, from small home circles to mass seances of five hundred people."

The article below is taken from the "Two Worlds", June 30th 1939:

ECTOPLASM EXAMINED

SEEN AND HANDLED BY EXPERIMENTERS.

MR. HARRY EDWARDS reports that experiments are still proceeding with the remarkable mediumship of Mr. Jack Webber, and we publish herewith a photograph of an ectoplasmic structure which was taken at Webber's private developing circle, which shows a remarkable ectoplasmic effect.[3]

Prior to the photograph being taken, the guide had given permission to the sitters sitting on each side of the medium to handle the ectoplasm, and to unfold it. The width of this ectoplasmic structure was about one yard and a half, and required the effort of two of the sitters to unfold it to its extreme width. The formation was very clammy to the touch, the sitters testified that it felt like a closely woven silk, and that it was possessed of a peculiar odour.

[2] A PDF of the book can be downloaded free.

[3] The only photograph with this article is shown below; this image is elsewhere in the same issue.

Ectoplasm seen and Handled

On another occasion at this same seance, the ectoplasm was seen by the aid of a red light operated by the spirit controls themselves, to reach from Mr. Webber's mouth to the floor, it was spread out for several feet in front of him, being approximately two to three yards in length.

The return of the ectoplasm to the medium appears to take place in a fraction of a second. This has been carefully witnessed in red light. One moment the ectoplasm is extended before the medium, then a swish is heard, and with tremendous rapidity, it disappears into the medium's body so quickly that the eye cannot follow it. One moment it is there, the next it has gone.

What have regurgitationists to say to this?

The chair was smashed

Another remarkable happening at Mr. Webber's seance was the fact that a heavy Windsor chair was smashed to pieces. The seat of the chair, one and a quarter inches thick, was broken across in two places, the arm of the chair was broken off where it joined the back, and the legs and supporting bars were wrenched out.

This incident happened to the armchair in which Jack Webber was bound, when it was brought to the floor after the medium had been levitated in the chair. An effort was being made to photograph, by infra-red rays, the medium bound to the chair, while still levitated.

A few minutes previously, Webber had been taken up into the air, and had descended with considerable force. The controls were endeavouring to repeat the feat when the descent of the chair was so forceful as to break it in pieces. The photograph on another page shows the armchair actually in the process of being broken up, and readers will notice the entire absence of tension of the medium's body; there is no downward force being exerted by him as far as can be seen.

Tremendous Force Necessary

The nature of the physical force necessary to break up a chair in this manner arouses interesting problems. Assuming the medium was levitated two to three feet, and suddenly dropped, this would not account for the force required to smash the chair. The most reasonable thesis is that the very considerable psychic forces which were used to lift the chair and medium in the air were suddenly reversed, thus accentuating the descent.

It is also noteworthy that when the medium is entranced and such an unusual incident occurs, rendering the physical body of the medium liable to injury, or when, during a seance, the trumpets return with a force, striking the medium's head, there has never been any harm done to the medium himself, not even a reddening of the skin. Normally, of course, such incidents would severely bruise or cut the medium.

The incidents described above took place in Mr. Webber's own developing circle in a red light, and in addition to the usual sitters, Mr. Bernard Grey (of the *Daily Mirror*), Mrs. Grey, and Mr. Leon Isaacs were present.[4]

—~—☼—~—

The above séance is mentioned in Edwards' book but not referenced to the above article; however, the photographs, which were taken by Leon Isaacs, are reproduced in the book. It is noted that Bernard Grey of the "Daily Mirror" lived in Wembley. As a journalist he published a report of a séance he attended on May 24th 1939, which covered a two-page spread in the "Sunday Pictorial". He prefaced his report with an affidavit swearing that what took place happened and was true.[5]

The article which follows is an earlier report and gives a more detailed look into Webber's mediumship. It was published on the front page and continued on page 50 on January 27th 1939 in the "Two Worlds", by their Special Reporter:

The Mediumship of Jack Webber

FULL FACE MATERIALISATIONS

ON Friday, January 20th, I attended a seance conducted by Jack Webber at the premises of Mr. Harry Edwards, in Balham, London, in the company of Mr. H. B. Millar, who was in charge of the recording arrangements, made possible by the use of his portable "Phono-Disc" recording apparatus.

Other than the equipment necessary for the seance, such as luminous plaques, skipping rope, small handbell, three metal trumpets, etc., chairs for the sitters, there were no unnecessary fittings or fixtures; the room was [lofty?] and the ceiling well out of reach of anyone who might have attempted to touch it, even standing on a chair—a point which is of importance when considering the phenomena which occurred later.

[4] Leon Isaacs took many of the photographs of Webber's seances. Photography does not necessarily show genuine mediumship, as unscrupulous mediums may use tricks. Pioneer has previously published the séance photographs by Leon Isaacs with Ronald Cockersell, who tricked Isaacs; the photographs are shown in Pioneer, Vol. 4, No. 1, February 2017: "Leon Isaacs – Pioneer of infra-red séance photography – Britain's Greatest Seance Room Photographer – Two Worlds".

[5] The paper may well have been in the Mirror Group- the "Sunday Pictorial" was renamed the Sunday Mirror in 1963.

Prior to the sitters assembling in the circle, two of us were invited to secure the medium to his chair with a single length of stout rope; a lady first obliged by sewing the medium's jacket securely with white thread—I examined her handiwork, approved it, and proceeded to rope the medium in a fashion which must have caused him considerable physical discomfort, the other sitter making himself responsible for the remainder of the roping. A microphone stood in the centre of the circle, I seated myself next-but-one to the medium, and practically as soon as the lights were extinguished, the heavy breathing of the medium indicated that a supernormal condition had supervened.

General levitation of the equipment, which had been placed on a small table in the corner of the room, first occurred. The path of the levitated articles could be easily followed by the bands of luminous paint which supplied a phosphorescent glow in the darkness.

I was careful to note that various objects, trumpets, small bell, etc., were floating well out of reach of the entranced medium. The trumpets occasionally rose to the ceiling, and could be heard tapping against the plaster. I was fortunate, enough during the seance to witness practically the whole of the phenomena that occurred. The small hand-bell floated across, a glowing ball of metal, and remained poised before my face. I invited it to touch me, which it did, gently moving across my face in a manner which satified me that it was actually floating. Then it drew back a yard or so, and suddenly flew towards me at a speed which made me draw back involuntarily. It continued across the room, in a flashing arc of phosphorescent light, so quickly did it travel.

At this juncture, the sitters were told by the entranced medium (presumably under the control of a guide) to put on the lights; this was done and I observed the ropes to be in their original positions, and noticed a trumpet by his side, rocking gently as though it had just come to rest. Lights were extinguished again, and a mass of material fell across my feet. On putting the lights up, it proved to be the medium's jacket; still sewn across the front; the ropes were still intact.

Then the seance began in earnest: floating objects paid me considerable attention. For instance, a trumpet crossed the room and repeated the procedure observed by the bell at an earlier stage; first, the mouthpiece passed gently across my face, then the body of the megaphone, finally, the trumpet-end, in a fashion which demonstrated the unquestionable nature of the levitation.

A luminous plaque—a piece of plywood some nine inches by four—coated with luminous paint, floated across to me, and hovered before my face; I invited the plaque to repeat the performance of the trumpet, which it did, bringing the luminous surface within half-an-inch of my nose. I must mention that during the whole of the seance, the sitters' hands were linked round the circle.

A pair of castanets rose in the centre of the circle, crossed to me, and rapped out a well-marked rhythm on my head; they then floated back across the room to a different tempo, occasionally tapping the frame from which the microphone was suspended.

Occasionally, a trumpet crossed to the medium, tapping his arms, shoulders and head, presumably with a view to indicating that he was still in his ropes.

Prior to this, nothing evidential of spirit return had occurred, apart from the physical phenomena which were undoubtedly supernormally produced.

A control announced that an attempt would be made at recording; Mr. Millar prepared his task in the dark—and a record was soon ready for cutting. A trumpet rose to the microphone, and a powerful baritone voice led the singing of a hymn. Mr. Millar informed the voice that the volume of sound was likely to distort the recording owing to the nearness of the trumpet to the microphone; whereupon, it immediately withdrew a foot or two, still floating above the circle.

The recording was played back immediately on the same machine, to the great satisfaction of the sitters, who found it an exciting experience to hear their lusty voices as a background to the fine singing which had come through the trumpet. This procedure was repeated, and several good records secured. "Paddy," Jack Webber's youthful control, spoke without the trumpet; his childish treble, with its Celtic lilt, advised the sitters to carefully consider the phenomena they had witnessed and apply the lesson they had learned to their ordinary lives. A three-minute record was thus secured, the play-back being made on "Paddy's" request, when he demanded the same treatment which had been accorded to the other voices. Mr. Millar is to be congratulated on the fine results which were secured under difficult conditions; the co-operation of the unseen operators was also noticeable; when Mr. Millar announced that the end of the record was approaching, for example, whatever was being said by the communicator was quickly brought to an end.[6]

Again, although the nature of the communications was not always evidential, these were fine demonstrations of direct-voice.

For me, the most outstanding event of the seance was the materialisation of two faces. A luminous plaque rose from the floor, and came within a few inches of my face; rising from it, partially concealed in what appeared to be a shining band of material, some two inches wide, was the face of a woman—I should estimate her to be between 40 and 50 years of age; it was perhaps a little larger than three-quarters life size, and near enough to me for me to observe the fine moulding of the features, which were illuminated with the glow from the plaque. Particularly, I noticed the nose and nostrils, which seemed to be perfectly chiselled as from alabaster or some similar material.

A Living Face

The face was quite solid—three dimensional, without colouring, but obviously alive; I encouraged it to talk while it floated there, resting on the plaque which was quite unsupported. The lips moved in attempt to answer me, but produced that strange "ticking" sound that seems to precede any attempt at speech under these occasions. Eventually, the woman whispered "I have no pain now; I do not suffer as I used to . . . . isn't it glorious . . . . mother." The information was not for me, nor was it claimed by the others. Then the plaque withdrew, and the face disappeared.

Afterwards, when discussing this phenomenon with an observer, he remarked "While you were staring at it, I did something which might have had me thrown out—I passed my hand all round the plaque; there was nothing there!"

The woman's face was remarkable for the fine moulding of the features—almost like a piece of Greek sculptury; the absence of skin-creases probably accentuated this, and while it was obviously the face of a mature woman, there was a suggestion of youthfulness about it. The eyes were partly in shadow, owing to the lighting arising from the plaque, so that it was difficult to determine whether or not they had been materialised;

[6] A recording of another séance with one of Webber's alleged controls, "Reuben", singing via direct voice can be heard: Google "Jack Webber's Spirit Control - Reuben".

yet during the; whole time the face remained there—a matter of several minutes—there was no suggestion of eyeless sockets.

The second face, which appeared after an interval during which records were made, and the earlier physical phenomena were repeated, also came across to within a few inches of my face, supported by the luminous plaque.

This time, the strong masculine features were surmounted with a white, typically Egyptian head-dress; the long, Roman nose gave it a look of severity and the eyes—what I could see of them, looked piercingly into mine. This face was unlike its predecessor in that there was a suggestion of swarthiness about it. Pronounced facial ridges in the flesh enhanced the severe expression, and the set of the jaw and mouth suggested a powerful character. Several times, the head bowed in front of me, and, projecting from the headdress, I noticed a triangular device which stood out, and threw a shadow back on the forehead. I heard other sitters commenting on the "hair"; they apparently overlooked this triangular projection, which had its base in the head-dress, and apex standing well out from the head. It seemed to be constructed from different material, and was evidently not intended to be overlooked. I commented on it, and, after remaining in front of me for a brief period, the head withdrew and disappeared.

Head-dress Device

This, too, was solid, and three dimensional in appearance, certainly more life-like than the first, nearer to life-size, and without the mask-like appearance that characterised the first, before it spoke.

Needless to say, there were no sitters in the room resembling either face. I later learned that the device in the head-dress corresponded to that worn by priests and officials of the ancient Egyptian temples; it apparently signified rank in the temple—this no doubt explains the repeated endeavours of the head to draw my attention to the device.

Shortly afterwards, the seance came to an end. The medium was still in his ropes and the equipment was lying about the floor of the room. Several good records had been secured, although one or two attempts to communicate via direct voice with other sitters were poor.

Trance States

Considering the seance afterwards, it occurred to me that the apparently meaningless levitation of articles, rapping of castanets, etc., corresponded with the ebb and flow of the trance state. Like other states of consciousness, mediumistic trance is not a static condition; under seance-room conditions, there seems to be a marked "tide," which, on the influx, brings remarkable phenomena such as the faces I have described, and on withdrawing, leaves behind the simple levitation of articles. This seems to be repeated until the energy is exhausted.

Investigators would be wise to consider this point before condemning the strange and apparently inexplicable levitation of articles such as castanets, skipping ropes, bells, etc.

—~—☼—~—

Editor's Note:

Not knowing the person who wrote the above report rather inhibits the full credibility of the report; part of the report is *quoted* in Edwards' book and referenced but the direct *quote* is edited, removing, for example, "The information was not for me, nor was it claimed by the others" (referring to the alleged materialised head).

Harry Edwards' destiny was to become one of the movement's finest spiritual healers. He began his investigation into Spiritualism in 1936, then starting to sit for his development and becoming aware of his healing potential, as well as trance speaking and clairvoyance. Webber for around two years was under his sponsorship, moving to London and working as a professional physical medium. Harry Edwards was the head of the 'Balham Psychic Research Society,' under whose auspices Webber worked. It should be noted that Edwards had only been in Spiritualism for around eighteen months or so and could not at this time be considered as an experienced psychical researcher into the various phenomena said to be exhibited by his friend Jack Webber.

The Spiritualist weekly journals of the day are the best source of information, reporting the unfolding reports of the events shortly after they happened; as soon as the reports were reproduced, they became edited and often out of context, etc.

The journal reports were mostly fair, which may be in favour of the medium or maybe against, giving a balanced view of the original accounts. The genuineness of the mediumship was regulated by the Spiritualist press and their readers. Many physical mediums were publicly exposed by the journals by Spiritualists.

The reports published in 1940 in "The Mediumship of Jack Webber" are selective and positive accounts of Webber's mediumship, but when readers read the original amazing accounts of his remarkable mediumship within the journal pages in 1938/9, Webber's mediumship was beginning to be questioned by some sitters.

One criticism was that Webber used *one* length of rope, which, when slack, could be taken up and be able to release his arms freely; also pointed out is the fact that *all paraphernalia was placed on a table on the medium's immediate right*.[7] These points can be clearly observed in some of the photographs published in the 1940 book. The challenge to Webber's mediumship was potentially damning, starting in the February 17th 1939 issue of the "Two Worlds". The paper published both sides of the controversy over some months. In the issue cited above its editor, former SNU President Ernest Oaten (1919-1945), made these remarks:

> Editorial remarks.—Since *The Two Worlds* has repeatedly given publicity to Mr. Webber on the testimony of various people who have sat with him, and of photographs received, we are obliged, in the interests of truth, to publish the foregoing. Our sole desire is that the facts should be made known. The above are statements of eye-witnesses pro. And con.[8] We are glad that there was no flash and grab, a form of procedure with which we have no sympathy. After carefully reading the statements on both sides, one can only conclude that evidence on either side is inconclusive. A majority of the sitters, at any rate, are satisfied that evidence for the actuality of psychic phenomena is lacking.

[7] "Mr. Webber's Mediumship Questioned", published in the "Two Worlds", February 17th 1939.

[8] As the previous footnote, not published in this issue of Pioneer.

PART ONE:

Spiritualistic phenomena of the past

In the history of Modern Spiritualism there have been many variations of physical mediumship; some of these phases were fleeting and not generally repeated as the various types of phenomena developed or simply seem to have disappeared. Over the next few issues Pioneer will be looking back to the nineteenth and early twentieth century. Starting off with James J. Morse, the following article describes how he was changed as regards the dimensions of his body, arms and hands: [22]

ELONGATION AND SHORTENING OF MEDIUM

"On Friday, August 12th, Mr. Morse was entranced in our office, and the controlling spirit elongated his body in various ways. The medium was made to kneel down with his chest against the end of the table and his arms placed on the top of it. In this position it was impossible for him to move his body forward. His left arm was first stretched till the bones in the shoulder were felt to be considerably apart, and till it was about three inches longer than the other arm. Then the right arm was stretched, and afterwards both were contracted. Measurements were being rudely taken, when the spirit requested that a measuring tape should be used. The natural length of the medium's hand was ascertained to be 7½ inches, which became elongated to 9 inches, and was afterwards reduced to 6¾ inches. The medium then sat upon a chair, when his chest was expanded, previous to which it measured 13 inches across, but after expansion it was 17¼ inches. This was not accomplished by simply inflating the lungs, as the spirit spoke through the medium all the time, and gave directions as to how the measurement should be taken. The medium then sat upright, and it was found that from the corner of the shoulder-bone to the seat of the chair, measured 24 inches. After the elongation of the body, which was not effected by the medium rising from the seat in any degree, the elevation of the shoulder-bone from the chair was 27½ inches, and after contraction this measurement was reduced to 19¾ inches. These changes seemed to be effected without effort or straining.

"The controlling spirit stated that these elongations were effected by the will-power of himself and another spirit. Each atom of the body and aggregation of atoms forming tissues and organs could be made the objects of this will-power and shaped accordingly. The spirits not only used their own will, but stimulated the latent will of the medium."

[22] Published in *The Medium & Daybreak,* August 19th 1870, and cited in the *Spiritual Magazine*, 1870, p. 401. The quote is taken from *The Facts of Psychic Science* by A. Campbell Holms, 1969, University Books Inc., N.Y. (originally published 1925), pages 317-318.

Below is taken from "The Physical Phenomena of Spiritualism Fraudulent and Genuine" by Hereward Carrington, published in 1907, pages 394-399.

It gives the testimony of psychical researcher Mr Henry Diedrich Jencken, barrister-at-law. Henry, incidentally, was married to the younger Fox sister in December 14th 1872 in London; Kate became known as Kate Fox Jencken. Jencken over several séances investigated the phenomena of elongation with the medium Daniel Home in 1867. There is also the testimony of the Master of Lindsay (the Earl of Crawford), who in December 1868 witnessed Home's levitation, where it is alleged he levitated out of a window and floated back through the window in which the witnesses were seated.

Another case of elongation is quoted with the medium Mr Alfred Peters in 1900, investigated by the sceptical Frank Podmore, an influential member of the Society for Psychical Research. His report was published in the *Journal* of the Society for Psychical Research, *suggesting* how these phenomena could be produced by trickery:[23]

Elongation

Another of the marvellous feats witnessed in Home's presence was that of "elongation," in which the medium's body was apparently, lengthened or drawn out a number of inches, and quite beyond the limits of any normal extension possible. This is one of the best attested, and at the same time one of the most incredible phenomena witnessed in this medium's presence, varied as those phenomena were. One or two typical reports of this phenomenon are as follows:

"Mr H. D. Jencken, of Norwood, England, communicates, under the date of December, 1867, his experiences at four séances, at which the body of D. D. Home was elongated; and on all these occasions, Mr. J. used his utmost endeavor to make certain of the fact. On two of them, he had the amplest opportunity of examining Mr. Home, and measured the actual elongation and shortening. At one, the extension appeared to take place at the waist, and the clothing separated eight or ten inches. Mr. J., who is six feet, hardly reached up to Home's shoulder. Walking to and fro, Home especially called attention to the fact of his feet being firmly planted on the ground. 'He then grew shorter,' says Mr. J., 'until he only reached my shoulder, his waistcoat overlapping at his hip. . . . Encouraging every mode of testing the truth of this marvellous phenomenon, Mr. Home made me hold his feet, whilst the Hon. Mr.— placed his hands on his head and shoulders. The elongation was repeated three times. Twice, whilst he was standing, the extension, measured on the wall by the Hon Mr—, showed eight inches; the extension at the waist, as measured by Mr.—, was six inches; and the third time the

[23] Pioneer: Unfortunately, there are no details given of the actual séance procedure, e.g. whether the medium was searched before or after, etc. In a case like this it would have been beneficial for Alfred Peters to have been searched.

elongation occurred, Mr. Home was seated next to Mrs. —, who placed her hand on his head, and her feet on his feet, had the utmost difficulty in keeping her position, as Mr. Home's body grew higher and higher; the extreme extension reached being six inches.'"[24]

Very much the same description of the phenomenon was given by the Master of Lindsay (the Earl of Crawford), as follows:

". . . I saw Mr. Home, in a trance, elongated eleven inches. I measured him standing up against the wall, and marked the place; not being satisfied with that, I put him in the middle of the room, and placed a candle in front of him, so as to throw a shadow on the wall, which I also marked. When he awoke I measured him again in his natural size, both directly and by the shadow, and the results were equal. I can swear that he was not of the ground or standing on tiptoe, as I had full view of his feet, and moreover, a gentleman present had one of his feet placed over Home's insteps, one hand on his shoulder, and the other on his side where the false ribs come near the hip-bone. . . . The top of the hip-bone and the short ribs separate. In Home, they are usually close together. There was no separation of the vertebrae of the spine; nor were the elongations at all like those resulting from expanding the chest with air; the shoulders did not move. Home looked as if he was pulled up by the neck; the muscles seemed in a state of tension. He stood firmly in the middle of the room, and, before the elongation commenced, I placed my foot on his instep. I will swear he never moved his heels from the ground."[25]

It is true that there are several minor defects in the records, as given above, which detract from the strength of the evidence. Thus, it is hard to see how the Earl of Crawford had a "full view" of the medium's feet, when we learn that they were covered by the feet of another sitter; nothing is said as to the amount of light admitted at these séances, and it is very suspicious that the vertebrae did not separate, when the length of the elongation would seem to call for such separation, if genuine. However, the defects in the report seem to me to be such as would be made by any person drawing up a report of unusual occurrences; minor inaccuracies exist, but the central facts seem to have been carefully noted, and rather more than the usual care exercised against fraud. It is hard to consider seriously this phenomenon as genuine; but, on the other hand, if we are to keep an open mind, what *right* have we to dismiss the phenomenon as impossible or inconceivable, merely because it is not understandable? If we had been at the séance in question, it is possible that our belief would be as strong as those who recorded the phenomena; for the present, it would seem best to hold our judgment in suspense, awaiting further evidence.

A case of apparent elongation occurred in 1900; it was investigated by Mr. Podmore, and a report of the case printed in Journal S. P. R., Vol. X., pp. 104-9. In this case the medium, Mr. Alfred Peters, stood in the corner of the room, which was poorly lighted, and, after being "controlled," began swaying backward and forward. Two sitters stationed themselves one on either side of the medium, placed their feet on his feet, and one hand on his hip (the one nearest to them), the other hands grasping those of the medium. Under these conditions, the medium was elongated. "Both my brother and I looked to see that we were still on his feet, and that our hands were on his waist; we were both conscious that the hands we had placed on the waist were being carried up as the elongation gradually took place.

Frank Podmore

[24] *Planchette*, by Epes Sargent, p. 100-1.

[25] *Dialectical Report*, pp. 207-8, 213-4.

Keeping our eyes upon him we found that we had to stretch our arms to their fullest extent (without rising from our seats) to retain their position on the waist. On my attempting to arise from my chair, the 'Indian' requested me to remain seated. At last a point was reached when I called to my brother, 'If he goes any higher I can't reach,' my arm being stretched to its very fullest extent; at the same time I was conscious, and so was my brother, that our feet were still on the medium's feet. The 'red Indian' (who was controlling) called to us then to observe his hands, one arm (the hand and fingers being open and extended) being quite six inches longer than the other; from our position, this was difficult for my brother and me to see, but was quite apparent to Mrs. S. . . . Again our attention was directed to the fact that the shorter arm had been lengthened to match the other. We had now arrived at the limit of our powers of extension, and, with a warning from the 'Indian,' the medium collapsed on to the floor."

When this case appeared (which is at least interesting, if only to show that phenomena of the kind still occur), I sent in a criticism of the case, suggesting three possible methods of trickery by which the phenomenon might have been accomplished.[26] I then said:

"(1) We are told . . . that he appeared to be drawn upward by his hands,' which were 'stretched straight out above his head.' Now are we sure that his hands could reach nothing sufficiently substantial to enable him to raise his body in this way? Of this we are told nothing definite. The ceiling of the 'bow window' was lower by six inches than that of the remainder of the room; and there were curtains separating them. On what were the curtains hung? On a rod, as is usually the case? And if so, would this rod be sufficiently substantial to sustain the medium's weight, assisted, perhaps, by one or both feet? As for the hands seen against the ceiling, they may have been the medium's shown *alternately*, he, meanwhile, supporting' himself with the other hand. The objection to this hypothesis is that the medium's feet were held, and on this basis they would necessarily have to be free. When we read that the medium's 'feet were held, we must presume, in this case at least, that it was his *shoes* that were so held, and very insecurely at that. I would suggest, therefore, either that the medium slipped out of his shoes and left them under the careful supervision of their guardians while he 'elongated' himself, as above described; or that dummy feet were substituted, whilst his own followed the rest of his body, as they would under ordinary circumstances.

"(2) My second hypothesis is that dummy feet were substituted, or his shoes left under observation, as above described, and that the medium mounted in some way by means of his stocking feet. This would cause his body to be elevated from the floor to the extent described and enable his arms to be seen against the ceiling, as they would really be at that height from the ground floor. The question is, on what did the medium find a foothold? We read (p. 108), 'the only chair near (D) I pushed away when the medium began to sway backward and forward, fearing he would knock himself against it.' On the other hand, the chairs A and B were not moved during the whole phenomenon—'we none of us moved from our chairs during the whole time.' " (These chairs were those on either side of the medium, and I advanced the theory that the medium was enabled to place his feet on the rungs of the chairs). . . . "It must be remembered that the attention of the investigators seems to have been almost entirely concentrated on the medium's arms and

[26] *Journal S. P. R.*, Vol. X, pp. 238-40.

upper portion of his body; he, no doubt, attracting attention thereto. . . . From their strained position, observation must have been next to impossible.

"(3) My third hypothesis I admit to be exceedingly improbable, but it is, to my mind, more conceivable than a genuine manifestation of the phenomenon of elongation. It is that the medium employed dummy arms to display against the background of the ceiling, and that some sliding mechanism was attached to his body, which, being elevated, would carry the investigator's hands along with it (his feet remaining on the floor), and thus give the sensation of moving the whole upper part of the medium's body. It will be observed that only the medium's hands and arms were actually seen to be at an unusual distance from the floor; nothing is said of the body being seen in its elevated position, it being merely *inferred* from the sense of touch."

I think that Mr. Podmore's suggestion is more probable than any of my own, however, it being that "the elongation was effected by some simple mechanism, such as steel stilts, concealed in his boots and trousers."[27]

The evidence for this case, however, is distinctly inferior to that in the case of Home, both with regard to quality and quantity. It is hard to see how Home could have produced his own cases of elongation by trickery; the nearest attempt to an explanation that has been offered is that by Mr. Podmore, in a passage following that just quoted. He there says: "That Home used any such concealed apparatus of the kind (just described) is, I think, improbable. The evidence in his case, either from want of detail, length of time between event and record, or the attendant circumstances, such as feebleness of illumination, is so defective that it is easier to attribute the results recorded to illusion, which Home may no doubt have eked out on occasion by such devices as slipping his feet half out of his boots, and standing on tiptoe, or supporting himself on some convenient articles of furniture".

The question of Home's elongation is likely to go unsolved until another medium shall arise who can duplicate the phenomena under the same conditions. If such a medium ever comes to light, it will be time to consider, seriously, this phenomenon of elongation.

The December issue will continue with

"LUMINOUS PHENOMENA"

[27] *Modern Spiritualism*, Vol. II, pp. 261-2.

PART TWO:

Spiritualistic phenomena of the past

LUMINOUS PHENOMENA

Luminous effects of a surprisingly beautiful character were one of the principal features of Moses' séances. He himself did not usually see them, for he was generally entranced during this phenomenon. As is usual with spirit lights, they did not illuminate surrounding objects. They took various forms; sometimes numerous star-like points of light appeared and floated about the room. Sometimes one would remain poised over the table, and flash in response to the alphabet; or took the form of a large diamond, brightly illuminated. A floating mass of luminous vapour would gradually condense and form a globe of golden light in which a spirit hand would be seen. Sometimes globes of light would bounce on the table audibly. The medium was sometimes surrounded by silvery or phosphorescent light, and a halo formed over his head which moved as he moved. [4] The globes of light were usually surrounded by spirit drapery, which the sitters were permitted to feel. Other lights were also handled and found to be hard and cold, like a luminous crystal.

The above quote is referring to the Victorian medium, Stainton Moses, who would be better known at this period under the pseudonym 'M.A. Oxon'.[5]

Pioneer has previously given attention to the Polish medium (producer of "Wax Gloves"[6]), who worked with scientific researchers such as Dr. Geley and Prof. Charles Richet under the pseudonym of Franek Klusky. Dr. Geley gives an account in "Revue Métapsychique" of a séance held in Warsaw on May 15th 1921:

> A moment later, magnificent luminous phenomena; a hand moved slowly about before the sitters. It held in the palm, by a partial bending of the fingers, a body resembling a piece of luminous ice. The whole hand appeared luminous and transparent. One could see the flesh colour. It was admirable. The phenomenon was repeated three times. Then the luminous hand approached a face which it illuminated. It was a handsome male face, but I could not see its details with precision. During all this scene the medium, who was entranced and held by both hands, did not make a movement."

---

[4] It is recorded that D.D. Home and many other mediums were sometimes illuminated in this way. See D.D. Home, His Life and Mission, p. 247.

[5] For further information on Moses please see Pioneer Vol. 3, No. 3, June 2016: "The College of Psychic Studies – Some background information – Visit to the College of Psychic Studies".

[6] Pioneer, Vol. 5, No. 2, April 2018: "Britten Museum & Library "Wax Spirit Hands" booklet — Reviewed by the SPR Houdini & Wax Gloves — Joseph F Rinn".

Archibald Campbell Holms' (1861-1954) work, "The Facts of Psychic Science and Philosophy", first published in 1925, reprinted in 1969, from which all the above quotes are taken. Dr. Geley frequently noticed a strong smell of ozone during luminous manifestations, also noticed by other experimenters. The author states:

> "It should be noted that ectoplasm has been observed by many to have a smell resembling ozone. The ordinary spirit lights commonly observed with various mediums are not usually accompanied by any smell; but in exceptional cases, when flame-like displays have occurred, a distinct smell of phosphorus has been noticed. This occurred with Stainton Moses,[7] and with Slade."[8]

Many accounts can be found in our early history; I will quote another from William Crookes F.R.S., an account published in his 1874 book, "Phenomena of Spiritualism":

Luminous Appearances.

> These, being rather faint, generally require the room to be darkened. I need scarcely remind my readers again that, under these circumstances, I have taken proper precautions to avoid being imposed upon by phosphorised oil or other means. Moreover, many of these lights are such as I have tried to imitate artificially, but cannot.
>
> Under the strictest test conditions, I have seen a solid self-luminous body, the size and nearly the shape of a turkey's egg, float noiselessly about the room, at one time higher than any one present could reach standing on tiptoe, and then gently descend to the floor. It was visible for more than ten minutes, and before it faded away it struck the table three times with a sound like that of a hard, solid body. During this time the medium was lying back, apparently insensible, in an easy chair.
>
> I have seen luminous points of light darting about and settling on the heads of different persons; I have had questions answered by the flashing of a bright light a desired number of times in front of my face. I have seen sparks of light rising from the table to the ceiling, and again falling upon the table, striking it with an audible sound. I have had an alphabetic communication given by luminous flashes occurring before me in the air, whilst my hand was moving about amongst them. I have seen a luminous cloud floating upwards to a picture. Under the strictest test conditions, I have more than once had a solid, self-luminous, crystalline body placed in my hand by a hand which did not belong to any person in the room.
>
> *In the light*, I have seen a luminous cloud hover over a heliotrope on a side table, break a sprig off, and carry the sprig to a lady; and on some occasions I have seen a similar luminous cloud visibly condense to the form of a hand and carry small objects about. These, however, more properly belong to the next class of phenomena.[9]

One of the most famous spirit controls in our history would be John King, who, unlike most controls, would work through multiple mediums over many decades. The alleged control had a wife and a daughter, confusingly both called Katie King. The daughter is said to have worked through Florence (Florrie) Cook, producing the first full-form materialisations in this country circa 1873.

Incidentally, it is interesting that in physical phenomena the medium's spirit controls would generally specialise in a certain phenomenon, e.g. slate-writing, but would fail if asked to produce another type —this was noted by Stainton Moses:

---

[7] Proceedings of the Society for Psychical Research, Vol. XI, p. 45.

[8] Henry Slade, slate-writing medium: The Spiritual Magazine, 1874, p. 174.

[9] The Appearance of Hands, either Self-Luminous or Visible by Ordinary Light.

> Moses observed that during the period that any particular spirit was in the habit of manifesting a certain type of phenomenon, this was produced in abundance; and that a change of spirit operator was accompanied by a new type of phenomenon, each operator evidently excelling in its own speciality.

This is evident in well-known mediums like Etta Wriedt and Ada Besinnet; their mediumship remained in the same style.[10] Wriedt's speciality was direct voice; she tried hard to produce slate-writing but her controls would give her no assistance and she continually failed.

John King appears to be more multifunctional in the production of phenomena. Moses noted at the beginning of this article: "As is usual with spirit lights, they did not illuminate surrounding objects."

The spirit control John King, when materialised, brought with him a peculiar spirit lamp which illuminated him in the darkened séance room, and it is reported that on occasion the lamp would illuminate the séance-room. It was often handled by the sitters and was usually found to be hard and slightly warm, or soft, like flesh. Often it was covered with soft, lace-like drapery. Its light increased or diminished according to the available psychic force. There are many records describing the doings of this spirit and his curious lamp.[11]

The engraving shows the physical medium Charles Williams with the spirit control John King holding his lamp:

> "Katie King" the elder, as the leader of a band of scientific disembodied minds, we say, most heartily, God bless her! It was she who discovered the mode of concentrating the spirit-light which is now so well known as "John King's" spirit-lamp."

The above quote is taken from a series of articles in Psypioneer, "The Beginnings of Full-Form Materialisations".[12] Stainton Moses recorded some thirty sittings with Charles Williams during the period 1872-1876; some of the earlier recorded sittings with Williams were joint séances with Frank Herne. For the spirit-lamp as observed and described by Stainton Moses, see the above-cited series for more information and references:

> "A great development in this special manifestation has taken place during the past 18 months. When first I saw spirit-lights they were of a smoky, phosphoric nature. In the presence of Herne and Williams Katie would endeavour to illumine her face with light which streamed from her fingers. The result was very much what I could obtain by daubing a plate over with phosphorized oil and rubbing my fingers over it. The features were purely imaginary, and the odour of phosphorus which pervaded the room most real. By degrees this mode of illumination viz by sheaves of phosphoric light emanating from fingers of a hand gave way to something more refined. I remember well being present on the evening (Sep. 22 1872) when the new lamp was first produced. It gave a dull reddish-

[10] Vice-Admiral W. Usborne Moore noted: "Miss Besinnet's phenomena are almost stereotyped… They have changed very little during the last thirteen years …" (Glimpses of the Next State).

[11] "Some Reminiscences" by Alfred Smedley (and others), published London 1900, page 45.

[12] Started in Vol. 6, No. 11, November 2010: all volumes are archived at: http://psypioneer.iapsop.com/

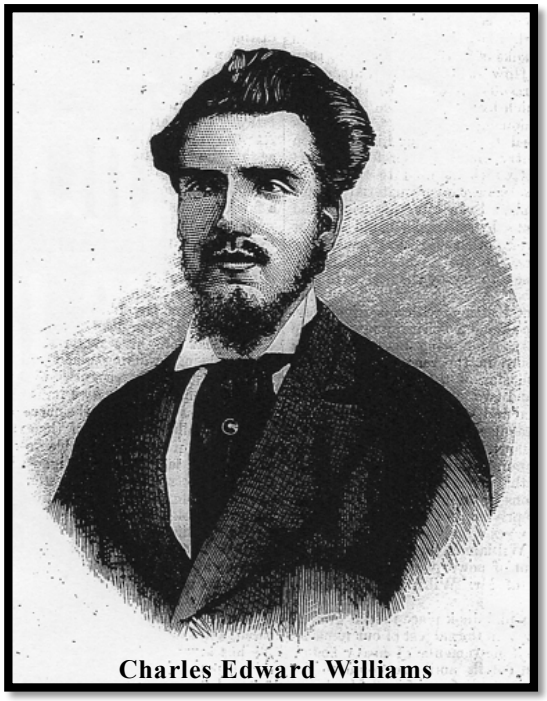
yellow light, very evanescent and very poor, as we think now, but it was then a great triumph. The crystal was apparently an oblong of about 6 in x 3 in and varying in thickness. This form of light has been gradually improved by John King who now uses it until it presents now the appearance of a globe of soft yellow light surrounded by drapery, and varying in size from that of a large turnip down to that of a hen's egg. I have seen it as John King passed it over his face as large as a turnip, and giving out light which filled the Cabinet and was reflected from the mirror at the back of the Cabinet. I have seen it too when apparently no hand held it, hovering about 8 feet from the floor whilst Mrs. Wm. Crookes held Williams in his chair. This séance was in Mr. Crookes' own house. The light on that occasion ascended 6 feet from where the Medium sat, and rapped quite plainly on the table 3 feet from the hand which was held by Mrs. Crookes. This was crucial evidence of the independent action and existence of the light.

"This light varies, as I have said, from a vapoury large phosphorescent light to a clear luminous crystal. The appearance can in some degree be counterfeited by a phial of phosphorized oil enclosed in a handkerchief, but the light so made is of a greyer tint, more ashen in hue, and is not nearly so permanent. Moreover the experience just detailed is crucial as to the independent existence of the light.

"In presence of Mr. Williams are seen also little round flashing lights purporting to be made by the spirit Katie. They are of a totally different character. Instead of the bottled moonlight appearance, they are brilliant, radiant, like the flashing of a gem in bright light. They are not larger than a walnut and dart about rapidly in mid-air giving one the idea of a large diamond scintillating in a ray of light. I have once observed a similar light on the mantel shelf in the study at Dglas House, but it was quite stationary and remained for half an hour or more like a large gem lit up by a ray of light.

"Katie's little gem-lights are not unlike the little points of light which dart about with Mrs Everitt, and answer questions by their flashes.

"Spirit-lights of great brilliancy are seen with Mrs Jencken [Katie Fox]. They are not unlike the light shewn by John King. Mr. Crookes has tested the independent existence of these lights very satisfactorily."



Charles Edward Williams

Florence (Florrie) Cook - Corner & Katie King Photographs

The image shown of the alleged daughter of the spirit controls John and Katie King is taken from an 1875 book by Epes Sargent, "The Proof Palpable of Immortality; Being an Account of the Materialization of Modern Spiritualism".

I found important references in this book while writing an article for the now defunct Psypioneer on William Crookes' photographs of his séances with the medium Florence (Florrie) Cook - Corner & Katie King, which he investigated. The article was published in Psypioneer, "Four "Katie King" Photographs" in 2012.[13]

The opening paragraph started:

> The photographic images of the alleged spirit Katie King, through the physical mediumship of Florence Cook, taken at 20, Mornington Road London the residence of William Crookes are well known, through numerous books, spiritualistic journals and websites. Published below is the original article that brought four of these photographs to public attention in 1934.

One of the images is published here for convenience. Within the article Crookes' feelings on the materialisations of "Katie King" were noted:

> Mr. Crookes was not convinced of Katie's identity. In a letter to professor Brofferio in 1894, he said:
>
> "All that I am concerned in is that invisible and intelligent beings exist, who say that they are the spirits of dead persons. But proof that they really are the individuals they assume to be, which I require in order to believe it, I have never received, though I am disposed to admit that many of my friends assert they have actually obtained the desired proofs, and I myself have already frequently been many times on the verge of this conviction."

It is noted in the article that "all the forty-four negatives taken by Sir William Crookes, O.M., F.R.S., were destroyed after his death…", which is discussed in the cited article.

However, there are a few photographs of Crookes arm-in-arm with Katie King.[14]

---

[13] Vol. 8, No. 7, July 2012: "The Katie King Photographs – Four "Katie King" Photographs – *Psychic Science* – Paul Gaunt comments".

[14] Nandor Fodor, in his *Encyclopaedia of Psychic Science* (Citadel Press, 1966, p. 71), states: "He never allowed the circulation of the photograph in which he stood arm-in-arm with Katie King." Some reports state that none of Crookes' photographs were published in his lifetime. When the above article, along with the publication of the

During the research for the article it is noted:

> It is usually assumed that all photographs of "Katie King" are part of Crookes' private collection. We can note quite clearly the cabinet behind the alleged materialisation, and we can see on the four photographs the sitters appear to be facing away from the cabinet, this is suggestive that the photographs were not taken at Mornington Road as the article states.

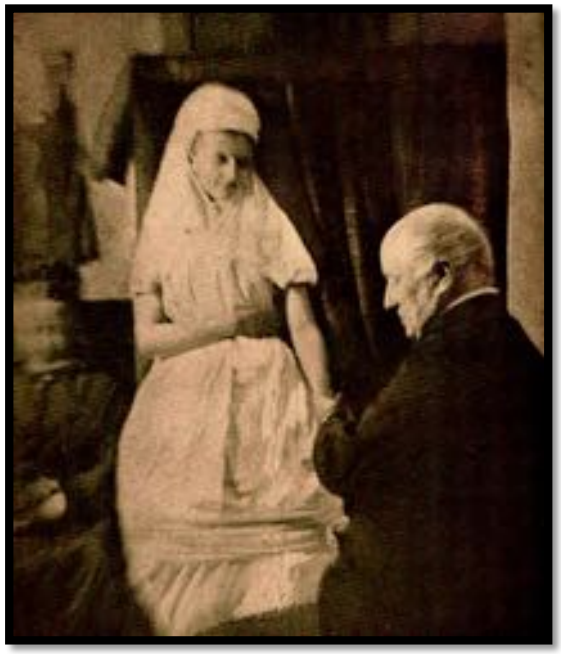
Note Crookes' comments on the photographic séances setup:

"My library was used as a dark cabinet. It has folding doors opening into the laboratory; one of these doors was taken off its hinges, and a curtain suspended in its place to enable Katie to pass in and out easily. Those of our friends who were present were seated in the laboratory facing the curtain, and the cameras were placed a little behind them, ready to photograph Katie when she came outside, and to photograph anything also inside the cabinet whenever the curtain was withdrawn for the purpose."

What is not generally known is the fact that Crookes was not the only person to photograph the alleged "Katie King": photographs were taken by the founder editor of "The Spiritualist", William Henry Harrison (1841-1897).

Harrison was one of the most experienced sitters with Florence Cook, covering at least two years during her stages of development to full materialisation, and he was the first to obtain photographs of the alleged materialised figure, "Katie King". In May 1873 Harrison by magnesium light successfully obtained a series of photographic images as the form emerged from the cabinet, walked about the room and conversed with the sitters who sat in a semi-circle in front of the cabinet.

This image on the websites and books generally states (I believe incorrectly): "Photograph was taken by William Crookes with Dr. James M. Gully taking her pulse."!



One of the more frequent sitters with William H. Harrison was indeed Dr. Gully. Information on this image can be noted in the book mentioned at the head of this article by Epes Sargent, which states on July 20 1874:[15]

> "When that photograph was taken, I held her hand for at least two minutes, three several times, for we sat three times for it on one and the same evening; but I was constrained to close my eyes by reason of the intense magnesium light which shone upon me; she desired that none of us gaze at her whilst the lens was directed upon her."

---

four Crookes photographs, appeared for the *first* time in April 1934, *Psychic News* also reproduced these by courtesy of *Psychic Science*.

[15] "The well-known published photograph, in which Katie is represented standing with Dr. Gully sitting at her side and holding her hand." (Sargent, p. 54-55)

A further observation has now been made:

The conclusion of one photograph (6) in the Psypioneer article cited was left open:

6, again no research has been carried out on this but does not fit in with Crookes description:

"On entering the cabinet Miss Cook lies down upon the floor, with her head on a pillow, and is soon entranced. During the photographic *séance*, Katie muffled her medium's head up in a shawl to prevent the light falling upon her face. I frequently drew the curtain on one side when Katie was standing near, and it was a common thing for the seven or eight of us in the laboratory to see Miss Cook and Katie at the same time, under the full blaze of the electric light.

We did not on these occasions actually see the face of the medium because of the shawl, but we saw her hands and feet; we saw her move uneasily under the influence of the intense light, and we heard her moan occasionally. I have one photograph of the two together, but Katie is seated in front of Miss Cook's head."

As with the Dr. Gully photograph, it is frequently stated to have been taken by William Crookes but it does not fit in with his above description!

It is clear the image is indeed Florence Cook but she has her head exposed and not on the floor, as stated by Crookes; it may appear the ghostly image could suggest it is pulling away the shawl—but the entranced medium is clearly resting her head on the chair and not with her head on a pillow on the floor. It could possibly suggest the photograph of a séance taken by William Harrison, as Crookes clearly notes: "I have one photograph of the two together, but Katie is seated in front of Miss Cook's head." So it was left as an open question.

It has previously been noted in Pioneer that the Spiritualists' Lyceum Union donated its archives to the Britten Museum & Library, housed at Stansted Hall. Included in this archive is a collection of lantern slides on psychic photography, which are now all scanned. Psychic photography dates to the early 1860s but is referenced around a decade earlier, though no images are known to have survived. I have been researching some of the history on this subject and have put together a Powerpoint to be used at the Arthur Findlay College. During this research I discovered the origin of the image here shown.

This observation shows without doubt that the image was not taken or associated with either Crookes or Harrison: in fact, it brings into consideration another phase of psychic phenomena. The image shown would have been invisible to any observers and to the photographer, as this was produced by psychic photography in March 1872 by the first commercial psychic photographer in the UK, Frederick Hudson.

At this period there were no known reported full-form materialisation mediums in the UK, as it was still in development; in London, in January 1872, Mrs. Elizabeth Guppy (who later became Mrs Volckman)[16] was the first British medium to materialise spirit hands and faces—followed by Frank Herne and Charles Williams taking the young teenager, Florence Cook, under their wing. The following year Florence materialised the full form of Katie King.

It is interesting to note that Katie King the younger was in fact materialising, giving the appearance of solid form not only in this photograph but in at least one other at this time by Hudson. The forms appear solid rather than the appearance of double exposure, as some of Hudson's other images appeared. However, the images were not at this time visible to the human eye but through the process of what became known as psychic photography early in Hudson's work the faces of the ghost images were mostly unseen.

Shortly after Hudson in June 1872, John Beattie's experimental circle began to produce psychic photography but not in the form of human spirits like Hudson and previously Mumler.

Beattie said that the luminescent substances were

"taken up by invisible intelligent beings and molded into shapes, like clay in the hand of the artist"

Left: John Beattie

John Beattie continued in the next issue …

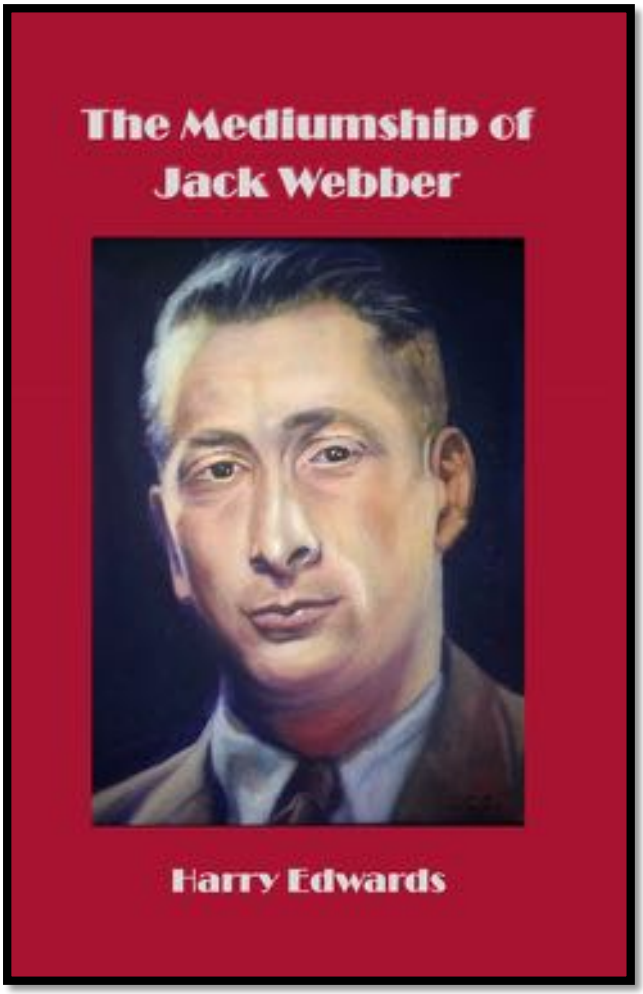
[16] Volckman was the first, a seasoned experienced researcher, to grab a spirit form. This took place at the Cooks residence at Hackney during a séance on December 9th 1873—Volckman grabbed Katie King. See Psypioneer Vol. 6, No. 7, July 2010: "William Volckman".

The Mediumship of Jack Webber:

Featured in the last issue of Pioneer were a few articles on John Boaden Webber (1907-1940), better known as Jack Webber. I received some feedback on the Webber article from Ann Harrison.

Ann wrote:

> "Dear Paul
>
> Aren't Spirit wonderful?
>
> Just as I am about to issue a new edition of "The Mediumship of Jack Webber" by Harry Edwards, with the permission of the Harry Edwards Healing Sanctuary, who hold the copyright for this book until 2046, you publish a long article about his mediumship in the SNU Pioneer.
>
> We (being Denzil Fairbairn and myself) were rather dismayed to see the inclusion of the information that the book was available for free as a pdf on the web, as this will deny revenue to the HEHS, who do such good work in sending healing throughout the world. All royalties from sales of the new book, which will be available as a paperback and an Ebook, are going to the Centre to help in their work.
>
> I do hope that you can include this information in your next edition.



> The book will be available from early January through Amazon worldwide and through my website.[17] It will be available through mainstream bookshops to special order too (ISBN 978-1-908421-33-3) and at the Arthur Findlay Bookshop.
>
> I am happy to say that the photographs have been rescanned from the originals, thanks to Denzil, and are now placed at the relevant places in the book instead of all at the end as previously. He hopes to shortly have his own book about the mediumship of his uncle Jack Webber in print too.
>
> Thank you for your help
> Ann Harrison
>
> Saturday Night Press Publications."

[17] SNPP: Saturday Night Press Publications: http://www.snppbooks.com

DIRECT - INDEPENDENT VOICE PHENOMENA

Could this be simulated by ventriloquism?

Direct - Independent voice phenomena are recorded in the beginning of Modern Spiritualism. The voices are allegedly produced at a distance away from the medium by a temporary building of an ectoplasmic larynx, where the spirit voice reproduction was generally heard through a trumpet, but this is not always the case, e.g. as in the case of Leslie Flint.

Pioneer, Vol. 3, No. 3, June 2016:

> Flint was able to demonstrate the direct voice while he was fully conscious, seldom going into a trance state. Flint did not speak in trance; he worked in total darkness and, unlike most mediums, he did not use a trumpet or any other physical devices to help produce the spirit voices. His ectoplastic larynx was formed on his left side and located some two feet away from the medium, where the spirit voices would speak into the manufactured replica voice box. The communicating spirit would concentrate its thoughts into the ectoplasmic voice box by lowering its frequency/vibration to produce objective speech.

The voices are quite distinct from that of the mediums, although often the reports state that the style and mannerisms of the communicating spirit are more evidential, as the voices in the early stages are not always easily recognised.

There are numerous striking reports on this rare form of physical mediumship, for example John Campbell Sloan (1869-1951), whose name became synonymous with James Arthur Findlay, whom he met on September 20th 1918. A rare report on this voice medium, "A Scotch Materializing and Voice Medium", can be found in Psypioneer.[22] Further valuable information can be found in this publication: "Direct Voice Mediumship", "Arthur Conan Doyle and the Independent Direct Voice", and "Independent Voice Development with Mrs. Osborne Leonard".[23]

The above Pioneer reference also includes "Behind the scenes at Estelle Roberts' Voice Seances" by Maurice Barbanell.

However, there are some skeptical avenues of thought which considered ventriloquism as a possible way of creating the voices which emanated from the trumpet, etc.

Psychical researcher and author Hereward Carrington (1880-1958) ably tackled this suggestion, "Ventriloquism, Considered as A Possible Explanation of 'Independent Voice' Phenomena", in his 1930 book, "The Story of Psychic Science", which is published below:

[22] Vol. 8, No. 12, December 2012: John Campbell Sloan (1869-1951) – Paul J. Gaunt – A Scotch Materializing and Voice Medium – Mrs Hewat McKenzie.

[23] Vol. 10, No. 1, January 2014; Vol. 10, No. 7, July 2014; Vol. 12, No. 2, March/April 2016.

VENTRILOQUISM, CONSIDERED AS A POSSIBLE EXPLANATION OF 'INDEPENDENT VOICE' PHENOMENA

The impression seems to be fairly prevalent that 'ventriloquism' may account for the so-called 'independent voices' often heard at trumpet séances; in fact such an explanation has frequently been advanced by skeptical investigators, in an attempt to dispose of the possible authenticity of such manifestations. In view of the striking evidence which has recently been obtained, in connection with the 'Margery' mediumship,[24] it may be of interest to examine this supposition at some length, in order to see whether or not any such explanation may be advanced by way of accounting for the facts.

Roughly speaking, there are two types of ventriloquism: *near* ventriloquism, and natural or *distant* ventriloquism. In the former, the voice apparently proceeds from the mouth of a dummy or lay-figure, which the performer holds upon his knee, and, while producing the ventriloquial effects, he causes the mouth of the figure to move in imitation of the sounds produced—usually by means of the thumb of the hand holding the figure erect. The audience instinctively watches the mouth of the figure, and the voice seems to proceed from it—the illusion being maintained by the studied immobility of the lips of the ventriloquist himself. In the latter case (distant ventriloquism) no figure is visible, but a conversation is carried on with some child or grown person who is in a box, upstairs, on the roof, etc. Imitations may also be given of various animals, or of a saw, planing, tearing linen, drawing soda, and so forth. In all such instances, the ventriloquist acts out the part, in order to add to the illusion.

Ventriloquism is an art which can be learned, and depends very largely upon certain physiological controls, which insure the desired sound-effects. A number of these I have described at length in my little book *Side Show and Animal Tricks* (1913),—since reprinted in *The Boys' Book of Magic*. Two essential factors must be noted: First, the lips of the performer must be as far as possible without movement; secondly, the sound produced must be precisely the sound which would emanate from the location whence it is supposed to issue. To insure this the ventriloquist listens to the voice of some real person in the position desired, and then reproduces this as accurately as possible. The illusion is enhanced by the acting of the performer, and by distracting the attention of the audience to the spot indicated, and away from himself.

In other words, the ventriloquist reproduces the voice precisely as it *would* sound to his audience, were it really to issue from the spot whence it is supposed to come; and adds to the illusion in every way possible—such as pointing, looking, etc., in that direction himself; or, in the case of 'near' ventriloquism, by moving the jaw of the lay-figure which is supposed to do the talking.

All this works very well so long as the audience is at some distance from the performer; but the nearer the audience the less perfect the illusion! At very near range, it is impossible for a ventriloquist to produce the illusion of distant sounds or voices; he must then depend upon 'near' ventriloquism, and the nearer the listener's ear to the mouth of the performer the less perfect the illusion, until, at quite close range, the illusion

[24] 'Margery' mediumship: Carrington is referring to Mina Crandon, a Canadian physical medium.

vanishes altogether, and the sounds are correctly located, as issuing from the ventriloquist's mouth, and not from that of the lay-figure.

This is merely due to the fact that, contrary to popular belief, there is no such thing as 'throwing the voice' across the room, or to any distant location in space. The prevalent conception seems to be that the voice can be 'thrown'—like a stone—and that the 'stone' will speak, or appear to speak, from its present position. This is a complete fallacy, as every practical ventriloquist will testify. The voice merely *seems* to issue from that spot because the performer distracts the attention of his audience to it, and imitates the exact sound which would be heard if it actually did so. The imagination does the rest. But there is no such thing as 'throwing the voice' across space, in the sense popularly supposed. Mr. Charles H. Olin, a practical ventriloquist, in his book upon the subject, explicitly states that:

'A large part of the otherwise intelligent public still labours under the delusion that the ventriloquist is endowed by nature with the power of "throwing his voice" wherever he pleases, and causing it mysteriously to return to him; and that it is as easy to ventriloquize in the midst of a crowd or in the street as it is from a theatre stage or in a large hall, where the audience is some distance from the performer. . . . If the commonly accepted theory of the vocal bomb were correct, it would undoubtedly be as easy to ventriloquize in one place as in another; but as a matter-of-fact, there is nothing peculiar about the formation of the throats of the professors of this art—even of the most adept—to distinguish them from the rest of humanity; and as for actual voice-throwing—there is no such thing' (pp. 11-12).

All this has a distinct bearing upon the alleged 'independent voices' produced by mediums, through a trumpet or otherwise. For, in such cases, all acting, distraction of attention, etc., is necessarily eliminated, while the investigators are usually quite close to the medium. In complete darkness, the customary illusions and methods could not possibly be employed. In their absence, a large percentage of the delusory effect would at once vanish. The medium might produce an exact imitation of a voice, as it would sound some feet away, but at such close range the illusion would be completely lost, and the voice would be located by the listeners at its real point of origin. In other words, inasmuch as 'throwing the voice' to a distant part of the room, in the commonly accepted sense of the term, is quite impossible, the illusion of its being there would at once disappear, and hence ventriloquism, in this sense, is quite incapable of explaining the 'independent voices' heard, e.g. at Margery's séances.

It is true that our senses are all subject to error, and that sounds are often difficult to locate exactly, but it is not nearly as difficult as many persons imagine. Years ago, Dr. Hyslop and I tried a number of experiments of this kind, and discovered that it is usually fairly easy to locate a sound, provided that it is not in the median plane—that is, exactly midway between the ears. Mr. Bird and Dr. Crandon have obtained the same results in informal experiments. This is true both in the dark and in the light. And it is certainly true that no person of even average keenness of perception would locate a sound behind him while it really emanated from in front of him. So that, if the investigator were standing close beside the medium, there is no known ventriloquial effect by means of which the medium could make a sound which would appear to issue from a point in space behind the investigator—as happened, *e.g.* at the Margery séance of May I9, 1924, at which Mr. Bird and myself were present, the medium's mouth being completely closed by Mr. Bird's hand.

All of which, of course, does not prove that the independent voices produced at Margery's séances are genuine. I am not at present discussing that point. All that I have endeavoured to do is to examine the theoretical possibility that such voices might have been produced by means of ventriloquism, and I think we may confidently conclude that such an explanation in no wise serves to elucidate or explain them.

—~—☼—~—

In conclusion, the article published below is an example of Leslie Flint's voice mediumship during WWII. The image of Flint shown at the beginning of the article is taken from that published by "Psychic News", August 3rd 1940:

"Dead" Air Hero Gives Perfect Proof of His Survival

FULL NAME AND ADDRESS TOLD AT SEANCE

FLIGHT-LIEUTENANT PETER KITE, who was killed when his machine crashed in the Norwegian offensive in April, has succeeded in transmitting perfect proof of his survival.

At a direct-voice seance at which he was unknown to all but one of the sitters—he met him years ago but knew nothing of his recent activities—he told his full name, gave the correct address of his parents and transmitted information which his mother confirms is "in every way accurate."

Kite communicated at a seance with Leslie Flint. the direct-voice medium, on Monday of last week. He was introduced by Micky, Flint's Cockney guide, who announced, "There's a chap here out of the Air Force who wants to get into touch with his parents. He's very excited. I don't know if he will manage; I'll see what I can do."

Then the dozen sitters heard the excited voice of the "dead" airman speaking to them. No trumpet is used at Flint's seances; the spirit voices speak out of the air. "Hello, hello, hello!" he repeated. "My name's Peter. I want to get into touch with my mother. Do please help me, somebody. I was just 20. I am their only son.

"NOW I'M ALL RIGHT"

"I've been to see them, and they don't know I'm there. It's awful! Tell them I'm all right and tell them I'm not dead. Tell. Mother I came down in a crash, but now I'm all right. I want them to know.

"I was Flight-Lieutenant. Promise me you'll tell Mum and Dad. Tell them I like the enlargement from the snapshot. Mother's very worried; it's making her ill."

From the information given, no one in the circle could identify the boy. W. J. West, one of the sitters, promised the spirit that he would try to contact his parents if he could give sufficient information to enable them to be traced. "Try to give us your full name and address," he said, "and I promise that, if it is at all possible, I will get into touch with them."

THREE CHRISTIAN NAMES

"Oh, thank you so much," exclaimed the "dead" boy. "I had three Christian names—Peter William Handford Kite." To make sure he had transmitted his name correctly, he spelt his surname letter by letter, K-I-T-E. "I lived at 85, Upland Way, Grange Park," he added.

Then Kite materialised—there have been attempts at materialisation for several weeks at this series of Monday sittings, which are of an experimental nature—and advanced

towards one of the sitters, a man named Turner. The spirit touched Turner's knees and took hold of his arm, as if trying to shake him.

"I know you." he said. "You're Mr. Turner. I was a patient of yours. You took my teeth out!"

Although Turner had been attending these seances for several weeks, none of the sitters knew he was a dentist. He said he remembered Peter coming to him for treatment some years before, but he did not know he had joined the R.A.F. and had not heard of his "death."

"It's Peter," went on the spirit, still talking to the dentist. "Tell Mother, please, I'm not dead. She is worrying; tell her not to. Tell her I'm all right."

He repeated that he liked the enlargement, as though that message had some significance, and added: "Tell her to give my regards to Edward—she will understand. I'll be very upset indeed if you don't tell them. Tell them to come and talk with me. I want them to be happy. Don't forget, please. Thank you."

West promised that he would try to contact the boy's parents the next day and, with a final "Thank you," the spirit went.

On Tuesday, West went to Grange Park, North London, and at last succeeded in locating the address the "dead" airman had given.

EVERYTHING CONFIRMED

The woman who answered the door admitted that she was Mrs. Kite and that her son, Peter, had recently been killed in an air crash. But when she was told a message from her son had been received at a seance the night before, she, knowing nothing of Spiritualism, did not understand.

But West read to her from his notes what the "dead" boy had said and she acknowledged point after point as being correct. The only slight discrepancy was that her son's third christian name had been given at the seance as "Handford" whereas it was really Handsford. She knew Edward, she said, and showed West the enlargement of which Peter had spoken.

MOTHER'S LETTER

Mrs. Kite asked whether she might have a copy of what her son had said. When it was sent to her, she replied: "I wish to thank you for sending me the transcription of your notes and also for your visit to me last Tuesday.

"I must apologise to you for the way in which I received you at first, which was due to my ignorance and fear of the supernatural, but want you now to realise how much I appreciate your desire to help me. My husband is also much impressed with all that you told me.

"At first, as you know, I was very sceptical, and still am much bewildered, but must admit a feeling of serenity and comfort after your visit, which I have not experienced during many recent weeks.

"My husband and I acknowledge that the facts of the communications, some of which you could not possibly have been cognisant of are in every way accurate.

"We are indebted to you and Mr. Turner for the fulfilment of your obligation to our son, and the fresh hope you have given to us."

* * *

At this same seance, there was a conversation between a spirit and a sitter in Dutch, a language of which Flint is ignorant. Micky, giving additional evidence, said to the man:

"Your wife is here and she has Peter with her. Peter was her dog: it was a Pekinese and it had something the matter with its eyes. You have a lock of hair in a locket. It is not her hair, but the dog's! She says it was buried at the bottom of the garden and she had a flower bed put round it, in memory."

All this was accepted by the sitter as correct. It was evidence, he said, which was unknown to anyone in this country except himself.

Leslie Flint (1911-1994)

Taken from the same book is a rather amusing memory from Ernest Oaten with the direct-voice medium John Sloan, whose name is generally closely associated with J. Arthur Findlay; see Pioneer, Vol. 1, No. 1, August 2013: "John Sloan – James Arthur Findlay". The image of Mr and Mrs John Sloan is taken from the article cited.

CORONA, CORONA!

THOUSANDS of people will be familiar with the name of John Sloan, of Glasgow, a most versatile medium, who is the central figure of that fine book by J. Arthur Findlay, *On the Edge of the Etheric*.

I was privileged to have several sittings with John, and cherish happy memories of a direct conversation I had on one occasion with Dr. Alfred Russell Wallace, O.M.

The trumpet was at the other end of a large circle of some twenty sitters when, immediately behind me, I heard a voice calling my name. It proved to be the famous Dr. Alfred Russell Wallace. He spoke to me concerning my public work, and when questioned showed a complete familiarity with correspondence which had passed between us when he lived at Wimborne.

The seance ended, we adjourned to another room while Mrs. Sloan made some coffee. Some of the sitters had departed, but a few of us still remained and sat round the fire chatting. When coffee was served William Jeffries remarked, "There is only one thing needed to complete a pleasant evening." "What's that?" asked Galloway. "A good cigar!' In a few seconds Sloan was under control and the voice of "Whitey" said, "Just dim the lights and wait a minute or two, and I will see what I can do."

In a few minutes there dropped at the feet of Mr. Jeffries a cigar, with a glowing lighted end. "There you are, Jeffries," said "Whitey," and he picked it up, wiped the end with his handkerchief, put it in his mouth and began to puff.

"Where did you get it, Whitey?" said I. And the reply sent us into fits of laughter. "A fellow was walking along George Square smoking it, and I took it from his mouth and brought it here. He is still looking for it."

We were, of course, unable to verify that statement, though the house was only a few hundred yards from George Square. But I have often found myself smiling at the discomfiture of a man who lost a cigar from his mouth and looked for it in vain.

MEDIUMS HANDLE FIRE

Recently, Pioneer has featured various early psychic phenomena, for example the "Elongation and Shortening of Medium" (Vol. 5, No. 5), "Luminous Appearances" (Vol. 5, No. 6) and in the last issue John Beattie's psychic structures. Below is an article taken from the front pages of the "Two Worlds", February 7th, 1936, which gives an excellent overview of the phenomenon of holding hot coals. I know of only a few mediums who were able to demonstrate this, one being James J. Morse and another Daniel D. Home, who is featured with Samuel Carter Hall (1800-1889) and his wife Ann Maria, both well-known respected Spiritualists; he was chairman of the British National Association of Spiritualists (BNAS) and in his working life he was an editor, reporter, etc.

REMARKABLE TESTIMONY

The recent reports of fire-walking by Mr. Kuda Bux is a reminder that the handling of fire has been a characteristic of psychic phenomena throughout the history of Spiritualism. The Link Association of Home Circles reports a case this week from Johannesburg, in which a medium (Mr. Chard) took hold of a red-hot iron bar and twisted and bent it into a U shape. The medium was lifted up bodily in the air and placed on a chair. A second iron was brought in, and the heat and glow was enough to clearly show all the sitters in the room. The medium then licked the hot iron bar with his tongue, after which a foam of white substance emerged from his mouth. It is hoped that further particulars will be available.

Probably the best authenticated cases of the handling of fire are connected with the great medium, D. D. Home. In over a dozen cases the phenomena were under the observation of skilled observers. Despite all the attacks which have been made upon Home there has never been a single case where the validity of his mediumship has been seriously questioned.

One of the most remarkable cases is that recorded by Mrs. S. C. Hall in a letter to Lord Dunraven. There were nine sitters present. Mrs. Hall says:

"Mr. Home went into a trance. He got up, walked about the room in his usual manner, went to the fire-place, half knelt on the fender stool, took up the poker and stirred the fire (which was like a red-hot furnace) so as to increase the heat, held his hands over the fire for some time, and finally drew out of the fire with his hands a huge lump of live, burning coal, so large that he held it in both hands as he came from the fireplace in the large room into the small room, where, seated round the table, we were all watching his movements. Mr. Hall was seated nearly opposite to where I sat, and I saw Mr. Home, after standing for about half a minute at the back of Mr. Hall's chair, deliberately place the lump of burning coal on his head. I have often wondered that I was not frightened; but I was not, I had perfect faith that he would not be injured.

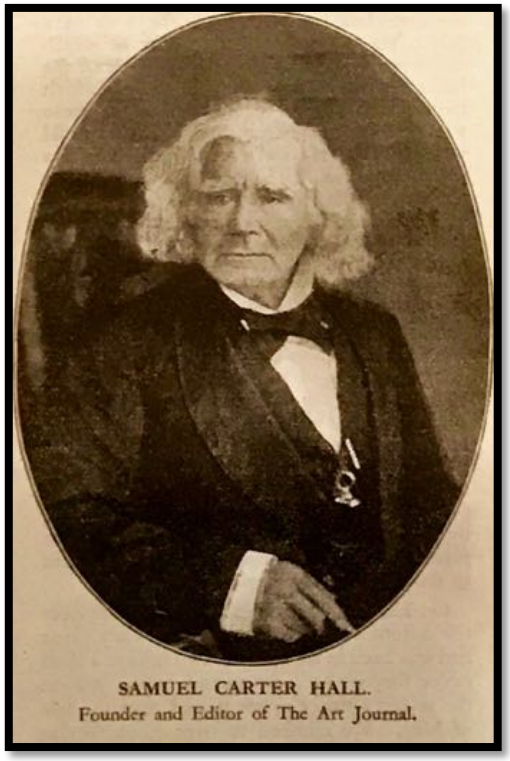
Someone said, 'Is it not hot?' Mr. Hall answered, 'Warm, but not hot.' Mr. Home had moved a little away but returned, still in a trance; he smiled, and seemed quite pleased; and then proceeded to draw up Mr. Hall's white hair over the red coal. Mr. Home drew the hair into a sort of pyramid, the coal, still red, showing beneath the hair. Then after, I think, four or five minutes, Mr. Home pushed the hair back, and taking the coal off Mr. Hall's head he said (in the peculiar low voice in which, when in a trance, he always speaks), addressing Mrs. Y., 'Will you have it?' She drew back; and I heard him murmur, 'Little faith, little faith.

"Two or three attempted to touch it, but it burned their fingers. I said, 'Daniel, bring it to me; I do not fear to take it.' It was not red all over, now, as when Mr. Home put it on Mr. Hall's head, but it was still red in parts. Mr. Home came and knelt by my side; I put out my right hand, but he murmured, 'No, not that; the other hand.' He then placed it in my left hand, where it remained more than a minute, I felt it, as my husband had said, 'warm,' yet, when I stooped down to examine the coal, my face felt the heat so much that I was obliged to withdraw it. After that Mrs. Y. took it, and said she felt no inconvenience. When Mr. Hall brushed his hair that night he found a quantity of cinder dust."

Lord Lindsay (afterwards Lord Crawford and Balcarres F.R.S.), in his evidence before the Dialectical Society's Committee,[8] said—

"I have frequently seen Home, when in a trance, go to the fire and take out large, red-hot coals and carry them about in his hands, put them inside his shirt, etc. Eight time I, myself have held a red-hot coal in my hands, without injury, when it scorched my face on raising my hand. Once I wished to see if they really would burn, and I said so, and touched a coal (held by Home) with the middle finger of my right hand, and I got a blister as large a sixpence. I instantly asked him to give me the coal, and I held the part that burnt me in the middle of my hand for three or four minutes, without the least inconvenience.

A few weeks ago I was at a seance with eight others. Of these, seven held a red-hot coal without pain, and the two others could not bear the approach of it; of the seven, four were ladies."



Hall published for private circulation "The Use of Spiritualism" in 1876; this is available for a free download, which contains more on D. D. Home's mediumship

[8] The London Dialectical Society created a committee 'to investigate the Phenomena alleged to be Spiritual Manifestations and to report thereon', which was appointed on January 26th, 1869. Their findings were published: London Dialectical Society, "Report on Spiritualism", London: Longmans, Green, Reader and Dyer, 1871. Also by J. Burns, London 1873, slightly shortened.

In the last issue of Pioneer, in the opening article, "Visit to the Spiritualist Association of Great Britain", Mr Thomas Everitt was featured as one of their early Presidents and passing reference was made to his wife as a well-known non-professional medium. The Everitts were first acquainted with Spiritualism in 1857. In November 1867 an audible spirit-voice was first obtained through the mediumship of Mrs Everitt, who was thrown into a trance-sleep for the first time, and the spirit of John Watt first made himself known. Mrs Everitt was probably the first direct-voice medium in this country. Published below is an article taken from the "Two Worlds", May 22nd, 1936, "an interesting account with another of her controls, 'Znippy'."[9] [It should be noted that the editor, Ernest Oaten, has spelt "Everett" incorrectly: it should read "Everitt".]

SPIRITS SPEAK ON THE TELEPHONE

I HAVE just been reading Dr. Edwin Bowers' new book, *Spiritualism's Challenge* (National Library Press, New York), in which he relates an incident which occurred in May, 1935, in one of the sittings with Frank Decker, the well-known American medium. At this séance 'materialised form of "Patsy," Frank Decker's guide, put through telephone call, himself lifting the receiver and calling the number, and a conversation was sustained for some minutes. Dr. Bowers says, "The phenomenon is unique," a conclusion with which we are inclined to agree.

It is perhaps singular that only a fortnight ago I was relating, in London, a case in which the direct voice (not a materialised form) used the telephone over forty years ago.

Mrs. Everett, of London, was probably the greatest medium for the direct voice that this country has ever produced. It was my luck to meet her on one occasion early in the nineties at Cardiff, where she was staying at the house of Mrs. Cooper. It was while we were sitting at tea (not a seance) that the voice of "Znippy" was heard talking to the assembled company.

The telephone was quite a new instrument then; there were certainly not a score of instruments in the town, but one possessed by Mr. Cooper, who ran one of the leading music establishments in the city. Mr. Cooper asked "Znippy" if he could speak over the phone, and, ringing up a number, Cooper put the call through. We all then retired to that part of the room farthest from the phone, whilst "Znippy" held an animated conversation with a friend at the other end of the line.

In those days the telephone was a very imperfect instrument, and one had to speak pretty close to the mouthpiece in order to be heard. 'This demonstration created a remarkable impression upon me at the time. There certainly was no one within ten feet of the instrument, yet the message went through clear and distinct, and in the most normal manner.

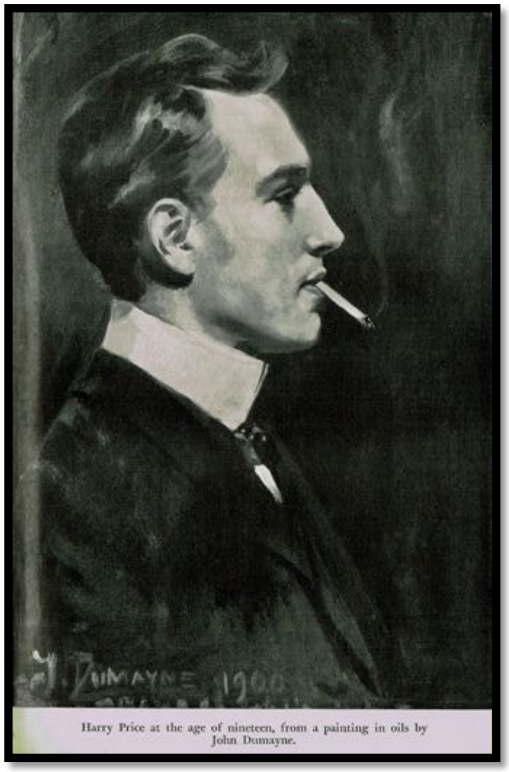
[9] In the previous article, "Mediums Handle Fire": a report of Mrs Everitt's mediumship can be found in Samuel Carter Hall's book, *"The Use of Spiritualism"*, referred to at the end of the article.

Mr. and Mrs. Everett were amongst the founders of Spiritualism in London in the early days, and having been convinced of the facts of Spiritualism, and developed remarkable mediumship, they travelled the length and breadth of the land, chiefly without fee or reward, to spread abroad the tidings which had helped and blessed their lives.

There seems of late to be a recurrence of some of the physical phenomena which characterised Spiritualism in the early years, and we hope and believe that before long the phenomena, which was so convincing in those early days, will be repeated in even greater quantity.

It seems strange that the first outbursts of Spiritualistic phenomena were characterised by many remarkable phases of the physical types of phenomena. These came to an almost abrupt ending about the end of the ’seventies. Probably the application of crude and often cruel forms of testing and controlling mediums had something to do with it. Greater attention, however, was paid to mental types of evidence, enabling us to explore the bearing of subconscious processes and telepathy in relation to evidence.

In the last few years however the pendulum has been swinging again, and in the light of past experience we are in a better position to assess their value.



Harry Price at the age of nineteen, from a painting in oils by John Dumayne.

HARRY PRICE

1881 - 1948

Harry Price was a psychical researcher; it would be fair to say, generally speaking, that he was—not popular in the Spiritualist Movement—a debunker and an exposer of fraudulent mediums; some would consider Price the British equivalent of Harry Houdini. This would be an unfair assumption: Price did in fact endorse some valuable Spiritualistic and psychic phenomena during his researches, unlike Houdini. See Pioneer, Vol. 5, No. 2: "Did Harry Houdini ever believe in Spiritualism?"

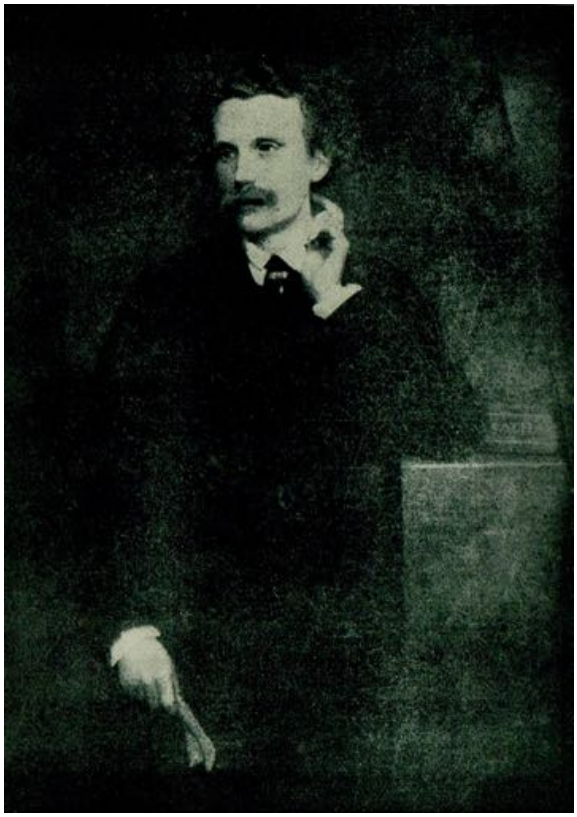
An example of this is published below in Jean Burton's "Heyday of a Wizard: Daniel Home the Medium", published in 1948, for which Harry Price, just prior to his death, wrote the foreword:

It was with great pleasure that I accepted the invitation to introduce this latest and most colourful story of Daniel Dunglas Home's life and achievements. For the layman it is the best biography extant, and Miss Jean Burton is to be congratulated upon writing a racy, impartial, accurate, and most readable record of a great personality and a great physical medium.

I have always regretted that I was born many years too late for me to test the alleged—and much debated—phenomena of Home. But even in my early youth I was attracted to the man and his miracles and began collecting all the books, articles, and letters I could find concerning this strange psychic. Always I asked myself, "Was he genuine?"

Was he genuine? There is a vast literature dealing with Home, and in my own library I have scores of items describing the man and his phenomena, his life, his queer personality, his egotism—and his gentleness. But—and this is significant—I possess not one word about any valid 'exposure' of his methods or that he was ever caught cheating at his séances. This does not, of course, preclude the possibility that Home did 'help out' occasionally. But he was never exposed.

The very fact that such an extensive literature concerning Home is available is, I think, *prima facie* evidence of the man's genuineness. Had Home been merely a charlatan, interest in his person and performances would have petered out long since. In my collection of such things I have literally hundreds of books and pamphlets exposing mediums and explaining their tricks—tricks which, to the uninitiated, appear far more startling and impressive than anything Home ever did. But the fact that they were tricks, and that their exponents were tricksters, meant that the 'mediums' involved lasted a very short time only, and quickly faded from public memory. How many of the lay public have ever even heard of such physical mediums as William Eglinton, 'Dr' Francis Ward Monck, Charles H. Foster, F. F. Craddock, and a score of other charlatans? These men were more or less contemporaries of Home; all were exposed and their tricks duplicated. It is noteworthy that Home's most striking phenomena have never been duplicated, under the same conditions, by normal means.



I have said that Home was never exposed. But there have been stories of exposures, all of them untrue and unsubstantiated. The most persistent of these is a yarn about a séance held at the Tuileries during the Second Empire, in the spring of 1857.[1] Napoleon III and the Empress Eugénie were present. It was stated—some time afterwards—that at one of these Tuileries séances, Home was detected removing one of his feet from its shoe and touching with it the august person of the Emperor—the implication being that the medium had prehensile toes.[2]

For nearly ninety years this story has gone the rounds—with variations and embellishments. Several different dates are mentioned and many different places have been given as the scene of the dénouement—but usually it is the Tuileries. Details are conspicuous by their absence, and no evidence for the exposure worthy of the name has ever been published. And not a word about the alleged incident is printed in Princess Metternich's Souvenirs,[3] in which she gives such a graphic word picture of her adventures with Home. If there had been a word of truth in the story at least she, of all persons, would have recorded it. Though she accepted the phenomena, she was sceptical at heart, and would not have suppressed any evidence for fraud. She was an intimate friend of the Empress and would have heard all about any 'exposure' at Court. But she is silent.

In 1934 it came to the knowledge of Dr Eugene Osty, Director of the Institut Métapsychique, Paris, that M. Marcel Le Roy Dupré, a distinguished Parisian who had been a friend of the Empress Eugénie, had approached this lady on the very question which we are discussing. So Dr Osty wrote to M. Dupré, asking him to put in writing the details of the Empress's answer as to the truth or otherwise of the statement that on one occasion Home cheated.

In a letter dated November 26, 1934, M. Dupré gives Dr Osty the result of his interview with the Empress, whom he saw at Cap Martin:

> I no longer remember whether, without a direct question, I led the interview around to the subject, or whether the Empress mentioned it spontaneously, nor whether the gist of the matter, which I have retained, was enlarged upon. It is more than fifteen years since that day! But I remember that *she affirmed the falsity of the widespread rumour* that Home, in a séance at the Tuileries, succeeded in putting his foot, first drawn from his shoe, under the table into the Emperor's hand according to

[1] Wikipedia: The Tuileries Palace (French: *Palais des Tuileries*, IPA: [palɛ de tɥilʁi]) was a royal and imperial palace in Paris which stood on the right bank of the River Seine. It was the usual Parisian residence of most French monarchs, from Henry IV to Napoleon III, until it was burned by the Paris Commune in 1871.

[2] Pioneer: Prehensile feet are the lower limbs which possess prehensility, the ability to grasp objects like a hand, commonly observed in monkeys, who similarly have prehensile tails.

[3] Pauline, Princess Metternich, *Souvenirs d'enfance et de jeunesse*, 1845-1863 (Paris); Eng. trans.: *The Days that are No More* (London, 1921).

some, on his knee according to others. The Empress seemed even a little shocked that such an audacious and gross lack of respect for a reigning Sovereign could be supposed possible; and, moreover, for so many unlikely reasons.

I was led to believe, further, that this invention was not immediately contemporaneous with the séance. If it were true it would have spread rapidly. Now, my father told me that considerably later, at the request of my mother, who was interested in these phenomena, then hardly known and scarcely examined, he went to look for Home in Paris in order to bring him to see her. He did not succeed, as Home was, I think, just leaving France. But an anecdote about any subterfuge would naturally have prevented my father from taking this step. A minimum presumption!

[Signed] MARCEL LE ROY DUPRÉ [4]

So now we have first-hand evidence from the Empress Eugénie herself that Home was not caught cheating at any Tuileries séance. As Miss Burton points out, there were many people in Paris willing—even anxious—to slander the great Daniel in an effort to drive him from Court and capital.

At no period was Home without active enemies.

—~—☼—~—

There are indeed a few stories surrounding Home's (pronounced Hume) alleged imposture during this period; an example is published in "The First Psychic", by Peter Lamont, 2005, who tells the story of a séance in Biarritz which came under the watchful eye of Dr. Barthez, who it is said become concerned that the Empress was under Home's influence. The physician *was confident that Daniel was 'a performer of tricks', but he did not know how the tricks were done*.

The doctor was persistent in his quest to show that Home was a fraud:

As for the nature of the subterfuge, Barthez explained: The matter is simple enough. Mr Home has thin slippers, easily drawn on and off; he has also, I fancy, cuts in his socks, which leave his toes free. At the proper moment he throws off a slipper, and with his toes tugs at a dress here and there, rings a handbell, gives a rap on this side or that, and the thing once done quickly slips his foot back into its slipper again. This', Barthez went on, was not mere speculation, but 'was seen by M. Morio, who drew up a full signed and written statement, with all the details necessary to establish the genuineness of his discovery'. Alas, this first statement by a witness telling us how Daniel accomplished his feats never survived, …[5]

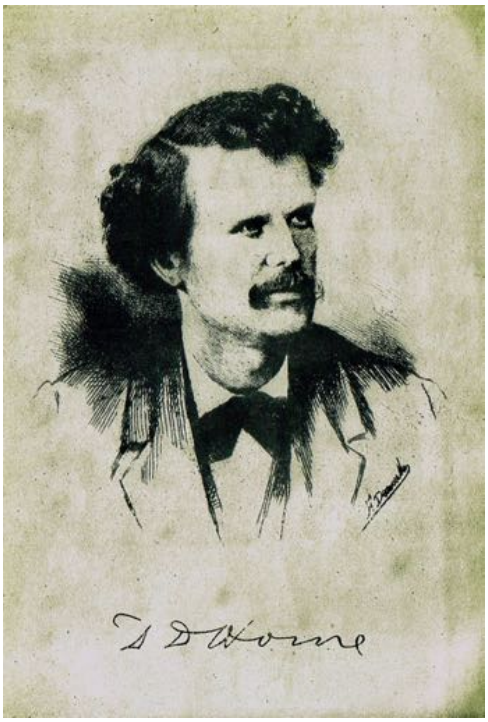
The story is told in Chapter 6, "Diagnosis in Biarritz", but the attempt held little substance to show conclusive evidence that Home was indeed a trickster. During the above period Home was still recovering from the suspension of his mediumship; on the evening of February 10th 1856, as Home himself records, "the spirits told me that my power would leave me for a year." He was also in poor health. Home had many who would like to see him exposed and it appears that all the allegations were of a similar nature concerning his feet.

—~—☼—~—

[4] For the full text of this letter, see Osty's "D, D, Home. New Light on the 'Exposure at the Tuileries' ", *Journal of the American S.P.R.* (New York), March and April 1936.

[5] Pages 91/92.

To close on the allegations against Daniel Home, the account published below is taken from "The Newer Spiritualism", by Frank Podmore, published in 1910, pages 45/46:



Robert Browning was convinced that Home was an impostor, and gave characteristic expression to his conviction. But there is no direct evidence that he ever proved that Home cheated, though he formed a decided opinion, after witnessing a single performance, "that the whole display of hands, spirit utterances, &c., was a cheat and imposture." [6]

The only direct evidence of imposture which I have come across is in a letter from Mr. Merrifield, who wrote in August, 1855, an account, from which the following extract is taken, of a sitting held with Home the previous month. New moon occurred on July 14, 1855, and, as the moon had already set, the date of the sitting would probably be not later than the 18th, a time when the last faint traces of daylight would still be lingering in the sky even at eleven p.m. There had been a sitting earlier in the evening, at which the usual phenomena—movements of table, playing of accordion, and plucking of dresses—had occurred:

> " . . . Just as we were on the point of taking our leave, the medium professed his willingness to give us another sitting. Accordingly, we took our places at the side of the table, the medium occupying the extreme right, and a constant associate of his sitting opposite to him. I sat nearly half-way between them, and therefore facing the windows. The table was circular, and the semicircle nearest the window was unoccupied. The lights were removed, and very soon the operations began. It was about eleven o'clock; the moon had set, but the night was starlight, and we could well see the outline of the windows and distinguish, though not with accuracy of outline, the form of any large object intervening before them. The medium sat as low as possible in his low seat.
>
> His hands and arms were under the table. He talked freely, encouraging conversation, and seeming uneasy when it flagged. After a few preliminary raps somebody exclaimed that the 'spirit hand' had appeared, and the next moment an object, resembling a child's hand with a long, wide sleeve attached to it, appeared before the light. This occurred several times. The object appeared mainly at one or other of two separate distances from the medium.
>
> One of these distances was just that of his foot, the other that of his outstretched hand; and when the object receded or approached, I noticed that the medium's body or shoulder sank or rose in his chair accordingly. This was pretty conclusive to myself and the friend who accompanied me; but afterwards, upon the invitation of one of the dupes present, the 'spirit hand' rose so high that we saw the whole connection between the medium's shoulder and arm, and the 'spirit hand' dressed out on the end of his own.'' [7]

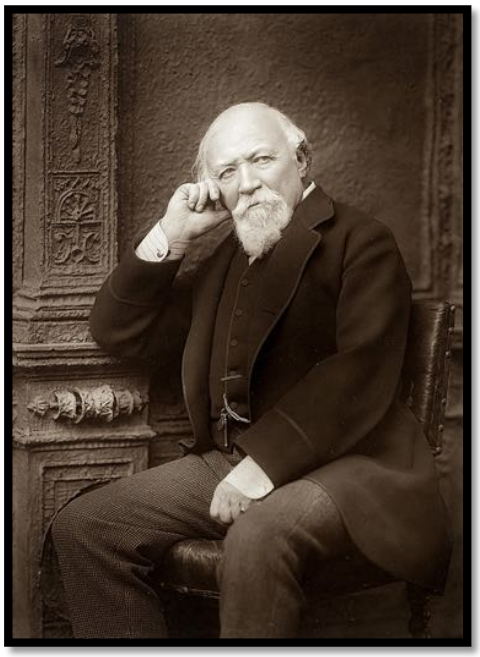
---

[6] See letter from Robert Browning, published in *The Times* of November 28, 1902.
This is an error by Podmore, as Robert Browning died in 1889; the letter appears to have been written by his son, also called Robert. It appears that after the séance Browning wrote an angry letter to *The Times*, in which he said that the whole display of hands, spirit utterances, etc. was a cheat and imposture [Wikipedia].

[7] Journal, S.P.R., May 1903, pp. 77,78.

No doubt Mr. Merrifield saw what really took place. But his account in itself carries no more weight than that of the rest of the spectators, who "saw" spirit hands. It is valuable, however, as showing that Home did not succeed in hoodwinking all his sitters.

Incidentally, Robert Browning was an English poet and playwright who believed Spiritualism to be a fraud and focused on Daniel Home. However, maybe one motive was that his wife Elizabeth was convinced Home was genuine, which proved to be a constant source of argument with her husband.



Browning wrote a long poem, "Mr. Sludge The Medium", which is a fierce attack on Spiritualism. The setting of the poem is Boston and a Yankee medium called Sludge, who confesses his duplicity. Browning is almost certainly referring to Daniel Home as the medium, Mr. Sludge.

It is published in a collection of works by Robert Browning, "Dramatis Personae", in 1864 and is available on the internet; it begins:

Now, don't, sir! Don't expose me!
Just this once! This was the first and only time, I'll swear,—
Look at me,—see, I kneel,—the only time,
I swear, I ever cheated,—yes, by the soul
Of Her who hears—(your sainted mother, sir!)
All, except this last accident, was truth—
This little kind of slip!—and even this,
It was your own wine, sir, the good champagne,
(I took it for Catawba, you 're so kind)
Which put the folly in my head!

FRANEK KLUSKI

Franek Kluski, sometimes referred to as the "King of Mediums", was born in Warsaw in 1873. His profession was banking and journalism; he was also a poet. His mediumship was active from 1918 to 1925, taking a break due to the Polish/ Russian war in 1920. He gave up mediumship due to poor health, a heart condition caused by being shot in the chest, apparently in a duel around 1900. Kluski was a married family man; he was not a professional medium and accepted no fee. He died in January 1943 of tuberculosis and was buried in Warsaw.

Kluski has previously been featured in Pioneer with the remarkable production of 'wax gloves' for Dr Gustave Geley in the early 1920s; please see for further details Pioneer, Vol. 5, No. 2, April 2018: "Britten Museum & Library "Wax Spirit Hands" booklet", reviewed by the SPR.

However, some Spiritualistic phenomena are not always as easily associated, or even accepted, within the Spiritualist movement, but are invariably linked by its critics. However, in saying that, some well-known Spiritualists like Emma Hardinge Britten and Arthur Conan Doyle believed in, and in some cases experienced, for example, 'elementals' first-hand. A good example of this is reported in the old Psypioneer, Vol. 5, No. 12, December 2009: "Spirits of the Mines – Emma Hardinge Britten".

Demonstrations of clairvoyance, clairaudience, etc. have often related messages from our loved family pets, etc.; there are also reports of animals allegedly materialising at séances, for example at Helen Duncan séances, where dogs, cats, birds, etc. returned to their previous owners.

At the earlier experimental séances with Kluski, a large creature would be reported to materialise more like a modern horror story in the séance room! A creature neither human or animal – a *Pithecanthropus;* some recorded seances imply that the creature was at times *violent and rough*. A lion or similar animal and large birds of prey would be some of the materialised apparitions over the course of the séances.

Serious investigation was given to this rare Spiritualistic phenomenon and it was investigated by well-known investigators, as will be noted in the ensuing information. Kluski was a powerful psychic medium, but unlike most materialisation mediums he often remained conscious during the phenomena. He was most willing to submit to rigorous investigations, often for long intervals:

> Thus he easily recuperates from the drain on his vital forces. When, after an interval of rest, he agrees to sit again, he knows that his pent-up psychic energies will produce startling manifestations.

The 1919-1920 images below are sometimes incorrectly credited to Dr Gustave Geley (1868-1924) and were published by Geley in his "Clairvoyance and Materialisation: A Record of Experiments". The English translation was published posthumously in 1927. Dr Geley died as a result of an air crash, leaving Warsaw for Paris on 15th July 1924. He had been conducting more experiments with Franek Kluski at Warsaw and his last two sittings were on 3rd and 11th July (published in *Revue Métapsychique*, Jan.-Feb. 1925). Prior to these more séances were

conducted; the quote that follows applies to a séance held on June 20th, 1924, possibly the first in the final set; *Psychic Science* notes:

> This glove and all those obtained during the séances were in a little bag which Dr. Geley was holding in his hand at the moment of this death. The aeroplane's crash broke the moulds into tiny bits.

Below is taken from pages 263-265:

17. Experiments of the polish S.P.R. with Franek Kluski

During 1919 and 1920 the Polish S.P.R. made a series of remarkable experiments with Mr. Kluski, and the Society has kindly permitted me to publish parts of their Proceedings *in extenso* [12] with the photographs of the materialised forms.

Having taken no part, directly or indirectly, in these experiments, I can only publish these as documents which throw light on the subject. I desire only to give my readers some exact information on the modalities of Mr. Kluski's powerful mediumship.

I render my cordial thanks to the Society, to Mr. Franck Kluski, and to Colonel Okolowicz, who directed the experiments and has edited the Proceedings. I also thank my friend, Count Potocki, who has so kindly undertaken to translate them.

These experiments were undertaken with the special intention of photographing materialised forms. The purpose was but partially realised, but interesting records have been secured, and the sittings were nearly always characterised by important phenomena. All were conducted under identical conditions.

They were held in Mr. Kluski's study, a large room on the fifth floor, measuring about 22 feet by 16 feet. There is only one door and one window. The furniture consists of a table with a typewriter and a red electric lamp, small bureaux containing his papers and correspondence, a bookcase, some chairs, stools, and a sofa. There were in it no draperies, muslins, or white materials of any kind. Before each sitting the room was carefully searched, the window was closed by shutters and a thick curtain, and the door was bolted from within,

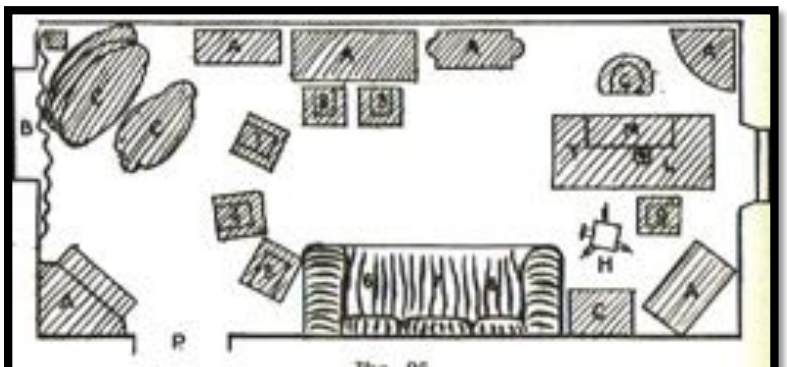


Fig. 95.

The experimenters were grouped as shown in Fig. 95, the medium being seated on a plain chair, and both of his hands were held. The room was lit by the small red lamp on the table, permitting satisfactory vision of the materialised forms. Near this table was a camera, and a little behind it one of the experimenters (No. 9) sat to make the magnesium flash.

[12] These, being somewhat redundant, are slightly condensed in translation.

The séances were conducted by night; they were very long, sometimes lasting the whole night, with intervals of rest.

Many human and animal forms manifested, only a few of which were photographed, the reason being that consent of the materialised forms was always asked for prior to making the flash. Many of these entities seemed to dread the flash and would not consent to it.

Development of the plates was done at once in the room itself. The camera was an ordinary one taking plates 13 centimetres by 18 centimetres. The photographs were taken by Lieutenant Dluzynski and Colonel Okolowicz.

It is to be noted that Mr. Kluski was usually conscious and observed the phenomena, but had to maintain entire mental passivity, failing which the forms were resorbed in him. The records were written up immediately after the séances, and signed by all present.

Given the restricted space, I will publish the first recorded experiment but will add other images from the succeeding experiments with quoted notes:

Experiment of August 30, 1919

Present: The medium, Mr. Kluski; controllers, Mme. L. Sokolow, Mr. S. German, Colonel Okolowicz, Mlle. Hertner, Mme. Okolowicz; photographer, Lieutenant Dluzynski.

First Phase.—Beginning at 10.45 p.m. Deviation of the compass, 10°. As no materialised forms presented themselves, the sitting was broken off at 11.30 p.m.

Second Phase.—Sitting resumed at fifteen minutes past twelve. Luminous points round the medium, crackling noises, and steps in the room. The medium asked that when the materialised entity were ready he should give the signal for photography by four distinct raps.

Several apparitions were seen at the same time. The first to be clearly seen was one which had appeared at previous sittings. It was a creature as large as an adult man, very hairy, with a mane and a bushy beard, resembling an animal or very primitive man; did not speak, but made hoarse noises, clicked his tongue, and ground his teeth. When called, he approached, allowed his fur to be stroked, touched the hands of the sitters, and scratched them lightly with claws rather than nails. This was an improvement on previous sittings, when he was violent and rough. He obeyed the voice of the medium, doing no harm to the sitters. He constantly tried to lick their hands and faces, much to their annoyance. He obeyed the orders of the medium, whether spoken or mental.

The next was the materialisation of a man who called himself Charles, approached Colonel Okolowicz, and greeted him by three pats on his hands. He asked to communicate by raps, said he had died thirteen years before, but would not let himself be photographed, saying that he could not do this for the medium's sake. Mr. Kluski having said that this was untrue, we heard slaps, and Mr. Kluski said that he was struck on the head, on his back, and on his hands. We asked Charles about the hairy creature, but Charles replied that he knew nothing about it.

There followed in succession two apparitions of women, features very clear, with an indication of the bust. The first was recognised as "Rheri," an Indian woman from Calcutta, seen in previous séances, with whom we communicated in English.

Fig. 96.—Warsaw Experiments: An Animal Form.

Fig. 97.—Warsaw Experiments: A Bird Form.

Then there were four clear raps, and the red light on the table went out without being touched. The flash was made, and the lamp rekindled of itself, untouched (Plate XLVI., Fig. 96). After the flash cracklings were heard and some of the furniture was moved. A small table and a wooden column holding candelabra were moved over the heads of the medium and of Colonel Okolowicz into the circle, and the sofa was pushed up against the chair on which Colonel Okolowicz was sitting.

Third Phase.—Resumed at 4 a.m. for photography. The medium asked us to sing, to concentrate the thoughts of the sitters, and again requested four raps. We sang, accordingly, Mme. Konopnicka's hymn and three soldiers' songs. Lights round the medium. At 4.15 a.m. the four raps came, and the flash gave Plate XLVI., Fig. 97.

The medium, being very tired, asked that the sitting be suspended.

(Signed by all present.)

Dr. Geley notes: *"However strange these materialisations of animals may seem, their reality is not in doubt. We have been able verify them in recent experiments made at the Paris Institute."*

Fig. 98: The séance exhibited a minute after the lights were put out: "luminous gleams appeared and condensed into a face with phosphorescent teeth". The "ape-man" materialised with similar actions above cited, four raps were asked for, when heard the red lamp went out and relit as before. By the flash light all saw the white form shown in the photo.

Fig. 98.—Warsaw Experiments, September 3, 1919.

Fig. 99: During this séance three paraffin/wax moulds were produced, the "ape-man" was again present, a luminous screen was roughly snatched, thrown into the air and remained floating near the ceiling for two minutes, luminous side down. Four raps and Col. Okolowicz made the flash and then developed.

Fig. 100: More paraffin moulds the observers could clearly see the outlines of the hands formed in the tank (middle of the room) by the red light. Lights concentrated around Kluski about two yards above him forming a triangle of small bright stars, different sizes. At the same moment two moulds were placed on the table—the "type writer on the table, fully illuminated by the red light, began to write." During this phenomenon, the persons holding Kluski's hands stated the mediums hands "twitched during the writing."

Fig. 99.—Warsaw Experiments, September 11, 1919.
(See p. 108.)

Fig. 100.—Warsaw Experiments, November 23, 1919.

Fig. 101.—Warsaw Experiments, December 23, 1919.
(See p. 120.)

Fig. 102.—Warsaw Experiments, June 15, 1920.

The sitting resumed at midnight, hands linked. "Powerful luminous effects, phosphorescent nebulæ, as a large luminous sphere floating in the air not far from the medium." Indistinct whispering voice, and the ape-man, usual four raps and the photograph taken.

Fig.101: Two cameras were used simultaneously, medium awake and well disposed. Large and small lights seen in twenty minutes the four raps heard—photographs developed on the spot.

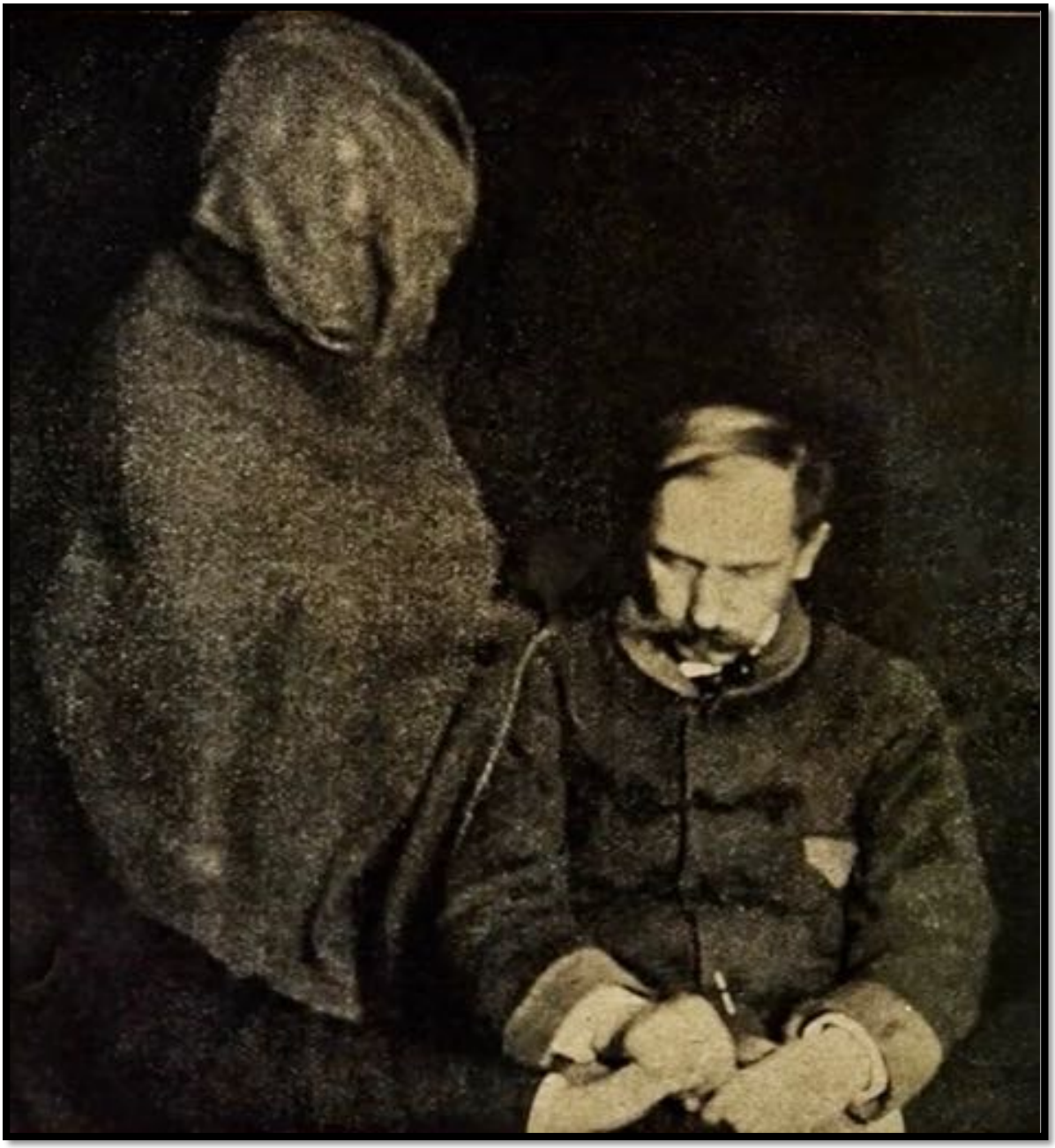
Fig. 102: "*Present*: Mr. Franek Kluski; controllers, Mr. Iskowski, Mr. Niemojewski, Mlle. Wanda Kluska; photographer, Colonel Okolowicz.

"The medium, very well disposed, chatted with the sitters and asked that the materialised entity should let

himself be photographed without a veil. Four raps, and the photograph was taken on a plate 9 centimetres by 12 centimetres. After development the plate was put into water and shut up in a cupboard in the room. On the morrow it was found to have been mysteriously scratched as shown (Plate XLIX., Fig. 102).

"Some other photographs were obtained at later séances, which will form the subject of a special publication.[13]

(*Signed*)
For the Polish Society of Psychical Research." [14]



[13] The image shown above I am afraid I have no reference.

[14] Please note that apart from Fig. 102 I have summarised the information given by the Polish SPR.

Below is an overview of Franek Kluski's mediumship taken from "These Mysterious People", by Nandor Fodor, published in 1934, chapter VI, pages 61-67:

STRANGE BEASTS FROM THE BEYOND

Story of Franek Kluski

THE familiars against whom Moses warred, who loom uncannily in witch trials and old tales of mystery, have been rehabilitated, and tamed, under the name of "controls" by Psychical Research, The ghost world, however, does not always respect the discipline of science, and occasionally investigators are visited by terrors of the dark which would chill the spine of the most hardened adventurer.

There are instances on record in which the visitants, who appear to be born into temporary existence through the agency of a materializing medium, were not human beings. They were the "beasts that perish"; animals whose presence inspired fear, To Franek Kluski, a Pole, whom the late Dr. Gustave Geley, Director of the Institut Metapsychique International of Paris, called the King of Mediums, we owe the most incredible experiences of this kind which scientists ever had the good fortune to share.

For the consideration of those who would accuse them of temporary insanity there are flashlight photographs, which demand an explanation. The best of these pictures (which is reproduced in Dr. Geley's classical *Clairvoyance and Materialization* [15]) was taken in 1919 in Warsaw. A bird, described by Prof. Pawlowski, of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, as a hawk or buzzard, was heard to stretch its wings with a whirring 'sound, accompanied by blasts of wind. It "flew round, beating its wings against the walls and the ceiling; when it finally settled on the shoulder of the medium it was photographed with a magnesium flash, as the camera was accidentally focussed on the medium before, and was ready".

There was no possibility, we are assured, of introducing that bird surreptitiously into the room or hiding it after the manifestation. It appeared and vanished in the way of human phantoms.

There was another, more dangerous customer in charge of a completely luminous old man, Prof. Pawlowski describes the man (an Afghan native who called himself Hirkill) as a column of light. He illuminated all the sitters and even the more distant objects of the room. The light appeared to be focussed in his hands and in the region of his heart.

"Accompanying him always was a rapacious beast, the size of a very big dog, of a tawny colour, with slender neck, mouth full of large teeth, eyes which glowed in the darkness like a cat's, and which reminded the company of a maneless lion, It was occasionally wild in its behaviour, especially if persons were afraid of it, and neither the human not the animal apparition was much welcomed by the sitters, The lion, as we may call him, liked to lick the sitters with a moist and prickly tongue, and gave forth the odour of a great feline, and even after the séance the sitters, and especially the medium, were impregnated with this acrid scent as if they had made a long stay in a menagerie among wild beasts"[16]

[15] pp. 266-267.

[16] Psychic Science, April, 1926.

The acrid scent was very pronounced with the weirdest of all these apparitions—the Pithecanthropus, which showed itself several times, "One of us," writes Dr. Geley, "at the séance of November 20th, 1920, felt its large shaggy head press hard on his right shoulder and against his cheek. The head was covered with thick, coarse hair; a smell came from it like that of a deer or a wet dog. When one of the sitters put out his hand the Pithecanthropus seized it and licked it slowly three times. Its tongue was large and soft. At other times we all felt our legs touched by what seemed to be frolicsome dogs."

According to Col. Norbert Ocholowicz, "this ape was of such great strength that it could easily move a heavy book-case, filled with books, through the room, carry a sofa over the heads of the sitters, or lift the heaviest persons with their chairs into the air to the height of a tall person. Though the ape's behaviour sometimes caused fear, and indicated a low level of intelligence, it was never malignant. Indeed, it often expressed goodwill, gentleness and readiness to obey... It was seen for the last time at the séance of December 26th, 1922, in the same form as in 1919, and making the same sounds of smacking and scratching."

Of another small animal, reminding the sitters of a weasel, the following description was quoted by Mrs. Hewat McKenzie, widow of the founder of the British College of Psychic Science:

"It used to run quickly over the table on to the sitters' shoulders, stopping every moment and smelling their hands and faces with a small, cold nose; sometimes, as if frightened, it jumped from the table and rambled through the whole room, turning over small objects, and shuffling papers lying on the table and writing-desk. It appeared at six or seven séances, and was last seen in June, 1923."

Kluski's animals are unique in species but not as phenomena. Two other Polish contemporaries, Burgik and Guzyk, demonstrated similar apparitions. Prof, Richet, the world-famous physiologist 'of the Sorbonne, writes of a séance with Burgik: [17]

"My trouser leg was strongly pulled, and a strange ill-defined form that seemed to have herd paws like of a dog or small monkey climbed on knee, I. could feel its weight very light, and something like the muzzle of an animal (?) touched my cheek. It was moist and made a grunting noise like a thirsty dog."

Other investigators with other mediums have also testified to such amazing adventures. Gambier Bolton, Fellow of the Zoological Society, writes in his *Ghosts in Solid Form:*

"Materialization of both beasts and birds sometimes appeared during our experiments, the largest and most startling being that of a seal which appeared on one occasion when Field-Marshal Lord Wolseley was present.

"We suddenly heard a remarkable voice calling out some absurd remarks in loud tones, finishing off with a shrill whistle.

"Why, that must be our old parrot,' said the lady of the house. 'He lived in this room for many years, and would constantly repeat those very words."

"A small wild animal from India which had been dead for three years or more, and had never been seen or heard of by the Sensitive, and was known only to one sitter,

[17] *Thirty Years of Psychical Research*, London, 1923.

suddenly ran out from the spot where the Sensitive was sitting, breathing heavily and in a state of deep trance, the little creature uttering exactly the same cry which it had always used as a sign of pleasure during its earth life. It had shown itself altogether on or about ten different occasions, staying in the room for more than two minutes at a time and then disappearing as suddenly as it had arrived the scene, but on this occasion the lady who had owned it during its life called it to her by its pet name, and then it proceeded to climb slowly up on to her lap.

Resting there quietly for about half a minute it then attempted to return, but in doing so caught one of its legs in the lace with which the lady's skirt was covered. It struggled violently, and at last got itself free, but not until it had torn the lace for nearly three inches. At the conclusion of the experiment a medical man reported that there were five green-coloured hairs hanging in the torn lace, which had evidently become detached from the little animal's legs during its struggles. The lady at once identified the colour and the texture of the hairs, and this was confirmed by the other sitter—himself a naturalist—who had frequently seen and handled the animal during its earth life. The five hairs were carefully collected, placed in tissue paper, and then shut up in a light-tight and damp-proof box. After a few days they commenced to dwindle in size, and finally disappeared entirely."

To return to our Poles, Burgik and Guzyk had questionable reputations. They were professional mediums. Kluski, on the other hand, is a distinguished professional man, a poet and writer. His real name has not been made known.[18] In him powers of "physical" mediumship co-exist with remarkable intellectual psychic gifts; which is a rare combination. Strange presentiments, visions of distant events, and the facility of seeing phantoms, were his endowment from early childhood, but his "physical" powers were only accidentally discovered in a sitting with Guzyk in 1919. Their manifestation annoyed him, but his curiosity was aroused and he consented to experiments, Like Mme. d'Esperance, he preserved consciousness during the phenomena of materialization, and could give invaluable subjective accounts of his own sensations to men of science, whom he was always very willing to oblige. There was no facet in his strange gifts which did not lend itself to the fullest and most rigorous scientific examination. An instance of his luminous phenomena,[19] as recorded by Dr. Geley, is the following:

"A large luminous trail like a nebulous comet, and about half a metre long, formed behind Kluski about a metre above his head and seemingly about the same distance behind him. This nebula was constituted of tiny bright grains broadcast, among which there were some specially brilliant points. This nebula oscillated quickly from right to left and left to right, and rose and fell. It lasted about a minute, disappeared and reappeared several times. After the sitting I found that the medium, who had been naked for an hour, was very warm. He was perspiring on the back and at the armpits; he was much exhausted."

At the Institut Métapsychique of Paris there are eloquent proofs of Kluski's supernormal powers on view. They include plaster casts of human hands with fingers bent and joined. The mould is fine and delicate, and the texture of the skin perfect. But whose skin? That question cannot be answered. For the hands which alternately dipped into buckets filled with hot paraffin and cold water ended at the wrist. They had no visible owner. When the paraffin shell thickened the hand faded away, vanished, dematerialized and left a perfect glove behind. The operation only took three minutes. Normally, it would

[18] Pioneer: Teofil Modrzejewski.

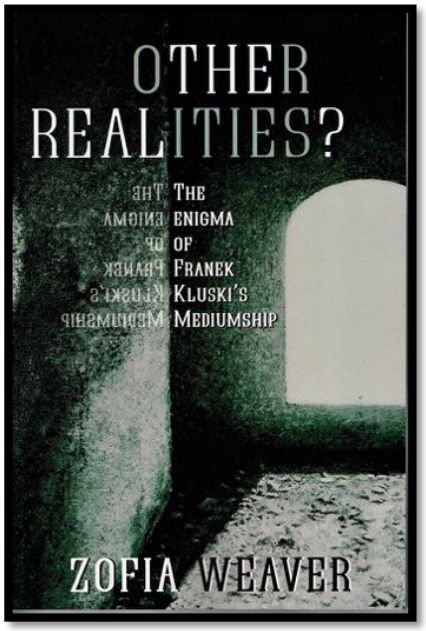
[19] See Pioneer, Vol. 5, No. 6, December 2018: "Part Two: Spiritualistic Phenomena of the Past – Luminous Phenomena".

take twenty minutes to produce a paraffin glove. But the hand, with drawing from it, would burst he shell at the joints if the fingers were bent, and at the wrist.

The Kluski gloves defied normal human production. They showed blue spots, traces of cholesterin which Dr. Geley, unknown to all, mixed with the paraffin to have further evidence that the gloves were made on the spot.

The excellence of Kluski's phenomena is due to his economy in the use of his mysterious power. Not being a professional medium, he only sits for those he cares for, and at comparatively long intervals. Thus he easily recuperates from the drain on his vital forces. When, after an interval of rest, he agrees to sit again, he knows that his pent-up psychic energies will produce startling manifestations.

Further recommended reading is:



OTHER REALITIES?

The Enigma of Franek Kluski's Mediumship, by Zofia Weaver

Reviewed by Tom Ruffles of the Society for Psychical Research

MRS ANNIE MELLON

Materialisation medium

Miss Annie Fairlamb married James Barr Mellon. The name Mrs Mellon as a materialisation medium would fill to full volume, becoming one of the most successful physical mediums. Around the turn of the twentieth century Annie was widowed, then marrying Henry Gleave on November 30th, 1903.

Annie was known for the materialised spirit not returning to the cabinet but standing in the centre of the circle and gradually dematerialising; Annie herself would sometimes sit outside the cabinet in full view of the sitters during her séances.

In Light, May 28th, 1904, then as Mrs Gleave, Annie writes her 'Personal Experiences'; at this time she had completed over three decades as a physical medium and this is a short quote from her memoirs:

> Mrs. Gleave—formerly Mrs. Mellon—addressed the following communication to the friends assembled at the gathering of the Union of London Spiritualists on the 18th inst: -
>
> My experiences as a psychic or spirit medium would more than fill a large volume; but I will content myself with referring to a few instances only, which I hope will be deemed of sufficient interest to be worth recording. My initiation into our movement dates as far back as the autumn of 1871, when I was but a child. Messrs. Herne and Williams, noted mediums at that time, were on a professional visit to Newcastle. I was fortunate enough to be invited to one of their séances, which proved to be a red-letter day in my life, and I have recounted over and over again the marvellous manifestations which occurred on that never-to-be-forgotten occasion. I was indeed so fascinated that I could not rest till I had seen more. Therefore, with this object in view, I became a member of a developing class, and from the very commencement exhibited signs of mediumship. Some of the sitters who sat with me then are still to the fore, being members of our society (namely, the Newcastle-on-Tyne Spiritual Evidence Society), of which I have the honour to be a life member and a member of the executive. Others have passed on to the higher life.

Annie had two main controls, Cissy and Geordie. In the New Year physical mediumship will be a regular feature, starting with publishing more on Annie Mellon. Below is taken from the "Medium and Daybreak", October 23rd, 1891, front page:

MRS. MELLON'S MATERIALISATIONS

REMARKABLE SPIRIT MATERIALISATIONS, Held at the house of Mr. Braham, Manchester.

Sunday evening, October 11, 1891, through the mediumship of Mrs. Mellon.

There were twenty-two ladies and gentlemen present, of the highest respectability and intelligence, and possessing sufficient mental accumen to detect any effort at simulating phenomena, had such a thing been attempted.

The cabinet was formed by stretching a cord across one corner of the room; over it hung a curtain, which parted in the centre, allowing only just sufficient room for a cane-seated chair. The light was a gas jet with a red glass chimney of the argand-burner type, and sufficient light to see the time from a watch in any part of the room.

After a careful inspection of the room and cabinet, and all were seated, the medium entered the cabinet. A hymn was then sung, and during the singing of the second verse spirit lights were seen, and as soon as the hymn was finished a little black spirit girl ("Cissy") materialised outside the curtain, and said, "How are you all people?" She asked the chairman (Mr. Tomlinson) to be introduced to the company.

On a small table standing near were two boxes of sweets; she came forward, took a sweet, and tried to eat it; afterwards taking up the box she came across to Mrs. Braham, putting several sweets into her hand, saying, "You have a cough." Some of the company asked for some; she turned round and threw the remainder among them. Then she returned to the centre of the cabinet, and gradually dematerialised till there was but a small speck of white remaining on the floor. She then commenced to rematerialize herself in full view of the sitters, saying, at the same time, "Can you see me?" and she showed her black feet and ankles. We also saw her face and white teeth, which she called our attention to, and appeared quite proud of them. She then retired into the cabinet.

Spirit-lights were again seen, and a form known as "Geordie," a fully materialised male spirit, came out; and going to the table, on which stood a musical box, wound it up. He then turned so as to be plainly seen, and said, in a deep voice, "I am pleased to meet you; the conditions are very good here." This spirit appeared to be about five feet eight or nine inches high, with dark beard streaked with gray, and had a graceful and gentlemanly bearing. He passed in and out of the cabinet, replying to numerous

questions. He then came to the side where Mrs. Braham sat, and said to her, “Put your hand out, please; I have found a tack” (this was dropped by Mr, Braham's brother when tacking up the curtain, and be forgot to pick it up, but remembered the fact as soon as he heard the spirit say he had found it). The musical box having ran down was again wound up quite vigorously by “Geordie,” and afterwards he returned to the cabinet.

A hymn was again sung, “There are angels hovering around,” when a hand was seen high up outside and above the curtain as if stretched out to greet the friends. “Geordie” again came out, and asked Mrs. Braham if he might be allowed the honour of kissing her hand, which of course was granted. His lips were warm, and his beard soft to the touch; he remarking at the same time, “I am proud to have the honour,” and also expressing to the friends present his pleasure at having such harmonious and good conditions. He then wrote his name, at the request of Mr. Tomlinson, on a sheet of paper in a bold legible hand.

“Geordie” returned to the curtain, when a second spirit was seen partially materialised; and as he faded out of sight “Cissy” reappeared, moving her dress or spirit-drapery about, and commenced dancing. We could all plainly hear the patter and see the little black feet; there was also a perceptible vibration of the floor, which was undoubtedly caused by something more than a shadow. She then said, “Do you see my medium?” at the same time throwing open the curtains, so that all could see inside the cabinet.

The medium was in a deep trance at the time; “Cissy” seated herself on one knee, plainly showing herself and her white dress in contrast to the medium’s black one, which she had on at the time. “Cissy” got up and seated herself on the other knee of the medium, saying, “Now see me bofe.” *The two were plainly seen together* at the same time. “Cissy” came outside, whilst the medium was distinctly heard inside breathing heavily, the spirit saying, “Do you hear her.”

A female spirit-form appeared, and was recognised by Miss Brown as her sister.

Two other female spirit-forms were seen for a short time, but were not recognised, and did not stay long. After they had disappeared “Cissy” again came, and said, “Me can’t do any more; good night all,” and dematerialised between the open curtains, the medium being clearly seen at the same time. This ended a very successful seance.

Annie Mellon and “Geordie”

A long list of names of those who attended followed, which I have omitted owing to space, but it is available to any reader if required. The article published below followed with an earlier account of the then Miss Fairlamb; we can note at the introduction of the séance their reference made to William Crookes' experiments with Daniel D. Home, where a Mr J.M. Robertson criticised Crookes' experiments, accusing Home of cheating. This rather interesting accusation is published at the end of this issue.

WAX MOULDS OF SPIRIT-HANDS

Dear Mr. Burns,—I have read with much pleasure your masterly reply to J. M. Robertson's criticism of Professor Crookes's experiments with Mr. Home, and fully endorse your just comments with reference to the lame excuse of want of space. The fact is patent, your crushing counterblast was too perfect and complete. It was indeed refreshing to read it. As a lover of truth and fair play, I do not object to honest robust criticism; it is wholesome and healthy; without it there would be nothing but stagnation, no progress. We can understand the motives actuating men in political warfare, and however regrettable it may be, however dangerously misleading to the unthinking multitude, the fact still remains, for do we not witness almost daily to what depths of base misrepresentations men can reach in their ambition and lust for power and place, but when we find men in the position of Mr. Robertson resorting to such tactics in criticising, the researches of an eminent scientist like Professor Crookes, it is simply incomprehensible. If permissible through the medium of your Journal, I will submit for Mr. Robertson's information an experiment under conditions I think he will not easily wriggle out of.

Some sixteen years ago, my friend, Mr, W. Armstrong, of Cross Houses, Newcastle-on-Tyne, and myself were deeply interested in the wonderful spiritual phenomena taking place through the mediumship of Miss Fairlamb (Mrs. Mellon), and we commenced a series of experiments with the lady to see if we could obtain through her mediumship moulds in paraffine wax of hands or feet of materialised spirits. Our apparatus was simple, consisting of two ordinary foot-baths, one containing the molten paraffine wax kept in the liquid state by floating on the top of hot water, the other about half-full of cold water. Before describing the conditions under which this experiment was carried out, I will just say that Miss Fairlamb was on the day of the experiment the guest of lady friend of mine, and in my company and under my observation for several hours, and never out of sight of my friend or myself until we wished her good night at the end of the experimental seance. After tea we had to walk a distance of about two-and-a-half miles before reaching the place where the experiment took place.

On our arrival there, we found Mr. Armstrong had completed his arrangement, and with other five gentlemen was waiting our arrival. The room in which this experimental seance was held was about 15ft. by 12ft., as near as I can remember, and approached from the landing of the staircase through another small room used as an ante-room. The cabinet was formed by green woollen curtains, suspended from a semi-circular rod of iron, fixed to the side-wall of the room, as near the centre as possible. The curtains were drawn back, close to the wall, showing nothing but the bare wall and the rod on which the curtains were suspended. The furniture of the room consisted of a common deal table and some windsor chairs; the table for convenience was placed in a corner of the room, and the chairs placed in position round the cabinet. Mr. Armstrong with my assistance then placed the foot-baths containing the molten wax and cold water within the radius of the cabinet, at the extreme end of it, Mr. Armstrong now locked the outer as well the seance-room doors, to prevent the possibility of ingress to the room. After every one present expressed their satisfaction with the arrangements, the curtains were drawn round the cabinet by Mr. Armstrong.

All was now ready, and Miss Fairlamb was requested to take her place in the cabinet, but this she positively refused to do. She said she was willing to sit outside the cabinet, but inside she would not go. Her reason was this: she told me she was certain that if she entered the cabinet, and anything in the shape of phenomena occurred, one of the gentlemen present would declare it a trick, and not genuine spiritual phenomena, so we had to give way, and at once took our seats round the cabinet, Miss Fairlamb sitting immediately opposite the centre of the cabinet, with a clear space of about 3ft. between it and the chair on which she was seated. She was immediately controlled, and the controlling spirit requested me to bring my chair close to the medium, to take hold of both her hands, and also place my feet upon those of the medium. This latter I strongly objected to do. I said 1 was willing for the medium to place her feet upon mine, but could not think of placing mine upon those of the medium, However, the control would not give way, and I was compelled to comply under protest against those conditions. I was further commanded on no account to lose my hold upon the medium. Another gentleman, a complete stranger to Miss Fairlamb, was then requested to bring his chair and sit next to me, and hold me as he pleased, and so place himself that he could see that I faithfully carried out the conditions imposed upon me.

When these arrangements were completed, the control requested us to sing. After we had been singing for a short time, we all heard what appeared to be a splashing of water inside cabinet, at the same time the medium was very much convulsed and shaken, so much so, that I found it difficult to hold her, but I succeeded in keeping the conditions imposed. When the splashing ceased, the control asked me if I knew the reason why her medium was so much shaken, I replied, I did not; the control said it was caused by "Minnie" (one of the medium's guides) when dipping her hand into the hot molten wax. We were again requested to sing, when the same remarkable convulsions of the medium, and splashing of water in the, cabinet, were repeated. We were now told they could do no more, as the power was exhausted.

Whilst I still held the medium as described above, Mr. Armstrong went direct to the cabinet, threw back the curtains, and we beheld with astonishment that the foot baths had been removed from the position in which they had been placed, to the centre of the cabinet; a magazine, which had previously lain on the table before the commencement of the seance, was spread out on the floor in front of the baths, and on it were laid two perfect wax moulds of the right and left hands, evidently of a lady by their size and shape.

Now let me ask Mr. Robertson to explain by what power or agency the two baths were removed from where Mr. Armstrong and myself had placed them, under the observation of the whole company present? or how did the magazine so mysteriously get into the cabinet? or from whence did the moulds come? for I most solemnly vouch they were not placed there by any mortal present. I wonder how Mr. Robertson can explain away these facts, and under such conditions as they occurred. A gentleman proficient in electric science and an inventor (if I mistake not he is now residing in London), was present at that experimental seance, and afterwards took a plaster cast of one of the moulds, and can vouch for the correctness of this record of what took place, under conditions hardly ever heard of, or applied before. There was not only a clear space of three feet between the cabinet and the medium, which was clearly under observation by all present, and in a good light, but she was placed in such a position, and under conditions that made it impossible for any one present to doubt the genuineness of the phenomena.

The gentleman who had made the cast of the hand, at the first opportunity submitted it for inspection and comparison with that of the corresponding hand of Miss Fairlamb. There was not the slightest comparison whatever. The cast was clearly of a different mould and shape. Upon it could be plainly seen the beautiful and delicate tracery of the skin. It was a most beautiful and perfect cast, and must have been executed with great skill and the utmost care, as the mould was remarkably thin, and required delicate handling. There were eight persons (one lady and seven gentlemen) besides the medium, witnesses of what I have stated occurred at that—to me—ever memorable séance.

I have no interest whatever in giving this record of one out of many experiments instituted and superintended with the greatest care and patience by my old and valued friend, Mr. Armstrong, only in defence of truth. Truth to some minds is evidently stranger than fiction, and because it is so, and beyond their grasp, in their conceited egotism conclude that all men are knaves and fools but themselves, and utterly incapable to form a correct estimate of the evidences of their senses.—Believe me, dear Mr. Burns, faithfully yours,

THOMAS ASHTON.

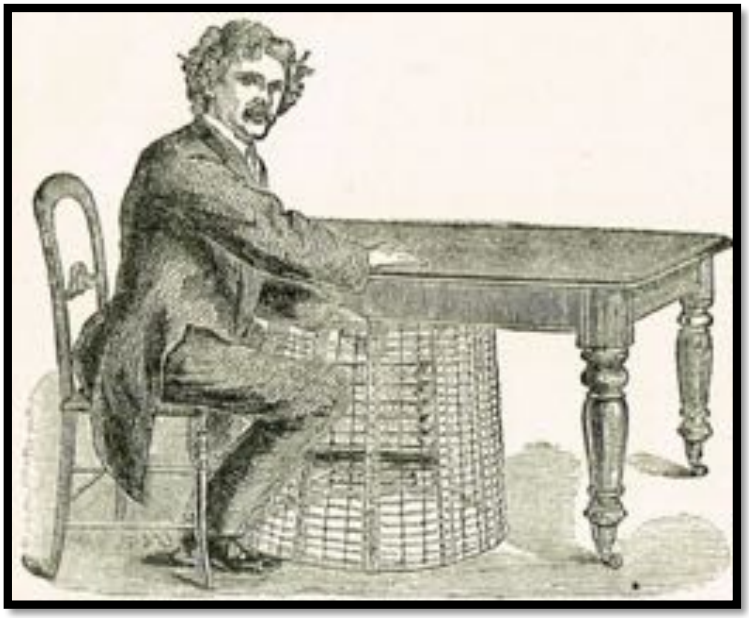
28, Heaton Road, Newcastle-on-Tyne, Oct. 19, 1891.

Mr J.M. Robertson's criticism of William Crookes'

Continued as noted previously in the Mellon articles: Mr J.M. Robertson's criticism of William Crookes' experiments, accusing D.D. Home of cheating—responded to by the paper's founder editor, James Burns.

These experiments of Homes' accordion playing under Crookes' laboratory conditions have previously been touched upon in Pioneer Vol. 5, No. 3, June 2018:

> I am referring to Daniel Home (pronounced *Hume)* undergoing experiments with William Crookes in 1871 with an accordion. Crookes had purchased a new one. Home had neither handled nor seen the instrument before the experiments. The accordion was placed in a cage and under a table; the illustration from Crookes' report clearly shows Home's position.[19] Home took the accordion between his thumb and middle finger at the *opposite end* to the instrument keys.



Shortly after the experiment began the researchers could see the accordion waving about in a curious manner; then sounds came from it and several notes were played in succession. The researchers could clearly view the phenomena; one actually going under the table reported that the accordion was expanding and contracting while Home's 'hand was quite still, his right hand on the top of the table.'

For many years it was not generally realised that this was a common demonstration by Home; please see Psypioneer, Vol. 10, No. May 2014: "The Accordion Playing of D. D. Home – Herbert Thurston, S. J.":

> "… one would be led to suppose that the accordion phenomena had only been produced in the séances with Sir W. Crookes in 1871. In point of fact they were constantly exhibited by Home during a period of nearly twenty years, and they have been described in detail …"

Sometimes the critics' explanation appears more extraordinary than the phenomenon itself!

—~—☼—~—

[19] "Researches in the Phenomena of Spiritualism", by Sir William Crookes, published by James Burns, 1874. This is available online as a free PDF download.

REPLY TO "A SPIRITUALISTIC FARCE"

To the Editor of the *National Reformer* Sir,—I am the person who held a two nights' debate on "Spiritualism" with Mr. Charles Bradlaugh, in the Hall of Science, on Dec. 16 and 17, 1872. A verbatim report of that debate was published in the succeeding issues of the *National Reformer*; if the columns of that weekly be equally liberal to-day, this answer to an article entitled "A Spiritualistic Farce," signed "John M. Robertson" (N.R., Sept 20, 1891) will also appear in the *National Reformer*. In what follows I will allude to the author of that article as "the writer."

Not unfrequently when a great drama is enacted in a leading London theatre, it is burlesqued, or the theme is turned into "a farce," in some other house, devoted to that lighter form of entertainment. This is good-humouredly done, and is generally recognised as a compliment to the play on which it is founded. From this point of view, one can enjoy the ingenuity with which the writer twists and turns the various features of Mr. Crookes's experiments, making them appear in quite a different light from that in which the author intended them to appear. But it is a question whether the caption, "A Spiritualistic Farce," is in keeping with the nature of the performance, seeing that it is the work of a Secularist, and appears in the organ of that party: I therefore beg to suggest that "A Secularistic Farce" would be much more appropriate. For indeed there was nothing "Spiritualistic" about Mr. Crookes's experiments.

In his opening chapter, which immediately precedes the report "farced," Mr. Crookes criticises the methods of the Spiritualists most severely, accepts none of their results, appears to regard the whole question as unopened, and proceeds to commence the examination as if no one had ever touched it. And the task which he set himself, was not to *prove* Spiritualism, but, be it remembered, to establish the existence of a "new force," which for convenience he denominated "psychic force." He declared that his intention was to examine a department of a nature that had been overlooked by men of science; his experiments must therefore be regarded as researches in "natural philosophy," or "materialism" if more commendable; with the view that truth should be followed wherever it might lead, and in support of no hypothesis or theory whatever. Though Mr. Crookes's researches as a whole are denominated "the phenomena of Spiritualism," because of the results to which they finally led, yet there is no "Spiritualism" whatever in the experiments examined; that is, from Mr. Crookes's point of view as an experimenter at that stage. It is not notions or names to which importance must be attached, but facts. Mr. Crookes may not call himself a "Spiritualist" to-day, but his facts stand on their own merits.

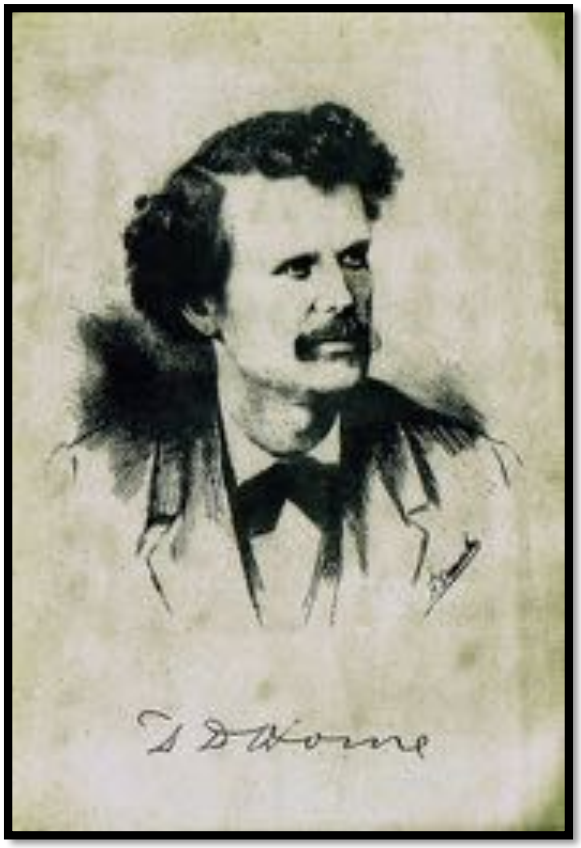
The writer endeavours to cast a slur on Mr. Home's character, as if that was of the slightest importance in the inquiry, the conditions of which were such that Mr. Home could not have influenced the result in the least, if he had been the most untrustworthy on earth. But it may be noted in passing that Mr. Home's phenomena were testified to by hundreds of persons of good standing, so that the nature of those facts does rest alone on the conclusive experiments made by Mr. Crookes, which simply corroborate the observations of innumerable other experimenters; many of them, like Mr. Crookes himself, leading men of science.

The writer stultifies himself on the threshold of his task. He first states that Mr. Crookes had seen these phenomena several times, and then he constructed a cage, to be placed close under a table, for the purpose of testing the results in a precautionary manner; but the writer finds fault with these precautions, which were instituted to obviate fault-finding. If Mr. Crookes had not used the cage and table, captious readers might have objected that the experiments were done so openly that there were no means supplied to prevent Mr. Home from assisting the manifestations with his legs or other hand. The cage was so high that when placed under the table, it had to be drawn out a little way to enable Mr. Home's wrist to pass into the cage to hold the accordion by the lower end. In the sum total we have both methods tried: the phenomena had first been scientifically observed without table or cage, as many other experimenters elsewhere had observed them, and then with table and cage as stated by Mr. Crookes. The claim of the writer that the table and cage favoured trickery falls to the ground, for the same results were obtained on other occasions in the way the writer suggests, that is, without table or cage, which were simple appliances to hem in the experiment beyond the power of Mr. Home to tamper with it had he been so inclined.

Next it is objected to that Mr. Crookes uses the phrase "somewhat curious manner" when describing the "waving about" of the accordion in the cage while Mr. Home held it by the lower end. The writer wishes to make it appear that Mr. Home, "by a very slight muscular action of his fingers," could "cause the lower part of the accordion" (the key-end, farthest from Mr. Home's hand) "to wave about." But the language criticised, "somewhat curious manner," answers this objection, for had the movements been of the kind insinuated, there would have been nothing "curious" about them. A similar futile objection is raised a to the statement that the accordion was seen to "expand and contract," "without saying *how*." Simply "expand and contract"! The bellows were seen to expand and contract again. Could anything be plainer? The "*how?"* Ay, there's the rub!

The writer overlooks one of Mr. Crookes's experiments which "contracts" these objections completely. It must be remembered that after having tried these experiments repeatedly without the cage and table, they were witnessed several times on the occasion in question. On the last of these experiments Mr. Crookes writes: "Whilst this tune was being played, I grasped Mr, Home's arm, below the elbow, and gently slid my hand down it until I touched the top of the accordion. He was not moving a muscle." Why did the writer ignore this statement, which completely settles the question once and for all that Mr. Home used no "muscular action of the fingers" whatever while the experiments were going on?

He then discusses the phenomenon of the accordion continuing to play in the cage after Mr. Home's hand had been withdrawn, and when there was "no person touching it." He thinks he is "entitled" to the "explanation" that the accordion was swung from a thread and a tack, and that "no mention is made of any attempt by the investigators to ascertain whether or not the accordion had been hung by a thread." This thread objection has not even a tack to hang by. The whole of the arrangements were such as



to prevent any objection raised that Mr. Home could tamper in any way with the experiments. The investigators had no interests to serve in testifying to these facts; they were not Spiritualists; they were physicists, endeavouring to demonstrate the operation of a "new force in nature." They did not take Mr. Home into their confidence in any particular. Mr. Crookes himself bought a new accordion on purpose; the apparatus was designed and arranged in the absence of Mr. Home. He knew nothing as to the nature of the tests until he met the investigators in that laboratory. Mr. Home changed his dress before he began the experiments, that he might have no machinery about him.

Then in the laboratory or other room used, the bottom end of the accordion was placed in his hand; the instrument was passed into the cage; his other hand was in view all the time; several pairs of critical eyes were watching his every movement. I ask, then, how could he possibly hold the bottom of an accordion in the left hand, under the edge of a table-top, and at the same time, with that same hand, drive a tack into the under-side of a table-top, and affix a thread to the instrument which he was holding? The supposition is so absurd that Mr. Crookes had no necessity to refer to it, seeing that all the arrangements were such as to render a thing of the kind quite impossible. It must also be remembered that the accordion was repeatedly withdrawn from, and again placed, under the table, which would have interfered with any thread arrangement. There is no use in talking about "legerdemain" in connection with these experiments, for no performer of that kind would attempt his "skill" under similar conditions. Even if the tack with thread attached had been got into position, and fastened to the accordion, it would not have accounted for the phenomena, such as moving of the keys: besides, "thread" is a visible substance, and the experimenters were not blind, and too "perspicacious" to be fooled to the top of the writer's bent.

The writer has next to extinguish the playing of the accordion, which performance on his part is of a piece with the rest of his task. He regards it as "extremely difficult to fix with accuracy the locality of the source of sounds," and to bear out this opinion he quotes experiments with persons blindfolded, who differed in their judgment, as to the source of sounds. But there is no parallel between the cases. Mr Crookes and his experimenters were not blindfolded nor were they blind, and the experiments were conducted in a good light. The accordion was seen playing, the keys were seen in motion as the sounds were emitted. Under such conditions there is nothing more certain than "to fix with accuracy the locality of the source of sounds." This can be proved at any time by getting within two feet of a person playing any musical instrument; it can be certified on the street, where music is being played every day. If mankind were incapable of thus fixing "the source of sounds" there would be no certainty of any experimental fact; for if the sense of hearing is thus faulty, what must be said of the other senses. To argue thus is to undermine Secularism hopelessly. The writer so far loses his senses as to be driven to the conclusion that any accordion may seem to play a great many ways except by its usual and only way of playing; in other words, any thing is true except that which is evidently and undeniably a fact! Before the writer took up

his pen, it does not seem that he took "a single precaution against this notorious form of hallucination." He actually has the folly to suggest that Mr. Crookes and his party were "hallucinated," and did not know when they heard and saw an accordion actually play under their noses; and he seems to maintain that his supposition is to be entertained before their actual experiences. The writer's "hallucination" is very peculiar indeed: instead of its imagining the existence of a thing which does not exist, it takes the opposite course, and endeavours to "hallucinate" the facts out of existence.

The writer's objections become weaker as he proceeds, till they have to lean against one another for mutual support. He wants to know whether the accordion "floated" when it played with no hand near it, and whether it "continued to expand and contract."

This is answered by the statement that the floating and action of the accordion were observed in connection with sounds made, while the instrument was seen in the act of making them. He makes a mistake when he raises the objection that Mr. Crookes "could not really have seen what Mr. Home took hold of" when he put his hand back into the cage. The writer evidently forgets that Mr. Crookes not only saw but felt, for he put his hand down Mr. Home's arm till he touched the accordion, and felt that Mr. Home "was not moving a muscle," and at the same time the instrument was in full action. Other observers knelt down, looked under the table, and through the open work of the cage saw the position of Mr. Home's hand and the action of the instrument at various times. Mr. Home was so completely at the discretion of the experimenters that the nature of the proceedings was liable to be observed in all aspects at any moment, and such observation were repeatedly resorted to. One of the writer's "confused" objections is to confound "the force at work" with the "action of the keys"; the whole tendency of the report is to show that the action of the instrument was quite normal, but that the "force" producing the action was inscrutable.

It may be noticed that though Dr. Huggins in his testimony says he did not see Mr. Home's hand when holding the instrument in the cage, yet other observers, differently placed, did see Mr. Home's hand, some being on their knee on the floor observing it through the cage, and Mr. Crookes states that he felt Mr. Home's hand during a most crucial experiment, as described above. It must likewise be noticed that while Mr. Home's hands were both on the table, and the accordion was floating about in the cage with not visible support, Dr. Huggins subscribes to all the facts recorded by Mr. Crookes in an unreserved manner; only he did not see Mr. Home's hand when in the cage because of the position in which he sat at the table. Dr. Huggins does not invalidate Mr. Crookes's statement in any one particular.

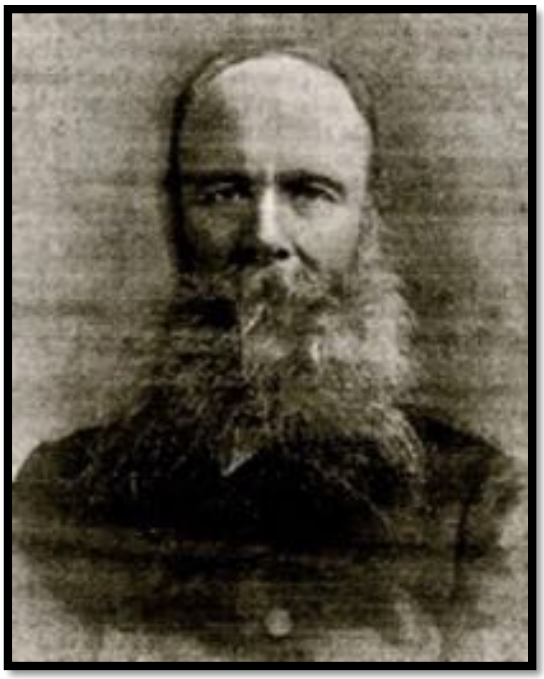
The writer closes in a fit of deep dissatisfactions with his own performance. He thinks Mr. Home may have used "mouth accordion," right in the face of so many sharp observers in a full light! Or the music might proceed "from some machine about his person." Yes, it is "very like a whale" indeed! But the "whale" has not the whole field to himself; the "weasel" and the "camel" strive hard to win distinction. The writer further hazards the insinuation that Mr. Home "got another accordion payed near at hand." Impossible! How? Mr. Home came to the house accompanied by Mr. Crookes, who went to his lodgings for him; no accomplice could therefore enter the house, and if in the house such an assistant could not have been in the apartment where the experiments took place, otherwise he would have been seen as well as heard. If Mr. Home could have rendered a musician invisible while playing an accordion within a yard of a part of intelligent sceptical men, he would have been a far greater wonder than in his modest roll of spirit-medium. The investigators were fully satisfied that the sounds were emitted by the accordion before their eyes, and at the time when the action

of the instrument was in accordance with the sounds heard. The objection to "a violin or a cornet" being used in these experiments is, that they are not so conveniently operated; but the facts are just as conclusive in the one case as they would be in the others. As a matter of fact, the piano is most frequently used in similar experiments, as its keys are easily operated by pressure by the force; but in such a test case there would be the objection that it might contain hidden mechanism, and being large it cannot be so well observed, handled and isolated. Indeed no instrument so readily testifies to its action as the accordion, in the self-contained way in which its operations co-ordinate with the sounds it produces.

I have now shown the futility of the whole of the objections raised, and now the laboured efforts to disparage the scientific accuracy and ability of Mr. Crookes fall to the ground; he clearly stated the facts that did occur, and did not discuss the thousand and one improbabilities which could not occur. It is a personal attack on that imminent scientist from first to last; a forced attempt to suppress the real facts and invent others to do duty instead. I have been a Free-thinker for forty years, and I deeply regret to see so-called Free-thought in such a decaying condition that its propaganda has to resort to suppression of truth and gratuitous inventions to attain its ends, and endeavour to damage the reputation of the boldest and freest thinkers of the age.—

I am, your obedient servant, J. BURNS.

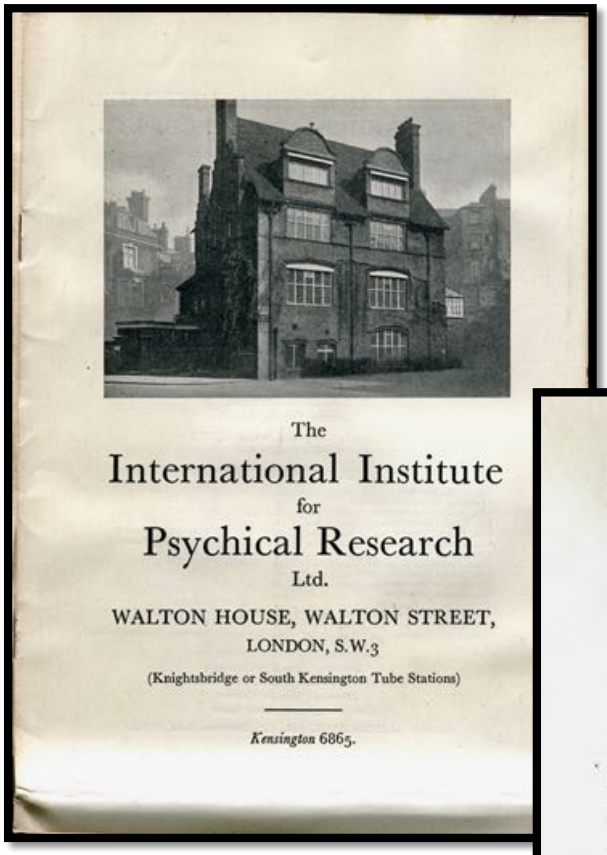
15, Southampton Row, W.C., Sept. 27, 1891.



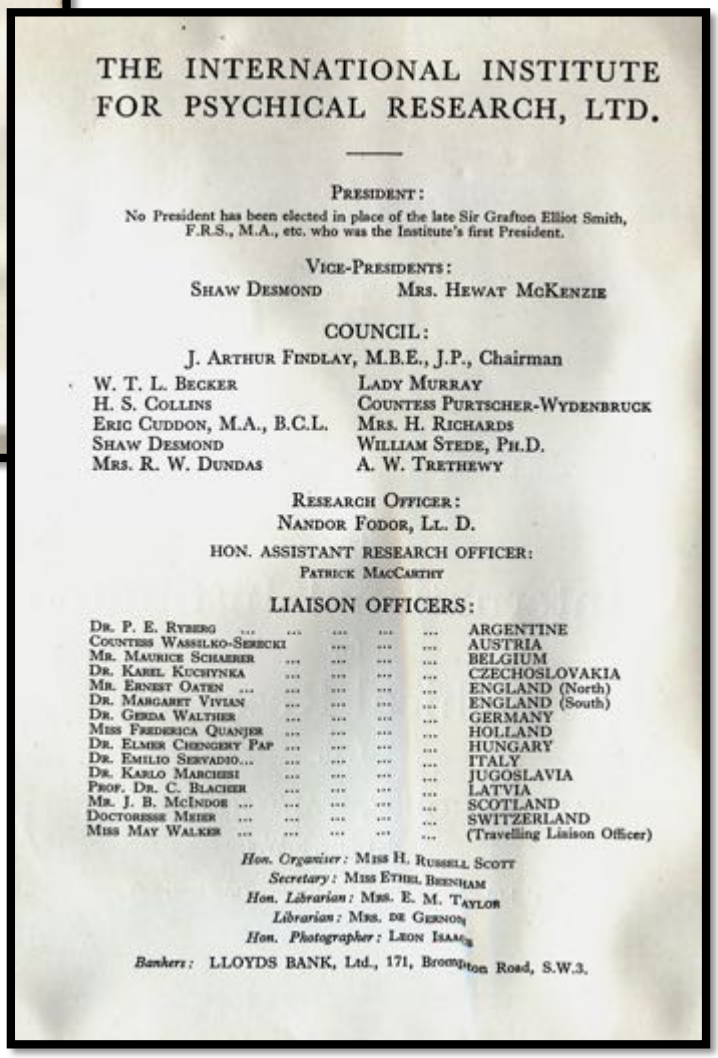
JAMES BURNS

1835 – 1894

INTERNATIONAL INSTITUTE FOR PSYCHICAL RESEARCH



The International Institute for Psychical Research was formed in 1934 for the purpose of investigating psychic phenomena on strictly scientific lines; it enrolled a number of distinguished scientists both in an active and in a consultative capacity. For further information please see "International Institute for Psychical Investigation", by Leslie Price, Psypioneer, Vol. 1, No. 17, September 2005.[10]



THE INTERNATIONAL INSTITUTE FOR PSYCHICAL RESEARCH, LTD.

PRESIDENT:
No President has been elected in place of the late Sir Grafton Elliot Smith, F.R.S., M.A., etc. who was the Institute's first President.

VICE-PRESIDENTS:
SHAW DESMOND — MRS. HEWAT MCKENZIE

COUNCIL:
J. ARTHUR FINDLAY, M.B.E., J.P., Chairman
W. T. L. BECKER
H. S. COLLINS
ERIC CUDDON, M.A., B.C.L.
SHAW DESMOND
MRS. R. W. DUNDAS
LADY MURRAY
COUNTESS PURTSCHER-WYDENBRUCK
MRS. H. RICHARDS
WILLIAM STEDE, PH.D.
A. W. TRETHEWY

RESEARCH OFFICER:
NANDOR FODOR, LL. D.

HON. ASSISTANT RESEARCH OFFICER:
PATRICK MACCARTHY

LIAISON OFFICERS:

DR. P. E. RYBERG	ARGENTINE
COUNTESS WASSILKO-SERECKI	AUSTRIA
MR. MAURICE SCHAERER	BELGIUM
DR. KAREL KUCHYNKA	CZECHOSLOVAKIA
MR. ERNEST OATEN	ENGLAND (North)
DR. MARGARET VIVIAN	ENGLAND (South)
DR. GERDA WALTHER	GERMANY
MISS FREDERICA QUANJER	HOLLAND
DR. ELMER CHENGERY PAP	HUNGARY
DR. EMILIO SERVADIO	ITALY
DR. KARLO MARCHESI	JUGOSLAVIA
PROF. DR. C. BLACHER	LATVIA
MR. J. B. MCINDOE	SCOTLAND
DOCTORESSE MEIER	SWITZERLAND
MISS MAY WALKER	(Travelling Liaison Officer)

Hon. Organiser: MISS H. RUSSELL SCOTT
Secretary: MISS ETHEL BRENHAM
Hon. Librarian: MRS. E. M. TAYLOR
Librarian: MRS. DE GERNON
Hon. Photographer: LEON ISAAC
Bankers: LLOYDS BANK, Ltd., 171, Brompton Road, S.W.3.

Later, on January 1st 1939, the "International Institute for Psychical Research" amalgamated with the "British College of Psychic Science", founded in 1920 by Mr Hewat McKenzie, changing their name to "International Institute for Psychic Investigation". In addition, it took over the BCPS journal, which continued, retaining its name, "'Psychic Science' Quarterly Transactions of the International Institute for Psychic Investigation", with Mrs Hewat McKenzie as editor, Barbara McKenzie being the widow of Hewat McKenzie.[11]

It appears that with the outbreak of war the organisation had a difficult time; its library and records are said to have been lost or destroyed by bombing and the IIPI collapsed in 1947.

[10] I note that the title is incorrect and should read at this point: "International Institute for Psychical Research" (not "Investigation").

[11] For further information see Psypioneer, Vol. 7, No. 2, February 2011: "Whatever happened to the British College? - *Psychic Science*" "The International Institute for Psychic Investigation (IIPI)".

The article below was written by Arthur Findlay, showing him as a sympathetic researcher; it was published by "Psychic News", January 9th, 1937, pages 7 and 8:

THE CASE FOR REAL PSYCHICAL RESEARCH

By ARTHUR FINDLAY,
who is chairman of the International Institute for Psychical Research.

WHAT is the right attitude for Spiritualists to adopt towards psychical research?

All Spiritualists who have reached definite conclusions as to the truth of what Spiritualism stands for have been, and perhaps still are, psychical researchers. There is no reason why a Spiritualist cannot be a psychical researcher or why a psychical researcher cannot be a Spiritualist.

I would define a psychical researcher as one who seeks for evidence of a supernormal nature in a thorough businesslike, scientific manner. In his investigations he tries entirely to eliminate sentiment and emotion and obtain evidence which cannot be disputed.

World's Greatest Force

Most people who obtain evidence do not approach the matter in this matter-of-fact way and often get evidence, satisfactory to themselves, under the strain of emotion caused by the "death" of someone they loved. When the psychical researcher approaches the subject he eliminates emotion entirely and thus is at a disadvantage, so far as receiving definite evidence of Survival is concerned.

Love is the greatest attractive force in the world, and it is not difficult to understand how much more easily a "dead" husband can return to the wife he loves and give her evidence of his survival than for this evidence to be obtained when the emotions, and when the affection, are eliminated.

For that reason those who have lost their dearest can generally obtain evidence of Survival, completely convincing to themselves, which is denied the psychical researcher. Such people, having thus obtained this evidence, naturally see no object in the scientific methods adopted by psychical research.

Yet, in my opinion, psychic phenomena must be approached from these two angles, which I might term the scientific and the emotional.

I freely admit that much which went on under the name of psychical research in the past was crude and foolish. In so far as what is called physical phenomena is concerned, I have never believed in the tying up of mediums, or other similar attempts, to eliminate fraud.

Defeated Their Ends

So as to eliminate fraud psychical researchers of the past have defeated their own ends, and in their anxiety to obtain genuine results they have inhibited the very phenomena they were so anxious to produce. Again, so many psychical researchers treated mediums as if they were a species apart, who were to be continually watched for the slightest sign of trickery. This attitude has likewise inhibited phenomena.

We now know that the mind plays such a part in the phenomena that the last thing a psychical researcher should do is to make the medium feel that he or she is suspected of being watched. Though this attitude towards mediums has been too general in the past, yet there have been notable exceptions.

Past Investigations

I can recall to mind the supernormal phenomena obtained by Sir Oliver Lodge, Alfred Russel Wallace, Sir William Crookes, Sir William Barrett and Dr. Crawford, of Belfast, so far as the British Isles are concerned, Lombroso, Richet, Bozzano and Schrenck-Notzing abroad. In Canada, one calls to minds the wonderful phenomena obtained in Winnipeg at Dr. Glen Hamilton's seances, which were carried on under strictly scientific conditions.

These and many others lend a glory to the name of psychical research, and have helped to raise Spiritualism from being considered a superstition to the rank of a science. It is doubtful if this would ever have come about had these, and other investigators, not carried out their investigations under strictly scientific conditions, entirely free from emotion.

So much for the past. What of the present and future?

A good deal has lately been discovered with regard to photographing in the dark. The day has now passed when the medium need be treated in any way different from an ordinary human being. There is no need to shackle him or tie him to his chair or bolt the chair to the ground. There is no need now to cover him with luminous paint, or, at a direct voice seance, the trumpets with luminous bands.

It is now possible to photograph in the dark what occurs in the seance room by means of cinematograph cameras, operated by infrared light, so that after the seance is over everything that has occurred can be reproduced on the screen, just as quickly or as slowly as is desired.

This, of course, is an expensive method, requiring expensive equipment and expensive films, but it is well worth the money. After the séance is over and the film is developed, the psychical researchers then adopt the attitude of critics of what they see on the screen, and, if the pictures reveal that anything doubtful has occurred during the seance, it is carefully noted. Thus, the conclusion can be arrived at without difficulty as to whether the phenomena are produced normally or supernormally. So much for the dark seance.

As, however, much supernormal phenomena occur in the daylight infra-red and ultra-violet light, which help the researcher so much in the dark, are of no use to him in daylight seances. Here, other methods are adopted, in the field of what is called mental phenomena.

Checking Mental Phenomena

Mental phenomena are produced when the medium is on a state of trance, or is hearing clairaudiently, or is seeing clairvoyantly. What is spoken by the medium is all-important. The psychical researcher tabulates carefully what is said, makes certain that it was impossible for the medium to have known it normally, and lastly that the information given is accurate. Each one, of course, can do his alone, but it only satisfies the person concerned.

If you wish, in any way, to influence the general public with the weight of evidence, it is only possible to do so when they can be made to realise that everything said was taken down correctly at the time, that investigations have proved that the medium could not have known normally what was said, and lastly that what was said was correct.

Thus only can the outside public be convinced of the reality of these supernormal messages, as due weight is given to the evidence when it is realised that it has been obtained by people who specialise in the subject.

But this is not all that the psychical researcher can now do. Doctors have very delicate instruments which immediately register the state of the body in health and in sickness. Doctors have so much data to go upon that, by means of vibrations, they can now tell the state of health and even the disease by means of the vibrations from the human body which are picked up by these instruments. Blood tests, and other means, are also used by the medical profession to determine the state of the human body.

So much for the normal individual. But what happens when these scientific methods are adopted towards a medium when in trance, or when supernormal phenomena are occurring in his presence? From the records now obtained by the International Institute for Psychical Research, we find that when a medium is in trance all normal records are broken, and the instruments employed show a range of vibrations which never occur in a normal person.

NANDOR FODOR, LL.D.
Research Officer of The International Institute for Psychical Research

This method of investigation is only a beginning and the results are being tabulated. But we are not yet able to express definite conclusions. What seems evident, however, is that the trance condition has a very decided effect on the human body, and I am hopeful that when these investigations are concluded it will be possible to draw conclusions about trance which it was impossible to do in the old days before these instruments were invented.

Changes In Temperature

During a seance our instruments have also recorded changes in temperature to a supernormal degree, and we also know that both the medium and the sitters alter in weight to a supernormal extent. All this is being carefully tabulated and recorded by Dr. Nandor Fodor, a very capable research officer of the International Institute for Psychical Research.

After months of preparation and thought, we recently succeeded, at the International Institute, in securing a cinematograph film of the movement of an object without visible contact.

In this instance, we secured a continuous picture of a carnation being taken out of a vase, standing in the middle of the floor, and carried some feet up into the air, and then falling down some distance on the side of the vase away from the medium.

This film has just been taken and is now the subject of microscopic study on the part of the research officer and his assistants. It will be enlarged to such an extent that any trickery used to cause the movement will be discovered, if such were the cause.

By such methods we should someday be able to arrive at a better understanding of what many believe takes place at so many seances, at which the sitters are unable to see with their own eyes because the phenomena take place either in the dark or in a very dim light.

Now, however, we have a camera which can see in the dark by means of infra-red light. It requires little imagination on the part of anybody to realise how infra-red photography must prove the genuineness of psychical phenomena or, on the other hand, that it is all due to fraud.

Now that we can record what takes place in the dark, what has been mysterious will become clear, and what has been doubtful will become certain. Thus the International Institute is steadily, day by day, accumulating results which are available to members, and I cannot foresee the day when its work will be finished.

The supernormal side of men and women has, until recently, never received any scientific consideration. If, as I believe, Man is a trinity and the physical is only a portion of his make-up, where can the end be?

Within the last 200 years, the physical part of him has received consideration, but the etheric and mental parts have received little or no consideration at all. These may be found, and I believe they will be found, to be just as important, if not more important, than the physical part.

Psychical research is just in its infancy and, like everything in its infancy, has to withstand criticism. But infants grow up to be men and women. So also will this new science some day take its place with the other recognised sciences.

The International Institute has never had any difficulty in obtaining mediums because mediums are treated by all the officials of the Institute which kindness and respect. If we find a medium defrauding, as unfortunately we have done, then his or her services are dispensed with and that is the end of the matter.

No publicity is given to the discovery. We do not glory in exposing mediums. We are only too sorry when we discover fraud. We are building up this science on genuine phenomena, not on fraudulent phenomena, and when fraud is discovered, it just means that so much time has been wasted, which would otherwise have been applied to the investigation of genuine phenomena.

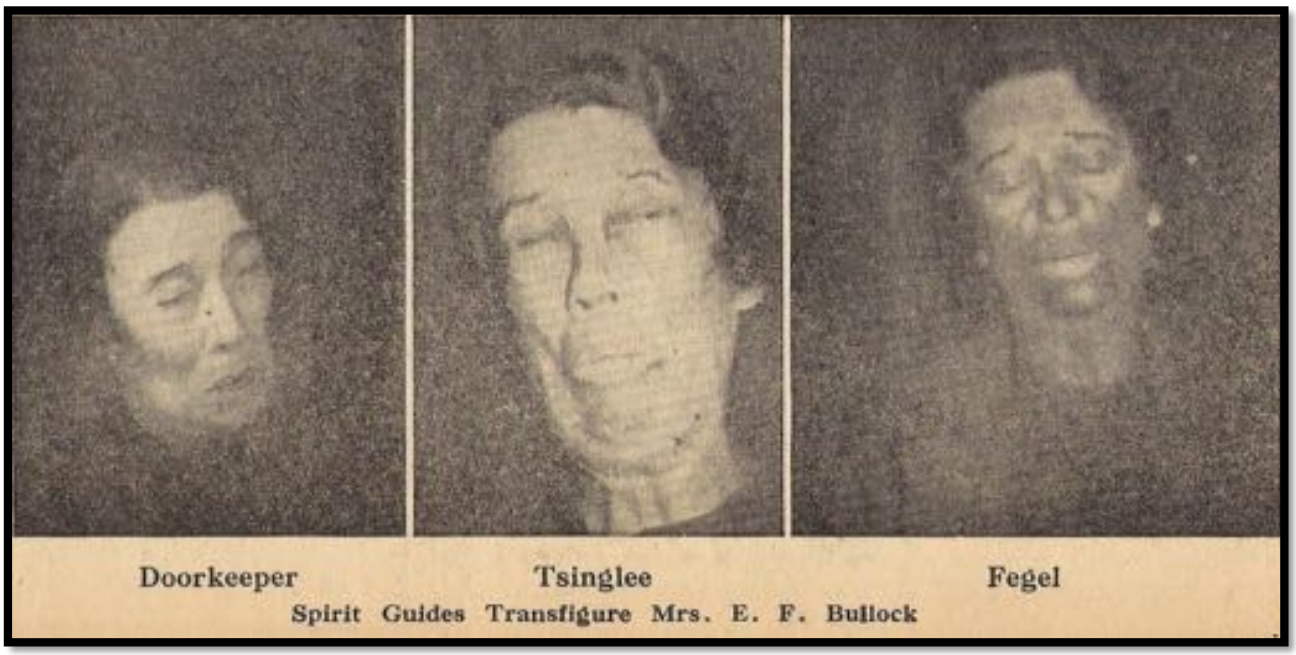
Some of the best mediums in this country have sat for investigation in the seance room of the International Institute, and are still sitting. I shall not mention them all by name, but only two who have given their services for work of a special nature, namely Miss Naomi Bacon and Mrs. Garrett. The services of these two women have been particularly helpful in connection with our investigation of haunted houses.

Our work has never been hampered through lack of mediums. I am glad to think that, once mediums have experienced the methods we adopt, they are not afraid of returning to the Institute and helping onward our work of tabulating, recording and investigating psychic phenomena, the better shall we be able to determine the place of Man in the universe, and the meaning of existence.

To have all the records lost of the cinematograph camera, which is noted to be operated by infrared light, so that after the seance is over everything that has occurred can be reproduced on the screen, is naturally a great loss to research and to the subjects they investigated; for example, there is reference that Helen Duncan attended.

However, we do have transfiguration reports. Leon Isaacs was Honorary Photographer to the International Institute for Psychical Research and he was responsible for some of the first infra-red film of séance happenings. For this, Isaacs invented and manufactured all his own apparatus. It was at the International Institute that Isaacs photographed the transfiguration medium, Mrs Elizabeth F. Bullock, with the Research Officer, Nandor Fodor; however, the reports on transfiguration are of interest and are published in Psypioneer, Vol. 8, No. 6, June 2012.

This set of photographs was published in the "Two Worlds", April 15, 1950, "Spirit Guides, Past and Present, of Mediums, Healers and Speaker". There is no indication as to their origin but quite probably these were taken by Leon Isaacs.



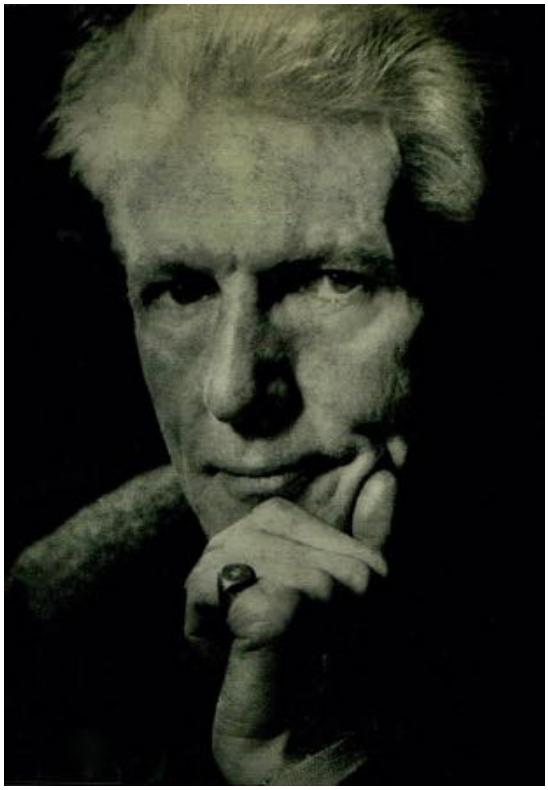
EUSAPIA PALLADINO

Eusapia Palladino (1854-1918) was an Italian physical medium, who it was claimed levitated tables, along with other related Spiritualistic phenomena. She communicated with the dead via the historic spirit control/guide "John King".[7]

Leading researchers investigated Eusapia Palladino's phenomena, e.g. Frederic Myers and Oliver Lodge. Polish researcher Julian Ochorowicz held experiments with Palladino during 1893-1894 and concluded that the phenomena were due to "fluidic action". French researcher Charles Richet, who brought in the term "ectoplasm", at the time he investigated Palladino in 1894 considered her genuine at times. These names are but a few who investigated her phenomena in various countries during the nineteenth and early twentieth century.

Below are the conclusions of the British-born American psychical researcher Hereward Carrington (1880-1958), who like other researchers detected her cheating at sittings but also claimed, like the names above, that she had genuine mediumistic ability.

Below is taken from Carrington's book, "The World of Psychical Research", originally published in 1946, second edition 1973. The photographs shown are from "Eusapia Palladino and her Phenomena", Carrington, 1909, and so do not necessarily directly relate to this article:

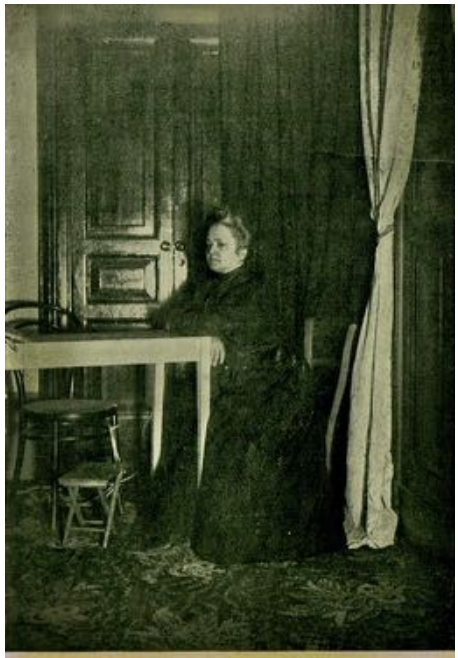


OUTSTANDING AS AMONG the most vivid and extraordinary experiences of my life, I must count my séances with the remarkable Neapolitan medium, Eusapia Palladino. Illiterate, hardly able to sign her own name, she nevertheless possessed powers of a unique character, powers which for many years baffled the scientific men of Europe.

Attention had first been drawn to her about 1890, when Professor Lombroso obtained a series of sittings with her. For many years thereafter, she gave séances for scientific groups in Paris, London, St. Petersburg, Turin, Genoa, Milan, and many other cities in Europe. A committee of eminent men sat with her for four years in Paris, and it was here also that Professor Flammarion studied her at length. An enormous literature had sprung up about

[7] For more information on John King see Pioneer, Vol .5, No. 6: Spiritualistic phenomena of the past – Luminous Phenomena.

her, and scores of books and articles had appeared dealing with her phenomenal mediumship.



Mme. Eusapia Palladino seated at our Seance table, in Italy. Behind her are seen the black curtains of the cabinet; to her right, the locked door leading to Mr. Baggally's room. Directly in front of her is the Seance table, and beneath it is the small stool, referred to on several occasions.

In 1908 a committee was appointed by the British Society for Psychical Research to go to Naples and obtain a series of séances on its behalf. This committee consisted of the Hon. Everard Feilding, Mr. W. W. Baggally and myself. All of us were well known as critics and skeptics of physical phenomena generally. During the course of our many years' investigations, we had never yet encountered any manifestations (obtained under fraud-proof conditions) which seemed to us conclusive. We were all amateur magicians and had exposed many fake mediums in the past. The Society felt, therefore, that if we brought in a positive report, it would be good evidence indeed that Eusapia possessed genuine powers of no mean order.

We visited Naples, stayed there several weeks, and had a long series of sittings with this medium, during the course of which we became firmly convinced of the supernormal nature of her manifestations. The following year (1909) I brought Eusapia to America, and a further series was held in New York.

Eusapia Palladino was primarily a physical medium—that is, but few mental phenomena were noted. Objects moved about in her presence without anyone touching them; raps of tremendous power were heard; lights appeared; musical instruments were played upon—no visible fingers touching the strings. Finally, so-called materializations took place, in which "bits of bodies" were formed, and again disintegrated, while we were watching them, leaving no trace behind. All these things happened while the medium was sitting securely held, hand and foot, and usually with light enough to enable us to perceive everything in the room fairly clearly.

Eusapia would give her séances anywhere—in a private house, in the laboratory of a university—wherever she was requested to sit. Often she would be carefully searched before the sitting, but nothing of a suspicious nature was ever found upon her. Then she would take her place at the séance table, which was merely an ordinary wooden table rather lighter than most, while several other sitters would seat themselves about it also. The person seated to her right would hold her right hand, foot and knee, while the person seated to her left would similarly control her limbs on that side. The séances all began in brilliant white light.

Behind her was erected a small cabinet, which consisted of an enclosed space, made by hanging two black curtains across one corner of the room. In this cabinet a small table was usually placed, and on this rested various small musical instruments—the property of the sitters. It should be emphasized, however, that Eusapia never sat *in* the cabinet, but always in front of it, in the circle itself. The back of her chair was usually about a foot from the cabinet curtains.

Now, in bright light, with her hands, feet and knees securely held, the table would begin to move, tilt and oscillate. Many people have obtained table tippings, and if these had been all, no particular attention would have been paid them. But, after several such

tiltings, the séance table would then rise completely off the floor—that is, all four legs off the ground, and remain thus suspended in space for a number of seconds.

A TABLE LEVITATION.

This photograph shows the exact position of the hands and feet of the medium during one of our levitations. It will be observed how far they are removed from the table. [From a photograph specially taken to illustrate this manifestation.]

I have seen scores and hundreds of such levitations, and I am as assured of their reality as I am of any other facts in life. Many times, while the table was in the air, we would pass a string or a fine wire up and down, between her body and the table, showing no physical connection of any kind. These levitations have been obtained when a sitter has been underneath the table, holding both the medium's feet in his hands, while *her* hands were completely removed from it, and everyone could see perfectly clearly that she was not touching it at any point. There seemed to be a curious elastic resistance while the table was in the air, as though it were suspended on rubbers; then this would suddenly be released, and the table would fall with a crash to the floor.

I have seen the table rise three feet and more from the floor during her séances, and have had it levitate while I myself have been kneeling upon it—the medium sitting motionless in her chair, hands and feet securely held.

After these table-liftings, rappings would be heard, in the cabinet and on the séance table itself. Often these were of a remarkable character. For instance, Eusapia would knock four times on the top of the table with her own knuckles, and then hold her hand above it, at a distance of about six inches. About three seconds later, faint raps, exactly imitating those made by her, would be heard in the wood, as though they were a sort of echo—only delayed in their reply!

About this time, five knocks would be heard, which was a signal for less light. The bright light would then be turned off, and a dimmer one substituted.[8] Even in this, however, everything could be clearly seen, including the medium. Now, the instruments in the cabinet would be heard moving about, and finally one or more of them would float out into the séance room, continually playing. If it were the mandolin, the strings

[8] Objection has often been made to darkness, as a prerequisite for spiritualistic phenomena. I cannot discuss this question at the length it deserves in a brief footnote, beyond pointing out the fact that many delicate physical and biological energies can only manifest themselves in darkness, and are destroyed by light; and that many historic phenomena (such as the so-called "miracles" in the New Testament) were similarly reported to have taken place in darkness and semi-darkness. I drew attention to this fact in my book, *Loaves and Fishes*, and the Rev. Edward M. Duff and Dr. Thomas G. Allen have also done so, in their book *Psychical Research and the Gospel Miracles*. Thus: Lazarus was raised in the darkness of the cave or tomb; Jairus' daughter was raised by dim lamp-light; the feeding of the multitude was "in the evening"; Jesus walked on the water in the dark of the night; the demoniac was cured in dim light; the stilling of the tempest was under similar conditions; when the multitude fell down, at Gethsemane, this was during the dark of the night, and so on. Many analogous cases could be quoted, in which similar conditions were deemed necessary for the production of certain supernormal physical phenomena.

would be strummed while it was floating in the air; if the bell, this would be rung violently before being thrown to the floor.

The latter part of the sitting would usually be devoted to obtaining materialization phenomena, and here hands, heads and "bits of bodies" would form in space—hands firm and solid enough to push and pull the sitters out of their chairs, or grasp them with a firm touch. The fingers and thumbs of such hands could often be clearly distinguished, and they remained visible while performing their actions. And bear in mind that, during all this time, the medium remained securely held, hand and foot, and visible in the red light which was permitted at such times.

These hands were very curious. Sometimes they would be large, sometimes small. Sometimes they would be white, sometimes black, and sometimes invisible altogether. Yet they were solid and substantial, and had every appearance of being true physiological structures for the time being. The skin, hair and nails could be clearly felt during the brief period of their existence, and on more than one occasion I myself have held a hand such as this in my grasp, and had it slowly dissolve as I was holding it. It was *not* pulled away, but melted within my hand, and was gone. This is not, of course, a unique experience, as Sir Oliver Lodge, Sir William Crookes, and many other psychic investigators have reported precisely the same thing.

Mind you, both before and since that time I have seen innumerable so-called materialization séances, which were complete frauds, and I had no difficulty whatever in detecting them. As previously stated, I have been an amateur magician all my life, and know the tricks of the trade pretty well. One book of mine, in fact, *The Physical Phenomena of Spiritualism*, is devoted almost entirely to an exposé of the trick methods employed by fraudulent mediums. But, despite all this, I remain quite convinced that we saw in the presence of Eusapia Palladino genuine materializations of "bits of bodies" and other equally remarkable phenomena of an undoubtedly supernormal nature.

It is true that Eusapia resorted to trickery at times, and in this she was caught, both by ourselves and others. Her method of trickery consisted in the substitution of one hand for two, and the production of phenomena with the free hand. Nearly every group of scientific investigators had detected and described this method of trickery. Yet every one of them had emerged convinced of her genuine powers! Why, it may be asked, should she ever resort to trickery if she could produce genuine manifestations such as I have described? Is it not possible that all her phenomena might have been due to trickery, only undetected?

It is difficult to reply to this objection in a few words. But I can best answer it, perhaps, by citing a typical instance which throws light upon her peculiar psychology—and if a medium felt and thought like other people she wouldn't be a medium!

One day I took the famous magician Howard Thurston to see Eusapia. On the way there I had said to him:

"Now, Thurston, it is quite possible that Eusapia will try to trick you at first—just to see if she can. But don't make a fuss about it immediately; just let her see by your manner that you are not satisfied. She will soon settle down, and show you something really remarkable."

Sure enough, when we had taken our places at the table, Eusapia tilted it, inserted one toe under it and up went the table! Thurston glanced at me, but I merely smiled, shook my head, and said:

"Not good, Eusapia."'

She thereupon smiled also, settled down in her chair, went into a light trance, and soon produced a series of perfectly magnificent genuine levitations, which so convinced Thurston that he came out in the papers the next day with a thousand-dollar challenge to any magician who could produce table levitations under the same conditions as he had seen them in her presence. The challenge was never accepted.

So here we have an instance of the fraudulent and genuine combined. The mischievous, impish self of the medium trying to "pull something," just for fun, and when she saw that she could not get away with it with impunity, she then produced the genuine article. I have seen more or less the same thing happen over and over again, and know that, while she occasionally tricked, she was also capable of producing amazing genuine phenomena which have never been explained.

Let me narrate two or three incidents that occurred at her séances, which deeply impressed me at the time, and which could not possibly have been fraudulently produced by the medium, even supposing that she had both hands and both feet free. The materialized hand which melted in mine was one of these incidents, but I shall mention a few more.

Eusapia had a deep affection for Professor Lombroso, whom she regarded as a sort of father, and whenever his name was mentioned she would invariably dissolve into tears. But, at one of our sittings, Eusapia said, quite spontaneously:

"Now, if you are all very good tonight, Lombroso may materialize!'

As a matter of fact, Lombroso did *not materialize*, nor did anyone else, but a most curious and striking phenomenon occurred, which is almost unique in psychic annals. As the séance progressed, there formed over the center of the séance table what I can only describe as a sort of psychic water-spout—a whirlpool of invisible energy, felt by everyone at the table, and affecting them so much that several of the sitters had to leave the table and go to the window to get some fresh air. As one receded from the table, this power became less and less noticeable, and as one approached it, the force became stronger and stronger, until it was well-nigh overwhelming. Nothing could be seen, nothing heard, but over the center of that table a power was operative, sensed by everyone present, which was most impressive and indicative of the reality of the invisible.

On another occasion, Eusapia asked me to go into the cabinet behind her, to replace the small table which had been thrown out onto the floor. I picked up the small table and entered the curtained recess, which was quite dark, of course, but still light enough to enable me to see the other side of the table I was holding, and to see quite clearly that no physical person was in the cabinet with me. Yet the moment I placed the table on the floor, it rose up under my hands and pressed against me. I again replaced it, and again it rose. Finally, this developed into a sort of tug-of-war between myself and the invisible influence manipulating the table on the other side. The force—whatever it was—was eventually strong enough to throw both the table and myself out of the cabinet altogether, so that we landed on the floor of the room outside! All this time, it must be remembered, the medium was seated outside the cabinet, held hand and foot by two skeptical controllers, and visible in the dim light which illumined the room.

On still another occasion, one of the gentlemen present suddenly exclaimed that the cigar case, in his inner coat pocket, had been removed by invisible fingers, and a moment later we all saw it reposing upon the top of the séance table. Then, as we were

looking at it, it seemed suddenly to become doubled; it looked as though there were *two* cigar cases where there had formerly been only one! But this was an illusion. What had actually happened was that the leather case had been pulled apart, the top sliding off the lower portion, so that the two halves were now lying side by side. Then, a moment later, this sitter cried out that a cigar had been placed in his mouth by those same invisible fingers. He held it between his teeth for a few seconds, then replaced it in the cigar case.

Bear in mind that the tabletop was of light pine wood, and that any dark and opaque object held over the table could be *seen* immediately, dim as the light was at the time. If, therefore, the medium had removed one of her hands from the control and handled the cigar case with it, her hand and arm would instantly have been seen against the background of the light wood. But although we were all looking at the case intently, nothing of the sort was seen; so that it would have been utterly impossible for the medium to have handled the cigar case, even if her hands had been free. This was really a very striking phenomenon, small though it was, since it was observed under such excellent conditions of control.

I have mentioned the fact that the materialized hands were sometimes small and sometimes large. When the sitters were grasped and nearly pulled out of their chairs, they usually described the hands touching them as extremely large ones, having a powerful grip. But, in the following instance, the hand was very small and most delicate in its general appearance.

During one of the New York séances Eusapia suggested that (in addition to holding her as usual) we tie her hands and feet to the hands and feet of her controllers by means of short pieces of rope. This was done. During the latter part of the sitting, when phenomena were in full swing, a tiny hand was seen to emerge over the top of the séance table and begin to untie the knots on the ropes binding her to her controllers. It took several seconds for this untying process to be completed, and when the right wrist had been untied the rope was coiled up and thrown at one of the sitters, striking him on the chest. The hand then went over and untied the left wrist, likewise coiling up the rope and throwing it out into the séance room.

The small table in the cabinet is lifted onto the Seance table, between the curtains. The medium's hands are seen to be held on opposite corners of the table, and her feet are well controlled.

The medium said: "I'm sorry; it is not my fault; tie me up again!" So her hands were re-tied to the wrists of her right and left hand controllers; and a *second* time the little hand untied the knots and removed the ropes. After this no attempt was made to fasten them again.

Bear in mind that all this was done while both hands of the medium were held visibly upon the table by two separate controllers, who were ascertaining at the time that they were really holding the hands of the medium, and not dummy hands, and tracing her arms to the shoulders to make sure that these members really belonged to her! The untying process, as I have said, took some considerable time—ample time for them to observe and verify all that was going on.

They reported that they were undoubtedly holding the medium's hands, and of course her head was visible throughout.

The hand which untied these knots was white and small, as I have said, and was enclosed at the wrist in a sleeve of black material, which was visible as far as the elbow—and nothing beyond! The edge of the black sleeve terminated in a small white lace cuff, which was turned backward onto the sleeve itself. The dress which the medium was wearing had no lace cuff. This fact was observed very carefully at the time, both by myself and by others, who were all looking at the hand intently. Its manipulations were intelligent and sprightly.

The two gentlemen who were holding or controlling the hands of the medium at the time were Mr. Frank Tilford on one side and Mr. Daniel Frohman on the other—both practical, shrewd men of affairs, who were unlikely to be taken in by any petty trickery, and who were completely bowled over by what they had seen. It was certainly one of the most spectacular manifestations I have ever witnessed.

Those of my readers who happened to see the motion picture *Topper Takes a Holiday* will remember the incident of the decanter which rose in the air by itself, pouring out a glass of liquid into a tumbler similarly suspended in space. Of course this was done by means of trick photography, and was not intended to be taken seriously. But it is interesting to note that precisely this same thing was noted by Sir Oliver Lodge and others in séances with Eusapia Palladino years ago. They also saw a decanter raised into the air and pour out its contents into a suspended glass. So it is possible that many of the occurrences noted in fairy stories are really based upon actual happenings—psychic phenomena which had been noted and which were utilized by the narrator in the telling of his tale.

But to return to Eusapia. The phenomena witnessed in her presence were for the most part physical, though an intelligence was certainly behind them, manipulating the invisible energies involved in their production. We psychical researchers do not believe of course that when an object is moved without contact, this has been brought about by a spirit which runs around the room like a chicken, producing phenomena. No, we believe that a *mechanism* is involved, and we want to know what that mechanism is: this is why we study these phenomena in psychic laboratories.

What seemingly happens is that a form of unknown energy or invisible substance issues from the body of the medium, capable of affecting and molding matter in its immediate environment. At times this is invisible; at other times it takes form and becomes more or less solid, when we have instances of the formation of so-called ectoplasm. It is this semi-material substance which moves matter and even shapes it into different forms.

This energy-like substance issues from various parts of the medium's body, but especially from her fingertips, her solar plexus and the sexual organs—though it can be emitted elsewhere. It represents a psychic force, as yet unknown to science, but now being studied by scientific men as part and parcel of supernormal biology.

It is this energy-like substance, then, which is probably responsible for most of the phenomena noted in the immediate vicinity of the medium. But this is in turn directed by a mind of some sort: and the next question is—whose mind? Is it that of the medium or that of some extraneous spiritual entity?

The answer to this question is not easily given. Certainly many of the phenomena are controlled by the medium herself, since they are under her own volition. For instance, I have often heard Eusapia say, "Now, I shall move that stool," and, placing her hand a few inches above it, the stool moved—though there was no visible connection between the two.

In studying Eusapia's phenomena, then, I was led to these conclusions: that they may roughly be divided into three categories. In the first, certain manifestations were under the control of the conscious mind of the medium. She willed a certain thing to happen, and it did.

Second, the medium passed into trance, in which state her conscious mind was no longer active. In this state the phenomena seemed to be directed by her subconscious mind, as though she were dreaming a certain thing, and this dream actually found expression in the outer world. It was as though a dog dreamed of catching a rabbit, and the dream was so vivid that a living rabbit was actually caught and killed!

But thirdly, we have cases (in deeper trance) in which the subconscious mind of the medium seems also to be superseded, and replaced by a mind altogether different from her own—an independent mind, having ideas and volitions entirely different from those of the medium.

These were the most striking and convincing of all her phenomena—and also the most rare. I have seen manifestations of this type on only a few occasions, while witnessing hundreds capable of being explained by the power of the medium herself. Here, as in so many other instances, we seem to have an inter-blending of the power of the medium herself and an external power imparted from without.

Scientific investigators of Eusapia's phenomena have attempted to explain even her most marvelous manifestations without recourse to this hypothesis. Even materialized hands they attempt to explain by means of "naturalistic" theories. What they suggest is something like this: that, just as the sculptor can mold clay by means of his material hands into various shapes, so the dynamic will of the entranced medium may similarly mold in space the semi-material emanation issuing from her own body, causing it to take the form of hands, heads and various parts of a body. They would constitute, on this theory, a variety of objectified thought-forms.

This theory is ingenious and may be all very well so far as it goes. But there are cases on record which are hard to account for on this view. For instance, at one séance given in Genoa, a complete form materialized, which was recognized by the sitters, and spoke in a low voice in *Genoese dialect*—which Eusapia did not know. Such cases certainly seem to indicate that, in some instances at least, an external spiritual being is actually involved in the production of the phenomena.

But it is certain that they have a biological basis; that is, that they are in any case dependent upon the physical body of the medium for their production. And, this being so, it is obvious that there is great need to study such phenomena in a properly equipped laboratory, fitted up with every contrivance calculated to measure, register and record these mysterious phenomena. That is why some of us have been urging for many years the setting up of such a laboratory—which is certainly one of the prime needs of our time. In it experiments could be undertaken, calculated to throw more light upon the real nature of man than all other scientific laboratories in the world combined!

Eusapia Palladino is no longer with us. She died more than twenty-five years ago. But other physical mediums have come to the fore, and some of these have been subjected to careful scientific investigation. In studying such manifestations we enter a realm of mystery; the borderland between spirit and matter. We approach the essence of life itself. It is a fascinating study, and I for one cannot but feel that the importance of such phenomena is very great—placing almost within our hands the Key to the enigmas of life and mind. They partially lift the veil from the enigmatic face of Nature, and, in the words of Sir William Crookes:

Veil after veil we have lifted, and her face grows more beautiful, august and wond'rous with every barrier that is withdrawn!

EINER NIELSEN

(1894–1965)

Physical — Materialisation Medium

Like many mediums, his mediumistic abilities started as a very young child, clearly remembering his visions when he was ten years old. Nielsen was sixteen years old when he came into contact with Spiritualism, and it happened in this way:

"Engineer Stochel had heard that Senior Caretaker Nielsen's son could see spirits. As he was very much interested in Spiritualism he called on my parents, and started a small group to which Mr. and Mrs. Stochel, my father and mother and I belonged.

"During the first year we had but table seances, i.e., we sat around a small three-legged table and uttered the letters of the alphabet whilst the table swayed at every letter which we used, stopping at the one desired. In that manner we got messages from the spirit world.

"My guardian spirit, Sister Agnete, manifested herself at these seances. I have seen her clairvoyantly several times. She is of medium height, has black hair, parted in the middle, brown eyes, bent nose, and a charming mouth; always she dressed in white.

"The spirit doctor, Brother Monarc, came also. He announced straightaway that he was connected with the circle as a friend and healer. He remains with me still, and has given to thousands of people instructions regarding their diseases, as a result of which almost all have regained their health.

"Another friend who visited these seances and has followed me all the time is Sister Rose. We asked her once why she came, and had the answer that serving the earth plane provided her the opportunities to progress: she was very happy if she, at the same time, was allowed to communicate God's love to us."

Nielsen's public work began at the end of 1911 at Copenhagen Spiritual Mission. With about seventy people present, he gave a trance address. The Spiritual Mission opened several branches in Hillerod, Helsingor and Frederikssund under the leadership of Alfred Nielsen (no relation). Einer Nielsen worked as a trance medium within the Spiritual Mission and its branches, with a break for military service. On his return his mediumship incorporated materialisation, spending several years at the Mission.

Nielsen notes:

"THE first time Mica demonstrated was probably in 1913 or 1914, and soon afterwards the materialisation seances began. He told me then that this power would last several years, and he has kept his promise.

"Who is Mica? He has told me that his last incarnation happened 400 years B.C., and that he was then a priest in an Indian cult. At that time he was working as a specially-incarnated leader for the benefit of this cause. In the Holy of Holies of a great temple, into which priests only had admission, a woman who was a medium was confined for life. She was not allowed to live with other people for fear that worldly contacts might damage her wonderful powers. Ever since then, Mica has served as a

priest in the spirit world, and the work he now performs through my mediumship is but a small part of the huge mission with which he has been entrusted.

"Since Mica appeared in my life he has had a great influence over me. Many times I have wished to be free from seances, but when he bade me continue I had to obey him as a child. In all my struggles he has stood faithfully by my side, but he never advised me regarding the way I was earning my living or about seance arrangements, leaving me to select sitters, etc. He guided me only in spiritual matters, and usually did so in a positive manner."

In the winter of 1915 Nielsen was arrested under suspicion of fraud after he had given two séances to members of the Society for Psychic Research; the first séance was apparently a success but in the second no materialisations manifested. In both séances, according to Nielsen,

"I was undressed and clad in other cloths. My hands were tied to a cord which was fastened to a hook in the wall: and from there the cord went to a Mr. O. who had to control me"

After the séance he was accused of *intended cheating*, where they produce a piece of white material—he admitted it was his but was an apport from another séance which he claimed he brought to exhibit after the séance. He had left it in his coat pocket in the hall prior to his séance restriction during the séance. Nielsen was arrested a couple of weeks later and spent several days in prison.

All the above information and quotes are from Einer Nielsen's book, "Solid Proofs of Survival", first published in 1950 by the Psychic Book Club; this is available as a free download. I will end with a 1931 report from the "Icelandic Society for Psychic Research", pages 70/71:

"*Einer Nielsen's Seances in Iceland* 1931.

"The account of the President of the Icelandic Society for Psychic Research, Mr. Einer H. Kvaran,

"Reykjavik, February 26th, 1931.

"I am sending you an extract from the records which the late Minister, Kristinn Danielsson kept of the seances Mr. Einer Nielsen held here in Reykjavik at the request of some gentlemen interested in psychic research. The chief purpose was to get materialisations. In all, fifteen seances were held from January 13th to February 10th. The materialised apparitions came out of the cabinet in red light at eleven seances, and some were visible at two other seances. The apparitions appeared at the sitting from eight to forty times. Of those six were at once recognised as friends or relatives of the sitters. Most of them appeared several times, among them Prof. Haraldur Nielsson, who came most often. At eight seances the sitters saw more than one apparition at the same time. At seven seances they saw the medium together with one or two materialised entities. At three sittings they heard more than one voice talk at the same time inside the cabinet. At three seances the sitters saw a materialised entity dematerialise itself outside the cabinet.

"Several times the entities approached the sitters, embraced and kissed them. Sometimes they sang together with the sitters outside the cabinet. Their draperies were different, some of them lying in rich folds. The most splendid draperies were made perhaps of about 20 yards of material. The forms of the entities varied very much, too, some being tall, others slender and short.

"The number of the sitters at the seances was twenty, of whom five composed the permanent group whilst the others varied. At the two first seances, which were test seances, there were only twelve sitters. Besides materialisations, telekinesis phenomena appeared at eight seances. An aluminium trumpet was levitated, sometimes up to the roof, and through the trumpet we heard voices at six sittings. During these manifestations the medium sat outside the cabinet, and the sitters next to him kept hold of his hands. Later on, we saw in full daylight several telekinesis phenomena apart from the regular seances, in the undersigned's home, where Mr. Nielsen stayed, and also in other homes where he was a guest. In addition we sometimes obtained very good tests of identification through Mr. Nielsen's clairvoyance and clairaudience.

"As you may understand, according to our opinion, Mr. Nielsen's visit to Iceland was very wonderful. We are very grateful to him, and we hope sincerely that he will have an opportunity to come again. There are many people here who could not get admittance to the seances, as Mr. Nielsen could not extend his stay in Iceland.

"Einer H. Kvaran."

Editor's note:

The question is: was he genuine? I have never researched Einer Nielsen before but I was familiar with his name; the word 'fraud' is quite highly associated with this name on the various websites. It was only while sitting in the Britten Museum & Library that my eye caught "Solid Proofs of Survival" by Einer Nielsen.

Reading the various reports in the book, it reminded me of the similarities to Helen Duncan regarding his full-form materialisations, i.e. medium and materialisation seen together, forms recognised by family, large, small, men, women, voice, identifying features, etc. The reports are mostly dated and the name/names are given in the book but to get a more balanced view the negative reports need to be seen. It seems that

Nielsen was quite compliant with the needs of researchers, séances were in good light, and he agreed to photographs with both white flash and, I believe, infra-red. It should be noted that photographs taken at séances are generally staged, from the point of view that permission is required by the medium or their control as to when to release the shutter.

It is referenced that the Norwegian investigators suspected Nielsen to be a fraud and investigated him in 1922. The committee from the Kristiania University discovered that his ectoplasm was fake.[11] In addition. in 1932, Johs Carstensen, the leader of Nielsen's Spiritualist circle, wrote a pamphlet which exposed his tricks.[12] Nielsen does not make any reference in his book to his circle leader, Johs Carstensen, but does comment on some alleged exposures against him.

In a paper titled "Danish Spiritualism 1853-2011" by Jesper Vaczy Kragh, PhD, Associate Professor, Medical Museion, University of Copenhagen, Denmark we find a little more information:

> Scientific investigations of spiritualist mediums were conducted by the Danish Society for Psychical Research in the period from 1920 to 1950. The society's inquiries into spiritualist manifestations included the two famous Danish mediums Einer Nielsen (1883-1965) and Anna Melloni Rasmussen (1898-1983), both of whom had received the attention of scientists in other European countries.
>
> On 26 August 1921, the first international conference on psychical research was opened in Denmark. In the course of the conference, international psychical researchers were invited to materialization séances with Einer Nielsen. After these sittings many of the participants told the press that they had been greatly impressed by Nielsen's ectoplasm phenomena. Due to favourable reports and the press attention, the Danish Society for Psychical Research decided to investigate Einer Nielsen's phenomena. The enquiry was carried out by three of the society's members, who subsequently published a positive report recognizing Nielsen's abilities. However, few were convinced by the report and a new investigation was set up in 1922 by a committee from the Kristiania University in Norway. The Norwegian researchers could not confirm the Danish results and accused Nielsen of being a fraud. The Norwegian disclosure, which was widely covered by the Danish press, was a serious setback for the spiritualists as well as the Danish Society for Psychical Research.

---

[11] Kragh, Jesper Vaczy, *Danish Spiritualism, 1853–2012*. In Christopher M. Moreman's *The Spiritualist Movement: Speaking with the Dead in America and Around the World. Volume 1: American Origins and Global Proliferation*. Universitetskomiteen, Mediet Einer Nielsen, kontrolundersøkelser av universitetskomiteen i Kristiania (Kristiania 1922). Anonymous. *Rapport fra den av Norsk Selskab for Psykisk Forskning nedsatte Kontrolkomité*. Norsk Tidsskrift for Psykisk Forskning 1 (1921–1922).

[12] Carstensen, Johs, (1932). *Spiritismens Princip og Fejlgreb. Specielt: Afsløring af Mediet Einer Nielsen*. Brandmose's Forlag.

However, after 1932 there appear to be no more exposures which I have found to date, and in fact not much other information on Einer Nielsen, good or bad, except various photographic images with little information. This may appear a little strange, as he would work for over another two decades, albeit Wikipedia notes:

> Nielsen continued to work as a medium until his death but was never considered credible again by people outside his small circle of influence.

This may well be the case but on balance none of the surface reports give any indication of what was specifically exposed or alleged, under what conditions and so forth—equally, there are some strong positive reports, for example as quoted above from the President of the Icelandic Society for Psychic Research.

The photographs above are random photographs; unfortunately all the images are of poor quality, taken from mostly old journals. The images below are matched, as the article description states, taken from "Two Worlds", April 16th 1955. I have noted "after 1932 there appear no more exposures which I have found to date"; the images below are, I believe, all post 1932:

CAMERA SHOWS STAGES OF MATERIALISATION

The remarkable qualities of ectoplasm, the basis of all materialisations and direct-voice phenomena, is illustrated in these outstanding seance pictures.

They were all taken with Einer Nielson of Copenhagen, whose powers of materialisation have been witnessed by hundreds of people in all walks of life in Scandinavia. He is still giving seances.

Though small quantities of ectoplasm are drawn from the sitters, in the main the operators abstract it from the medium.

Adding unknown factors to make it solid, its culmination is shown in the first photograph where the materialised figure of Knud, one of the medium's child controls, is clearly seen at the opening of the curtains which form the cabinet.

This usually consists of a curtained-off recess used by the spirit operators to condense he power they utilise before the materialisation form.

The medium in trance can be clearly seen above the materialised figure of the child.

The second picture was taken at a well-lighted seance. An arc lamp is suspended at the top of the cabinet with its light shining on the medium. Ectoplasm is seen to pour from his mouth. It is usually withdrawn from all the orifices.

What happens in the cabinet is illustrated by the remaining two pictures (shown below) showing some of the stages of materialisation.

In the first it has been abstracted from the medium, forming itself into a swathe-like appearance, sufficiently rigid to maintain itself as it moves up the wall to beyond a picture.

In the second photograph a different technique has been employed. The ectoplasm is in two distinct and separate forms.

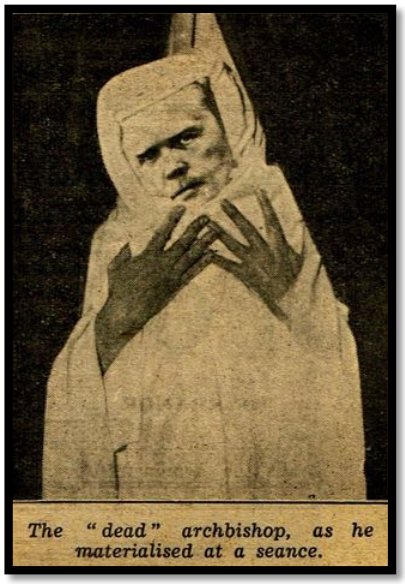
One portion, almost like a curtain, is draped round the medium from his knees, over part of his face, and falls behind his back. The second portion has floated away and partially obscures one of the pictures on the wall.

Ectoplasm has been described as a halfway house between matter and spirit. It has been handled and examined by front-rank scientists who have experimented with it for years and chemical analysed it. Its chemical properties are almost identical with the chemical constituents of the human body.

SEANCE PHOTOS SUPPLY PERFECT ANSWER

This section is taken from "Two Worlds", April 9th 1955:

The man who materialised and was easily identified is Archbishop Nathan Soderblom of Sweden. His appearance was a "birthday present" to Pastor Martin Liljeblad, through whose automatic writing gift he communicated a theological treatise. The Archbishop posed for this picture on Liljeblad's birthday.



The "dead" archbishop, as he materialised at a seance.

Not only was his face recognised by the pastor and others, but Liljeblad says that the hands we exactly they were before his death. The Archbishop was well-known, outside Sweden as a leader of an inter-denominational religious organisation. Liljeblad's advocacy of Spiritualism in Sweden — he published ten books many pamphlets on our subject besides speaking all over his country—led to him being forced to ask for "leave of absence" from his church for three years.

Here Liljeblad is greeted by a spirit form whose materialised hand touches the pastor on his shoulder. The spirit face is not completely visible because of the ectoplasmic draping over the head, which shields most of the features.

This is a very rare picture because it was taken in full daylight. The materialised figure has almost concealed the whole of his face. The ectoplasm with which he is garbed is mostly solid, but it becomes transparent in that portion which is close to the sitter's head and chest, which can be seen through It. Out of 225 pictures taken in daylight, only five showed any worthwhile result.

This remarkably photograph, the most famous of all Nielsen's seance pictures, shows Queen Astrid as she materialised at a seance in Denmark. Queen Astrid, wife of King Leopold of Belgians, was killed in a car crash at Lucerne, Switzerland, in 1935. Her subsequent appearances at Neilsen's Copenhagen seances — she was a Swedish princess before her marriage—were often witnessed.

The photograph was taken by Liljeblad, who wrote a book testifying to the authenticity of the Queen's materialisation in defiance of the Church authorities. As a result he was sentenced to two month's suspension from the Church without salary.

A score of sitters were present when this photograph was taken. The seance was held in red light, Liljeblad used three cameras, taking his pictures simultaneously with a white flash.

All the sitters saw Queen Astrid pose for the picture. And they all saw the materialisation and the medium together.

—~—☼—~—

The séance took place at Copenhagen, Demark, I believe, on May 31st 1938; Queen Astrid was killed in a car crash a few years earlier, on May 29th 1935.

The editor of "Two Worlds" at this period was Crestern Roskelly, who resided in the editor's chair from 1952 to circa 1957, when Maurice Barbanell took over as editor, then also editor of Psychic News, and continued with both publications until his death on July 17th 1981, aged 79.

Little is known about Crestern Roskelly; this statement is printed above:

> Ectoplasm has been described as a halfway house between matter and spirit. It has been handled and examined by front-rank scientists who have experimented with it for years and chemical analysed it. Its chemical properties are almost identical with the chemical constituents of the human body.

This is indeed a bold statement, which is completely unreferenced; one may understandably wonder who all these scientists are and their conclusions, *identical with the chemical constituents of the human body*.

—~—☼—~—

Announcement

Leslie Price, who is a sub-editor of Pioneer, along with Charles Coulston, advised me at the beginning of this year that he is stepping down owing to other commitments.

Without doubt Leslie is one of the foremost historians in this country on psychical research, theosophy and Spiritualism. I first came into contact with Leslie around 1999, when I started to research the SNU Principles; I had no computer at this time. I sent a letter to Leslie, as I saw an advert for his online newsletter, Psychic Pioneer, which ran from 1999 to 2001. All these issues today are available in the Britten Museum & Library at the Arthur Findlay College.

This resulted in my involvement with Leslie in pursuit to make public original researched materials of psychic pioneers; in May 2004 Leslie was founder editor of Psypioneer, covering a wide range of Spiritualistic material. A year later I took ownership of the journal and Leslie continued as contributor and sub-editor; in 2016 I retired as proprietor and editor to concentrate on my work at the Arthur Findlay College and the SNU Pioneer, which began in 2013.[13]

Leslie was once again a great support for me and continued to sub-edit Pioneer from 2013.

Leslie has been inspirational to me over the last two decades for his continued valuable support and his fine knowledge, which has taught me so much about psychic pioneers. Thank you.

Leslie Price & Paul Gaunt

[13] Leslie decided not to continue with Psypioneer but it is used in almost every Pioneer as referenced materials.

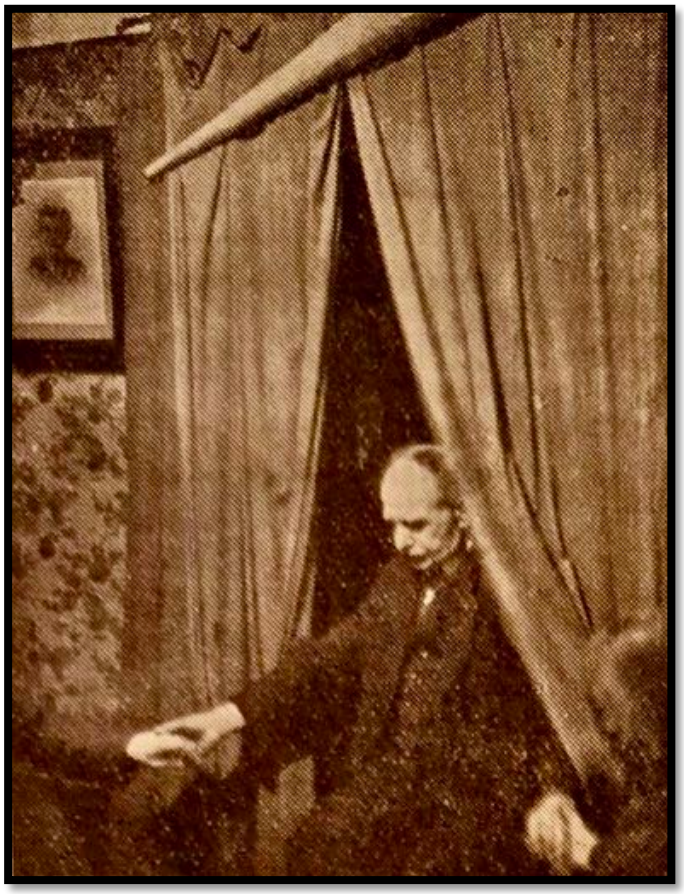
Trumpet flashlight photography experiment, where the well-known spirit photographer William (Billy) Hope, who died in 1933, spoke, giving instructions for the experiment. This took place in the private circle of John Ashworth. The reported experiment was with six sitters; this included J. Arthur Findlay and his wife. The following was published in the Two Worlds, January 7th, 1938:

Trumpet Levitation Photographed

Success of Glasgow Circle

THIS PHOTOGRAPH OF THE ENTRANCED MEDIUM AND LEVITATED TRUMPET WAS TAKEN BY FLASHLIGHT

Sir,—I herewith enclose a photo taken with photo-flash-light bulb, under the following circumstances, at John Ashworth's circle, Glasgow, on Sunday evening, December 26th, 1937.



Mr. Ashworth was in the cabinet under trance conditions, and the room was illuminated with a red light; during that time several fully materialised forms came out from the cabinet into the centre of the room, and spoke to those present in the circle, then a good clear strong voice, known to Mr. Ashworth's sitters as "Dr. Murphy," the control for the materialisations, spoke to me in the following manner

"I see, sir, you have brought your camera. We would be very pleased to try an experiment with your assistance. Now, pay careful attention: you will set up your camera trained on the front of the cabinet, wherein the medium sits; when you have done so I will instruct you again.

I replied, after doing so, that I was ready. He (the control) then said: "You will put out your red light and do not put in the red light until told to do so. There is a little man known to you (Billy Hope), he will give you further instructions, but before doing so we will bring the medium to the front of the cabinet and the sitters present will link hands, and those nearest to the medium will take hold of his hands,"

This was done.

"Now, keep singing."

When we stopped singing, Billy Hope spoke out quite loud and clear and addressed met thus: —

When we say the words, ‘Are you ready, Cummings?’ at the word ‘ready’ you will take the photo. Are you ready?

I switched on the flashlight, gave it three seconds, and then out, and we now know the result of the experiment.

The trumpet is high up at the front of the curtained cabinet; you can see the medium, and that his hands have been held as instructed; there were present at the time only six sitters (not including the medium).

In this experiment, we did not know what was going to take place, and after waiting a little while the medium was taken back into the cabinet. I was then told to put up the red light and the circle was continued in the usual way for about 20 minutes, then brought to a close.

Hope this little experiment will be of interest to your readers.

Sitters present: Mr. Findlay, Mrs. Findlay, Mrs. Murray, James Pyne, Mrs. Ashworth, Alex, Cumming.

I have shown this letter to Mr. Ashworth, and received his consent to send it on to you, Mr. Editor.

ALEXANDER CUMMING.

December 29, 1937:

A QUESTION OF FRAUD!

Throughout our history physical phenomena have been a debatable issue within the movement from its earliest days, even though the Spiritualist movement was largely founded on physical phenomena.

By the end of the 1880s much discredit had been placed on the dark séances. With many exposures, some of course were well-deserved and rightly exposed; some were self-exposed by the medium themselves! Others were merely alleged, etc. Its process and its history are indeed complex but in some instances of alleged fraud we may hold some of the answers. Many of the exposures were almost always by Spiritualists themselves; this can also be said of the Spiritualist press over the ensuing decades. But sometimes an alleged exposure cannot be as clear-cut as it may appear on the surface, as there may be other underlining issues, misrepresentation, jealousy and a real possibility of unconscious fraud.[18]

It is often claimed that physical mediums are sometimes badly injured, with some claims of actual death as a result of a spirit form, ectoplasm, etc. being grabbed. There are numerous accounts, but there appears to be no firm documented material, medical evidence, etc. of such injuries.

As noted: *Its process and its history are indeed complex but in some instances of alleged fraud we may hold some of the answers*: over the next few issues Pioneer will look through the history of some of these alleged cases of fraud, looking at both sides if possible. Some will be without doubt fraud, others perhaps *wrongly* alleged — others due possibly to the complex psychological process of physical phenomena.

Harry Boddington, along with his brother Richard, was involved within the SNU, more so Richard, a former Vice-President of the Union, elected to the Council in 1907. In 1928 Maurice Barbanell became a member of the SNU Council, taking over from the veteran Richard Boddington as London Area Representative.

The article below is by Harry Boddington and is picked up in the Two Worlds issue of September 9th, 1939 under the editorship of Ernest Oaten; it appears that the debating issues mentioned in the article were ongoing for clarification:

In the 1930s a group was formed by Harold Chibbett called "The Probe", which had a newsletter by the same name—hence Boddington's names: 'Probitis' and 'Probites'. "The Probe" investigated various occult fields, Spiritualism, psychical research, etc.

Another name which appears in the below article is that of Mrs Wakely, who was the President of Walthamstow National Spiritualist Church and a member of "The Probe".

---

[18] Conscious or unconscious fraud? Do mediums consciously premeditate fraud or is the fraud carried out unconsciously by *low* mischievous spirits? Some will argue that the medium premeditated the fraud and is therefore conscious and responsible for their actions, whilst others would say that due to the influence of *low* mischievous spirits or of the sitters in the séance the medium is totally unaware of their actions, as they are in a somnambulistic state and therefore cannot be accountable for their *unconscious* actions. For example, in August 1877 Catherine (Kate) Elizabeth Wood (1854-1884) was headlined "Miss Wood Caught Personating a Spirit". The report states: "During the unconscious state the medium is made the victim of the circumstances by which she is surrounded, and either through the perverted action of some of her own controls, or the intrusion of other spirits, she is reduced to the disgraceful position in which she was found." See Psypioneer, Vol. 8, No. 2, February 2012.

Harry Boddington replies to his critics, and discusses "an extraordinary disease called 'Probitis'"

Fraud

THE extraordinary disease called "Probitis" attacks all psychical researchers at some time or another. It is due to the fact that dwellers in a three-dimensional world find it quite impossible to accept the idea that a four-dimensional world interpenetrates it and that people conditioned to a four-dimensional world can, by very delicate mental and physical adjustments, produce results inexplicable to those living on the three-dimensional plane.

Add to this the fact that in this world everybody is on the look-out for "easy money" and is suspicious of everybody who attains that end by producing apparently incredible happenings, and that we are entirely ignorant of the dynamic effect of thought upon the elements around us, and you at once perceive the basis of the disease that continually drives genuine physical mediumship out of existence.

An Answer

Even when Spiritualists understand some phases of psychic phenomena they seem utterly incapable of grasping the fact that all psychic phenomena are mental at base and can therefore be unset by *other* mentalities.

First I must deal with my opponent, Mrs. Wakely seems to have adopted the role of representative for the Probites. As soon as she heard I had an answer to her theories she prevented her members hearing the other side of the question by cancelling my date. I note that she has this week added another victim at Kensington to her credit. Again the "flash-and-grab" process was utilised, but instead of grasping draperies they discovered a medium holding a trumpet to her mouth. Associated with Mrs. Wakely is a lady of theosophic tendencies who assured me that "all physical mediums were frauds."

Get two sitters obsessed with this mental outlook and their effect upon the delicate conditions of a seance room needs no further comment. They discover fraud wherever they go. No matter whether it is physical or mental phenomena that is being examined, the medium quite definitely passes under their control.

Mental Interference

Mrs, Duncan's spirit guide, "Albert,'' once gave the sitters a striking demonstration of their power over the entranced medium. One of their number was selected to *mentally* ask the medium to come and place her hands upon his shoulders, The medium could not possibly know who was selected, but as soon as the mental request was made the medium promptly left the cabinet and came and put her hands upon him

Mr. Oaten assures me that he has known of people who deliberately practise mental interference with seance room phenomena.

The only difference between these premeditated mental interferences and that of the Probite mind is that the former act consciously and the Probites ignorantly. The effect is the same.

In combating fraud we must not fail to note the main difficulties under which all trance mediums labour: 1, the unconscious medium is liable to suggestion from spirits both in and out of the body; 2, to seize an unconscious man and charge him with fraud means ignoring the very factors which constitute the basis of his mediumship; 3, subconscious action also produces fraudulent effects if the intense desire of the medium for success, or the urgent need for money worries him while sinking into trance, Many other motives conduce to the same end.

The offence of the Probites is that they destroy the "pearl of great price" in their vain effort to check the medium's money making.

I do not condone fraud, no matter whether produced consciously or subconsciously. It indicates a weakness somewhere, but that weakness is just as often in the mental atmosphere created by sitters as in the medium. Get the economic conditions altered and the main reason for fraud in every apartment of life will cease. That is why I want to see Spiritualists making it a definite plank in their propaganda platform.

My book on "Materialisations" cited one death and many injuries inflicted by the Probite method of testing mediums. Mrs Wakely suggests that my arguments are theoretical only. The book easily disproves that suggestion. In the first chapter on "The Mechanism of Mind," I prove the definite action of the mind upon inanimate objects. How much more powerfully operative must it be upon the quiescent brain of a medium?

My case against the Probites is that they ignorantly misuse the powers of hypnotism and telepathy. Harmonious seances succeed because of the trust and harmony present. In this condition the medium's brain responds to spirit action only.

The Walthamstow Probites are in a difficult position. I am sorry for them, but it should not blind them to the consequences of vindictive attacks.

Mrs. Wakely wrote to Harry Brown that he was the "one and only medium her society had ever seen or was ever likely to see." Their pet medium now denies that his phenomena are "psychic" in any way. Since throwing over trance states—which presumably include hypnotic control by Mrs. Bell—he successfully produces psychic phenomena on the music hall stage In imitation of Kuda Bux, with his eyes so completely bandaged that it is impossible for him to see anything, he rides bicycles, plays cards and billiards, reads sealed letters and does other incredible things previously attributed to spirit aid. It seems to have annoyed them. I want to whisper a word of consolation to them. What Harry Brown is now doing could, I believe, be achieved by any well-developed physical medium who travels along Yoga lines of development after being sensitised by spirit operators over a long period of time.

If Probites want to stamp out fraud it is useless attacking *unconscious instruments*. They must first kill *unconscious trance mediumship*. This in its turn would be incredible folly, for from this class the most definite tests and spirit teaching are obtained. The way out of the difficulty is to teach trance mediums how to co-operate—in good light—with their spirit guides. Harry Brown is merely indicating a way.

HARRY BODDINGTON,
London Psychic Educational Centre.

—~—☼—~—

The following issue of Two Worlds naturally brought a response from Mrs Wakely and "The Probe".

Mrs E Wakely's response:

Sir,—Logic teaches us that we must have our premises correct. If the premises on which Mr. Boddington builds his case for materialisation are as incorrect as those in his article on "Fraud" in last week's issue of *The Two Worlds*, then one doubts the wisdom of his attempt to write a book on the subject.

I did not cancel Mr. Boddington's date. The Secretary of the church, acting at the *unanimous* vote of the Church Committee, did this. It was felt that in view of the fact that Mr. Boddington was publicly supporting Clive Holmes, it was unwise to permit his presence on the platform of a church which is out to do its best to raise the standard of Spiritualism. As several members of the Church Council (not all members of "The Probe") had witnessed the so-called phenomena of Clive Holmes, and had positive proof of his fraudulent practices, it was felt that no opportunity of talking on such a subject should be given to one whose observations were apparently not sufficiently careful to detect the presence of the fraud we had witnessed.[19]

Mr. Boddington was given a chance to appear on our platform on a weekday, when the very members he seems so convinced *want* to hear him would have a chance of voicing their own opinions, but, so far, he has not availed himself of the opportunity.

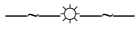
On no account, however, will he—at least while the present Council is in power—be allowed to speak on a Sunday evening, when only his side of the question can be voiced and heard. I have no one of theosophic tendencies associated with me, nor yet anyone who is likely to have assured Mr. Boddington that "all physical mediums are frauds." May we ask Mr. Boddington to give the *name* of the medium who was killed through being tested by any method. *We want facts*. As he claims to know how exposures should *not* be done, will he please tell me how they should be carried out.

In no exposure with which I have been connected has the so-called medium suffered any injury, and in every case ample proof of fraud has been visible to all sitters.

As Mr. Oaten pointed out in his recent article, exposures are not published until sufficient evidence has been previously gathered. The same applies to the actual exposures with which I have been concerned. As long as people of Mr. Boddington's calibre are alive to provide excuses for these ghouls in human form, just so long will Spiritualism cease to make the progress it deserves.

Not having read Mr, Boddington's book, I have yet to learn what he considers proof. Unfortunately for Spiritualism, commercialisation and vested interests are not solely confined to fraudulent mediums.

Mrs. E. WAKELY,
President,
Walthamstow S. Church.



[19] **NOT RESPONSIBLE**: Sir,—As Vice-President of Walthamstow Spiritualist Church, I would like to point out that Mr. Harry. Boddington's bookings were cancelled by the Church Council. We were notified of the matter he was to speak on, and we did not think this desirable for a Sunday service. Mrs. Wakely was not, responsible. LEONARD C. BOOTH, Vice-President, Walthamstow Church.

Response from "The Probe":

NO CONNECTION

Sir,—The article, entitled "Fraud," by Harry Boddington, contained in last week's issue of *The Two Worlds*, may have conveyed the impression to your readers that "The Probe" is actively concerned in the controversy between Mr. Boddington and the members of the Walthamstow Church.

This is not so, and Mr. Boddington should seek information regarding "The Probe's" organisation from authoritative quarters before assuming that every exposure is necessarily the work of "The Probe."

"The Probe" is concerned chiefly with *bona fide* research, and resents the loose use of the terms "probitis" and "probites" in connection with the exposure of fraudulent mediums, which contain the implication that "The Probe" exists solely for that purpose.

It is time that responsible Spiritualists such as Harry Boddington realised that psychic researchers are not ignorant fools, and that co-operation in the investigation of psychic phenomena is much more likely to be of use to the Spiritualist. Movement than abuse and unprovoked attack.

Per pro "The Probe,"
H. S. W. CHIBBETT, Hon. Sec.

—~—☼—~—

A Church Council member adds: [20]

Sir,—My name has been brought into Mr. Harry Boddington's vituperative explosions, all because our local Church Council cancelled his dates. My wife and I must, according to him, face a charge of condoning fraud or else we must read his book !

Straight speaking is now required. Constant misstatements of fact and misrepresentations are made by Mr. Boddington.

Being a member of the Walthamstow Church Council, a member of the Probe, and a friend of many years' standing of Mr. Harry Brown, whore remarkable mediumistic development my wife and I were privileged to watch, I am in a position to reply to Mr, Boddington.

I challenge Mr, Boddington to produce one tittle of evidence of Mr. Brown's confession of fraud, or prove that he ever stated that his mediumship was not genuine.

I challenge Mr. Boddington to produce one letter from Mrs Wakeley asking him not to use Holmes' name.[21]

[…]

Now as to the Probe, with whose name he tries to make such capital. What does he know of this organisation? Because they once successfully exposed a fraudulent medium, he feels he has the right to use his questionable wit at the Probe's expense. Well, he has a tough nut to crack. The Probe is strong enough and independent enough to follow its own. line of investigation and research. It does not depend on popularity or advertisement, and Mr. Boddington's cheap sneers will neither help nor harm the Probe.

[20] Two Worlds, October 21st, 1938 (*slightly edited – repeated information*).

[21] Mr Bell misspells "Wakely" as "Wakeley".

With regard to the matter of my wife and I condoning fraud. Let Mr. Boddington first prove fraud by Mr. Harry Brown—I wish to emphasise the word *prove*, not make statements—then I will take up the matter of condoning fraud.

We can all have differences of opinion. We may not all see alike, but let us state facts plainly and truthfully, and not rely on subterfuge to make our case good. Only thus can we hope to arrive at some germ of truth.

FRANK H. C. BELL.

—~—☼—~—

The editor, Ernest Oaten, on October 28th brings a halt to the argument, letting Harry Boddington have the final say (*slightly edited*):

This brings us to the crux of the matter so far as Brown is concerned. Both of them deny that he uses extra-sensory perception, psychic sight, or the faculty of clairvoyance (which Mrs. Bell admits he developed), during his stage shows. The "dangerously misleading statement" is theirs, not mine. Readers must judge.

I have before me two printed accounts of the way in which he claimed to train for his stage show. The clearest explanation is taken from *Pearson's Weekly* of July 10th, 1937, and reads as follows:—

" 'But how did you suddenly discover that you had this power' I asked.

" 'It wasn't sudden,' he corrected. '*It's a matter of concentration and development*.' As a child he could see hazy forms while blindfolded. He mentioned this to a friend, who suggested he might be able to do the Kuda Bux [1905-1981: known as "The Man with the X-Ray Eyes."] act.

" 'I tried, but at first it did not work. Yet I somehow felt that with patience I should be able to recapture my childhood's powers. I lighted a candle in a darkened room, bandaged my eyes very tightly, *so that I could not see the candle*, and sat gazing at the place where it was. I concentrated on seeing it.

" 'After a time I began to see the dim form of the light, A mere glimmer. Then it took shape. I could see the actual outline of the flame. Then, *after weeks of further practice*, I got expert that I could not only see the candle, but some of the things in the room which were lighted up by it.

" 'Then I increased the bandage thickness and tried again, gradually developing the power *of seeing without my eyes*' "

What becomes of the suggested stage "trick" after that very lucid explanation? I called it positive development on Yoga lines. I still adhere to that explanation.

I think Brown's denial that anything "psychic" enters into his show is due to the fact that his later development differed from his earlier clairvoyance in that his concentration has caused him to restrict his extra-sensory perception to the physical plane that same act shuts out normal clairvoyance and its relationship to the spirit world. To me, it is simply a difference in degree and not in actual fact.

Please note that I have not suggested that Brown ever committed conscious fraud. But I have emphasised the fact in "Materialisations" that all entranced mediums are liable to subconscious actions and also to influence from their audience. These are the actual points in debate, but which have in no way been dealt with by any contributor.

H. BODDINGTON.

—~—☼—~—

Editor's note:

Boddington's article, "Fraud", and its response brought out some complex problems of what truly constitutes fraud, pointing to the possibility of blatant deliberate fraud, unconscious fraud and perhaps other considerations as to the mechanics of physical mediumship, as in the case of Clive Holmes, the materialisation medium, whom Boddington does not directly mention in the above article *but in fact, strongly supported*—while others *cited above* were equally satisfied from their first-hand observations and experience of Holmes' mediumship: "*... had positive proof of his fraudulent practices…*". However, the magistrate had no problem in their judgement that Clive Holmes was indeed guilty of his charges.

Regarding the points raised in the article, "Fraud", by Boddington and his apparent attack on Mrs E. Wakely, Frank Bell and his wife (Margery), these people were all Spiritualists, President and Councillor of an SNU church, Boddington a Diploma-holder of the Union, etc. On the surface, it appears that Boddington was not impressed with "The Probe", in which Wakely and the Bells were active members. The published response from "The Probe" was from its founder and then current Honorary Secretary, Mr Harold Chibbett.

Harold Chibbett

Harold Stanley Walter Chibbett (1900-1978) was in fact a supporter of physical phenomena, as is demonstrated by his involvement with Noah Zerdin (1889-1972), who was well known for pioneering a general awareness, and the safe practice, of physical mediumship.

The development of physical mediumship, generally speaking, is restricted to private home circles. Around 1930 Noah Zerdin began to exchange reports of his home circle with those of Harold Chibbett. This would lead to the formation of the "Link Association of Home Circles" in 1931, which developed into an international association of home circles, privately publishing its own monthly journal, "The Link".

NOAH ZERDIN

In 1931 Harold Chibbett and Noah Zerdin held their first conferences of "The Link". Chibbett became its Honorary Secretary. It represented 21 home circles and the following year it increased slightly to 26. By the third Conference, held on October 15th, 1933 in London, it had reached 156 affiliated home circles (1934 – 187 home circles).

"The Link" held large mass meetings for psychical phenomena. Mrs A.E. Perriman was the first voice medium for "The Link" in 1934 at the Æolian Hall.

Special picture of the cabinet, the microphone and the circle at the great Kingsway Hall experimental seance (photo by Lewis Bros.)

A year later Leslie Flint,[22] a friend of co-founder Noah Zerdin, gave a large direct-voice séance at

[22] The photograph is a later Leslie Flint direct-voice public séance by the "Link Association of Home Circles" in 1946, where over one thousand people witnessed direct voice. The photograph shows the cabinet Flint was sitting in; the microphone can be seen surrounded by Leslie Flint's home circle members. The "Link" event was started by various speakers: Noah Zerdin (whose photo is shown), Lord Dowding and former SNU Presidents Percy Wilson and Harold Vigurs (then SNU President).

Bloomsbury's Victoria Hall. Colin Evans' home circle was a member of the "Link Association of Home Circles" and reports were circulating of remarkable physical phenomena in Evans' home circle, in which he was already a well-known clairvoyant. "The Link" decided to centre some large mass séances around Evans' home circle. This was in late 1937; arrangements were made for Nandor Fodor, research officer for the "International Institute for Psychical Research", to record any phenomena which might occur.[23]

In more recent years, after the deaths of Chibbett and Zerdin, in their footsteps came the formation of the "Noah's Ark Society", whose journal carried important articles on pioneers of physical mediumship. The name came from Noah Zerdin, followed in later years by the "Zerdin Fellowship", which also had its own magazine, the "Zerdin Buzz Sheet". All of these are now sadly defunct.

See Psypioneer, Vol. 10, No. 8: "The Link"—The Association of Home Circles & "The Noah's Ark Society"—for Physical Mediumship.

To conclude the arguments between Boddington and the "Probites," it is correct to say that Mrs Wakely, Frank Bell and his wife Margery were sometimes involved in the exposure of alleged fraud. For example, Frank Bell and Mrs Wakely were involved in the exposure of the flower apport medium, Miss X – Miss Hilda Lewis, 'Flower Medium'. Bell played a fairly substantial part, with Mrs Wakely as a signed witness. An overview of the story is published in Psypioneer, Vol. 6, No. 6: "The Flower Medium — Mrs. Hewat McKenzie, Oct 1935", albeit this article does not include the involvement of Wakely and Bell.[24]

During the discussions of Boddington and the "Probites" former SNU President and editor of the Two Worlds Ernest Oaten publicly exposed two physical mediums, Mrs Grover and Mrs Woolf. Following the exposures Oaten publishes in the Two Worlds, August 26th, 1938:

—~—☼—~—

[23] See Pioneer, Vol. 6, No. 5: International Institute for Psychical Research – The Case for Real Psychical Research – by Arthur Findlay.

See also Psypioneer, Vol. 10, No. 8: "Spiritualism through the Lens – Colin Evans" – "Paul J. Gaunt comments on Colin Evans" – "Sitters See His Body Floating in the Air – A. W. Austen" and " "The Link" Triumphs Again – Two Worlds".

[24] Further information is available from the editor.

The Question of Fraud

THE exposure we have published in the last two weeks, which concern Mrs. Grover and Mrs. Woolf, draw attention once again to the element of fraud in psychic phenomena. In the minds of many people mediumistic phenomena, by reason of their strangeness and exceptional nature, are invariably associated with fraud, credulity and deception. Unfortunately such accusations are not always without foundation.

Accusations of fraud have *always* been levelled against. mediums, and while some of them have been undoubtedly based upon facts a large number of such accusations have been due to the fact that men of ordinary experience found it impossible to believe that such phenomena *could* actually occur; there appeared to be no laws known to science which would allow such happenings, and it was therefore far easier to assert that they were produced fraudulently than to accept results which lay beyond the pale of ordinary experience. We are convinced that a very large number of the accusations of fraud in the early days of the Movement were by no means well founded. Men were dealing with phenomena which were new to them, the laws of which were *not* understood, and the only comparison which most men had was to the delusions produced by conjurors, and they imagined that there was some relationship between the deceptions of the conjuror and the seances of mediums.

Rogues and cheats are to be found in every walk of life. "The Church, the Law and Medicine are all disgraced occasionally by the conviction of disreputable practitioners," but however numerous such people may be, it is only when we come to Spiritualism that the existence of fraud and deception is used as an argument against the whole movement.

Psychical researchers have *ever* been suspicious of professional mediums, and, of course, it is quite conceivable that where the element of gain enters into the matter the prevalence of deception is far more likely than in cases where no material gain is at stake. There are, of course, other factors, such as the desire for fame, notoriety or personal vanity, all of which may enter into the matter, but in the main it can be said that ability to extort heavy profits in any department of life or trade offers a temptation to the cheat to pretend to powers which he does not possess.

The difficulty of dealing of with fraud in mediumship, however, would be very much simplified if it was attempted by people who processed no genuine powers whatever, but there have been remarkably few cases of this type in the history of the Movement. The problem is complicated by the fact that we have to deal with sensitive people who under *some* conditions are capable of producing genuine phenomena, but who, when those conditions are not present, resort to deceit and trickery. Now in our opinion, when we are dealing with the most sacred convictions of the human soul, when we are attempting too, to analyse the very serious matter of the love-links which bind us to our best-beloved friends, the individual who would practise wilful fraud under such conditions deserves the worst that can be said about him. To exploit the deepest emotions of the human soul and the most sacred of human associations by using fraudulent means to exploit them for personal gain is a detestable and disgraceful thing, showing a lack of all fine feeling and of decency.

As the importance of Spiritualism grows in public estimation, as its claims become popular, it is obvious that there is a greater demand for phenomena, and while, half a century ago the best mediums in this country lived on the borders of starvation, to-day the medium who can produce definite and positive evidences can undoubtedly command large fees. There seems little doubt, from facts in our possession, that Mrs. Grover must have been receiving somewhere in the region of £20 per week, and for an individual whose

position in life has always been moderate and humble one, the ability to acquire such fees is a very great temptation. The fact, too, that such fees are payable to-day throws upon the Spiritualistic Movement a very great deal more responsibility than in the days when fees were few and mediums wore despised.

Let us be perfectly frank: we should maintain that the individual who can produce actual evidence of the continued survival of loved ones, the apparent loss of whom has brought sorrow, misery and despondency into the hearts of their relatives; the individual who can stem the tide of sorrow, which is the result of bereavement, and substitute therefor the joy and confidence which comes from the conviction of reunion, is doing a great deal more good in the world than a Hollywood film star. The medium who can bridge the gulf of death is conferring quite as great a benefit on humanity as any bishop or archbishop, and is entitled—and rightly entitled—to comfort, security, and those amenities which bring peace of mind, so essential to the practice of mediumship.

It must not be forgotten that in the practice of mediumship there are psychological factors at work which are too often overlooked by the uninformed. The fact that a medium in the seance room is more or less in a hypnotic condition and may react to mental and psychical factors which are difficult to trace, very often causes them to do things unconsciously which they would not consciously do. Sitting some time ago with one materialising medium, the guide distinctly told us, "Will you bear in mind that my medium is in a hypnotic state, and if you give orders she will obey your suggestions; when in state she acts automatically." Such a statement throws a great deal of light on the process.

Again, Dr. Crawford [25] showed that much physical phenomena is produced by the extrusion of psychic rods (visible or invisible) from the body of the medium, and it would seem that there in a current of nervous energy flowing through those rods which corresponds very closely to the nerve energy flowing through the arms when we attempt to lift a chair, for instance. It is not surprising that in such cases part of the energy thus projected *is* directed through the limbs, and one gets involuntary twitchings and movements of arms and legs which may easily excite suspicion and lead to the supposition that the medium is wilfully and very crudely attempting to move objects with his hands. These characteristics were especially notable with Eusapia Palladino, who made little or no attempt to disguise the facts.[26]

It is always well to remember, then, that a medium in the seance-room may be liable to act unconsciously to psychological factors of which the sitters may be largely ignorant. In the days of long ago when such matters were imperfectly understood, many accusations of fraud were made against mediums which had no foundation other than the ignorance of the sitters. Such considerations, however, are not an excuse for fraud —in fact, when they are understood they make fraud easily apparent. When, however, as in the case of Mrs. Grover, it can be definitely shown that preparations were made beforehand to practice fraud by carrying into the seance-room the materials used for fraudulent purposes, such as butter-muslin and band of linen with a large safety pin in it, there is only one conclusion to be reached, namely, that a deliberate attempt had been made beforehand to deceive the sitters. And we hope Spiritualists, despite their sympathy for the bottom dog and the desire to practise kindliness and the spirit of brotherhood will let no false sentiment stand in the way of keeping the Movement clean. There is far less fraud in the Movement than the outsider is prepared to admit, but with the growing popularity of Spiritualism one can understand the danger of an increase. It's up to Spiritualists of every grade to denounce and make

[25] See Pioneer, Vol. 4, No. 5: "Letter from Harry Houdini to Dr W. J. Crawford", "Dr. W. J. Crawford & the Goligher Circle", "Ectoplasm Photographed – John McIndoe", and "Editor's endnote".

[26] See Pioneer, Vol. 6, No. 6: "Eusapia Palladino – Hereward Carrington".

public every case in which fraud has been definitely proved. It is our duty to the spirit world to keep *their* reputation and our own as clean as the conditions of this world will allow. Any false sentiment is a reflection upon that band of ministering spirits who in the last ninety years have laboured under very trying conditions to establish their case.

—~—☼—~—

Mrs Elizabeth Grover's exposure was published in the Two Worlds, August 12th, 1938; below is the full report by Ernest Oaten:

MRS. GROVER EXPOSED

IT is with very great regret that we have to announce that Mrs. Elizabeth Grover, who has posed as a materialising medium, was definitely discovered in fraud last week while giving an alleged materialising séance near Birkenhead. The seance had been arranged for the 2lst of August, but to fit in with Mrs, Grover's engagements, at her request the date was altered to the 7th. There were nine sitters, in addition to Mrs. Grover and Mr. J. L. Hampson. Mrs. Grover was met at Liverpool and motored across to the Wirral peninsular. Two ladies were appointed to take her into an ante-room for a complete search. After her outer clothes had been removed there was some delay before she removed her underclothing. She was *never* completely stripped. While the search was in process, Mr. Hampson called the two ladies, who were examining her to examine the clothes that she was to wear, thereafter they returned to the ante-room. A complete search was not made and to that extent the sitters were lax.

After the seance had started a form came from the cabinet who claimed to be Albert Stewart. Close scrutiny showed no likeness to the Albert Stewart whom many of the sitters were familiar with not even the voice being satisfactory. Two other forms came from the cabinet, one claiming to be "White Rose," a guide, and another one, who said he was Hill, but no one knew him, and he couldn't tell the sitters who he was. Mrs. Grover had heard a sitter addressed as "May," and the next form announced itself as being for May, although there was no one of this name in the room. The sitters were by now definitely of the opinion that in every case the form which appeared *was* Mrs. Grover, clothed in white substance. When another form appeared who gave the name of Ethel, one of the sitters slipped into the cabinet and found the cabinet empty. The light was put on and Mrs. Grover was then discovered in her underclothes draped with wet butter muslin, with a calico bandage round her head. The exposure was complete, and no attempt was made, either by Mrs. Grover *or* Mr. Hampson to disguise the fact. Mrs. Grover signed the following statement:—

> I, Elizabeth Grover, hereby acknowledge that on August 7, 1938, at 3 p.m., at a seance held in Wye View, Meadowbrook Road, Moreton, Wirral, I fraudulently produced the materialised form of "Albert Stewart" and others. These forms were produced by muslin and other material hidden on my person, in the presence of Edward Edwards, Caroline Davies, Lilian Roberts, Ethel Wearing, Dorothy H. Pugh, W. J. Lee, K. Nichols, W. O. S. Lee, Ada Lee.
>
> Signed,
>
> E. Grover,
> J. L. Hampson.

Mr. Hampson expressed his surprise, as he claimed that he had believed absolutely in Mrs. Grover, but as it was he who called the two ladies aside from the task of searching her, Mr. Hampson has signed the following statement:—

August 7, 1938.

I hereby agree that it was possible for Mrs. Grover to have secreted the muslin on her person, when I called, the two ladies who were examining Mrs. Grover into the seance room, to examine the gown she would wear,

J. L. Hampson.

The sitters acquit Mr, Hampson of wilful complicity and assert that he was as much surprised as they were.

Mrs. Grover has been sitting for a number of years in Edinburgh, and from time to time reports have reached our editor. He had hopes that a reliable medium was in process of development, but some months ago Mr. Hampson offered *The Two Worlds* a series of advertisements announcing that Mr. Hampson and Mrs. Grover would be prepared to undertake materialising seances throughout the country. Our editor wrote Mr. Hampson *definitely* stating that while Mrs. Grover might possess mediumship, he was of the opinion that that mediumship was by no means sufficiently advanced to guarantee the giving of public seances, and advised that she remain for another year or two in her developing circle. It was a loss of advertisement income to us, but *The Two Worlds* has always put the interests of the Movement first. Steps were then taken to give Mrs. Grover publicity in other ways. Since then we have received quite a dozen adverse reports of seances held in different parts of the country, and at least five persons who have sat with her have called upon us personally to express their dissatisfaction, On the other hand we have had two reports only which express satisfaction, and in neither case did the evidence offered seem to us conclusive, otherwise we should have published it.

There are many materialising mediums who can produce good results when they sit in the same circle with the same sitters regularly, but who are quite incapable of producing satisfactory results when they have to sit with different sitters at each seance, It *may* be that Mrs. Grover possesses mediumship, though we have little evidence of it, but in any case, the best course open to her is to put herself in the hands of a carefully selected committee for a series of seances under rigid test conditions. It is a matter of deep regret to us to have to call attention to wilful fraud, but in the interests of honesty and for the protection of honest searchers, it has been the policy of *The Two Worlds* for fifty years to make such facts known wherever they occur.

E. W. O.

—~—☼—~—

The exposure of Mrs Elizabeth Grover brings out another problem that some mediums *claim* to have other mediums' guides/controls. This was indeed sometimes the case with Estelle Roberts' "Red Cloud." At one point the alleged guide made a statement to the effect… *that he only works through his medium and after her death he will not chose another medium*—this is in contrast to "John King", who, it is claimed, worked with numerous mediums for decades—even today!

Alleged image of Albert Stewart

The Grover séances claimed Helen Duncan's alleged control, "Albert Stewart." The story was written very much from the point of view that Helen Duncan was *herself aware* of the fact that Grover was to be exposed. The letter below is from one of the people present at the exposure and a signatory to the confession, Edward Edwards; the following is a quote from the Two Worlds, August 26th, 1938:

Will you permit me, Mr. Editor, to explain how and why the exposure came about? For some considerable time at Mrs. Grover's "seances," a form purporting to be "Albert Stewart" has been appearing and giving so-called advice to sitters, which, when acted upon, has caused quite a lot of sorrow and disappointment. So much so that Albert himself was greatly grieved at the havoc that was being done.

When Mrs. Duncan was in Birkenhead during May last, Albert spoke to me very feelingly about this, saying: "Mr. Edwards, can you not, for God's sake, do something to stop this use of my name," I asked what could I do. He then suggested that I write a disclaimer to the Spiritualist paper, which I did. The Editor can bear me out in that. The letters were not published. Laws of libel, etc., had to be considered. At a trance sitting, Albert again pleaded for something to be done. He was asked if we should arrange a sitting to try and find the lady out. This, through Mr. W. J. Lee, was eventually arranged. We were directed by Albert all through. He told us what Mrs. Grover would be wearing, how we were to sit, and what we would find when the light went on.

Mr. Hampson is quite right in saying that Mrs. Duncan knew of the proposed exposure. She was staying for the week-end at the home of Mrs. Roberts, some five miles away, as we wished to keep in touch with Albert, and to ask him if the arrangements we had made were satisfactory. Mrs. Duncan gave up part of her holiday so that we could do this. Apart from that she had nothing whatever to do with the exposure. It was carried through by personal friends of "Albert Stewart," solely in an endeavour to vindicate his name.

It is unfortunate that Mr. Hampson considers he was subjected to some little abuse, but, as I have stated previously his action in calling the ladies away from Mrs. Grover placed him under suspicion. Regarding, his statement that he has received letters from persons who still have faith in Mrs. Grover, and are prepared still to engage her, I believe it was the "Great Barnum" who said, "There is one born every minute." So consequently, I am not surprised at this. And now, Mr. Hampson, a message to yourself from the real "Albert Stewart," which asked me to pass on to you. Albert said you were not knowingly a party to the frauds perpetuated by Mrs. Grover. And, in conclusion, I can only say I regret to find you still sign yourself as "Acting Secretary for Mrs. Grover."

EDWARD EDWARDS.

5, White Street,
Birkenhead.

Many points of view have been expressed and discussed and reasons given for and against conscious and unconscious fraud, etc. In the next issue Pioneer will look at the early Victorian mediums and the claims of fraud against them. As Ernest Oaten remarked:

> "… that it may be quite possible for suspicious sitters, who sit with the express purpose of exposing the medium to so permeate the mental atmosphere with their intentions that a medium acts under their suggestion. Mediums, being sensitives, must necessarily, in some measure, be influenced by the mental powers brought to bear upon them. The theory is perfectly valid, and is well recognised by all qualified experimenters. It is because of this that many people have been accused of fraud, when they have been perfectly innocent, …"

Given this article, “Fraud”, by Harry Boddington, it appears to suggest that perhaps the underlining factors of his article were the conviction and imprisonment of the physical materialisation medium Clive Holmes. It has been noted that it was Mrs. Wakely who said:

> “… several members of the Church Council (not all members of “The Probe”) had witnessed the so-called phenomena of Clive Holmes, and had positive proof of his fraudulent practices, …”

In Boddington's article, “Fraud”, he called “The Probe” members ‘Probitis’ and ‘Probites’, which he used throughout the article, but “The Probe” had nothing to do with the conviction of Holmes directly, albeit some were members of “The Probe.” Clearly its founder and Honorary Secretary, Mr Harold Chibbett, was in support of physical mediumship with “The Link”!

Below, Pioneer publishes the front-page story of the Two Worlds, July 30th, 1937:

A MEDIUM CONVICTED

CLIVE HOLMES SENTENCED

FROM OUR SPECIAL REPREHENSIVE

WHATEVER one’s ideas of justice may be, the sentence on Clive Holmes will rankle in all minds. Robbery with violence gets no heavier sentence. A clean life’s record, honourable army service, with King George’s Jubilee medal, twenty years’ service in Government employ, employment which will automatically cease, with loss of pension, and not even the grace of the First Offender’s Act. All this will be the normal sequence of four months’ imprisonment, because a lad claimed to seize a piece of muslin in a seance room. The magistrate said he had “no doubt a clever conjuror could produce all the phenomena.”

The witnesses who testified to searching, stripping, handcuffing, and recognising spirit forms, and accepted the manifestations as genuine, were dismissed as “dupes.” The magistrate’s attitude towards psychic phenomena is illustrated by the following extract from his summing up: “A certain French cynic said, ‘Faith consists of believing what you know to be untrue.’ I cannot help thinking that the faith of these witnesses is faith of that variety.” He also decided that ‘the “religious atmosphere in which these manifestations occur all form part of the ‘false pretence.’ ”

Mr. Ronald Evans, who sat next to the prosecutrix and her son at the seance on May 20th, said he had known Clive Holmes about three years. He was not an official, but went as a seeker after truth. He had definitely recognised his grandmother because of a particular scar on her nose. He had also recognised his aunt Mary, seen two forms out at a time, and sometimes young children had manifested. (Holmes is 6ft. 2in.) Sometimes he had seen forms and heard Clive’s voice speaking from the cabinet at the same time.

Several people had inspected the cabinet on May 20th. On that night four forms materialised. Three were recognised by sitters. Mr. Smith had handcuffed Mr. Holmes. He was a stranger to him, and was there for the first time. Smith held the key. The fourth form did not “lash out” at Evans, but tried to strike the light down with the luminous slates. Mrs. Evans could not have fallen on to the floor, as he was sitting next to her and she would naturally have fallen on him. The spirit form seemed to rise from the floor about 3 ft. away from him. As it passed him he was tapped gently on the face. He then saw the beam of light which for a moment he mistook for a psychic phenomenon. The torch was directed towards the stomach of the spirit, which used the slates as a shield to ward it off. The form then

disappeared towards the cabinet. He saw nothing whatever of the alleged striking of either Mrs. Evans or her son. Mrs. Evans held his hand nearly all the time and sat still. He went to the cabinet within a few seconds and found Clive Holmes, still handcuffed, with his head lolling on one side. He saw no theatrical properties nor anything suspicious in the cabinet.

He helped Mr. Clive Holmes out of the cabinet still handcuffed. The key was obtained and he was released and helped downstairs and laid on the couch. The unscrewing of the handcuffs occupied two or three minutes. One of the sitters had taken off his coat and made a pillow of it. They did this because the medium was apparently lifeless. When they got him downstairs he seemed in a very bad state, and complained that he could not see. Cross-examination rebutted the suggestion that he had concocted this story in collaboration with the defendant's solicitor. He had summarised his evidence in a letter to a psychic journal before he saw the solicitor for the defence.

Mr. Forsyth said he took the photographs exhibited in court. They were the same as Mr. Boddington took at the same meeting. He examined the cabinet while he was busy fixing up the infra-red photographic apparatus. It was impossible for anything to be smuggled into the room after the examination, and he was quite sure there were no theatrical properties in the cabinet. He saw Mr. Boddington cut the lock of hair from the head of "White Moose." He was quite sure it was not Clive Holmes, and that Holmes was a genuine medium.

Miss Silver, a maidservant to the Holmes', said she had access to all cupboards, drawers, and every part of the house. She was a Baptist and did not go to the meetings, but had never seen anything suspicious. Part of her Work was to clean the seance room. The lino over the cabinet floor was one solid piece. She was certain there were no trap doors or hiding places for theatrical properties. There was no restriction at any time to prevent her going to cupboards and drawers.

Mr. Chitty submitted that on the evidence of the prosecution he had no case to answer. There had been no false pretence. No specific promise to produce anything. In any event, if it was held that the phenomena were not genuine it was for the prosecution to prove it.

The magistrate intervened, and said it had been a false representation to suggest that Holmes could produce genuine psychic phenomena. It was not genuine, it was a fraud.

Then as to Mrs. Evans. She had posed as a poor ignorant widow duped by Mr. Holmes. Her own evidence proved her to be a woman who ought to have known all about psychic phenomena as she had been a practising medium for twenty years, and her son claimed to have been clairvoyant all his life. She first instructed a solicitor to claim compensation on her behalf and then denied instructing him. He was quite sure that if Mr. Seaton had known the type of woman he was acting for he would not have taken up her case. Exactly the same phenomena occurred on the 20th as had occurred when Mr. Holmes was sitting under strict test conditions. The material with which the forms are clothed cannot be distinguished from the manufactured article. If, therefore, any of it is seized it is no proof of fraud. If Mr. Evans could come armed with a torch, why not also a piece of muslin as well. This quite apart from the white scarf which Mrs. Evans admitted losing on that night.

In summing up, the magistrate said: "The case merely concerns what happened on the 20th May. Matters followed their usual course until Mr. Evans produced a torch. Mr. Evans' sworn evidence is that he saw the defendant. He apparently did not attempt to do Mr. Evans any bodily harm, but in the struggle his mother may have been struck. The fact of the handcuffs being used also constitutes a pretence that the phenomena were genuine. It is said, amongst other things, that white light would destroy the spirit.

But this never happened. It is said that the Evans' were inspired by spite against the Holmes' and brought the muslin in themselves. It is extremely unlikely. If any competent conjuror were asked to simulate the phenomena I have no doubt he could do so. I think that the whole thing can be reproduced. It was therefore a fraudulent series of seances. The procedure followed on that night was no different from those on any other night. Therefore representations were given to Mrs. Evans to produce genuine phenomena. She paid money by reason of these false pretences. I must therefore find him guilty. Police testified to the witnesses' good record. Mr. Chitty reminded the magistrate that the defendant had already lost a source of income by resigning his post as chorister. Also that his client had held a steady appointment for twenty years, and that he made no personal gain from the work of the centre. To this the magistrate dissented. Bail was demanded in £250. On further protest this was reduced to the prisoner's own recognisances in £50 and two sureties of £25 each. Bail was immediately arranged. Notice of appeal was given.

—~—☼—~—

The Two Worlds, October 1st, 1937:

CLIVE HOLMES APPEAL FAILS

The Clive Holmes appeal has failed. A grave miscarriage of justice has occurred. In the present state of the law and the prevailing ignorance of psychic science, nothing else was to be expected, no matter how honourable or innocent a medium may be.

Had I no other evidence of the genuineness of his mediumship than the letter I enclose from Mr. Case, the Vice-President of the Cambridge Psychic Research Society, I should hold myself justified in proclaiming his imprisonment a martyrdom.

At the moment, my energies are being directed into providing a means of livelihood for the martyred man. To this end, I am collecting all available reports on his mediumship and will publish them with an analysis on physical phenomena generally. Every aspect of the case will be reviewed in my forthcoming book on *Clive Holmes' Martyrdom*. I aim at producing a cheap volume at 2s. 6d. each. Subscribers helping me to cover the initial outlay by ordering their copies in advance will receive them at 2s. each. The entire proceeds, after paying costs of advertising and production, will go either to Clive Holmes as salary for organising a centre, or to the expenses of its creation. Full details will be stated in the book itself.

In the letter which follows, note the facts. Flesh is nipped into the lock of the handcuffs. It remains fixed until after the seance. Blood flows, which proves the location has never shifted.

> Dear Mr. Boddington,—I have been following with great interest the case of Clive Holmes, also your articles in *The Two Worlds*. It may interest you to know that in June of last year, in company with the President and other members of the above Society (Cambridge Society for Psychical Research), I attended one of the seances at Blackheath.
>
> I was invited to secure Mr. Holmes to his chair, and in doing so caught a small piece of the flesh of his wrist in the handcuffs. He told me not to bother about undoing them again. When I released him after the sitting, I found the flesh still nipped in the handcuffs and a small quantity of blood on the wrist. This seems to rule out any idea that he could have been released during the sitting.

I may say we were invited to search the room before the seance commenced, which I can assure you we did thoroughly, and were satisfied that there were no props or make-up concealed anywhere.—Yours faithfully,

A. J. CASE (Vice-President, C.S.P.R.

P.S.—Quite a number of materialisations took place, and in our opinion there was no loop hole for fraud.

The Committee and Mrs. Holmes tender their thanks for assistance rendered in their hour of need. The long period between arrest and hearing of the appeal, with all sources of income dried up, has proved a great strain. If no donors object, the Committee contemplate cleating all liabilities to date and pacing the balance towards clearing the rent as it comes due.

HARRY BODDINGTON,

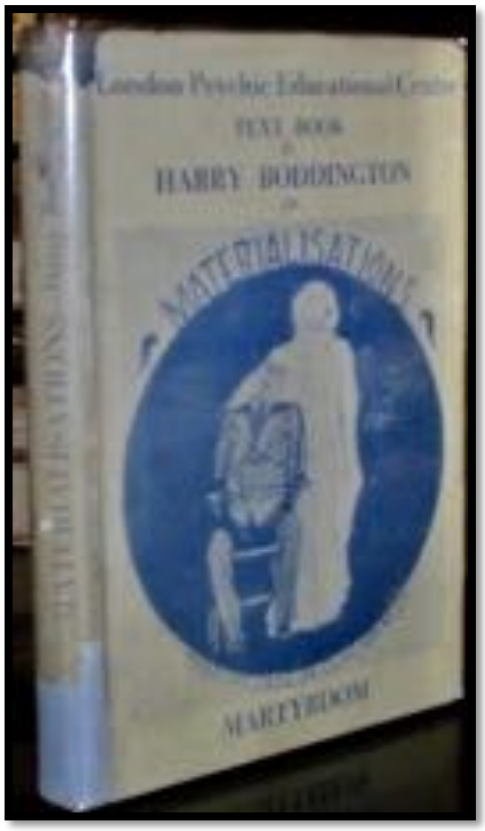
Director, London Educational Psychic Centre.

—~—☼—~—

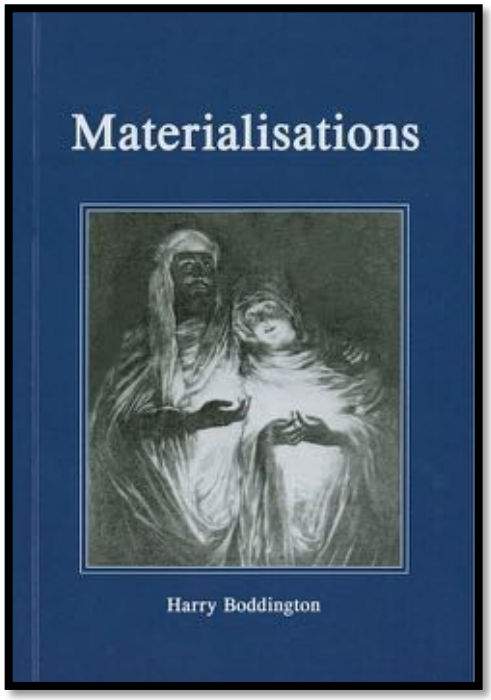
For further information please see:

"Materialisations: a critical analysis of physical phenomena, an instructive text-book showing the martyrdom of Clive Holmes"

by Harry Boddington, published by Psychic Press for the London Psychic Educational Centre [1938]



⇒



Available at the SNU online shop
and the Arthur Findlay College (AFC)

—~—☼—~—

A QUESTION OF FRAUD!
Continued … Pt II.

In the last issue of Pioneer, an article by Harry Boddington was published, titled "Fraud", which delved into the various avenues of fraud in physical mediumship/materialisation either by conscious action or, indeed, totally unconscious action. It was noted:

> Do mediums consciously premeditate fraud or is the fraud carried out unconsciously by *low* mischievous spirits? Some will argue that the medium premeditated the fraud and is therefore conscious and responsible for their actions, whilst others would say that due to the influence of *low* mischievous spirits or of the sitters in the séance the medium is totally unaware of their actions, as they are in a somnambulistic state and therefore cannot be accountable for their *unconscious* actions.

This led to some mediums being accused, and sometimes convicted, of *fraud* who were *in fact* acting unconsciously owing to the medium being in a trance or somnambulistic state, but unconsciously acting, not under the influence of the medium's control-guide but under the direct influence of a sitter or sitters in the circle or *low* mischievous spirits. In the last issue former SNU President Ernest Oaten noted:

> "… that it may be quite possible for suspicious sitters, who sit with the express purpose of exposing the medium to so permeate the mental atmosphere with their intentions that a medium acts under their suggestion. Mediums, being sensitives, must necessarily, in some measure, be influenced by the mental powers brought to bear upon them. The theory is perfectly valid, and is well recognised by all qualified experimenters. It is because of this that many people have been accused of fraud, when they have been perfectly innocent, …"

In the case of the exposure of Mrs Elizabeth Grover, Oaten further added:

> It is always well to remember, then, that a medium in the seance-room may be liable to act unconsciously to psychological factors of which the sitters may be largely ignorant. In the days of long ago when such matters were imperfectly understood, many accusations of fraud were made against mediums which had no foundation other than the ignorance of the sitters. Such considerations, however, are not an excuse for fraud —in fact, when they are understood they make fraud easily apparent. When, however, as in the case of Mrs. Grover, it can be definitely shown that preparations were made beforehand to practice fraud by carrying into the seance-room the materials used for fraudulent purposes, such as butter-muslin and band of linen with a large safety pin in it, there is only one conclusion to be reached, namely, that a deliberate attempt had been made beforehand to deceive the sitters.

The Pioneer Editor noted:

> It is often claimed that physical mediums are sometimes badly injured, with some claims of actual death as a result of a spirit form, ectoplasm, etc. being grabbed. There are numerous accounts but there appears no firm documented material, medical evidence, etc. of such injuries.

In this issue Pioneer will start at the beginnings of full materialisation in Britain, and look at the alleged exposures of the Victorian physical mediums; many were physically grabbed to expose them—but were they *all* conscious of their actions? In addition, were there any serious injuries or deaths to the person when the alleged spirit form was grabbed, as is sometimes claimed in reports?

In November 2010, for over a year, I ran a series in Psypioneer titled: "The Beginnings of Full Form Materialisations in England". Naturally some of the material will be reproduced here but, in general, I will cite new research materials and a different perspective. One early researcher from the start of form materialisation was William Henry Harrison (1841-1897), who was the founder editor of the Spiritualist journal, "The Spiritualist Newspaper" (1869-1882). Harrison was an experienced photographer, which would aid him in his investigations into this early phenomenon in Modern Spiritualism.

When the name Florence Cook is mentioned, it is the scientist William Crookes who springs to mind! As her researcher, etc., however, it would be, I believe, fairer to include William Harrison equally. Harrison was one of the most experienced sitters with Florence Cook, covering at least two years during her stages of development to full materialisation, and he was the first to obtain photographs of the alleged materialised figure, "Katie King".[15] Many of the books and reports claim that the photographs of the alleged materialisations of Katie King were taken by William Crookes but in fact they were taken by William Harrison at his séances with Florence Cook, albeit Crookes may have been present at some of these séances. See Pioneer, Vol. 5, No. 6: "Florence (Florrie) Cook - Corner & Katie King Photographs".

Below is quoted from "The Spiritualist", December 1st, 1872 and gives an account of Mrs Mary Andrews, who appears to be credited as the first medium with whom spirit faces, etc. began to appear regularly:

SEANCES AT MORAVIA, UNITED STATES.

The *Banner of Light*, of November 16th, contains the following account of five *seances* for spirit faces, held at the house of Mr. John Andrews, Moravia, New York State. Mrs. Andrews was the medium, and it will be noticed that the spirits have the power of making themselves visible, so as to be identified by their friends,—a stage of development not yet reached in England. The following description was written and signed by Messrs. Daniel, D. Bonnett, and John Hayward, of New York:—

> In the light circle, where everything in the room could be seen, we saw several faces, arms, and hands. The faces resembled those whom they represented so closely, that in nearly all cases they were readily recognised.
>
> The eyes of one figure were extremely bright and clear; the beards of some of the men were seen so plainly that the colour could be easily distinguished. A pure white handkerchief was held in fall view, in the hands of another dressed in female attire; it was then by her placed over her mouth while coughing; she then withdrew it, and on it was a large spot of fresh-looking blood.
>
> We afterwards saw the head of a coloured female; her curly hair was partly covered with a white kerchief; she gave her name as 'Bet.' She was not known to anyone present. John Pierpoint came, and was recognised simultaneously by many. As viewed by us, he seemed to be an old man with long white hair and beard. Before leaving he delivered a short address, concluding with these words: "Thank God, we live after death!" Giving his name, he disappeared from view. The son of Mr. Pope, a Universalist minister of Hyannis, Mass., showed himself to his father, mother, and others, three different times. At one time he said that drowning was not so hard a death

[15] Portrait of the spirit "Katie King" (as shown): Psypioneer, Vol. 6, No. 9.

as was thought; he said further that Spiritualism was true, and requested his father to preach it, promising that he (his son Milton) would inspire him. Mr. Pope stated, after the *seance*, that one of his sons, named Milton, was drowned a few years ago, and he was fully convinced that he saw and conversed with that son.

Three brothers, of the name of Weaver, from Baltimore, Md., recognised one of the faces as that of their mother; the kind of cap on her head, and the way she wore a kerchief about her neck (one of the brothers informed us) being strong points identical with her while in earth-life. The face and hands of another lady were plainly seen; the hair was dark and glossy; her hands were nearly of the same colour and appearance as if alive; on her wrist was a bracelet, and on the small finger of her left hand a plain ring; both had the colour and lustre of fine gold.

[…]

Mary Andrews is reported to have remained conscious during the phenomena; it appears she started her form materialisations in late 1871.[16] Soon afterwards the spotlight was pointed to London. In January 1872 Mrs Agnes Elizabeth Guppy [17] became the first British medium to materialise spirit hands and faces, followed by Frank Herne and Charles Williams, followed closely with the introduction of the teenager Florence Cook.

Reference has been made to the then weekly periodical, " 'The Spiritualist Newspaper'—A Record of the Progress of the Science and Ethics of Spiritualism". Its editor, William Harrison, was without doubt a major historian in the early phases of *form materialisations*.[18] Unlike William Crookes, Harrison was a Spiritualist; although Crookes is often stated as being a Spiritualist this *would not* be the case until many years later, after the death of his wife. In "The Spiritualist" for February 1st, 1873 Harrison gives an informative overview of its progress up to the beginning of 1873:

SPIRIT FACES

THE systematic appearance of spirit-faces to ten or twenty people at the same time, at *seances*, although a comparatively new manifestation, has now developed to such large proportions that it may be as well to review the whole range of facts, as far as they have been recorded. In all the past history of Spiritualism, there are occasional instances of the appearance of a spirit to one or more persons; for instance; Lord Lindsay and Mr. Home once saw the spirit of Mr. Home's first wife, Sacha; and Mr. S. C. Hall and several other witnesses saw the materialised spirit-form of Mr. Hall's sister at a *seance*. The regular occurrence, however, of such striking and interesting manifestations, is a thing of comparatively recent date.

---

[16] In the latter part of 1871 the American papers contained accounts of sittings held with a new medium, Mrs Andrews, at the house of a farmer named Keeler, in Moravia, New York, not far from Auburn. At these sittings spirit hands and faces were shown from the cabinet, and spirit forms, frequently recognised as those of deceased relations, walked about the room and conversed with the sitters. (*Mediums of the 19th Century*, Frank Podmore)

Mary Andrews was of Irish parentage and lived for some time as a domestic in Mr Keeler's family. She was described (Dec., 1871) as "a well-formed, comely married woman between twenty-five and thirty years old, and the mother of three little girls". From p. 32, *The Proof Palpable of Immortality*, by Epes Sargent.

[17] Sometimes called Elizabeth Guppy – later Volckman.

[18] Frank Podmore commented: "The Spiritualist was avowedly intended to represent the scientific element. It essayed primarily to record the phenomena, to analyse the evidence, and discuss the explanations, and proposed to defer theological and Socialist speculations until a more convenient season. This paper, which was conducted with fairness and ability for some years, did in effect adopt a more critical standpoint than any of its predecessors or contemporaries, and did contrive to keep clear of theological controversy and irrelevant humanitarian enthusiasms."

One Sunday morning, about a year ago, Mr. Benjamin Coleman, of Upper Norwood, called our attention to several New York and Boston newspapers, containing column after column of descriptions of the *seances* through the mediumship of Mrs. Andrews, at Moravia, U.S.; the *New York Sun*, a daily paper, had sent a correspondent to the scene of the occurrences, and he fully authenticated the facts. Mrs. Andrews, it appeared, sat for manifestations in a cabinet, as the Davenport brothers did, but instead of spirit hands and arms making their appearance, spirit-faces were formed in the dark, and afterwards showed themselves at the opening in the cabinet, so as to be recognised by friends or relations present. The faces were living, and could in some instances talk. At once full details of the new manifestations were published in *The Spiritualist*.

Mrs. Guppy

Mr. Guppy read the account thus published in these pages, and resolved to try at home whether he could not get spirit-faces through the powerful mediumship of Mrs. Guppy. He accordingly turned a photographic dark room into a cabinet, by cutting square openings in its wooden sides, out of which the spirits might thrust their heads if they could make them. Spirit faces were seen, obtained in a very feeble light at first; and a long account of the first manifestations at Mr. Guppy's; written by Mr. Harrison, was published in the *Daily Telegraph*. Shortly afterwards, Messrs. Herne and Williams began to obtain spirit faces at their dark *seances,* the spirits themselves making an artificial phosphorescent light to reveal their features to the observers. Next, Miss Florence Cook, of Hackney, and her spirits resolved to give their time and attention almost exclusively to the production of spirit-faces. Lastly, Mr. Holmes, an American medium, who recently arrived in England, began, a few months ago, to obtain spirit face manifestations.

Before the manifestations became common, it was thought that the appearance of spirits to several persons at once would be one of the strongest proofs of spirit identity that could possibly be had, but the facts have not borne out the anticipation. The faces are *manufactured* by the spirits, and are not usually like themselves as they are at present, but are made to resemble the faces they had on earth, in order that friends present may recognise them. The spirits who make these wonderful living faces often speak of them in a most irreverent manner, just as a hairdresser might speak of the wax dummies in his shop window. "That last spirit had scarcely any nose," remarked an observer, one evening. "Yes," replied the spirit Katie, "I know that. I only had a little dab of stuff left, and stuck it on for a nose."

In the earlier development of the manifestations, the first spirits who showed themselves were not deceased relatives of the sitters, but the chief spirits almost always in attendance upon the mediums for the production of the physical phenomena,—the spirits calling themselves John and Katie. Most of the first spirit-faces strongly resembled the faces of the mediums in shape, though not usually in colour. Many can testify how much Miss Cook's "Katie" usually resembles herself, though there are often unaccountable differences. Mr. Burns and Mr. Harrison have testified that Mr. Williams's "Katie" had

Florence Cook / Corner

features much like himself, though softened, more effeminate, and of fairer complexion. Mr. Guppy has published that in the lines of the eyes and nose, the faces he has seen through Mrs. Guppy's mediumship strongly resemble herself'; he also says that the faces seen by him through Mr. Herne's mediumship were much like Mr. Herne. Mr. Holmes, who has been the most successful medium as yet in getting recognisable faces, said that at first they bore a certain amount of resemblance to himself, but not enough to excite comment.

"Katie"

In the early days of Spiritualism the question of the possibility of the duplication of the whole or portions of the human form had been mooted. An article published by Mr. Coleman in the *Spiritual Magazine* of March, 1865, tells how, at the house of Sir Hesketh Fleetwood, where the Davenports gave a *seance,* a match was suddenly struck by a spirit, and the "double" of Ira Davenport, who himself was firmly bound in his chair, was seen gliding before the observers. Mr. Coleman states also that Miss Laura Edmonds, a medium, the daughter of Judge Edmonds, of New York, had the power occasionally of leaving her body, and appearing to friends at a distance. She frequently appeared in this way, and delivered messages to Miss Mapes, daughter of Professor Napes, the American agricultural chemist. Once, Mr. Coleman was on the platform with Mr. Fergusson at one of the Davenports' public exhibitions. The brothers had been elaborately tied and sealed as usual by a committee elected by the observers. Their hands, moreover, were filled with flour, as usual, to show that they did not unclasp them during the dark *séance*. Four hands came out of the cabinet, and after the *seance* Mr. Fergusson said to Mr. Coleman,—"Did you see those hands?" "Yes," was the reply, "and one of them was covered with flour." Mr. Fergusson remarked,—"It's a good job the audience didn't notice it, or we have had a row." There was a particularly noisy audience that night.

The Banner of Light recently stated how some ink was squirted by observers on some spirit-hands, and the ink was afterwards found on the hands of the boy medium in the cabinet, so that he was denounced as an impostor there and then. A gentleman, who had seen spirit-hands thrust out of one end of a shawl, when the boy simply put his hands under the other end to get darkness, was not satisfied. He tried experiments, and discovered that colouring matters placed upon spirit-hands, were afterwards found upon different parts of the body of the medium. The spirits told him that the colouring substances went into every part of the body of the medium. A little tar was once rubbed round the end of one of the paper speaking-tubes used at the *seances* of Mrs. Andrews, at Moravia, and a ring of tar was afterwards found round her month, yet the spirits who appeared at her *seances* had been recognised by their friends at the rate of more than a dozen a week, so that there was no reason to suppose imposture on the part of the medium.

Recently, at one of Miss Cook's *seances*, some violet ink was rubbed on the back of a spirit-hand for the purpose of experiment, and the smear—larger than half-a-crown—was afterwards found on the arm of the medium near the elbow. Mrs. Holmes tells us that once she was at a dark *seance* in America. A gentleman called suddenly for a light, saying he had caught a hand. A great, long additional arm and hand was then seen protruding from the body of the medium, and it shot back into one of the normal arms of the medium as swiftly as the eye could follow it. At dark *seances* spirit-hands and arms are very busy. The tying of the medium does not appear to prevent their formation, but the holding of his hands seems, so far as we have seen, to do so. After a short time has elapsed, the holding of the medium's hands does not matter much; but if the hands be held closely from the first; it is, probably, a barrier to the production of many manifestations. This is one of the many reasons why persons of a thoroughly suspicions nature, get fewer tests and more inconclusive manifestations than nobler people.

It would seem that the spirits always in close companionship with powerful physical mediums, because of similarity of tastes and character, can make themselves visible with more ease than others. They rise out of the bodies of the mediums, and, at first, exactly resemble the mediums, though they can change their features within certain limits before they show themselves. They do not materialise more of their bodies than is necessary, but usually form only a head, and sometimes arms and hands. The faces at Mr. Holmes's *seances* do not seem to come from him, but have been seen forming near the ceiling of the dark room, and then floating down towards the opening. Katie has been seen rising from the body of Miss Cook; and while she manifested, she was connected with the medium by cloudy, faintly luminous threads.

The recognisable faces of deceased persons seem to be formed with more difficulty, and to be able in all cases to bear less light, than the faces of the spirits in affinity to the medium. The latter spirits have the advantage of constant practice in making themselves visible, which, they say, is one reason why they can bear more light, their first attempts producing but weak results. The recognisable faces have less life in them, and but few of them can talk.

"JOHN KING."
A Materialised Spirit-form.—Medium, Charles E. Williams.

At Mrs. Andrews's in America, where this kind of manifestation is more developed, they can talk more than they can at present, through any British medium. In no case, as yet; has a recognisable face been known to come directly from the face of the medium, in the same manner that the faces of their attendant spirits do. Some of the heads are bound up in white spirit drapery, or have white turbans upon them, the object, they say, being to economise power, as the heads would not last so long were they bare, and wholly materialised. The intelligences animating the heads for the time being, say that both light and the intense gaze of the eyes of the spectators, give them a burning sensation while manifesting, and cause them to feel tied.

The influence of the spiritual state of the observers finds optical expression at face *seances*. Worldly and suspicions people get the feebler manifestations; the spirits then have often a pale, ghastly look, as usual when the power is weak. Spiritual people, in whose presence the medium feels thoroughly happy, see by far the finest manifestations.

Different mediums, however, vary very considerably in their power of resisting and overcoming adverse mental and psychological influences. Although spiritual phenomena are governed by fixed laws, those laws so work in practice that Spiritualism undoubtedly partakes much of the character of a special revelation to special people.

Below, Harrison again gives an equally valuable overview of the different classes of form manifestations in "The Spiritualist Newspaper" dated December 28th, 1877:

CLASSES OF FORM MANIFESTATIONS

OBSERVATION shows that there are two great classes of form manifestations; in the one class the forms appear with living, flexible features, plainly visible to all the observers, and in the others the features are rigid, or not visible at all.

FORMS WITH FLEXIBLE FEATURES

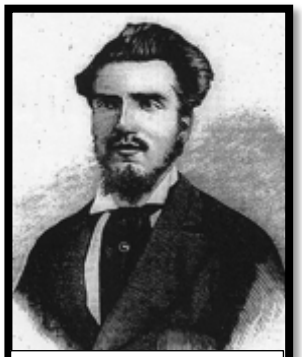
Sometimes when strong mediums, like Dr. Slade, are sitting with their hands in full view, in broad daylight, living hands and arms are thrust into view from some position where shade prevails, usually from under a table. These hands, when we saw them in Dr. Slade's case, were apparently the duplicates of his own, like the invisible hands which do the writing on his slates, for the said writing generally bears a very strong resemblance to his own, tending to show that it was executed by fingers and muscles like those of his own hand.

And this fact of the duplication of hands and forms has been demonstrated in many ways during a long course of years.

It was first well proved through the mediumship of Florence Cook (Mrs. Corner); indeed, it was better and more continuously tested in her case than in any other. She frequently left her own home to present the phenomena in the rooms and laboratories of men of science, and submitted patiently to every test which they could devise. For the last two years or so of her mediumship she scarcely ever sat without being carefully secured with tapes, applied by scientific and carefully considered methods by numbers of responsible people; the knots were sealed with signet rings. The upshot of all this was to prove that in some cases a separate form, bearing a strong resemblance to herself, was materialised; also that the power about her could free her, like the Davenports and other mediums, from any kind of bonds, and return her to the same.

The same phenomena took place with the Davenports, for there are records that when lights have been suddenly struck at their *séances* one of the Brothers has been seen in duplicate.

It is the same with Mr. Eglinton. The materialised form bears a strong resemblance to himself, as testified to at the last meeting of the National Association of Spiritualists by Mr. Fitz-Gerald. Moreover, in one case it was the medium himself, for Mr. Stainton Moses recently recorded that, at Mrs. Makdougall Gregory's, Mr. Eglinton became covered with white drapery, and that when his entranced figure stood before them there was no medium on the sofa where he had been lying. Mr. A. P. Wallace and others searched him thoroughly after one of his sittings, and no white drapery was found upon him. Yet had the form been seized, plenty would have been obtained, and this shows how much injury might be done by rough "investigators" to the reputation of an innocent medium, the subject of abnormal phenomena understood neither by himself nor the sitters.


Charles E. Williams

The late Mr. Samuel Guppy once printed in these pages how through the mediumship of his wife (now Mrs. Volckman) he had seen materialised faces strongly resembling her own.

With Mr. Williams a form appears, with a face strongly resembling his own in the lines of the eyes and nose, when a close view of it is obtained in a good light. This form has sometimes

appeared under good test conditions in an open circle with no cabinet, and while the medium was held by both hands.

Mr. C. P. B. Alsop has often seen in Mr. Herne's presence a form, the duplicate in features of that medium.

In the presence of Miss K. Cook a form appears, which on the one occasion we saw it had a face resembling that of the medium.

The forms once presented through the mediumship of Miss Showers, bore a strong resemblance to herself.

Mr. C. C. Massey and others can testify that at Miss Lottie Fowler's form seances, the faces strongly resembled her own.

Mr. Olive told us that Mr. W. G. Haxby's recent *séances* at his house, the faces had some similarity to that of the medium, but that some of them had beards.

Mrs. Fay's spirit forms, as observed by Mr. Serjeant Cox, ourselves, and others, resembled herself, and were accompanied by undoubted evidence that the medium herself was not presented.

The Blackburn Spiritualists are quite satisfied that Miss Wood's forms resemble the medium.

Thus it is well established that there is a class of manifestations in which forms and faces, more or less the duplicates in appearance of those of the medium, present themselves to view, and that the intelligences animating the forms claim to be spirits. These forms have living flexible features, which are seen by all the observers, but while they are visible, the medium is usually in a cabinet out of sight; on other occasions his body, transformed by abnormal power, and released from the securest bonds, is presented to the gaze of the observers.

FORMS WITHOUT FLEXIBLE FEATURES

In another class of manifestations, the medium is in full view, instead of in a cabinet, but the forms do not generally as yet under these conditions, present flexible features, with the life in them visible to all the observers.

Once, while Mr. Eglinton was held on both sides, at the house of Mrs. Makdougall Gregory, a draped form, with no features visible, rose from the floor behind him to a height of about two feet six inches, then sank again.

MR. W. EGLINGTON.

Sometimes when Mrs. Volckman has been similarly held, not in her own home, a form has appeared in the same way, without the presentation to the gaze of all the observers, of flexible, living features.

In the presence of Miss Cook, in Signor Rondi's studio, a form appears while the medium is in full view; but it does not present living, flexible features.

Thus the established manifestations divide themselves into two classes as yet—those *with* flexible, living features, visible to all the sitters, and those *without* flexible, living features, visible to all the sitters. We have patiently watched for years for a living, flexible face in a good light, which face bore no resemblance to that of the medium, and was not produced on his or her own premises. Hitherto this search has been prosecuted without success.

Mr. A. R. Wallace and Mr. Crookes have witnessed a great number of form manifestations, without once recording, that off the premises of the medium, they have seen a living, flexible, materialised spirit-face, bearing no resemblance to that of the sensitive. Neither has Mr. Varley made any such record.

We have been present at *séances*, on the premises of professional mediums, where perfectly honest and enthusiastic sitters saw anything the spirits gave them a suggestion that they ought to see, accompanied by any objective "something" which gave them a slight excuse for seeing the thing desired. Also, on the premises of mediums, who afterwards proved not to be trustworthy, we have seen a few living faces, bearing no resemblance to their own. But, sweeping these things away as "not yet proven," one can but wait patiently for living, flexible faces to make themselves visible to all the sitters at once, off the premises of the medium, in a good light.

—~—☼—~—

Editor's Note:

William Harrison gives the reader a good overview of this new phase of physical phenomena which started to change the face of Modern Spiritualism in England in early 1872. It can be noted that in the early stages of form materialisation it would be the early controls who *were almost always in attendance upon the mediums for the production of the physical phenomena—the spirits calling themselves John and Katie*.

This is referring to John King, his wife and his daughter. As the phenomena grew, this could become confusing, as both wife and daughter were called "Katie King"! Later, the recognisable deceased relatives and friends of the circle sitters would come. Generally, the materialised spirit-faces strongly resembled the various mediums; marks made on the materialised form were later represented on the medium.

Further noted is the manifesting spirit sometimes rising out of the medium's body*; ...at first, exactly resemble the mediums, though they can change their features within certain limits before they show themselves*.

To conserve the required power to form the materialisation only the necessary body parts were formed; *...usually form only a head, and sometimes arms and hands*.

Recognisable faces of family, friends, etc. were formed with much more difficulty and needed more subtle light than those of the spirit controls owing to the spirit attendants having constant practice in the development of the medium. *The recognisable faces have less life in them, and but few of them can talk*.

It is also noted that some of the heads were bound; *...in white spirit drapery, or have white turbans upon them, the object, they say, being to economise power, as the heads would not last so long were they bare, and wholly materialised*.

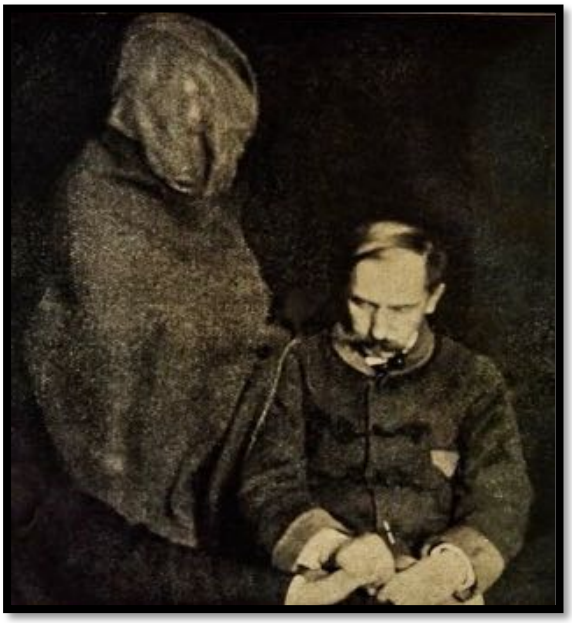
The most constant factor in all the above articles giving these early stages of form materialisation is the *fact* that the materialised form bears a strong resemblance to the medium! The above examples of *duplicates in appearance* of those of the mediums shown were British mediums: William Eglinton, Charles Williams, Frank Herne, Kate Selina Cook (Florence's younger sister), Miss Mary Rosina Showers, Annie Eva Fay, Catherine Wood and Florence Cook.

All of them were strongly subjected to allegations of deliberate conscious fraud, given that their alleged spirit forms strongly resembled the medium at this time and also the fact that the

medium could shed their restraints and be found out of the cabinet, etc.; this would be, of course, a disadvantage to the genuine medium and an advantage to the fraudulent medium!

—~—☼—~—

The above information about the first five years of form materialisation in England indeed gives the reader some reference and idea of these earlier stages and its problems. It can be noted that the withdrawal of the necessary fluids, more widely known today as ectoplasm,[19] did not appear to present itself in the way of later mediums from the mouth, etc., as with, for example, Helen Duncan.



At Christmas Week 2019 at the Arthur Findlay College my lecture focused on the Polish physical medium Franek Kluski and I strongly noted that Kluski's mediumship was reminiscent of past mediums Henry Slade, Florence Cook, Catherine Wood, etc. Until researching this article, both the old and the new material, I did not realise just how accurate that statement was; his remarkable mediumship represented much of the early mediumship given here. For example, Kluski's forms were doubles of himself; he produced forms with and without flexible features, etc. I have been wondering if in fact Kluski was the first to produce ectoplasm being shown *objectively* to come from the body, e.g., the mouth, but further research is required.

Pioneer will, at this time, focus on the most famous British medium of this era, Florence (Florrie) Cook, who in April 1874 married Captain Edward Elgie Corner. Following Florence's death on April 22nd 1904 from pneumonia, aged 47, he married her sister, Kate Selina Cook (1859-1923), in October 1907.

William Crookes, who investigated Florence Corner, was, as previously noted, not convinced of the alleged identity of Katie King, who claimed to be the daughter of Sir Henry Owen Morgan, ex-buccaneer and Governor of Jamaica under Charles II. Her name was Annie Owen Morgan. The name "John King", assumed by her father, was never satisfactorily explained: his identity with the Governor, Sir Henry Morgan, has never been established. Crookes, in a letter to Professor Brofferio in 1894, said:

> *All that I am concerned in is that invisible and intelligent beings exist, who say that they are the spirits of dead persons. But proof that they really are the individuals they assume to be, which I require in order to believe it, I have never received, though I am disposed to admit that many of my friends assert they have actually obtained the desired proofs, and I myself have already frequently been many times on the verge of this conviction.*
>
> *Für den Spiritismus*. Leipsic. 1894.

—~—☼—~—

[19] The term generally used at this period would have been "psychic force".

Below are a few quotes from "The Spiritualist Newspaper" dated December 12th, 1873:

SPIRIT FORMS

Dr. Purdon, of Sandown, Isle of Wight, was the first to see the face of the spirit Katie in strong daylight, and he was exceedingly startled and pained to discover the strong resemblance of her features to the features of Miss Cook, which, it will be remembered, caused the medium a great deal of trouble at the time, until it was discovered that the faces through all the other mediums in London, bore more or less resemblance to themselves. It appears as if spirits, when clothing themselves with matter, find it most convenient to take the material form of the instrument through whom they act. Although the faces of Miss Cook and Katie were very much alike, it was soon found that there were also strange differences, varying in amount at different times. Sometimes the spirit face would be half as big again as the face of the medium, and the parts of the face which seemed to be least subject to change, were the lines of the nose and eyebrows. The similarity of the features of the media and the spirits, soon gave rise to an elaborate system of testing, to relieve mediums, especially those engaged in the rough work of proselytising, from the odium of being supposed to do the manifestations themselves, so that at the present time nearly all the mediums in England who get spirit forms and faces, are bound with ropes and sealed with signet rings in their cabinets while the manifestations are going on.

"To return to Miss Cook's *seances*. After a time Katie began to exhibit not only the whole of her bare face, but her hands and arms in a strong light. In these early stages of the development of the manifestations, Miss Cook was nearly always awake while the manifestations were going on, but sometimes when the weather was bad, or the other conditions unfavourable, Katie would entrance her; the effect of the said entrancement being simply to increase the power of the manifestations. The medium usually objected to be entranced, because she very naturally wished to see and hear what was going on, although sometimes the sight made her nervous. She said that it was not pleasant to be shut up in a nearly dark room with a person in white floating about in it, who had a head and shoulders, but no legs or body. The activity of the mind of the medium also seemed to interfere with the manifestations, and after a time Katie never appeared without the medium being in a trance.

"From that time for the next year or two, Miss Cook never saw the materialised form of the spirit Katie, although of late she has seen her again on one or two occasions. Now that the spirit Katie appears in full form, and even walks about in the room outside the cabinet, she says if her medium were to wake up while she (Katie) is outside the cabinet, she would be in considerable danger; she also sometimes says that malignant spirits occasionally attempt to wake up the medium at inconvenient times."

Some sittings, for recognisable faces, were held at Miss Cook's, and the spirit Katie said that while they were showing themselves, on no account was the medium to go to sleep, and that if she did she was to be taken out of the cabinet at once. It soon therefore became clear, that the "recognisable face manifestations" were altogether different in kind from the appearance of the John's and Katie's, who so commonly manifest through different physical mediums.[20] Katie said that

[20] As previously noted, John King, his wife and his daughter could become confusing, as both wife and daughter were called Katie King. Katie King senior was active with other mediums, for example Charles Williams.

while these strange faces were about, malignant spirits who sometimes tried to interfere with their work, always began by trying to put the medium to sleep. It will be remembered also, as another example of the way in which different manifestations fit in with each other, that Mrs. Andrews is always awake in the cabinet while recognisable faces come, and she, like the observers outside, comments upon their general appearance.

"Another circumstance was noted in connection with the advent of these recognisable faces at Miss Cook's. Noises and disturbances became common in the house, and trinkets and other small articles were often missing; sometimes they were found hidden away, and sometimes stolen altogether. It was quite clear that the medium was passing through a period of danger, and there were disagreeable influences about. Katie said it was an ordeal which all mediums must pass through before getting recognisable faces.

"Of course, when low spirits of this nature were about, every kind of protection should be thrown over the medium, but it chanced that at the same period visitors were admitted very freely out of pure kindness to Miss Cook's *seances*, and if an occasional failure occurred, some few of them put the worst construction upon it, thereby causing the medium additional trouble and annoyance. It was further found that these strange faces began, as did Katie's, in a weak light, and were imperfect; in fact, this new manifestation wanted cultivating under the influence of genial sitters for many months, just as the Katie manifestation had done, and it was impossible to do this when visitors were admitted, who wanted to see startling manifestations, and not new and imperfect ones in their undeveloped form. For all these reasons sitting for recognisable faces was discontinued, but it is to be hoped that they will be resumed at some future time. These facts are very interesting, as tending to prove the desirability of entirely separating scientific from proselytising work in Spiritualism, since this manifestation was not perfected, solely in consequence of the fear of showing undeveloped phenomena to visitors who wanted tests."

"More recent developments at Miss Cook's circle, such as the appearance of Katie in full form, and her walking about the room, and her being able to bear so strong a light as to be photographed, are fresh in the memories of the readers of these pages. Of late Miss Cook has seen Katie once or twice when materialised, the spirit waking her up for that purpose."

"Where the white drapery of the spirits comes from is a mystery. The manifestations were too important in their nature not to be verified in every possible way, although to the many who know the integrity of the medium, tests are not considered to be necessary. Nevertheless, not only is the medium bound and sealed while the manifestations are going on, but sometimes she has requested ladies to accompany her to her bedroom to take off all her clothes and to search her, to see that she had no drapery of the kind concealed about her. At the same time the cabinet has also been thoroughly searched.

"The cabinet is nothing but a large cupboard, with no concealed machinery about it, and, in fact, the manifestations go on just the same at the residences of Mr. Luxmoore, Dr. Purdon and others, away from the home of the medium. Katie says she makes this drapery out of matter obtained from the dresses of all the sitters in the circle. She says that when she is forming herself she materialises the drapery first, and her own body afterwards; indeed, one or two persons have thought that they have seen Katie's head on the floor, in the middle of a heap of drapery, just inside the cabinet, although this has not been witnessed in a good light.

"Two hypotheses have been mooted to account for the phenomenon. One is, that the spirit Katie is not an independent spirit, but the spirit, or "double" of the medium, and certainly, in mental capacity, Katie is considerably limited by the intellectual capacity of the medium. But when the medium is awake, Katie and she carry on conversations and arguments with each other; in such case they would appear to be two distinct individualities.

"The other speculation, and the one to which we most incline is, that Katie is an independent spirit, allied in tastes and inclinations to the medium, consequently, much resembling her in mental capacity. Perhaps the spirit in attempting to communicate with mortals, is much limited by the mental powers of her medium, and by the conditions of manifesting, so that in the materialised spirit we have a mixture of the individualities of Katie and of Miss Cook."

In the same issue is a report of a séance held with Florence Cook at Mr Luxmoore's house in London on November 28th, 1873, where the alleged Katie King is questioned:

"Is it possible for you to explain to us what are the powers or forces you employ in materialising and dissolving your form?" *"No, it is not."*

"Is it electricity or does it bear any resemblance to it?" "*No; it is all nonsense what they talk about electricity."*

"But have you no name or mode of conveying it?" "*It is more like will-power than any else; in fact, it is the will which is at the bottom of the power I exercise."*

"When you disappear where is it to?" *"Into the medium, giving her back all the vitality I took from her. When I have got very much power from her, if anyone of you were to take her suddenly round the waist and try to carry her, you might kill her on the spot: she might suffocate. I can go in and out her readily, but, understand, I am not her, not her double: they talk a deal of rubbish about doubles; I am myself all the time."*

"When you dissolve, which part disappears the first. the body or the dress?" *The body, of course; its material power goes back to her and then the dress goes into the elements"*

"Do you think one in the flesh can ever appreciate the powers you use in manifesting?" *"No; you never can."*

"You speak of being yourself, and not a double of the medium—who were you when in the flesh?" *"I was Annie Morgan."*

"Were you married?" "*Yes; but don't talk of that."*

(At this she retired behind the curtain, apparently either hurt or grieved at the question, a state she has exhibited before when questioned about her married life.) She speedily returned, and was asked, "Have you a husband now?" *"Of course I have."*

"Can you give us any idea under what reign you lived?" *"I left the body when I was twenty-one years old, and 1 lived in the latter part of the reign of Charles I., during the Commonwealth, and to the early part of the reign of Charles II. I remember the high peaked hats of the Commonwealth and the broad hats of Charles I. and II.; the short hair of the men, but Cromwell's was not short."*

At this point the time which had been agreed on as the utmost that could be given, having the health of the medium in regard, was reached, and although the spirit expressed a desire to remain longer, she retired on Mr. Luxmoore insisting on it, and the *seance* terminated.

—~—☼—~—

Katie King / Annie Morgan

SEIZED AT A SÉANCE

Florence Cook was the first form materialisation medium to have her séance disturbed by a fully materialised form being seized. This took place on December 9th, 1873 at Hackney, London. Mr William Volckman, a known respected researcher and Spiritualist, had gained an invitation to the said séance. Volckman breached the circle conditions set down by the medium's father, Henry Cook: he felt that the circle itself was in breach, because he claimed that the medium, Cook's eldest daughter, Florence, was in fact acting as the spirit form—"Katie King"—and that the whole affair was a fraud. Volckman would claim to have taken the 'responsible' position to show this! Reports at the time and today of what actually took place at Mr Henry Cook's residence and Volckman's actual actions on December 9th, 1873, and before, are often contradictory, sensationalised and incomplete.

The full story is discussed in detail and is published in Psypioneer over three issues, starting in Vol. 6, No. 7, "William Volckman"; not only is this a story of the seizure of Florence Cook/Katie King but later, in 1875, the medium Mrs Guppy would marry William Volckman. This will bring in the possibility of Guppy's involvement and also the name of Mr and Mrs Holmes, mentioned in this article. Anyone wanting a pdf of these issues should please contact the editor.[21]

Below is quoted from Psypioneer, Vol. 6, No. 8:

"GROSS OUTRAGE AT A SPIRIT CIRCLE.

"LAST Tuesday night there was a seance at Mr. Cook's. Among the guests present were the Earl of Caithness (who is not a Spiritualist), Lady Caithness, and the Count El Conde de Medina Pomár, of 46, Portland-place, W.; Mr. Charles Blackburn, Parkfield, Didsbury, near Manchester; Mr. Henry M. Dunphy, barrister-at-law, Essex-court, Temple, E.C.; Mr. J. C. Luxmoore, J.P., 16, Gloucester-square, Hyde-park, W.; Mrs. A. Corner, and Mr. E. E. Corner (ship's first officer), St. Thomas's-square, Hackney; Mr. H. Bielfeld,[22] 208, Euston-road; Mr. G. R. Tapp, 18, Queen Margaret's-grove, Islington; Mr. W. H. Harrison, Wilmin-villa, Herne-hill; Mr. and Mrs. Cook and children; and the person who committed the outrage described in the following document:

"This evening at Miss Cook's seance, during the appearance of what purported to be the spirit 'Katie,' a man, named Volckman, rose up, grasped her round the waist with both arms, and tried to throw her down with his feet. Mr. Tapp and Mr. Corner seized the man who thus broke the conditions which we were all admitted on the understanding we would keep. 'Katie' instantly extricated herself from his clutches, and aided by Mr. Luxmoore, was in a moment back in the cabinet. After a delay of about five minutes, during which Katie gave earnest instructions to the sitters, the cabinet was opened and Miss Cook found in black dress, and boots, with the tape tightly round her waist, as at the beginning of the seance, the knot sealed as at first with the Signet-ring of the Earl of Caithness, and sewn underneath the seal with thread, as it had been sewn before the seance by Mr. Luxmoore.

9 Psypioneer, Vol. 6, No. 7: Henry Bielfeld (1802-1892).

The tape and seal are now in the possession of the Earl of Caithness. Before the seance the cabinet was searched by the strangers present, and after it by Lady Caithness and others. Lady Caithness and Mrs. Corner, who never lost sight of Miss Cook from the moment the cabinet was opened, subsequently led the medium to her bedroom after she had recovered from the severe shock, and searched her. She had her boots and black dress on, and no white drapery, and nothing but her ordinary dress.

There was nothing in her pockets. Her under garments were coloured wadded winter clothing. We all regard the act of the man as a gross outrage, and think the results redound greatly to the credit of Miss Cook.

"CAITHNESS.
MARIE CAITHNESS.
EL CONDE DE MEDINA POMAR.
CHARLES BLACKBURN.
AMELIA CORNER.
J. C. LUXMOORE
HENRY M. DUNPHY.
HENRY BIELFELD.
EDWARD ELGIE CORNER.
GEORGE ROBERT TAPP.
WILLIAM H. HARRISON.

"Dec. 9th, 1873."

—~—☼—~—

William Volckman responded initially in "The Spiritualist Newspaper":

'SIR,—In the report which appears in your journal of a *séance* lately held at Mr. Cook's, I am accused of seizing the ghost, thereby breaking the conditions by which the members of the circle were bound.

'In reply I have to state, that having for forty minutes carefully observed and scrutinised the face, features, gestures, size, style, and peculiarities of utterance of the so-called spirit, the conviction irresistibly forced itself upon me that *no ghost*, but the medium, Miss Florence Cook, herself, was before the circle. I perceived also an occasional tip-toeing by the young lady as if to alter her stature, and was much struck by the utter puerility of her remarks throughout the *séance*. I am confirmed in my conviction, as above stated, by the facts that the *struggling* ghost had to be forcibly extricated from my grasp, and afterwards to be "aided" into her cabinet by a Justice of the Peace.

'I may add that no third-parties had any knowledge of my invitation to, or presence at, the *séance* in question.

WM. VOLCKMAN.

'Dec. 16th, 1873.

—~—☼—~—

Second seizure:

During a séance with Mrs Corner on Friday, January 9th, 1880, and under the protection of Edmund Dawson Rogers, Chairman of the Séance Committee of the British National Association of Spiritualists (B.N.A.S), London,[23] Sir George Sitwell seized the full-form materialization of 'Marie', who appeared attired in white robes. The seized 'Marie' was found to be the medium herself, Mrs Elgie Corner (Florence Cook).

The 'seizure' raised the question: was Mrs Corner actively and consciously producing fraudulent mediumship or could she have been unconscious of the fact and under the influence of a controlling spirit or that of the sitters in the séance, the medium being totally unaware of their actions, as they were in a somnambulistic state and therefore not accountable for their *unconscious* actions?

This case became public with "The Capture of "A Spirit."—To the Editor of the Times" by Sir George R. Sitwell and Carl von Buch. The account of Sitwell, Buch, Dawson Rogers, the BNAS Council, etc. is published in Psypioneer, Vol. 2, No. 8, "The seizure of Mrs. Elgie Corner". This account shows both sides of the story, in full agreement that the seized *spirit of Marie* was, in fact, the medium.

Sir George Sitwell and the others claim that the medium was *consciously producing fraudulent mediumship*, whereas Dawson Rogers

> "… believed her to be totally unconscious, and therefore totally guiltless of any deception, and that he was satisfied the Council, after hearing his report, would arrive at the same opinion."

Quoted from Psypioneer, Vol. 2, No. 8, August 2006:

THE CAPTURE OF "A Spirit."
To the Editor of the Times.

> Sir,-We think the following facts will be interesting to the readers of The Times. Some time ago, being desirous of investigating the truths of so-called Spiritualism, we were advised by an eminent Spiritualist to attend the seances held at 38, Great Russell-street (British National Association of Spiritualists). We were assured that the seances conducted at that association were the most genuine in England and under strict test conditions. On our first visit, the medium being tied by one of us with great care, no manifestations followed.
>
> At the second visit (January 2) one of us again tied the medium, but under the directions of the chairman, who is officially connected with the institution, a "Spirit" soon appeared; which we were told was "Marie," and was represented to be that of a dead child 12 years of age. She was dressed in white, her face covered with a veil, and her arms and feet bare. We were surprised to distinguish the appearance of a corset under the white robes, and her voice and general appearance gave us the idea that it was the medium herself—Mrs. Corner (nee Florrie Cook).
>
> On the third visit, January 9, we were accompanied by a friend, Mr. John C. Fell, engineer, and editor of a scientific journal, of 23, Rood-lane, E.C., with his wife. The spirit "Marie" again appeared, and rendered our former suspicions almost certain by the audible

[23] BNAS would evolve into The London Spiritualist Alliance (LSA), later The College of Psychic Studies (CPS), as it is today. The BNAS members would help substantially in the formation and foundation of the "Society for Psychical Research". See Psypioneer, Vol. 4, No. 10: "The Society for Psychical Research, Officers and Council for 1882".

sound of undressing within the curtain and by the "unspiritual" levity of her behavior and conversation.

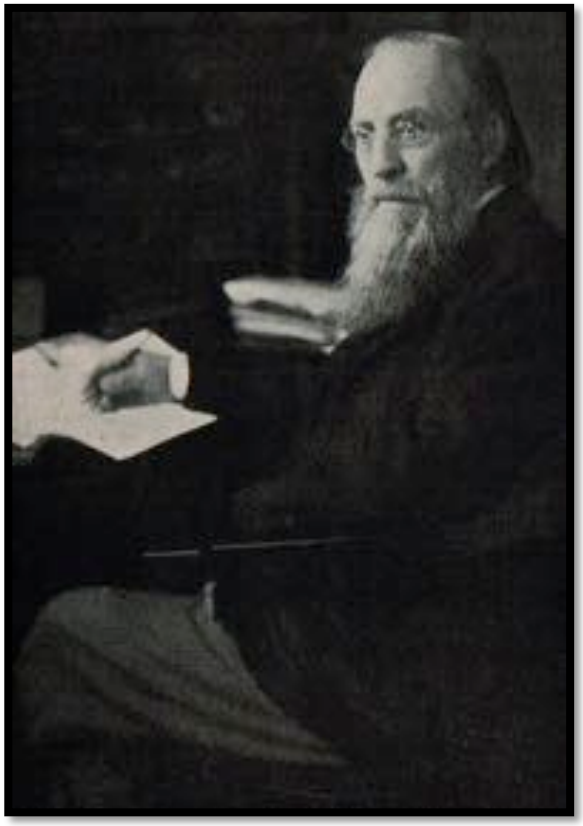
One of us by a sudden rush intercepted and gently held "the spirit," while another dashed into the curtains, and drawing them aside, displayed the medium's empty chair with the knot slipped, her dress, stockings and boots, and other discarded garments. There was sufficient light from a half-obscured candle for the captured "spirit" and all the above objects to be plainly seen, which latter were handed round for inspection and examined by those present. After a few minutes—to cover the confusion, we presume—the candle was extinguished by the official present, and we adjourned to the lower room. All present, except the officials, one of whom took refuge in abuse, entirely agreed with us and thanked us for exposing the deception.

Now, Sir, we leave general conclusions on Spiritualism to others, but what we do claim to have proved is that in the first society of Spiritualists in England, one of its best mediums has been detected in personating the spirit herself. Not wishing to further occupy your valuable space, we shall be happy to give fuller information to any one interested in the cause of truth.

GEORGE R. SITWELL.
CARL VON BUCH.

—~—☼—~—

Quote from Dawson Rogers' response to the letter:



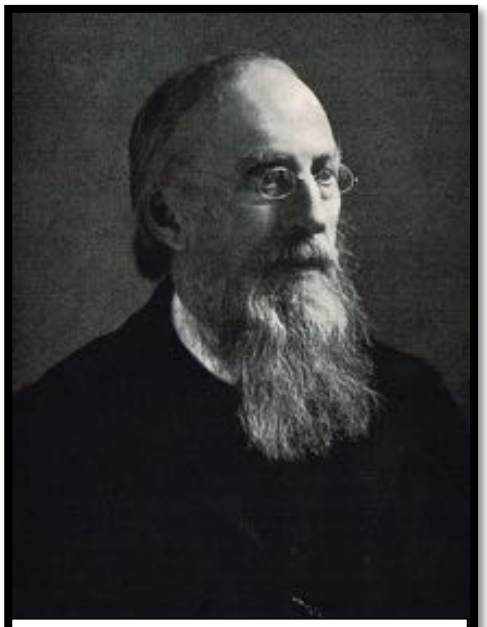
Mr. DAWSON ROGERS then proceeded. This letter, he said, stated that at a séance held at the rooms of the Association, on the evening of Friday, January 9th—and at which he (Mr. Dawson Rogers) was present in his capacity of Chairman of the Séance Committee —a form appeared attired in white robes, that the form was seized by one of the circle, and was found to be the person of the medium (Mrs. Corner), and that the chair to which the medium had been bound was found to be vacant, while several articles of the medium's dress were scattered about the floor behind the curtains which were used as a cabinet. He was sorry to be obliged to admit that all this was true. He would also take this opportunity of stating that, in the act of seizure, Sir George Sitwell was as gentle and considerate towards the medium as the successful accomplishment of his purpose would permit, and that he (Mr. Dawson Rogers) was sorry that in the heat of the moment he applied to Sir George an epithet which he freely confessed he ought not to have used. Having made a mistake he had done all he could to remedy it, and had personally conveyed the expression of his regret to Sir George, who had kindly accepted it.

He would now briefly state all the circumstances connected with this unfortunate affair, prefacing what he had to say by the assurance that he had no word of censure for Mrs. Corner, that he believed her to be totally unconscious, and therefore totally guiltless of any

deception, and that he was satisfied the Council, after hearing his report, would arrive at the same opinion. Naturally enough, perhaps, some persons would hastily conclude, after what had occurred, that notwithstanding all that had been heard of Mrs. Corner, she was not a genuine medium for physical manifestations, and that the Séance Committee ought to have taken more care before they accepted her services in that capacity. But as a matter of fact great care had been taken. At some of the preceding seances she had not only been well secured by tying, but her dress had been so sewn together that it was simply impossible that it could be removed and replaced without detection; and he himself had also, when sitting near the curtains, put his hands behind them and felt the medium's head, shoulder, arm, and hand at the same time that the "form" was out and visible to all the company; and he had reported the fact to another member of the committee. He had also had recourse to other tests which left no room for doubt as to the genuineness of Mrs. Corner's mediumship.

But how about the third sitting—that at which the capture was made? Mr. von Buch did exactly as he pleased without a single suggestion being offered by any other person. Did he then tie the medium securely, and, if not, why not? Be this as it might, a "form," after a little while, came out from curtains at the side, and stood with the back to the wall. It was covered with white drapery over head, face, and shoulders, and had a long white robe reaching to the heels, so that the naked feet could not be seen except when they were put slightly forward from beneath the skirt. While in this position Sir George Sitwell made a sudden rush, captured the "form," and, gently holding her, exclaimed, "It is the medium; I knew it was."

He (Mr. Dawson Rogers) at once stepped up, and taking the "form" out of Sir George's hands, threw up the veil to see whether it really was Mrs. Corner or not. For the moment he could scarcely recognise her, as the eyes had a vacant gaze as though there was no consciousness of what had occurred. He had been told that at the same moment Mr. von Buch rushed forward, and from the front of the curtains drew out the empty chair and various articles of Mrs. Corner's apparel; but of this, as he was then standing at the side curtains, he knew nothing. It should be borne in mind that when he took Mrs. Corner in this apparently unconscious state from Sir George's hands she was covered with white drapery as mentioned. He at once put his arms round her, and led her behind the curtains. There, for a few seconds, she remained perfectly quiet and silent, then trembled violently, and presently exclaimed, "Where am I? Where am I? What is it? Tell me, what is it?"



Edmund Dawson Rogers

He endeavoured to soothe her, but finding that she was getting heavy in his arms, and fearing that he should able to prevent her from falling, he proposed to lead her out into the adjoining room. She replied, "Yes, do!" and he was about to remove her, when she suddenly exclaimed, "Why, I am undressed; get away, get away" He did not, however, feel that he could leave her without letting her fall, and he therefore called Mrs. Maltby, who received her from his hands behind the curtain, and removed her into another room. Mrs. Maltby would tell them in what condition she was at the time.

Mrs: MALTBY: She had nothing on but her corset and flannel petticoat, and no white drapery whatever.

Mr. DAWSON ROGERS: What then had become of the drapery? It was impossible that Mrs. Corner could have removed and secreted it, for he had his

arms round her from the moment he received her from Sir George Sitwell's hands to the moment he placed her in the hands of Mrs. Maltby behind the curtains. The published letter already alluded to said that to cover the confusion he had put the light out. This was altogether untrue. The light was at one end of the room, and he at the other, and he was engaged all the time as he had said in attending to Mrs. Corner. Moreover, in another part of the letter, the writers themselves admitted that there was sufficient light for the discarded garments to be handed round for inspection.[24]

[…] full report available in pdf from the editor.

—~—☼—~—

To conclude in this issue:

SPIRIT FORM, ECTOPLASM, ETC. BEING GRABBED

As earlier noted, it is often claimed that physical mediums are sometimes badly injured, with some claims of actual death as a result of a spirit form, ectoplasm, etc. being grabbed. There are numerous accounts but it appears that there is no firm documented material, medical evidence, etc. of such injuries.

The first reference to any serious injury or death appears to come from Florence Cook's "Katie King":

> "… if anyone of you were to take her suddenly round the waist and try to carry her, you might kill her on the spot: she might suffocate."

We can clearly note that, when William Volckman seizes the alleged form of "Katie King", he

> "… grasped her round the waist with both arms, and tried to throw her down with his feet."

We can clearly note that, when Sir George Sitwell seizes the alleged form of "Marie", he

> "… made a sudden rush, captured the "form," and, gently holding her, …"

It can also be noted that Dawson Rogers, without apparent permission,

> "… when sitting near the curtains, put his hands behind them and felt the medium's head, shoulder, arm, and hand at the same time that the "form" was out and visible to all the company; …"

albeit given in Katie King's own words just a few weeks prior to the William Volckman incident: "…if anyone of you were to take her suddenly round the waist and try to carry her,

---

[24] **Psypioneer Vol.11, No.02: February 2015: "SPR Recognises Dawson Rogers At Last".** The Society for Psychical Research has acknowledged Edmund Dawson Rogers as a founder in 1882. This follows a ten-year campaign by Psypioneer. In our first issue of May 2004 we carried a lead story, "SPR was conceived by a Spiritualist" and cited evidence of the significant role played by Rogers, a journalist. He did not hold an academic position, however. In November 2014, we presented new evidence from both Rogers and Professor William Barrett, the other prime mover in the first meetings. On Christmas Eve, we were informed that the SPR had revised the history section of its web site to state:

The SPR, the first learned society of its kind, was founded in London on 20 February 1882, following initial discussions between William Barrett and Edmund Dawson Rogers, and then a conference convened in London in January to discuss the viability of such a Society.

P.S. The inaugural SPR conference in January 1882 was held at the rooms of the British National Association of Spiritualists. Leslie Price.

you might kill her on the spot: she might suffocate." Apart from the initial shock of the grabbings of the alleged *spirits,* Florence received no injuries!

Continued in the next issue …

Given that this issue holds numerous references to the now defunct Psypioneer all issues can be downloaded via my website (Study Weeks) page:

www.pauljgaunt.com

A QUESTION OF FRAUD! concluded

A twisty path indeed has been trodden over the two last issues of Pioneer, with its articles on conscious and unconscious fraud in physical mediumship and the difficulties shown in the early development of form mediumship, as well as the psychological considerations raised, together with the claims of serious injuries or even death to the medium if the necessary required fluids such as psychic force, psychoplasm and ectoplasm, etc. are seized, light shone on the alleged spirit form, the medium touched without permission, etc. Claims have been challenged but those who make such claims appear unable to back them. For example, Mrs E. Wakely noted,

> "May we ask Mr. Boddington to give the *name* of the medium who was killed through being tested by any method. *We want facts*."

All responsible researchers and sitters should, of course, be responsible and accountable for their actions, for example the "National Laboratory of Psychical Research" director, Harry Price, had a strict policy in place – "Do not seize teleplasm without the medium's permission!" It was further noted that Helen Duncan was in fact aware of the proposed seizure of Mrs Grover in 1938! Duncan was seized on three occasions, firstly in 1933 at Edinburgh; due to the structure of the charge she was found guilty at the trial but deemed innocent at the following Spiritualists' National Union AGM.[20]

In this third and final part of "A Question of Fraud" much of the material has given the reader *first-hand* accounts and original reports by those actually present, for example, in the last issue with the second seizure on Friday, January 9th, 1880 Mrs Corner (Florence Cook) was under the protection of Edmund Dawson Rogers, Chairman of the Séance Committee of the British National Association of Spiritualists (BNAS), London, when a sitter, Sir George Sitwell, suddenly seized the full-form materialisation of 'Marie', who appeared attired in white robes. The seized 'Marie' was found to be the medium herself. Albeit it was without doubt the medium herself who was *acting* as the alleged spirit, 'Marie', it was well argued by the BNAS chairman that he

> "… believed her to be totally unconscious, and therefore totally guiltless of any deception, …"

On the other hand, Spiritualists and the psychic press have publicly acted responsibly on numerous occasions on the practice of conscious fraud, for example Ernest Oaten in the first part of this series stated:

> "To exploit the deepest emotions of the human soul and the most sacred of human associations by using fraudulent means to exploit them for personal gain is a detestable and disgraceful thing, showing a lack of all fine feeling and of decency."
>
> "When, however, as in the case of Mrs. Grover, it can be definitely shown that preparations were made beforehand to practice fraud by carrying into the seance-room the materials used for fraudulent purposes, such as butter-muslin and band of linen with a large

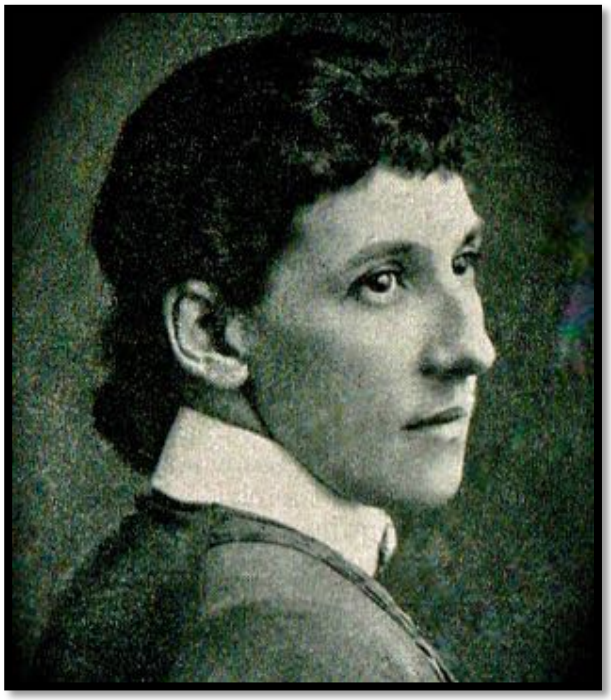
[20] An SNU sub-committee was appointed to look at the situation which had arisen from the prosecution and conviction. Their unanimous conclusion was that the alleged facts of the case were not "supported by the weight of evidence at the trial." President John McIndoe agreed; at the SNU Conference held in Doncaster on July 1st, 1933 and after a lengthy discussion a resolution was passed approving the Committee's report by fifty-seven votes to two—Duncan was innocent and her Diploma remained.

safety pin in it, there is only one conclusion to be reached, namely, that a deliberate attempt had been made beforehand to deceive the sitters.

"And we hope Spiritualists, despite their sympathy for the bottom dog and the desire to practise kindliness and the spirit of brotherhood will let no false sentiment stand in the way of keeping the Movement clean."

It was also pointed out by Oaten that "it has been the policy of *The Two Worlds* for fifty years to make such facts known wherever they occur."

The alleged exposures and the consequences of a *seizure* of a physical medium have not so far appeared to have the *drastic effects* which are so often noted in our literature of injury and even death to the seized medium. It is on this note that Pioneer will look at the effects of the early high-profile alleged exposures, given that the early mediums' spirit guides/controls looked strongly like a *double* of their medium! Some mediums preferred to be secured to avoid the possibility of unconscious fraud but it was also noted on occasions that the mediums appeared out of their cabinet, free of their binds, sealed knots, etc.



Catherine (Kate) Wood was one medium who agreed, on occasions, to be severely tested during full-form materialisation; her materialisations occurred sometimes in lighted conditions, often sitting outside the materialisation cabinet, thus making her fully visible to all present. One example is at Belper in 1877, where Kate accepted further challenges: 1)—for the spirit to materialise inside the cabinet and come out whilst the medium sat in circle; (2)—for the spirit to materialise outside the cabinet while the medium sat inside; (3)—to obtain moulds of spirit hands or feet while the medium was detained inside the screwed-up cage.[21]

Various reports in the Spiritualist press reported Kate Wood as being very susceptible to *evil* spirits—a better and more correct term would be *low* spirits. It can be noted in the John King séances with Charles Williams that they were sometimes of a rough character. Kate was developed in what most Spiritualists would call the correct way, that is, under the protection and harmonious auspices of development groups run by experienced Spiritualists; Kate fell into such responsible hands at the Newcastle Spiritual Evidence Society, Newcastle-upon-Tyne. Venturing away in 1876, she initially maintained early protection and

[21] In the early 1870s a group of psychical researchers emerged who became known as the "Sidgwick Group". Catherine Wood (along with Annie Fairlamb, later known as Mrs Mellon) would become the focus of some of their researches. A report dated February 17th, 1875 from two members of the group, F.W.H. Myers and Edmund Gurney, led to Miss Wood and Fairlamb being more fully investigated by this group; it was reported: "… Pocky leant over him to kiss Gurney he felt no body; nothing but drapery. Asked whether her trunk is materialised she replies that it is not—only head hands and some kind of legs—not regular feet. She [Pocky] retires to a point near the cabinet but quite outside it, so that wall of room is plainly visible between her and cabinet. She then dematerialises herself—sinking away into a slight white mark on the ground in about half a minute. This mark soon disappears. When the mediums have recovered we enter and examine seals and knots. We do this carefully. All is unbroken, though the nails had been driven so thoroughly through the substance of the silk that a slight push severed the silk from nails and seals."

procedure at the Derbyshire experiments, where she received careful and judicious supervision. Alfred Smedley and Mr W.P. Adshead undertook test séances; Adshead at Belper recorded an incident of *low* spirits on February 13th, 1877:

> "As usual, Miss Wood, on entering the seance-room, went at once into the cage, was bound and sealed to her chair, and the door of the cage screwed up. As I was about to let the curtain drop in front of the cage I observed Miss Wood lying back in the chair as in a death-swoon. Thinking she was perhaps more deeply entranced than usual, I said nothing. She must have remained in that condition for nearly a quarter of an hour, as not the slightest movement was heard.
>
> "Then "Pocka" took control,[22] and informed us the conditions were bad; that in coming to the seance some drunken men had jostled against the medium; that spirits who had been drunkards in earth-life were present, and their influence would prevent any manifestations taking place that evening; that, on being bound, the medium had been controlled by a spirit who had committed suicide by poison, and that she had been injuriously affected by the control; that the cage must be opened and the medium released at once, taken home under control and put to bed. This was done, and she remained under control until a late hour." [23]

However, there is no doubt that Kate Wood was seized and found to be impersonating one of her alleged spirits, "Pocka", on two occasions! On August 11th, 1877 the "Blackburn Times" reported on a series of seances held with Miss Wood at Blackburn. "The Medium & Daybreak" of August 17th reported the story; the paper's founder editor, James Burns, noted that there were present on the first occasion twenty-eight or twenty-nine sitters, including a newspaper reporter and a doctor. Burns noted:

> "From the flippant, slangy, self-sufficient style in which the report is written, it is easy to be guessed what kind of influence predominated in the circle."

Below is quoted from the "Blackburn Times", as published in "The Medium & Daybreak" referenced above:

MISS WOOD CAUGHT PERSONATING A SPIRIT

> Since the above was placed in type, our worst suspicions have been realised; the medium has been caught imposing upon the circle—caught in the very act of playing the spirit. It appears that the committee, finding it was impossible to have satisfactory manifestations whilst so many "sceptical minds" were in their midst, went through a weeding-out process, and recommenced sitting on Monday last with a smaller circle, understood to be composed of thorough-going Spiritualists. The seances were held at the house of a friend; and it was believed that they would thus obtain such phenomena as were witnessed during Miss Wood's first visit to Blackburn. There was nothing at all on Monday; but on Tuesday night "Pocks" did something more than take possession of the medium; she took possession of the sitters by appearing in their midst, and distributed biscuits and kisses to those whom she thought worthy of such spiritual favours. The biscuits, we should, explain, were handed to her; but the dessert, in the way of kisses, was all her own.
>
> One of the sitters, Mr. T. E. Atkinson, of 76, Whalley Road, has been looked upon all along as a confirmed believer, but the fact is that he was a confirmed sceptic after all he

[22] "Pocka" is also referred to as "Pocks" and "Pocky" in some reports.

[23] "Some Reminiscences", by Alfred Smedley, published in 1900: Adshead noted: — "We were afterwards informed by those who accompanied Miss Wood to the seance that in passing along the street two drunken men rushed from the road on to the pavement, nearly knocking the medium down. This fact, to those who know anything of sensitives and the laws which govern mediumship, will be premise enough on which to build a theory which will account for the peculiar occurrences of the evening."

had seen; and when he observed “Pocks” supplying him with a bit of biscuit, he was more than ever assured that it was the medium on her knees. Shortly afterwards he disengaged one hand, and lightly touched “Pocks” garment—a circumstance which caused her to get out of his reach, and to complain when she returned to the chair that someone had been attempting to poke holes in her dress.

On Wednesday night, sitting was resumed under customary conditions, that is, the medium was tied more or less securely to a chair, which was placed in a recess with a curtain before it. Mr. Atkinson was present with two friends in court in the shape of his wife and a grown up daughter. “Pocks” affirmed that everything was favourable, and that good manifestations might be expected. Indeed, it was intimated that three spirits might appear at once; but nothing was seen until about eleven o’clock, when several present saw a form emerge from the recess, and immediately afterwards various sitters on the shadier side of the room were touched with a tube, or fan, provided for the purpose.

It was really so dark that our wide-awake friend could not see “the spirit,” though he could hear the taps being administered on the other side of the room. But he was not to be imposed upon any longer; and was determined, if he could, to make a seizure, as he had not signed any regulations, and was fettered by no promise. It was the last seance of the series, and his only chance of exposing the humbug; so, with a courage which does him great credit, and guided by his ears, he dashed across the room, and made a grasp at the form, which, however, slipped through his hands. It became a race then for the recess, but the vigilant sceptic was more alert this time, and seized the figure whilst it was still amongst the sitters. What a struggle then ensued! It was as if life and death on both sides depended upon it, though there was no screaming and not a word was said.

The company seemed paralysed; there was much to hear, but nothing to see, and they knew not what it meant. The strong man proved in the end too powerful for the desperate woman; and when matches were lighted by Mrs. and Miss Atkinson, the medium was found on the floor, near the curtain of the recess, in attire which was confined to chemise, stockings, and a pair of —!

Miss Wood braved it out to the last, hardened sinner as she is, and speaking as “Pocks,” after being assisted to her chair, declared that she had been controlled by an evil spirit, who had all but stripped her naked, and sent her out in the circle. This was too much for Mr. Atkinson, who gave his opinion of what he called her “devilment,” and went so far as to say that, unless every penny that had been paid for the seances this week and last was returned to the sitters, he would put the case in the hands of the police.

—~—☼—~—

Problems again arose five years later when Kate Wood was seized *impersonating* "Pocka" during a séance at Peterborough. The alleged exposure was well covered by the Spiritualist publications, including E. Dawson Rogers, who was featured in the last issue in connection with the seizure of Florence (Cook) Corner by Sir George Sitwell just two years earlier. Dawson Rogers was the founder of the then weekly journal, "Light", noting "It is with deep regret that we publish the following communications, but fidelity to the truth leaves us no alternative.—ED. "LIGHT." (E. Dawson Rogers)" September 16, 1882:

MISS C. E. WOOD EXPOSED

To the Editor of "LIGHT."

SIR,—Last night, Miss C. E. Wood, of Newcastle, gave a sitting at my house. There were seventeen friends present, the majority Spiritualists. Miss Wood was tied to an armchair by two gentlemen. After sitting for two hours, a form draped in white came from the cabinet, then immediately retired. Then the supposed "Pocka" came out in white to a small table in front of me, played two small musical boxes, gave some sweets to a gentleman, kissed a lady, and chatted for some minutes. Then Mr. Cade, who is a medium, and a sitter at Mr. Chapman's circle, at Stamford, who sat on my left, suddenly seized the supposed "Pocka," and instead of a little Indian girl it was Miss Wood with her dress off, and covered with muslin, part of which was secured. I have retained some, and Mr. Cade part. In the interest of Spiritualism, I hope you will publish this, as Miss Wood is so well known as a so-called professional medium. It is only loyalty to the cause that compels me to discharge the painful duty of reporting this unsatisfactory sitting.—Faithfully yours,

ROBERT CATLING.

Granville-street, Park-road, Peterborough,
September 12th, 1882.

—~—☼—~—

To the Editor of "LIGHT."

SIR,—With your permission I would like to place on record an account of a seance at which I was present in the house of Mr. Robert Catling, of this city.

For the information of your readers I may say that I have been very intimately acquainted with Mr. Catling for about eight years; he has been a very devoted friend to the cause of Spiritualism before I knew him and ever since. Miss Wood arrived at his residence on Thursday, 7th inst. She was received and treated as a friend by Mrs. and Mr. Catling till the night of Monday, 11th inst., when the séance was held about which I wish to speak.

I may say that Mr. and Mrs. Catling went with Miss Wood to Stamford on Sunday, the 10th inst., when a séance was held at Mr. Chapman's Lyceum. This séance gave great satisfaction to all but one or two. Mr. Cade, who is to some extent identified with the Spiritual movement in Stamford, was present, but was not satisfied with what he saw, and he came to Peterborough on Monday evening, to be present at our séance.

During the séance, while what was supposed to be "Pocka" was outside the cabinet, Mr. Cade sprang forward, and there was a scuffle. The light was very dim. I stepped to the cabinet, and could see Mr. Cade sitting in the chair in which the medium had been tied at

the beginning of the séance. He called for more light, and held a figure draped with white in his arms, which seemed to struggle to get free. A gentleman who tried to turn up the light turned it out in mistake. I kept my place for about a minute, and when the light was turned on I could see that the figure with which Mr. Cade struggled was Miss Wood, the medium. She had a quantity of muslin wrapped round her head and shoulders, but through openings I could see parts of her body. I said to Mr. Cade, "We had better leave her to the ladies." I turned to call some of the ladies, and when I turned back again, in what seemed to me about one minute's time, Miss Wood was dressed in the black dress in which she commenced the seance, and the muslin was hidden away. Mr. Cade said, "We must have the muslin;" and after another severe struggle the muslin was found in some part of her and taken from her. These are a few of the disagreeable facts connected with this séance.

On Friday, when we were making arrangements for the Monday's séance, I suggested as a test that a piece of tape should be sewn round each of the medium's wrists, and the ends given to the sitters to hold, but Miss Wood objected to this, I think, very reasonable test.[24]

As the result of what I have seen, I have come to the painful conclusion that Miss Wood deliberately planned the deception, and that practice has made her too perfect in the art of deceiving.

I did not feel the least excited through the whole séance, and I do not feel the least discouraged now. Fraudulent mediums will always exist in proportion to foolish people.

Let us study Spiritualism by spiritual methods. Let us get our heads clear and keep them so, and let us—

"Keep a brave heart still."

When we have cleared the path of folly and fraud true spiritual manifestations will—

"Come as a waking joy
After bad dreams,"

THOS. MCKINNEY,

New Fletton, Peterborough,
September 12th, 1882.

—~—☼—~—

Frank Herne and Charles Williams, noted elsewhere over the last two issues, were major mediums at the beginning of form materialisations, especially in public demonstrations. It was in 1871 that Frank Herne was joined by Charles Edward Williams; their partnership was successful and they held séances at 61, Lambs Conduit Street, Holborn, London. Around April 1872, Herne and Williams started their form materialisations. Florence Cook, who had attended some of Herne and Williams' early séances, had been a pupil of Herne as arranged by her father, Henry Cook; around June 1873 they ended their partnership and continued independently. Charles Williams continued giving public séances at the Holborn address.

In 1887 William Harrison published a report in the Spiritualist newspaper, "An Exposure of Imposture", on Friday, 20 September, 1878; the account was also published in the October issue of "Spiritual Notes".[25] News was received from The Hague that two mediums working

[24] In response Miss Wood stated in her letter dated September 16th, 1882 and published in "Light" on September 23rd, 1882:—" Mr. McKinney says I objected to what he calls the "reasonable test" of a piece of tape sewn around each of my wrists, the ends to be held by sitters. This is put by him in such a way as to constitute a perversion of the truth. The fact is that *two or three days before, in the, course of conversation*, such a test was mentioned, but I recommended its non-application, as I thought that the sitters holding the tapes might, through their inexperience of such phenomena, jerk my wrists and injure me during any possible manifestation; but I offered to have my wrists sewn in the manner suggested, the ends of the tape to be sealed on both wall and floor in view of the circle."

[25] "Spiritual Notes" was the official monthly journal of the British National Association of Spiritualists (BNAS). However, the journal was short-lived and was in production only from 1878.

together, Williams and a medium called Mr Rita, were unmasked; not only were they seized but "John King" apparel was found!

On Tuesday evening, the 10th of September, some good investigators held a séance with Messrs. Williams and Rita at the rooms of one of the sitters. Two days before the mediums had given another sitting, and suspicions were aroused by some of the manifestations; therefore some of the sitters made up their minds to obtain security on that point, convinced as they were that both mediums cheated in the most impudent manner. On the said evening, at first the usual physical manifestations at the table occurred, but were very weak. After that the cabinet was made, and Messrs. Williams and Rita placed behind the screen. After some singing and the playing of the musical box, the materialisation began. "Charlie," one of Rita's spirits, showed his face, lighted by his spirit-lamp.

At once one of the sitters near the cabinet made a leap, grasped Charlie, and caught the collar of Mr. Rita's coat. A struggle ensued in perfect darkness. The gentleman cried out, "I hold the medium," and others entered the cabinet to assist in catching the two struggling mediums. Heavy blows were given and received, and furniture was broken. As at last a light was struck, the two mediums tried to escape out of the room, but luckily the lady of the house had shut the front door, so that they were again seized, and brought into the room and searched, notwithstanding their courageous powers of defence, for some of the gentlemen who held them can give proof of their muscular force. Williams, chiefly, was foaming with rage. Rita resisted less. The following objects were found on the mediums, but hidden between their clothes, shirts, pockets, &c.

On Rita, a reddish-grey, nearly new beard (Charlie's); three large handkerchiefs, one of them of muslin; a very small ditto—he kept in addition two for his own use; a bottle of phosphoric oil: the bottle is of the size of an ordinary flat-round scent bottle, convincing us that the light of Charlie was nothing else.

On Williams, a black beard (very old, dirty, and used) sewed on brown silk ribbons (John King's); several yards of dirty, soiled, and very frequently used muslin; some muslin handkerchiefs, which served without doubt as John's turban, &c.; a bottle of phosphoric oil; a small bottle of scent (for the perfume), in which particles of phosphorus were found, which made us draw the conclusion that they used it for cleaning their fingers after showing spirit lights in the cabinet. Mind this, the beard and all the muslin very, old, dirty, and been long used. This is an important point to the English. Afterwards, on searching Mr. Williams's hand-bag, a small tube filled with very minute pieces of slate-pencil was found. These points fitted into a flat, thin fishbone or spring, serving probably to produce the phenomenon of writing between sealed slates, if room enough is left to introduce the instrument. Williams had the most complete apparel. After the finding of the above-mentioned objects, the two mediums looked perplexed. It was about twelve o'clock; they were then turned out of doors, without trying to gain a better opinion for themselves by accepting the offer of some gentlemen to give a test *séance* to prove that they were mediums. In fact, they ran away to The Hague next morning as early as possible.

Similarly, Francis (Frank) G. Hearn appears to have had the same fate but not so detailed. For further information on the above quotes please see, as previously mentioned, Psypioneer's eight-part series, "The Beginnings of Full-Form Materialisations in England", available on one pdf; please contact the editor for a copy.

Further high-profile mediums such as Annie Fairlamb/Mellon/Cleave and Elizabeth Hope Reed, better known as Madame d'Esperance (sometimes spelt D'Esperance and Esperance) were both similarly seized during their séances.

To conclude the quoted reports, published below is the 1880 first-hand report on the alleged exposure of Elizabeth d'Esperance,[26] published in the "Medium & Daybreak", September 10th, 1880. The editor, James Burns, noted: "In presenting the following evidence it is necessary to add that we have cut down the first letter nearly one half. In this department we only want a statement of fact—not insinuations and prosecutory pleadings."

THE SEIZURE IN MRS. ESPERANCE'S CIRCLE

MADAME D'ESPERANCE.
(*From a Photograph by Mr. Boursnell.*)

THE SEIZURE SEANCE
By "RESURGAM."

Tuesday, the 24th of August was intended as the final weekday seance to be held by Mrs. Esperance, before leaving England. Twenty-four persons, besides the medium, then formed the seance, of whom seventeen formed the inner circle nearest the cabinet, and the remainder were in the outer row at the back of the others and at intervals. I was at the top end of the inner circle, by side of the circle manager, next the medium. Mr. Warnes, the gentleman who seized the form purporting to be "Yolanda," was the fifth person from the bottom end of the circle, and ten other persons sat between him and me. My son, however was in the outer circle, very nearly at the back of Mr. Warnes, but nearer to the bottom of the circle, being behind the third and fourth sitters exactly, and thus close to where the seizure occurred.

After the customary singing for the commencement of harmony I was observing to myself that I felt no indication of the spirits then being at work, for, whenever they are collecting the "power" from the sitters, I can recognise the fact by my own feelings. A gentleman then arose to deliver an invocation, and, at the same time, I, to my surprise, saw a form just inside the curtain at the further end of the cabinet, and I at once entered the fact in my note-book, as, "a form at Mrs. Fidler's end of the cabinet, like 'Yolanda,' but taller, I think." As the invocation proceeded, "Yolanda" retired a moment, and was next seen at the nearer opening of the curtains, in the prostrate form of Mahomedan prayer, and at the conclusion of the invocation she arose and looked curiously at the strangers present, and then retired, presently emerging with a small veil half over her head to look again at the visitors, when she held out her skirts for trinkets to be thrown to her, this action causing me to note the extreme scantiness of drapery clothing, as every contour of the body was discernible, while the neck, face, arms, &c., were bare, and the legs half way to the knees or more.

[26] Psypioneer, Vol. 9, Nos. 9/10: Doubt about Madame D'Esperance's Early Life – Lis Warwood.

She retired within the cabinet, and raps were heard for the alphabet to be called over, and "p." for "pitcher" spelled out. Mr, Armstrong handed up the pitcher with approved quantity of water, and "Yolanda" retired with it within the cabinet, as usual, but very soon emerged with the pitcher full of roses and other flowers. She walked out into the centre of the circle with the pitcher on shoulder, and then across to Mrs. Fidler's end of the circle, where she commenced to distribute the flowers, and had given some by handing the pitcher for each one to help him or herself to one therefrom. She had so helped a gentleman, and my son also, who were in the back row of sitters there, and also the first four of the sitters in the front row, and was in the act of holding out the jug or pitcher towards the fifth sitter (Mr. Warnes), when I heard, instantly, a scream proceed from that spot, and my daughter, who was at my elbow near the cabinet, at my end, also gave a scream of fright on the same instant. A man's voice had said, "I've got you at last." "It's madam." "It's the medium." "I'll not let go till there is a light." "Turn up the light!"

As an instant *ruse de guerre*, and believing the medium still to be in the cabinet, I called out: "It's not the medium, she is here in the cabinet!" The form continuing to loudly squeal, and scream, and struggle energetically, I stepped to the cabinet, as Mr. Armstrong rushed to the rescue of the form purporting to be "Yolanda." I carefully but swiftly passed into the inside of the cabinet, well knowing that, if so be the medium were there, she would be in fatal convulsion, or death; but, however, the cabinet was absolutely void of all living entity. Mrs. Esperance, of course, was not there; her chair was empty, the gauze partition was uninjured and unmoved; but I was truly shocked when I observed the dark dress of Mrs. Esperance lying, carefully placed, on the floor of the cabinet, at the foot of partition, and in front of the chair; while the pair of boots belonging to Mrs. Esperance were on the floor, one under the chair partially, and in part under the dress, while the other was clear of contact with anything else. This shocked me exceedingly, although I had been fully warned and truthfully informed by my own spirit-friends that I should actually so discover the medium personating a spirit.

On Mr. Warnes seizing "Yolanda," my son had rushed upon him with intention of at once knocking him down, but seeing that it was unmistakeably Mrs. Esperance, my son of course wisely abstained from such an assault, and contented himself with merely taking firm hold of Mrs. Esperance by the wrist and the man by the arm to pull the two asunder; at the same time a lady in the rear caught Mr. Warnes by the throat firmly, and so compelled him to lose his hold of Mrs. Esperance. I only wonder the medium was not dismembered, as the united tugging was incredible.

Now I found, on carefully close inquiry that, from the very first instant, all so closely concerned were satisfied that it was, from the first, Mrs. Esperance, and not a spirit-form; hence nobody there would strike the man who had seized her, as he merely demanded more light to see her features by, and used no further violence than holding her by the wrist very tightly, A lady turned up the light fully, on which I rushed and turned it down again, as even a mortal lady should be spared exposure to too much light under such circumstances, and I was sorry for Mrs. Esperance.

Mr. Armstrong by this time had received the liberated "Yolanda," and partially carried, but chiefly dragged, her towards the cabinet, as quickly as possible; a lady observing that Mrs. Esperance was too much for him to carry.

—~—☼—~—

The writer of the above report, who was in fact Mr Pettitt under the pseudonym of "Resurgam", was naturally criticised for his comment,

> "… although I had been fully warned and truthfully informed by my own spirit-friends that I should actually so discover the medium personating a spirit."

as he gave no warning of the pre-warned pending danger to the circle or the medium herself, with whom he was himself a frequent sitter. From Pettitt's ("Resurgam"'s) description of the unfolding events of the seizure it is clear that he appeared not to have told his son or daughter about his spirit friend's warnings. In the following reports of the seizure of Esperance Pettitt is held in a negative light for a number of reasons, especially in Grace Fidler's report. Unfortunately, the various reports are too long to publish here; however, any reader wishing a pdf of the "Medium & Daybreak" reports, please contact the editor.

The "Resurgam" report refers to Mr William Armstrong, who was a well-known Spiritualist researcher, co-founder and first President of the "Newcastle Psychological Society",[27] founded in July 1872 as previously noted, the society where Kate Wood would start her career, along with Annie Fairlamb, better known as Annie Mellon.[28]

Below is William Armstrong's version of the seizure of the medium, also published in the same edition of the "Medium & Daybreak", which gives the reader a different perspective:

MR. W. ARMSTRONG'S REPORT.

"The truth shall make you free."
To the Editor of the MEDIUM AND DAYBREAK.

Sir,—The Spiritualists of Newcastle having circulated throughout the country reports injurious to the character of Mrs. Esperance as a medium, you have been kind enough to request me to furnish you with my opinions, based on my experience from my standpoint of the circumstances connected with the unfortunate seance held in our rooms, on Tuesday evening, the 24th ult. I have been very anxious to know what were the opinions of the other members of the circle, and on what grounds they had formed their opinions and based their conclusions, and I think I have riddled the whole.

I will now endeavour, in as few words as possible, to describe the seance, and what part I took in it. The meeting was one, the order of which has so often been described that I need not repeat it here. The circle was composed of twenty-three ladies and gentlemen, including the medium. The seance was opened in the usual way by singing a hymn; the medium entered the cabinet, and the conditions of the seance were stated. No one it was expected would take hold of the form if any should appear, without the form giving permission to do so.

Very shortly, "Yolanda," the flower girl, came out of the cabinet. She appeared to look very anxiously at some one in the direction in which her enemy was afterwards found to be sitting. She stepped back, and stood for some time with her back against one of the iron columns supporting the cabinet as if in a state of suspense, cogitating what she should do. She appeared to make up her mind, and called for the pitcher, which was handed to her nearly half full of water. She required more, and was supplied from the water-bottle. She then entered the middle compartment of the cabinet, taking the pitcher with her. Presently she came forth, pitcher in hand, and commenced distributing her flowers at the extreme

[27] The society, founded in July 1872, was named the "Newcastle Psychological Society" and operated under that title for seven years, when it was renamed the "Newcastle Spiritual Evidence Society".

[28] Pioneer, Vol. 6, No. 4: Mrs Annie Mellon – Materialisation medium.

part of the circle from the medium. My eye for a second or two was off "Yolanda" when I was startled with a sudden scream from or in the cabinet.

(It is generally admitted that the first scream came from the cabinet, one gentleman says he heard the medium moaning when "Yolanda" was on the floor.)

I saw at once what was up, "Yolanda" was caught. I jumped to my feet, hesitated a moment between the cabinet and the form when "Yolanda" screamed, I sprang forward, and got "Yolanda" who was lying with her face on the floor, her arms above her head, held in the iron grip of her captor, and the same time calling out to him to leave loose, but he would not loosen his hold until a lady who sat behind him seizing him by the throat choked him off. When freed, I carried what remained of "Yolanda" into the cabinet, and placed her on the chair. My first impression was that the chair was vacant, and that was afterwards confirmed by two of the sitters.

And here comes, to me, the most wonderful part of the whole business, and is to me an additional incentive to be careful of rash conclusions. The student of the occult must observe all the facts if he be desirous of arriving at the truth. He must be prepared to meet with difficulties and disappointments, but he must not suffer himself to be carried away by his emotions, or he will soon find himself in the Slough of Despond; but enough of this, and now for the facts. I took up and carried "Yolanda," I had no difficulty in doing that, she was like a cork in comparison to the weight of the medium, and was fast melting away. I placed her as I have already said in the chair (you, sir, and your readers may believe what I have further to say, or they may not; it is a matter of indifference to me, as it has been my privilege all along to witness phenomena in advance of that enjoyed by others, but which they all must have in good time), and laid my hands on her bare neck and shoulders. Her bare arms hung down before her, a part of the white drapery still remaining. I reached over her shoulders to feel for the long hair (the medium's hair is very short), while doing so, "Yolanda" raised her bare arms and gave me a gentle push in the breast, I drew back my left foot, which was in advance of the right, and *instantly* laid my hands again on the shoulders, not this time of "Yolanda," but on those of the medium dressed in her brown cloth dress in every respect buttoned up to the neck, just as she entered the cabinet, and as she retired from it. I brought my hands gently down her arms as they hung by her side. I have been asked if there was time for the medium to dress in the cabinet, I say emphatically, No; had she been conscious she could not have done it.

I took both her hands in mine and held them; the metamorphosis was complete. I have seen many transformations; but to me this was the most astounding. There I stood holding the hands of the medium, sitting on the chair, where, but a moment or two before, sat the form of "Yolanda." I do not profess to be versed in the scientific modes of investigation so much insisted on by some people, but I do profess to be able to observe facts as they are presented to me, and I was quite able calmly to observe what was going on before me, until the raps on the wall, above the head of medium, rapped out, through the alphabet, "give the medium restoratives." By a singular coincidence a lady present had a little brandy in a flask. That lady has attended hundreds of seances, but never before had she a drop of alcohol in a séance room.

She helped me to a little in a glass, but the difficulty was to get it into the mouth of the medium in the unconscious state in which she was, with her teeth firmly set. I succeeded at last in getting a few drops between her teeth, when she struck at the glass, and dashed it against the wall, exclaiming, in a moment of consciousness, "Get away you nasty thing." Conscious for a moment, and but for a moment, for she now became convulsed, she ground her teeth, and her hands were clenched so that I could not open them. In this state she remained some time. When the spasms relaxed, I put the glass, with a little more brandy, to her mouth; she made a convulsive snatch at the glass with her teeth, and I succeeded in pouring the brandy into her mouth. I now took both her hands in mine, and held them until

she recovered consciousness; which was some time; but long before I had reasoned out the position.

She required to be supported into a cab, taken home, and carried into her room. So soon as she was conformably seated and rested I examined her arms and wrists; as I was told that there must be some marks on her arms—they must be blackened with the iron grip of "Yolanda's" captor, and the struggles made to release her. I am happy to say there was not the least discolouration or the least mark of any kind, either then or on the following morning, when I again examined them. She did not complain of her arms in the least; but she did complain of her neck then, and has done ever since: but more of anon.

In the investigation of this subject of manifestations the medium is an important factor, and the state of their feelings and their experience can be obtained if it is well to do so; these may assist us in our inquiries. With this end in view, I asked the medium:—

"Did you see 'Yolanda' in the cabinet?"

"No, I did not."

"What, then, were your feelings; will you give me your experiences?"

"Yes; I was just sitting this way (bent forward with the hands on the knees), not thinking of anything in particular, when I felt a sudden grip in the region of the heart, such as I felt and described on a former occasion. I felt a pull forward, and, falling in doing so, I grasped at the iron stanchion with my left hand; I missed with the right. I screamed. I felt pulled forward off my seat. I tried to scream again, but could not, but heard my voice in the distance, and felt as in a nightmare, as I dropped down upon the floor. Of what transpired afterwards I have no knowledge, until something disagreeable was put into my mouth, which caused sensation, and I exclaimed, 'You nasty thing,' or something to that effect."

I have thus given you a very brief statement of the facts as they came under my own observation. I have endeavoured to reason the subject with myself. I know the chair was vacant. I am told the medium's clothes were in the cabinet on the floor, while "Yolanda" was outside; how much more than her clothes I am not informed. No one felt them; it may have been the medium on the floor for anything they know, and I am satisfied from the weight of "Yolanda" that she was not the medium, and from what I witnessed in the cabinet I am thoroughly convinced that the medium, as a whole, was never out of the cabinet.

There is no evidence whatever against the medium; the same "Yolanda" has from time to time given the very best proofs of a distinct individuality.

That Mrs. Esperance is a medium of the highest order none of her "exposers" dare dispute. In her presence husbands have met their wives and wives have met their husbands; parents have met and acknowledged their long-lost children; children have recognised and embraced their parents; forms have grown up in their presence, passed before them, and again dematerialised; forms have been seen without heads, and heads have been seen rolling on the floor, laughing without a body; flowers and plants and fruits have been produced under unexceptionable conditions; sitters have seen the medium brought out of the cabinet by the forms; they have seen these forms dematerialise alongside her and again build up; all these things have they seen, and much, much more through the mediumship of Mrs. Esperance; but all this is forgotten in a moment—"Yolanda" is trapped, and there is an "exposure." Yes, Sir, there is an exposure, but whence and of what? Not of the medium. She has nothing to fear, nothing in her conduct to be ashamed of. But I leave it to intelligent Spiritualists to say who have exposed themselves, and to what purpose,—Yours for the Truth, Wm. ARMSTRONG.

Newcastle, *Sept. 6.*

—~—☼—~—

The question remains: when a medium is seized, or caught in what appears to be blatant fraud, are they *actually* in a trance/somnambulistic state and therefore unaccountable for their *unconscious* actions—or *conscious*, suggesting that they are therefore accountable for their actions, i.e. premeditated fraud?

Editor's Notes:

The numerous first-hand accounts published in the Spiritualist press of the day in this short series of "A Question of Fraud!" without doubt give the reader an informed understanding of the foundation and the early development of form mediumship.

Generally speaking, in the various accounts it can be noted:

There seems little doubt that the seized alleged spirits were indeed the medium himself or herself—*with* or *without* drapery.

Reports show that the medium when seized appeared to be dazed, confused or in trance; also noted is the alleged spirit form *usually* closely resembling their medium, their *double*.

The seizures reported have in all cases shown that they were the mediums' alleged control/guide, though not friends or family of the sitters,[29] but they almost certainly suggest that it is not the medium's *double* which is seized, as some literature suggests. If this was the case, the medium would presumably be in their chair in the cabinet and the items of their *physical* clothes not scattered about in the cabinet, as has been noted.

So, the difficult task remains of deciding if possible, when an alleged materialised spirit is found to be without doubt *the medium* acting as the *spirit*, whether or not, when caught, they were in actual fact unconscious of their actions, or conscious in the action of fraud. Of course, it is also a rather convenient escape for the true fraudulent medium to claim they were in fact fully *unconscious* of their actions and controlled by sceptical sitters, and/or low spirits, etc.!

It has been noted that during these sometimes rather rough seizures of suspected fraudulent actions of the mediums cited, some seized in *ectoplasmic form* with the drapery later *disappearing*, there appears to have been *no* detrimental reaction in some, *no* serious injuries recorded, and certainly *no* deaths!

What can be concluded:

In all cases quoted the medium was not in their intended position, i.e. the cabinet, and none of the seized mediums/spirits received any serious injury or worse, as is often warned. The early articles by William Harrison, founder editor of the "Spiritualist" newspaper, give the reader the complex psychological formation and the problems of the early development of materialisation mediumship.

All the seizures cited are very similar, apart from the velocity and violence of the attack on the alleged spirit form. It is clear that all the seizures must be looked upon on their own merit, and the reader must judge, if at all possible, as to who may be guilty of deliberate, conscious fraud. With the psychological processes of materialisation it can be readily accepted that the *unconscious* state of the medium may well induce their actions to a control other than the intended spirit control/guide desired, as well indicated throughout this series.

Apart from the Sir George Sitwell seizure of the full-form materialisation of 'Marie', who appeared attired in white robes but was found to be the medium herself, Mrs Elgie Corner (Florence Cook), and the Elisabeth d'Esperance seizure of the full-form materialisation of 'Yolanda', who also appeared attired in white robes, these quotes are fairly detailed, with both

[29] Excluding the later medium, Clive Holmes.

outcomes in favour of the mediums being innocent and unaccountable for their *unconscious* actions; in both accounts no drapery was found. However, the d'Esperance seizure is more complex, which readers can themselves discern. For example, it is noted in the Sir George Sitwell seizure that Edmund Dawson Rogers, Chairman of the Séance Committee of the British National Association of Spiritualists (BNAS), London, took hold of the seized figure. It is noted:

> "He [Dawson Rogers] endeavoured to soothe her, but finding that she was getting heavy in his arms, and fearing that he should able to prevent her from falling, he proposed to lead her out into the adjoining room. She replied, "Yes, do!" and he was about to remove her, when she suddenly exclaimed, "Why, I am undressed; get away, get away" …"

It is noted similarly in the first part of the d'Esperance seizure by "Resurgam" that his report notes:

> "Mr. Armstrong by this time had received the liberated "Yolanda," and partially carried, but chiefly dragged, her towards the cabinet, as quickly as possible; a lady observing that Mrs. Esperance was too much for him to carry."

Both reports suggest that Dawson Rogers and William Armstrong are both carrying the full body weight of the medium herself! However, in Armstrong's version this is not so:

> "I [William Armstrong] took up and carried "Yolanda," I had no difficulty in doing that, she was like a cork in comparison to the weight of the medium, and was fast melting away. I placed her as I have already said in the chair […] and laid my hands on her bare neck and shoulders. Her bare arms hung down before her, a part of the white drapery still remaining."

Like the alleged entranced 'Marie'/Corner (Florence Cook) and 'Yolanda'/d'Esperance, both similarly in their unconscious state remained perfectly quiet and silent, then trembled violently/convulsed, and spoke some confused utterings. This is what Madame d'Esperance said about her experience in a letter to James Burns, and published in the same issue of "The Medium & Daybreak" as the above reports of her seizure:

> When I went into the room, rather late, the light was turned down, and I could not distinguish one person from another after coming from the daylight outside into semi-darkness. I don't remember speaking to anyone, but I remember noticing that the room was nearly full, and I felt sorry for it, and very tired, for I thought there would be little or no phenomena, owing to my weariness, and many who came would be disappointed. You see those highly coloured reports caused people to flock to the rooms in order to try to see their friends as he had seen his, and consequently very great disappointment has been felt, and I have been vexed and annoyed very often when I have learned of poor people travelling a hundred miles or so, paying hotel expenses, attending one or two seances, and seeing nothing to satisfy them. Of course no one was to blame in the matter except themselves perhaps, but it has always made me feel very sorry.
>
> However, I went into the cabinet, not feeling much inclined to talk to anyone. I did not know for a while that "Yolanda" had gone out, and when 1 did know I did not care to bother myself about her or her doings. The next thing I knew was a horribly agonizing pain all over me. I cried out, but felt as though in a nightmare, and the sound I made was like that made by one trying to scream when oppressed by some bad nightmare, and it sounded as though it was a long way off. I remember falling from my seat and catching at the uprights

of the cabinet as I did so, and missing them, and feeling as though I was missing hold of my life.

I don't remember touching the ground—only the act of falling from my seat, and nothing more but a vague recollection of something being forced down my throat, seeing somebody's face close to me, and hearing voices. I don't remember getting to the friends where we were staying, nor very much that passed next day, except that I knew I had a very great deal of work depending on my shoulders that must be done and only I could do it.

—~—☼—~—

A few days later she noted that she was better and her post-séance memories were returning. It can also be noted in this instance that d'Esperance received no body bruising from her seemingly violent seizure; it is recorded in this series and other reports that marks placed on a spirit form are often reproduced on the medium.[30]

Seizures of full-form materialisations – effects on the mediums:

1873 Florence Cook: Alleged spirit of "Katie King" seized by William Volckman. Severe shock reported.

1877 Catherine (Kate) Wood: Alleged spirit of "Pocka" seized by Mr Atkinson. No injuries to the medium reported.

1880 Mrs Corner (Florence Cook): Alleged spirit of "Marie" seized by Sir George Sitwell. Drapery disappeared; medium again in convolutions/shock.

1880 Elizabeth d'Esperance: Alleged spirit of "Yolanda" seized by Mr Warnes. Drapery disappeared; medium in convolutions/shock and temporary memory loss.

1882 Catherine (Kate) Wood: Alleged spirit of "Pocka" seized by Mr Cade; stated muslin was found on the medium. No injuries to the medium reported.

1887 Charles Williams & Mr Rita: Alleged spirit of "Charlie"; both mediums seized by sitters. Theatrical materials and muslin found on both. No injuries to either medium.

1937 Clive Holmes: Appeared apparently lifeless; he seemed in a very bad state and complained that he could not see. Convicted to a term in prison.

1938 Mrs Elizabeth Grover: No ill-effects. Admitted to fraud.

All the above reports suggest no serious injuries, no burns as often suggested, no deaths.

—~—☼—~—

[30] Plate of the "Phantasmal Photograph of Yolanda with her Medium Madam D'Esperance", taken from Cesare Lombroso's "After Death – What", published in 1909.

For further research and some interesting photographs see "Historical Perspective: Revealing the Real Madame d'Esperance: An Historical and Psychological Investigation", by Adrian Parker and Elisabeth Warwood, published by the "Journal of Scientific Exploration", Vol. 30, No. 2. Available free online.

FIG. 50. PHANTASMAL PHOTOGRAPH OF YOLANDA WITH HER MEDIUM, MADAME D'ESPÉRANCE.

THE PHANTOM OF YOLANDA.

A MEANS OF SPIRIT COMMUNICATION

Designed from the Spirit World!

It began with a newspaper article in 1925 by a dying man called George Jobson, who asked the question,

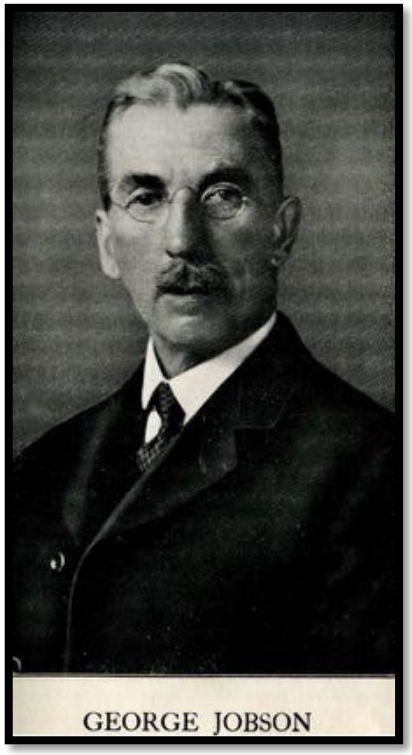
"Is there an After-World?"

Mr Kirkby contacted the sick man and he tells his story in his own words, published in Psychic News, June 30th, 1934:

SPIRIT INVENTIONS FROM BEYOND

A SEQUEL TO A DEATH-BED PROMISE

By B. K. KIRKBY:


GEORGE JOBSON

A DYING man's appeal in a newspaper changed the whole course of my life.

I little thought how it would affect my life, when, on a bright spring morning of 1925, I called to see an old friend, who said, "Here is something which will interest you." He handed me a copy of a county newspaper and pointed out an article headed, "Is there an After-World?"

It was written by George Jobson, a well-known scientist and world traveller, who, according to the address given, only lived about seven miles from me. I felt I could help this enquirer to prove for himself the truth he was seeking, as I had recently had some remarkable experiences myself.

I wrote and told him so, with the result that he sent for me to visit him, as he was bedridden and suffering with paralysis and cancer. He knew he had a lingering disease which gave him time for deep meditation.

ALERT THOUGH AILING

I soon called on him, and found a keen, alert mind awaiting me, even if the body was broken. We had a long chat, and then I told him this story.

I am one of those fortunate men who had a wonderful mother, who was mother, friend, pal, confidante, all in one, to whom I could turn in any difficulty if I needed help.

Early in 1923, she was taken very ill with dropsy and cancer. The doctors pronounced her case incurable. I paid her a visit, which I felt was my last. Whilst sitting by her bedside, chatting over intimate things, a terrible longing came over me. If only I could keep her with me.

Suddenly, a thought flashed in my mind. Death *cannot* take my mother from me.

"Mother," I said, "I feel you will not altogether leave me, if you are able to see me and understand when you are 'up there.' Will you tell me, dear?"

THE PACT

"Curious you should say that, my boy," she replied, "but I feel that, too. If I can come back, and it is God's will, I will do so."

And so we said "Farewell."

Shortly after she "went home" at sunset. I missed sorely the one who was so dear to me.

About four months later, I was driving a friend from the city, and stopped at a small village at her request for her to visit someone there. I waited some time. When the friend returned to the car, she told me of wonderful things an old woman told her relating to her private life!

Always being fond of something new, I said, "Oh! does the old woman tell fortunes. If so, I'm going in."

This old woman apparently went to sleep, as I thought. I felt I was in for a long stay. Presently a voice—not like the old woman's—spoke to me, and told me in endearing fashion it was Mother, returned, alive, happy, free from her terrible pain. She told me what her fatal illness was, and other details known only to us both.

"My boy, you must not keep this knowledge," she said solemnly. "You must tell everyone." I did, with the result my business acquaintances thought I was going insane. I went on obtaining more messages, until that morning when the article was shown me in the paper.

I watched my newly-found friend's face as I told my story.

"If only I could speak to my mother," he said at the close.

"You can if you will allow me to bring the medium my mother spoke through," I replied.

MY OFFER DECLINED

But he wanted no "old woman" to tell him anything, and declined my offer. He admitted my story sounded remarkable. As he enjoyed my company, he invited me to come again.

He soon changed a little through my chats on my various proofs, until one day he asked me to bring the medium. I went fifty miles to fetch her in my car. When I took her to his bedside, before she could take her hat off, she was entranced. *His mother spoke and addressed him by her pet name for him, known only to himself and to her. She gave him proof after proof.*

"I must repay you for this most marvellous happening of my life," he said. "I feel I can do this best by making a promise to you that when I return after so-called death I will endeavour to instruct you how to build an instrument to enable spirits to communicate with mortals. But I shall take over a call-sign for you to be certain it is I communicating."

THE CALL-SIGN

After careful deliberation, he chose my three initials as his call-sign as they were rather uncommon. Only he and I knew of the compact.

I waited three months for this after his "death," and it was given in a startling manner by a total stranger to me. I knew then I had to prepare for new work.

Gradually, I built up a regular line of communication through mediums with my friend, until at last he gave instructions how to build an instrument which he had promised.

This meant the biggest change of my life, because for twenty-five years I had been a successful businessman. This new friend said, "Sell all and do my work!"

A tall order? Well, it was, but I had faith in my man. I took the plunge.

My life's work results, financially, went into the construction of my new instruments. Years of anxious waiting took place before they worked. But they *do* work.

Hundreds of souls have cause to thank the writer of that chance article in that county paper, which has given them the glorious proof which I had, that Love is stronger than "Death."

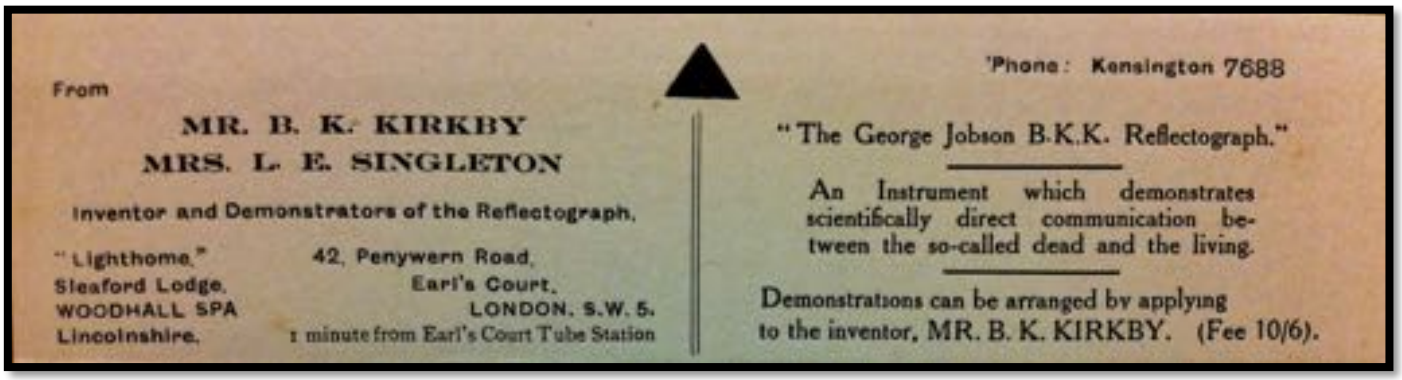
—~—☼—~—

Basil K. Kirkby was so taken with his meetings with George Jobson that it resulted in Kirkby taking up Jobson's suggestion *to build an instrument* after his death *to enable spirits to communicate*. Kirkby and Jobson decided on *a call-sign* so that Kirkby could be certain it was George Jobson communicating. The call-sign was Kirkby's three initials, "B.K.K." Reports suggested that Jobson, in life, worked as an engineer/scientist for the Graham Bell Telephone Company.

A few months after the death of George Jobson he communicated via a medium unknown to Kirkby using the agreed call-sign, B.K.K! So the work began between Kirkby and Jobson, which would in time closely involve two other people, firstly a physical medium, Mrs L. Singleton. Some reports state that Jobson died in 1930 but research would show that it was earlier, as the first of two machines made in collaboration between Jobson/Kirkby was up and running in early 1930! The first was called the "Reflectograph", then known as:

The Jobson-B.K.K. Reflectograph

It required ectoplasmic rods to be produced, gradually forming into a hand and arm needed to push the desired keys to produce the messages on the Reflectograph, which were flashed up on to a screen; the medium was Mrs L.E. Singleton and the alleged materialised arm/hand was that of one of Singleton's guides/controls, "Ethel". Shortly before Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's death on July 6th, 1930 Sir Arthur had shown much interest in the new invention but ill-health had severely restricted him


From

MR. B. K. KIRKBY
MRS. L. E. SINGLETON

Inventor and Demonstrators of the Reflectograph.

"Lighthome,"
Sleaford Lodge,
WOODHALL SPA
Lincolnshire.

42, Penywern Road,
Earl's Court,
LONDON, S.W. 5.
1 minute from Earl's Court Tube Station

'Phone: Kensington 7688

"The George Jobson B.K.K. Reflectograph."

An Instrument which demonstrates scientifically direct communication between the so-called dead and the living.

Demonstrations can be arranged by applying to the inventor, MR. B. K. KIRKBY. (Fee 10/6).

From a letter to Sir Arthur on January 31st, 1930 from Kirkby and Singleton, their advertising, etc. of the Reflectograph was in use and being demonstrated, thus showing that George Jobson died prior to 1930. In the spring of 1930 a group was organised on both sides of the veil consisting of George Jobson, Basil Kirkby and his steward and partner, Mr A.J. Ashdown a psychical researcher who had carried out scientific work in the testing of instruments in many outlets of government research departments and the War Office. This body became known as

THE ASHKIR-JOBSON TRIANION

Ashdown was the technical adviser to the Trianion; the name ASHKIR is made up from **ASH**down / **KIR**kby = ASHKIR, with George Jobson as the leader of the Trianion group.

Below is quoted from "A Review of the work and aspirations of The Ashkir-Jobson Trianion – and some reflections by Mr. A. J. Ashdown"; the foreword is by the daughter of William Stead, Miss Estelle W. Stead, and is dated June 1st, 1931:

> "There is no "sub-conscious element" with the Reflectograph; no validity in the feeble time-worn excuses of the pseudo-scientific or dogmatic blind sceptic. The Reflectograph is an instrument which is operated from the Beyond, and spells the spirit messages letter by letter when they are transmitted from the keyboard to the large alphabetical squares which light up clearly in view of all the sitters.
>
> "No earthly finger touches the keys, and yet fingers do touch them!—fingers of a form of "force-matter" which at present can only be conceived by the metaphysician; vibrant with life—of clear form—visible—and yet of structure and possessing energy of a character so far completely beyond the ken of our scientists and physicists.
>
> "The keyboard, or manual, of The Reflectograph is placed immediately in front of the cabinet in which, securely bound hands and feet, is seated the medium (Mrs. Singleton) in deep trance.
>
> "After the opening hymn on the gramophone and invocation by Mr. Kirkby, there is a pause during which the spirit guides are building up the power, and the materialised hand of Ethel, the spirit operator of The Reflectograph, is forming. This hand plays over the keys and, after a few trial letters, the bell controlled by one of the keys rings out to signify that a start is being made.
>
> "Then, under the dictation of the spirit communicating, the keys are pressed letter by letter at a rapid rate, and these close the electrical contacts and light up the letters on a large screen, placed against the wall away from the cabinet and in clear view of all the sitters.
>
> "The bell rings between each complete word, and at the end of each message the blue star on the screen lights up to indicate that that particular message is finished, and that interlocution and conversation with the sender can be carried on."
>
> "To those who wish to prove the reality of the Life Beyond, with all its great consolation, and lofty ethical value on human conduct and life, a visit to the laboratories where the Reflectograph is demonstrated is nothing less than a duty.

"As for the "honest sceptic,"' he is on dangerous ground when he criticises, in future, without having seen this work.

"To sympathetic earnest investigators is presented three forms of psychic phenomena:—

(a) Spirit messages on the Reflectograph from friends or relatives—in the discretion of the guides.

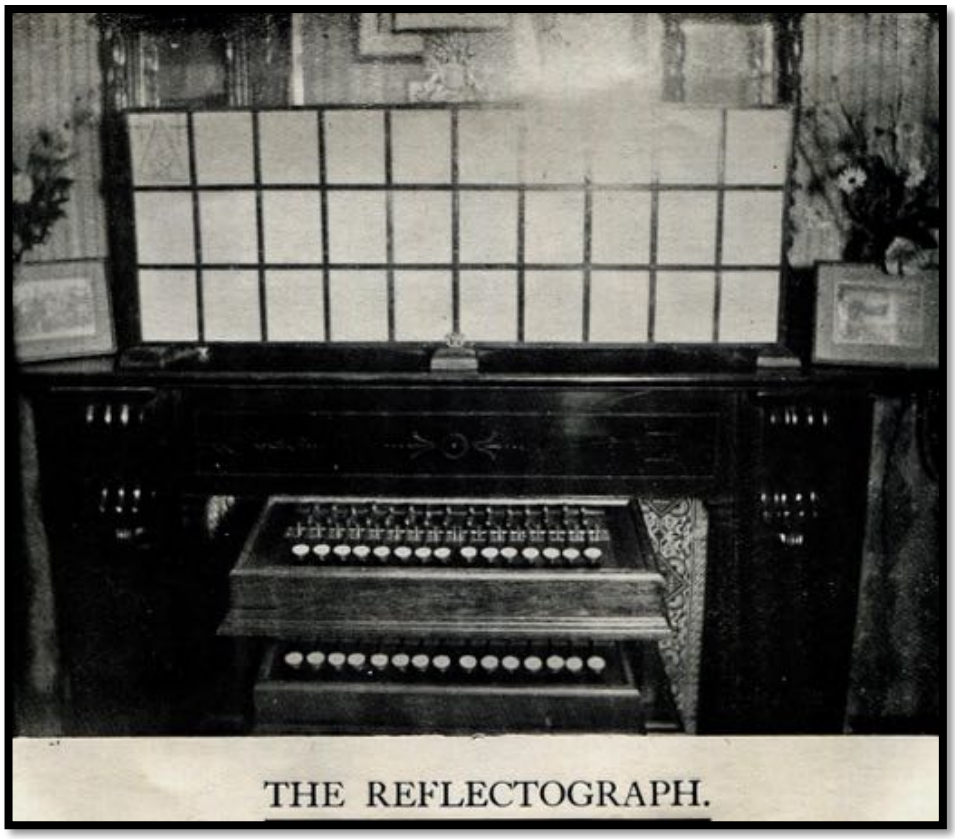
(b) An actual view of the materialised hand of Ethel; the spirit operator, and gallant little worker.

(c) A spoken message by one of the guides (in many instances from George Jobson himself) to the sitters, through Mrs. Singleton in trance.

"In ordinary sittings the truth and inspiration which the Reflectograph gives has a value against which the contribution charged appears ridiculous and paltry. What price in money can adequately set against Conviction in this most important knowledge in the world ?

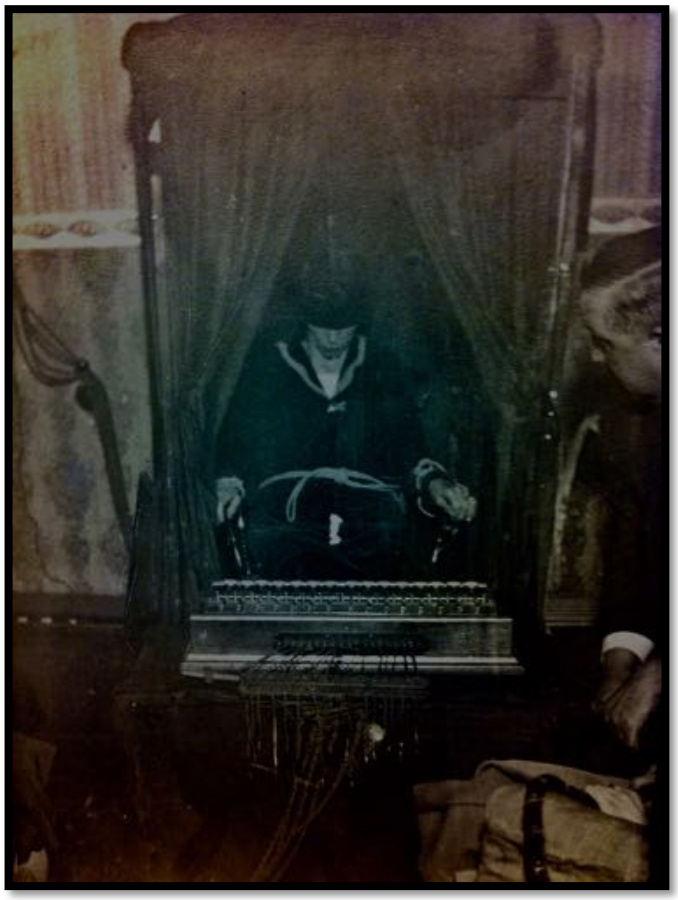
"It may, however, be mentioned for those investigators who like to carry out special tests in their own way, that these are not debarred as long as *it is explained clearly beforehand* what the tests are to be, and the sanction of the spirit guides is obtained. In the event of these special test conditions being carried through with success, the investigators must sign a statement indicating what the conditions were—and their satisfactory fulfilment.

"Furthermore, it is within the right of the wardens to charge such a contribution to the carrying on of the work for these special tests as will test also the bona fides of these hypercritical enquirers."


THE REFLECTOGRAPH.

It can be noted that it is in two tiers. The large screen was placed against a wall away from the cabinet for all to have a clear view of the messages.

The two images shown here show the entranced medium, Mrs L.E. Singleton, during a demonstration; it can be noted on the top image that it may appear to show the first signs of "force-matter" (ectoplasm) on Singleton's lap. On the back of the second photograph it is noted: "The top row of the keys have been removed to give a clear view of the hand." This shows the alleged materialised hand of "Ethel".[1]



[1] It is unfortunate that a front photograph of the cabinet was not taken to show the medium with both arms secured and the *additional* phantom arm and hand.

The problem with the Reflectograph was that a materialisation medium was *necessary* to produce results; apart from the Singleton/Kirkby partnership I have not come across any other reports with other mediums of this era undertaking experiments. Perhaps the Reflectograph was not manufactured or only on a limited scale. Around 1931 came the second machine, the "Communigraph", much improved insomuch as no physical medium was required for its operation; the building of the second machine appears to be more of a combined effort of the "Ashkir-Jobson Trianion" group, whereas the Reflectograph was by Kirkby and Jobson.

It can be noted that early in 1932 the Communigraph was still in its early stages; the quote below is taken from the Two Worlds, February 5th, 1932:

PROGRESS OF THE "COMMUNIGRAPH."

The Canterbury Psychic Society was recently favoured by a visit from Mr. Kirkby and Mrs. Singleton, who reported the progress which the "Conmmunigraph," the new instrument for spirit communication, was making.

Mr. Kirkby stated that the instrument had been put to many tests. It was constructed in the form of a table. At the top there is a white glass screen. Underneath the screen are the letters of the alphabet, each letter being illuminated by a little electric lamp when the right contact is made. Below, about half-way down the legs, is the "dais" on which are the metal discs, or contacts. Suspended above them is a ball, whose orbit passes over this circle of contacts—32 in number. [2] The contacts are lettered, and when the ball is stopped immediately over the letter intended, it is pressed downwards by spirit forces (who use the power given off by the sitters), and the corresponding letter flashes on the screen. The words of the messages given from the other side are transmitted in this way, letter by letter, by the control, operating.

[2] This appears to be an error (unless the prototype had an extra contact), as there are thirty-one contacts around the dais consisting of the full letters of the alphabet with the additional signs, "yes", "no", interrogation, star (for indicating that a word is finished) and the bell which rings to signal the commencement and finishing of a complete communication.

These beautiful wooden table instruments were no doubt expensive; they were available only through the Ashkir-Johnson Trianion, which required one to be an associate member of the Trianion and supplied through certified branches of the Trianion. The Communigraph was designed for use in home circles, psychic development, and naturally for more advanced physical circles where trumpets, etc. were introduced. As previously noted, unlike the Reflectograph, which required the forming of a *materialised hand*, the Communigraph is worked by an invisible force drawn from the members of the circle, none of whom need to be of any great psychic development. The Communigraph was basically a ouija board but no physical contact at all was required by the sitters—this was done by the spirit operators using the Communigraph rather than through a person using a planchette or glass, etc. to receive the messages.[3]

How many were in production is not known; today I understand that the one in the Britten Museum and Library, housed at the Arthur Findlay College, Stansted Hall, is the only known surviving Communigraph. This valuable item was kindly donated in 1997 by Irene and Gerald Sowter of Reigate, Surrey, England.[4] When I was appointed curator of the Britten Museum some nine years ago, I must confess it was not my priority, as I wanted to concentrate on making the Museum educational and uniting the Britten Library into the Museum, as was originally intended.

Another problem was that the Communigraph had no mains lead and no key to open to the lid; I removed the brass counterbalanced arm which is suspended from the chamber, brass pointer and wooden ball shown in the image above, so they were not damaged. The Britten Museum & Library Research Study Week in September 2019 was attended by two gentlemen, Dennis Bury and Alan Morris, from the "Survival Joint Research Committee Trust" (SJRCT), a charity founded in 1963, *exclusively concerned with the survival of human personality after bodily death*.

The SJRCT have strongly supported my work for around fifteen years in connection with my research and publication of Psypioneer and this journal, Pioneer. Dennis and Alan were interested in the Communigraph, which is displayed in the Museum, but I could tell them little, as I had never fully researched its full history, partly for the reasons already given. Alan Morris, a retired technician, contacted me and offered to repair the Communigraph, assisted by Sue Hussey.

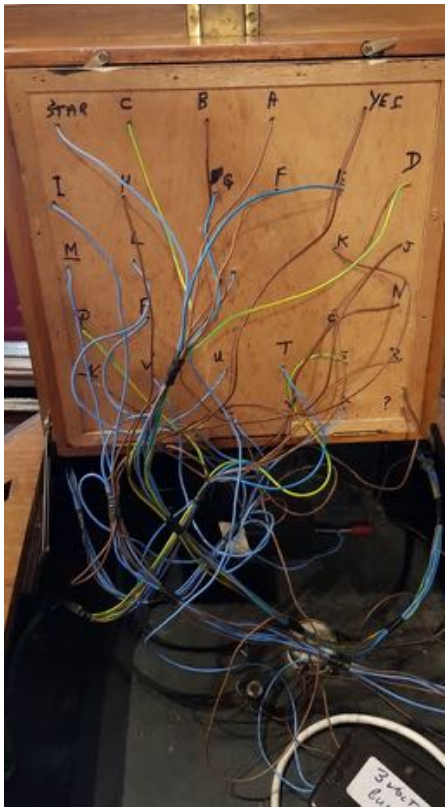
[3] See Pioneer, Vol. 6, No. 6: " 'Fifty Years' Involvement within the Spiritualist movement – Paul J. Gaunt: Ouija Experience".

[4] Gerald and Irene had their own Healing Centre in Reigate and were very well respected for their work. Irene also worked as a trance medium; after Gerald's death she carried on her healing work for a number of years until her passing, aged 91, on 7th August, 2012. More information is available, including a video of Irene working; use key word on Google: 'Irene Sowter Reigate'.

On contacting my predecessor, Duncan Gascoyne, former AFC Principal and SNU President, he told me that to his knowledge it had never been used at the College, so it appeared that the Communigraph had not been used for at least two decades. A key was eventually found by the AFC maintenance manager a month or so later. When Alan replaced the mains lead, it was found not to be working at all. As a result of a number of daylong visits to the College and painstakingly loving work the machine was restored.

All the brass discs on the dais were polished so as to make better electrical contact with the pendulum pointer and the dirt and grime in the gaps between the wooden carvings were cleaned out. All the copper strips were stripped of the black paint which they had been covered with and were covered, instead, with a thin smear of Vaseline to inhibit tarnishing while allowing good electrical contact. While screws were used to join the strips together, two of the strips had never been properly joined, relying entirely on them being in close contact; they have now been screwed together. A full new set of thirty-five torch bulbs to light the letters, etc. was replaced.

The bulb-holders were found to be of a complicated arrangement, so in order to make them more serviceable the holes in the fibre washers were widened and tailored spade connectors were clamped to the wires where they connected to the holders. The remains of the old switch had to be removed and replaced with a new switch of similar design. Additional washers have been used where needed and the contact screws polished. The bell was not working because one of the connectors that plugged into it was broken; this was due to the wire from it being too short and tugging on it whenever the lid was opened. A new connector was fitted along with a longer wire. The brass arm and pendulum arrangement were fully cleaned and the stiff grease in the bearing replaced by Vaseline, so that the arm now swings easily once the table is levelled. One of the leads which run down the table legs was not connected to the underside of the brass disc; this has now been rectified.



During sitting in development circles, attending séances and so forth, various methods have been used and adopted over many years to raise the all-important vibrations which are required for a platform in psychic, spirit communication. Gramophone records, hymns, Cockney songs like “Roll Out the Barrel”, conversation and laughter are some methods used.

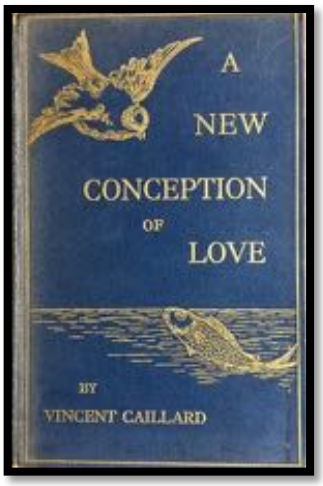
On this note it was realised by Alan and Sue that part of the essential operation of the Communigraph—according to the Trianion group the most vital and intrinsic part of the Ashkir-Johnson Communigraph—is the Vibrator or "Soul".

Alan notes:

The Mechanical Vibrator was a clockwork instrument designed by spirit and built at much the same time as the Communigraph. According to the manual it generated a continuous tone of 214 beats/second – approximately equivalent to lower A in the musical scale. It was to be used with the Communigraph to supply the frequency needed by spirit when they were giving messages. But we have so far found no record of it ever being used, let alone its location. So, given the frequency and duration of the sound it generated, a CD has been made to imitate it and is now kept at the Britten Museum.

THE MECHANICAL VIBRATOR.

However, when the Communigraph was donated to the Britten Memorial Trust by Irene and Gerald Sowter in 1997, it included two séance record books, which shows that this Communigraph was used by the Ashkir-Jobson Trianion group, Kirkby and Singleton; some scans from the record books will be shown in the next issue of Pioneer.



Due to space any reader requiring more information, e.g. the procedure for operating the Communigraph, is asked to please contact the editor. Furthermore, it is noteworthy to mention that in 1934 "A New Conception of Love" was published by Rider & Company; the book was compiled by Lady Zoe Caillard in 1933 following the death of her husband, Sir Vincent Caillard, in 1930, aged 73. Much of this book is written from Vincent Callard's own mind and according to the preface it was "Written on his Communigraph", hence the book's author is Vincent Caillard. The portrait of Basil K. Kirkby, shown above, and the images of Mrs L Singleton and the alleged spirit called Ethel are taken from this book.

The Britten Museum and Library and the General Manager of the Arthur Findlay College, Tanya Smith, wish to extend their gratitude and thanks to Alan Morris and Sue Hussey for their work in restoring this valuable "Communigraph".

—~—☼—~—

Below are two reports on Singleton materialisation séances. Her work as a materialisation medium needs further research; the reader can note that her colleague, Basil K. Kirkby, was present at both séances. The first séance, published below, is taken from the Two Worlds, February 26th, 1932. One of the signatories at the end supporting the report is R.F. Ermen: Miss Ermen was the Hon. Secretary of THE ASHKIR-JOBSON TRIANION and the séance was held at her address.

The second séance, held in Holland, is taken from the Two Worlds, August 19th, 1932; Singleton is noted as

> "… a very frail person, who portrays no sign of possessing extraordinary gifts. She takes an animated part in conversation, and has a kindly word for everyone. Nonetheless, it is not difficult to see that the phenomena of materialisation have left their traces on the body of the medium."

It is interesting to note that at this séance a "…small vibrator to create vibrations was put in action in the room…":

REPORTED FULL-FORM MATERIALISATIONS.

DEVELOPMENTS IN MRS. SINGLETON'S MEDIUMSHIP.

THE following record of a seance recently held at "The Beacon," Wimbledon Park, London, will doubtless be of great interest to many readers,

Saturday, February 6th, was the twelfth birthday anniversary of Muriel, the little daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Singleton, who passed out when only half an hour old. It was also the birthday of a great friend, a lady in spirit. They had each asked for a special seance at. 8 pm. Eight sitters were present, and Mr. Bence, one of the sitters, saw Mrs. Singleton (the medium) fastened in her chair in the cabinet, with special metal bracelets provided by the Principal of the British College of Psychic Science. A good red light was burning throughout the seance.

Soon after the opening hymn and invocation, we saw first a small hand come through the opening of the cabinet, draped in filmy white substance, which waved to us all, and then rang a little bell hanging on the curtain. Then the curtain parted, and the childish form of Muriel appeared, calling out to her Daddy and to her little brother aged ten, who was also present. She held quite a long conversation with them, and asked them to come near the cabinet, when she kissed their hands. She also asked each sitter to shake hands and feel her robe, which was as fine as gossamer. As she shook hands with one sitter; her drapery clung to his hand, but dematerialised as he drew away from her. She accepted several presents which had been brought her, thanked everyone for them, and gave flowers to several sitters before she withdrew.

The next visitor was a little black girl named "IVY," who helps Mrs. Singleton a great deal. She had jet black face and hands, and a very plain white dress, whereas Muriel's dress was all frills and daintily made. Ivy was full of fun. She showed her red tongue to everyone, and the whites of her eyes, asked for a red flower, played a toy piano, tore open a cracker, and placed a paper hat on her head, before disappearing into the cabinet.

After a little time the tall form of a lady appeared. She was the second birthday guest. She called to her husband in the circle. He had brought her a powder box for her birthday. This was handed to her, and she took a tiny puff, and immediately used it in a way peculiar to herself whilst in earth life, She was tall and stately, and her face and figure very beautiful. Her robe was quite different in style to the two children's. She held a quiet

conversation with her husband, kissed him, and then retired, but said within the cabinet, "I want to come right out."

Then the curtains parted, and she stepped forward, holding her head high, and facing the light, so that all sitters could see her features clearly. The re-union between the two families was a joy to witness, and those present felt how sacred and beautiful the atmosphere was long after the iridescent presence had faded from physical vision.

We (the undersigned) declare the foregoing to be a true and accurate description of the seance. (Signed) W. A. BENCE, R. F. ERMEN, B. K. KIRBY, K. HUDDLE, RONNIE SINGLETON, RUSSELL A. FRANKS, R. E. SINGLETON, ROBERT COPLEY.

Mr. W. A. Bence, who was present at the above seance, writes us: "The materialisations were perfect in every detail. The lighting was good, and one could see every movement. As a matter of fact, I was afraid at first that there was too much light to get results."

—~—☼—~—

MATERIALISATION IN HOLLAND

AN EVENING WITH MRS. SINGLETON AND MR. KIRKBY

By A. SPARENBURG (Editor of "Spirtische Bladen").

By kind invitation of Mr. van Walt I attended his house on Monday, May 16th, to take part in a materialising seance with the English medium, Mrs. Singleton. I was accompanied by Mr. Lys, the well-known Dutch medium.

My attitude of mind was certainly sceptical. I know the difficulty and rarity of the Phenomena which we were expecting (no less than the entire materialisation of spirit apparitions that were capable of coming out of the cabinet and speaking and shaking hands with sitters, etc.): nevertheless, the name of Mrs. Singleton gave me sufficient confidence to be sure that I was going to witness something out of the ordinary. In the reception room of Mr. van Walt we were introduced to Mrs. Singleton and Mr. Kirkby (who supports her at all seances).

The medium is a very frail person, who portrays no sign of possessing extraordinary gifts.

She takes an animated part in conversation, and has a kindly word for everyone. Nonetheless, it is not difficult to see that the phenomena of materialisation have left their traces on the body of the medium.

When the assembly had been completed we went upstairs into the special seance room. This contained a dark cabinet, around which the sitters were grouped. Between the ring of sitters and the cabinet there would be three to four yards of free space. Mrs. Singleton was next secured in her chair in the cabinet. The fastening was with bracelets fitted with a chain lock, which I understand has proved to be the most secure form of fastening, and is not capable of being fraudulently opened. Further, a cord was fastened round the waist of the medium, taken through the back of the chair, and fastened behind. The cabinet was a small square partition built up of black material. The medium occupied a small portion of it, leaving sufficient space for the building up of the ectoplasmic forms.

When all was in readiness I was placed in a position to control the medium, being within easy touch of the fastenings and the contents of the cabinet, which was empty, with the exception of a toy horse, which had been placed there by Mr. and Mrs. van Walt, and had formerly belonged to their departed daughter.

The white light was now extinguished, and one red light placed over the back of the cabinet remained. This, however, gave enough radiance to enable me to look at my watch, and see that the time was 8-40 when the seance started. A small vibrator to create vibrations was put in action in the room, and the gramophone then played a hymn, Mr. K. took an illuminated cross, and, holding this up before the entrance of the cabinet (the curtains being closed), offered a prayer for the success of the evening, and for the protection of the medium and sitters. Another hymn followed. After some waiting a voice was heard in the cabinet saying "I am coming." Mr. K. spoke some encouraging words, "Come on—it is all good here," etc. Next a hand appeared between the opening of the curtains, followed by part of an arm. It was draped with a kind of tulle veil, hanging at least thirty centimetres from the arm. The hand looked frail and transparent, but was solid to the touch, feeling like a human hand. It gave off a glowing light, and might be compared to a metal hand heated to a white glow. The hand then drew back, and a soft voice came from the cabinet, saying "I want a flower." A flower was held before the opening of the curtain by Mr. K. This was taken by a spirit hand, and a moment later presented to Mrs. van Walt.

FORM IN FULL VIEW.

Once more the voice spoke, "I am coming," and now the curtains were quietly separated, and a full figure appeared, fully formed from feet to head. It was the apparition of Ethel, the medium's control. It was a very wonderful experience, Ethel said "Can you see me?" in a soft voice. The form was of medium height, and entirely enveloped in tulle drapery, which on the top of the head was worked into a graceful hood, like a bridal toilet. The bare feet, however, were clearly visible. Standing there in full view of the sitters, the form said, pointing to Mr. Kirkby, "That gentleman does magnificent work." Mr. K. entreated her to come out of the cabinet. Once more she appeared at the entrance, only, however, to disappear. Later the voice was again heard, "I want to shake hands with the gentleman who gives so much power.'' The curtain opened. The same spirit appeared at the entrance, but now she advanced a step and offered her hand. It was

seized and gently pressed by Mr. L., who testified that it fell soft and warm.

Once more Ethel manifested in the perfectly materialised form, and invited Mrs. Th. van O. to shake her by the hand, which was done. Mrs. Th. van O. declared that the tulle felt so soft and fine to the touch that it was difficult to compare it to any earthly material. Ethel then disappeared into the cabinet. The impression she left was that of a charming young girl of about sixteen years of age and beautiful features. Though the face was not too clearly seen she looked very much like the photographs I have seen of Katie King made by Sir William Crookes during his researches.

The next form to appear was a little negro girl of seven to eight years of age, appearing at the entrance of the cabinet. The dark face showed very strongly against the white drapery. She was a lively little thing, and full of temperament, and she laughed typically at various things which were said and done. Mr. Th., who knows the negro race from intimate association, said that this particular laugh was characteristic of just such a negro child. While she stood at the entrance she said she wanted to play the piano. Mr. K. handed me a tiny toy piano, and I personally held it against the curtains of the cabinet after the apparition had retired into it. Soon the curtains reopened, and the full figure of the child came. I held the piano before her, and the tiny black fingers strummed on the keys, so that all present could see her. I looked the apparition square in the eyes, of which the whites stood out very vividly. I clearly saw the eyes moving, and all present could hear the notes of the piano as the fingers strummed them. Mrs. Z. offered the form a little cap, which she put on.

She seemed to take great pleasure in displaying herself in it, and we could hear her laugh inside the cabinet. When the negro girl (Ivy) had disappeared, another voice was heard in the cabinet speaking in Dutch. Very clearly we heard the words "Ik kom." A little hand appeared and tremulously drew back. Again we heard the voice speaking, and Mr. and Mrs. van Walt recognised the voice as being wonderfully like that of their daughter Grace, who passed over at the age of seven. (At a previous seance Grace had promised to manifest if possible.) Again we heard the voice say "IK kom. Give me a flower for Violet (her sister)." Mr. K. offered her a flower, which was taken by the hand of the spirit. The curtain then opened, and the charming figure of a child appeared, and gave the flower to her mother, who was sitting next to the cabinet. She also stammered some words, but was overcome with emotion at seeing her parents so nearby. The voice ended in a touching treble, and she disappeared. Shortly afterwards, however, she again returned, whispered some words like "Mama, papa," and stretched out her hands to her parents, and these were gratefully pressed by Mr. and Mrs. van Walt. She then disappeared into the cabinet.

It is difficult to see whether the figure goes back into the cabinet or dissolves between the curtains. I can state of the feet of this last apparition that they passed from visibility to invisibility in a fraction of a second.

THE VOICE FROM OVERHEAD

Following Grace's disappearance, a heavy man's voice resounded from the cabinet. Mr. K. said it was the voice of a Zulu chief, who in broken English gave several explanations of the phenomena. The seance practically finished with this phenomenon, but whilst the heavy voice (which formed such a marked contrast to that of the medium) was still heard in the cabinet, I was invited to go inside with a red light and investigate, I found the medium huddled on the chair, hanging in the cord that was bound round the waist. I could not withhold a feeling of pity and appreciation, realising how much this lady is doing to convince people of the reality of materialisation. While I was examining the wristlet bands and the rope, finding all intact, the voice of the Zulu kept resounding above me. I stood up, and within about twenty centimetres above my head I heard the

voice continuously talking in the top of the cabinet. It was the most extraordinary sensation I have ever experienced to be able to hear this voice above my head and be unable to see anyone.

It was 10-15 when the seance ended, and we all went downstairs, where, after a few minutes, the medium joined us, exhausted but full of courage. All thanks should be given to Mrs. Singleton and Mr. Kirkby. Untiringly experimenting, they appear to be under the guidance of their spirit friends, who create conditions that make it possible to produce powerful manifestations. A word of thanks also to Mr. and Mrs. van Walt for giving an opportunity to Dutch investigators to attend the experiments of this gifted medium. It was an unforgettable evening.

Spiritualism has been rich in psychic and spirit art from its earliest days. Its presentation has undergone many phases, from Wella and Pet Anderson in America, to David Duguid in Scotland in direct and trance art, to the first demonstration of recognisable spirit portraits of family members and friends by Frank Leah, to symbolic art, known better today as Auragraphs and pioneered by Harold Sharp. Pioneer has featured numerous psychic/spirit artists and all articles pertaining to this subject can now be downloaded on one pdf; see "New One-stop Website" elsewhere in this issue.

PIONEER

The Pioneer is now part of the recommended reading for the Spiritualists' National Union's education courses. Please reference: "Pioneer, volume, issue and page numbers"

Volume 1, No. 5: October 2014:
165 – Harold Sharp Symbolic Drawings – Auragraphs

Volume 2, No. 1: January 2014:
012 – Artist who draws "Spirit" pictures – A rare form of mediumship – Horace Leaf, F.R.G.S.

Volume 2, No. 3: May 2015:
078 – Book review: The Spirit Artist – Alan Stuttle

Volume 2, No. 4: July 2015:
096 – Trance & Direct Spirit Art – David Duguid

Volume 2, No. 6: November 2015:
177 – Marcel Poncin, psychic artist, passes on

Volume 4, No. 3: June 2017:
086 – Frank Leah – Psychic artist
First-ever attempt at public post-mortem portraiture by Frank Leah partnered by the clairvoyant Helen Hughes

Volume 5, No. 2: April 2018:
639 – Harold Sharp – *Symbolic Drawings* – *Auragraphs*
He Portrays the Soul in Colour – The Mediumship of Harold Sharp
A sitter explained the auragraph

Volume 5, No. 4: August 2018:
129 – Perfect Proof of Afterlife – This Psychic Drawing Challenges Sceptics

Volume 6, No. 2: April 2019:
055 – When is a psychic not a psychic? – A Curious Spirit Drawing
Robert Cooper

Volume 7, No. 2: April 2020:
041 – Forgotten Pioneers – Miss Edith Potts
Editor's note

Volume 7, No. 3: June 2020:
084 – More on Harold Sharp
Harold Sharp's Auragraphs – Exhibition in London
Profile – Harold Sharp – Story by Philip Paul

One very rare form of psychic art is missing from this list – Precipitated paintings

THE BANGS SISTERS

Elizabeth, known as Lizzie, and Mary, known as May, collectively known as the Bangs Sisters, are best known today for their stunning precipitated paintings; I have refrained from adding their birthdates, as the various sources are most contradictory.

From their early childhood they exhibited many forms of mediumship, including materialisation, clairvoyance, automatic writing, slate-writing, etc. It would appear that they did not start their precipitated paintings, or at least publicly demonstrate them, until the latter part of 1894, as most reports suggest, which would bring the sisters to fame and envy.

However, their earlier mediumship was brought into serious question in 1888 with a claim of fraud levied against the Bangs family.

The Religio-Philosophical, a weekly journal, was founded in 1865 by Stevens Sanborn Jones. In 1877 Jones was shot twice in his office, situated in room 16 of the Religio-Philosophical Publishing House Building, No. 394, Dearborn Street, Chicago. Control of the Religio-Philosophical Journal was assumed on Mr Jones's death by his son-in-law and former business manager, Colonel John Bundy (1841-1892). Bundy published on April 7th, 1888 "The Bangs' Fall from Grace".[8]

Bundy noted:

The great body of Spiritualists are more unrelenting toward fraud practiced under the cloak of Spiritualism and better able to detect it than outsiders possibly can be

[8] As noted in the recent series in Pioneer, "A Question of Fraud!", the British Spiritualist press was committed to stamping out fraud; this also extended to the American Spiritualist press.

A short quote below:

> On Sunday evening last, while several societies in this city were celebrating the fortieth anniversary of Modern American Spiritualism, and all the churches were filled to overflowing with people who thronged them to hear the beautiful music and witness the floral display, a very different scene was in progress at the home of the Bangs Sisters on Walnut street. While church bells were ringing, organs pealing forth joyful anthems and trained voices filling the air with triumphant strains in commemoration of the resurrection of Jesus, the Bangs women, mother and daughters, were busily engaged in the cold-blooded, damnable, unutterably vile business of running a bogus materialization show. With a music box making noise enough to drown all other sounds and Mrs. Bangs ever on the alert with her cracked voice to fill up any hiatus of the machine music, the daughters went through the sickening swindle with all the coolness of well-trained performers. Heedless of friendly admonition, intent only upon securing the forty to sixty dollars per week which the swindle was bringing in, this female trio, mother and daughters, persisted in their diabolical business; blinded by their avarice and feeling the confidence bred of long success in eluding exposure and deluding seekers after evidences of the continued existence of their beloved dead, these women went on with their nefarious work until the experience which must come sooner or later to all evildoers overtook them. Nemesis was on their trail disguised as D. F. Trefry, and though they were suspicious of hum, their overweening confidence in their ability to circumvent an exposure led them to court danger and defy detection. Here is Mr. Trefry's statement of the exposure, condensed as much as possible by omitting vivid descriptions of the dramatic, almost tragic, details of the scene:
>
> Having secured the assistance of two policemen and several friends, I proceeded with them to the Bangs Sisters, 22½ Walnut St., on Sunday evening last, to attend a séance. There were about thirty persons present. I sat in the front row where I had an opportunity to carefully inspect the proceedings. The two policemen were seated in the third row, and the friends accompanying me were compelled to stand back of them, there being no seats for them.
>
> May Bangs occupied one apartment of the cabinet, being locked therein, there being a thin cloth partition between the medium and the apartment where the spirits were supposed to materialize. Five or six figures appeared purporting to be materializations, some of which were recognized as spirit friends by the gullible people present. Then Belle, one of the principal cabinet spirits came, dressed in white, with white pearl buttons, and stood in the cabinet with the door partially open.
>
> Then forms appeared, after which the celebrated Russian Princess came and stood in the partially opened door of the cabinet, dressed in white, trimmed with what was stated by Mrs. Bangs, the mother of the mediums, to be precious diamonds. She wore a white head-dress bespangled like the dress. There was a signal agreed upon by me and my friends, which I gave when the auspicious moment arrived for making the exposure, and at the same time I made a sudden spring and caught the Princess just before she got the door closed, and I did not release my hold until she was taken before those present, some sixty ladies and gentlemen, with her toggery still upon her, and held by me and my assistants; and when this was torn off of her, the medium, May Bangs, was revealed, dressed the same as she was when she first entered the cabinet. She had in her possession a bundle of paraphernalia, consisting of robes, scarfs, false beards, etc. The mother, fighting to release her, grabbed the bundle, and tried to carry it off, but was intercepted by one of the policemen, who took it from her.[9]

[9] Further noted: It may be well however to say a word about the trick cabinet. This cabinet is large and divided into two compartments. As it stands with the sitters facing it, the compartment for the medium is to the right and is only about one half the dimensions of the other one, used by the "spirits." The partition is of thin but strong

The friends of the mediums were so pugnacious that the policemen were compelled to flourish their revolvers in order to maintain order. After, however, the mediums were arrested, their paraphernalia exposed, and the condition of the cabinet shown to be such that fraud could be easily practiced, those who were loudest in denunciations of their arrest, were glad that it had occurred.

The patrol wagon was summoned and when the mediums were taken out to it, there were about 150 people on the sidewalk, who expressed themselves as highly pleased, at the result, for the show had got to be a dreadful nuisance.

However, Bundy does give us some valuable information on their early life and as mediums: "May and Lizzie Bangs", reprinted from the Chicago Herald in the Religio-Philosophical Journal, April 7, 1888:

"Colonel John C. Bundy, editor of the *Religio-Philosophical Journal*, yesterday consented to give *The Herald* some interesting revelations touching the Bangs sisters and their methods. He says the girls first came to his notice as mediums about eighteen years ago. Lizzie is twenty-nine. She was married some years ago to one Paul, a letter-carrier, Colonel Bundy adds: "Lizzie obtained a divorce for good cause, as I am informed, and with her two little children, girls, returned to her father's home. May is twenty-six years old, and also divorced; has a little boy about three years old, and lives with the parents. In the early years of their alleged mediumship marvelous stories were told of the phenomena occurring in their presence and about the house. The respectability of the family and the apparent sincerity of the father carried much weight, and the stories were quite generally credited. Soon public 'circles' were given under the auspices of the parents, and a fee was charged.

"Gradually the demonstrations increased in variety and complexity. Nearly eleven years ago, at the earnest solicitation of Mr. Paul, who was then, as I suppose, engaged to Lizzie, I witnessed several of their 'dark séances' for physical manifestations. The conditions were unsatisfactory in that the observer could never be sure that the girls were not assisting. As such exhibitions have no scientific value and are useless where certainty is essential, I declined to pursue the matter."

"Prior to two years ago I did not allow the names of the Bangs sisters to appear on the mediums' directory which I furnish investigators, nor did I mention them in the *Religio-Philosophical Journal*, to the best of my recollection. Some time after the formation of the Psychical Research Society in this city the girls called on me and offered to submit their claims as mediums for independent slate-writing to the investigation of the society's committee on physical phenomena. They appeared ingenuous, and anxious to obtain a standing in the *Journal* and with the society."

The full report is available to any interested parties in pdf; please contact the editor. It is interesting to note a leading comment by Bundy:

From my own observations and the reports of credible informants I had by this time reached the conclusion, much against my inclination, that Mrs. Bangs was master spirit of the business. I then ceased to have any further interest in the mediumistic claims of the family and knew little of its history for some years.[10]

---

muslin nailed to two pieces of hard wood, one on either side, about an inch thick and two inches wide. These extend from bottom to top of the cabinet, and are secured by iron sockets and bolts. The whole thing looks honest and only an experienced investigator familiar with the construction of trick boxes would be able to detect the swindle. By the use of a small wrench, its head covered with chamois skin to deaden sound, and the removal of three screws which had no hold on the wood and could be instantly removed, the materializer could in a minute remove the wooden strip at the rear of the cabinet and have free access to the other compartment. After the show it could all be replaced in another minute.

[10] Mrs Meroe Bangs, their mother, died on November 2nd, 1917.

There are numerous unsavoury reports of this era, no doubt giving the media much fuel surrounding the then called "Notorious Bangs Sisters", with five failed marriages between the two sisters in their early life. As noted in the Pioneer's three-part series ending in the last issue, "A Question of Fraud!", apparent fraud is not always as it appears on the surface; in addition, the local and national non-Spiritualist newspaper articles of the day often had *sensationalised headlines* and generally knew nothing of the mediumistic processes, albeit the comments of the editor of the Religio-Philosophical, John Bundy, require respect as an experienced Spiritualist investigator and editor of the respected journal.

PRECIPITATED PAINTINGS

As previously noted, precipitated paintings, which the Bangs Sisters started in the latter part of 1894, were unlike David Duguid's direct art, which were done in total darkness with oils or watercolour, with the paints present on the table; precipitated paintings were different. They were produced in direct view of the sitter or sitters, with the portrait of the deceased slowly and gradually appearing on the canvas, sometimes the details of the portrait being altered, as in life our image changes—long hair, short hair, moustache and/or a beard, clean-shaven, etc. It is reported that the precipitated image would change when sitters would remark (sometimes mentally) that at that age they did not have a beard, so the image was said to change, reshaping the image.

The finished paintings were without doubt stunning. During my time at Lily Daly in July 2019 it was the first time I had viewed original precipitated paintings displayed in Lily Dale museum and the Maplewood Hotel, Marion Skidmore Library, NSAC office.[11] The paintings were produced by Lizzy and May Bangs and by Allen Campbell and Charles Shourds, known famously as the "Campbell Brothers". To my knowledge these are the only known mediums to demonstrate precipitated work. The paintings of the Bangs and Campbells are indeed very similar. The photograph of myself and Museum Curator Ron Nagy shows some of the beautiful displayed works in Lily Dale museum. Ron himself cannot be certain with some of them whether or not they were produced by the Bangs or the Campbells!

The Bangs and Campbell paintings are indeed similar, as noted, but totally unlike other paintings produced through other forms of art mediumship, as in the case of precipitated paintings, for example, there are no eyelashes, the eyes are vibrant and there is a feeling of being alive and deep. There are no brush strokes similar to an image produced by modern-day airbrushing. Reports show that when the paintings were produced they were damp to the touch and vibrant in colours, which would rub off with one's finger, feeling like soot or powder or oily.

[11] See Pioneer, Vol. 6, No. 4: "Ron Nagy, Museum Curator at the Lily Dale Assembly".

The Bang Sisters rented various properties at Lily Dale during the summer months for a number of years, whereas the Campbell Brothers owned a property and lived at Lily Dale. Allen Campbell and Charles Shourds, the "Campbell Brothers", will be covered in a later issue of Pioneer.

Sometimes, as in the case of Frank Leah, and with psychic photography at the end of the sitting the sitter would produce a photograph of their loved one or friend—being the same or similar to the image produced by the medium. With the sisters the image was close to the produced photograph but, for example, the hands were repositioned; perhaps the hat was missing or a badge on the lapel or on a dress would be added or missing—but yet identified by the sitter as belonging to the person in the painting at some point in their life.

This brings in similar problems as in psychic photography, whereby it was considered that in some cases the psychic image was projected on to the film emulsion by some form of *ectoplasmic overlay*, as it was generally agreed that the alleged spirit form did not pose for the photograph. Psychic photography was one of the most controversial phenomena in the Spiritualist movement. The Bangs Sisters had problems with hostile press, the authorities, and critics whose comments and accounts—for *non-psychic* theories—were sometimes more unbelievable than the actual phenomena themselves.

Given that the sisters would generally sit on either side of the table holding the canvases (not in all accounts), one must be aware of manipulation, as there were curtains, etc. in place, so substitution of pre-prepared canvas is of course possible. But, as with psychic photography, the known possible methods of trickery do little to rule out what is unquestionably actually produced on the precipitated canvas—a perfect recognisable image of the deceased person—but *not* always a direct copy of any known image. That is to say, the mediums could have had no foreknowledge of the image produced on the canvas; it should also be considered that in those days there was no colour photography, yet some reports state the accuracy of the correct colour of eyes, hair, etc. which were produced on the paintings! Perhaps a very different perspective of a well-known person of the day.

THE BANGS SISTERS

Lily Dale – Southwestern New York State

Below gives a general description of the way the sisters worked, taken from the Arthur Findlay College Newsletter of October 15th, 2010:

THE MEDIUMSHIP OF THE BANG'S SISTERS

The following is a description extracted from Admiral W Unsworth Moore's book 'Glimpses of the Next State' published by Watts & Co, London in 1911, as to how the paintings were obtained in his presence through the mediumship of the Banks Sisters of Chicago.

Two thin canvasses stretched on wooden frames and covered with thin paper were placed face to face and held up in the window. The blind was drawn to the top of the canvasses and curtains hung up in my presence on either side. The window has a southern aspect, and the light coming in through the two semi-transparent canvasses is sufficient for the purposes of taking notes and seeing everything that goes on. The small oak table was lengthways in the window; the bottom of the canvasses rests upon it.

May Bangs sat on my right side facing me and pinching together with her right hand one side of the canvasses. Lizzie Bangs sat on my left side facing me and pinching together the other side of the canvasses with her left hand. I faced the middle of the canvasses, my nose being between two feet and two feet six inches from them. After a few minutes the canvas assumed various hues, rosy, blue and brown; it would become dark and light independently of the sun being clouded or not.

On the morning of the 20th January 1909 went to the Bang Sisters for a profile portrait of Iola as arranged on the 18th. Everything was ready at 10.50 and we sat until 11.30. I had in my pocket a *carte-de-visite* of Iola taken in the year 1874. The mediums had never seen this or any other photograph in my possession. Fifteen minutes after we sat in the window the face and bust appeared; the profile was looking to the right, precisely the same aspect as it has now, framed, hanging in my room. Remember, I was looking through the back of the picture, and it was forming on the further side of that one of the two canvasses nearer to me; consequently, had it gone on as it was and been finished, it would now (when framed) be profile left.

When the portrait was nearly finished the two canvasses were lowered towards me on to the table (the mediums being impressed, apparently to do this). A telegraphic came by taps to May Bangs, who said: "She wants this picture for your wife specially, as well as for you. She thinks that your wife would prefer to see her in the pose to which she is accustomed." Up went the canvasses again to the window, and I found that the whole picture was changed round, so that the profile looked to the left instead of the right. In a few minutes the portrait was completed, May Bangs remarking: "She says she cannot put in the hand."

From the time the face and bust first appeared to the time the canvasses were separated and the finished picture put on the sofa in the next room, twenty-five minutes had elapsed. Neither of the psychics had ever seen the *carte-de-visite* in my pocket. How did they know normally that there ought to be any hand in the picture? As a matter of

fact, in this photo there is a hand (the left) supporting the cheek on its left side? This was omitted in the coloured picture.

When the portrait was finished, it bore a very close resemblance to the photograph. It was looking in the same direction – to the right. As to likeness, it is impossible for anyone who compares the photograph with the picture to deny that they are one and the same individual. At the same time the picture is by no means a slavish copy of the photograph.

Its pose is more upright, the face spirituelle, and the dress not exactly the same. There is a firmness, a decision, and an appearance of calm and contented happiness in the face which is absent from the *carte-de-visite.*

—~—☼—~—

Admiral W. Unsworth Moore further adds, on January 22nd, 1909: Sat with the Bangs Sisters for a portrait of Cleopatra:

As before two canvasses were produced, covered with blank drawing paper, laid face to face, and held up against the window, the bottom of the canvasses, in this case, resting on the sill of the window, as they were much larger in size than those used for the two portraits of Iola.[12]

I sat between the psychics, as on previous occasions, my eyes looking straight into the centre of the canvasses from a distance of two feet to two feet six inches. We took our places at 10.55. About 11.05 the form began to appear, and it was roughly finished in ten minutes. We were then directed, by taps on a slate, to put the canvases on the table and sit around it. We moved the table to the centre of the room, placed the canvases flat upon it, covered them over with the felt tablecloth, and sat around as directed. At 11.30 we were informed that the picture could be raised; the canvases were now separated and the picture put on a sofa in a neighbouring drawing-room.

In all precipitations through the mediumship of the Bangs Sisters the picture is found to be on the further side of the canvas which is next to the sitter. The stuff of which the picture is composed is damp, and rubs off at the slightest touch, like soot. Notwithstanding this, the paper on the canvas furthest from the sitter is unsoiled. The picture, while in process, can be seen clearly through the back of the canvas; but of course it presents the reverse aspect to that when it is framed – left arm for the right, and so forth.

The portrait of Cleopatra is practically the same now as it was when it was lifted from the table. Afterwards, but not while I was looking at it, the colours deepened a little, flowers were added to the embroidery of the dress, a ring was put on the finger of the left hand, and the picture acquired a general appearance of greater richness and finish. It was

[12] "The two portraits of Iola"? It is unclear whether or not this is an error or whether indeed Admiral W. Unsworth Moore received two portraits of Iola!

hanging in the lecture-room of the London Spiritualistic Alliance for four months, and it is therefore unnecessary to describe it.

It cannot be called a work of high art; the dress is stiff, and the anatomical features are deficient; but it is undoubtedly a representation of an Egyptian queen, and, considering the way in which it was done, a fine example of spirit power.

—~—☼—~—

It is clear that Vice-Admiral W. Usborne Moore was a strong supporter of sisters Lizzie and May Bangs, but he would come into contact with researchers and magicians who would not be as sympathetic to the genuineness of the sisters. One such opponent was the psychical researcher, Hereward Carrington, in connection with the Bangs Sisters' slate-writing. Carrington went to Chicago in 1909 and reported in the Annals of Psychic Science (July-September 1910) that he had found fraud. He had addressed a letter in a sealed envelope to "Dearest mother, Jane Thompson" (who never existed) and received a reply addressed to "Dearly loved son Harold", signed by his "devoted mother, Jane Thompson".

As the controversy increased, Carrington sent a letter to "Light", published on May 13th, 1911. Carrington pointed out in his letter that fellow-magician David Phelps Abbott, who had invented some famous illusions, had succeeded in duplicating the Bangs Sisters' precipitated paintings—by trickery. Part of Hereward Carrington's letter to "Light" is quoted below; it was in response to an ongoing argument with Vice-Admiral W. Usborne Moore:

The Bangs Sisters and Fraud.

"I could go through Admiral Moore's reports if I chose to do so, and point out exactly where, in my opinion, the fraud crept in, in his slate-writing sittings, but it is hardly necessary. I do not consider them genuine, and Admiral Moore does; others besides myself have detected fraud; Admiral Moore did not—let the matter rest there. If the Bangs Sisters would ever consent to give sittings under really test conditions, I should be most happy, and stand willing to investigate them with the utmost care and patience and to publish a favourable report, should I fail to detect fraud—as I did not hesitate to do in the case of Eusapia.[13] I have no grudge against the Bangs Sisters; indeed their work interests me immensely."

"Finally, I wish to say this: If this portrait phenomenon can, under virtually the same conditions, be duplicated by fraud, then, surely, its evidential value vanishes. If it could be shown that phenomena, precisely similar to Eusapia's, could be produced by trickery, hitherto unsuspected, then I should give up my belief in her at once. I still believe in her powers because no such proof has been forthcoming. But in the case of the Bangs Sisters, it is a little different.

"For years these 'spirit portraits' were the wonder and the envy of all the conjurers and mediums in America. Attempts were made to duplicate their work, without success. I myself was 'on the fence' regarding their portraits, and so stated in my report. After I had my sittings, Mr. David P. Abbott and myself worked together over this problem, but I was forced to stop, at the time, owing to press of other matters, and Mr. Abbott continued his experiments alone. I think I am safe in saying that he has now succeeded in duplicating the Bangs Sisters' portraits exactly—and by trickery. No chemicals are used, no solar-photography, no spraying—nothing of the kind.

"Two canvases are selected, marked and placed upon a light easel, which is examined. A bright are-lamp is placed behind the canvases. Investigators may walk round the

[13] Pioneer, Vol. 6, No. 6: "Eusapia Palladino – Hereward Carrington".

canvas during the entire process. They may look above, below, behind, on all sides. A picture slowly forms on the inside—between the two canvases—which picture has the same finish and texture as the Bangs' portraits. It can be made to appear slowly, the eyes to open at will, &c., exactly as their pictures do. The process is, in fact, from all external indications, identical in appearance. In view of this fact, I think the authenticity of the Bangs' 'spirit-portraits' may seriously be called into question! As to their slate-writing, I am certain I could duplicate it myself, under the same conditions.—Yours, &c.,

Hereward Carrington."

At the time Carrington wrote this letter, David Abbott had not yet released his report of duplicating the Bangs' style of precipitated paintings; Abbott, as far as I know, never sat or attended a public demonstration with the sisters. C.F. Eldredge, a supporter of the sisters, wrote a book stating that it was written by his dead wife through the Bangs Sisters' mediumship. Unfortunately, at present I have been unable to find this book, no doubt valuable, as it is *full of these pictures*! The book title is "Through the Valley of the Shadow and Beyond".

Abbott (image shown) gives via Eldredge's report a description on how Lizzie and May Bangs conducted their séance:

Mr. Eldredge is a very intelligent man, and is teaching the mysteries of the human mind, how to effect certain marvelous cures, and how to perform other mental miracles—if I may be allowed the word. It was through a description furnished by him that I was able finally to work out the solution of this mystery, and to settle definitely the extravagant claims of the mediums, besides making the stage illusion possible. Mr. Eldredge had the privilege of witnessing one of the Kansas City seances, and I here give his report:

Having met by appointment at the residence of the mediums, my doctor friend and myself were ushered into the studio where the sitting took place. The object was to secure a portrait in colors of the doctor's sister who was killed some six years ago in a run-away accident.

The doctor was requested by the mediums to select two canvases from a dozen or more that were leaning against the wall. This he did from near the middle of the pile, holding them up to the light and rubbing his hand over them in order to determine if there was any coating or film over them. I also examined them very carefully, and was satisfied there was not. One of the mediums now took the two framed canvases and placing them face to face, stood them upon a small table in front of a window which looked out upon the Paseo, one of the great boulevards of our city. The canvases were leaned against the window which faced the south.

One of the mediums stood upon a chair and pulled down the blind to the top of the canvases, and then each of them drew a soft, dark curtain from the side of the window to the frames, thus darkening all of the window except where light came through the canvases.

The light from the window passed directly through the canvases and they appeared clear and white. My friend held a picture of his dead sister in his hand, being requested to fix the expression of her face in his mind. We were seated immediately in front of the window, not more than three feet from the canvases while the mediums stood at the two sides of the table holding them and talking to us.

After waiting possibly five minutes, one of the mediums said, 'You will observe how the canvases are drawing. They are being sized.' The front canvas did seem to be stretching on the frame making a slight noise, as if the thumb were being drawn upon the side of the frame. Presently the noise stopped, and there appeared on the outer edge of the canvases, or rather between the two, a slight shadow. I did not notice it until our attention was called to it by the mediums. It continued to darken while the center remained white and clear. In a few minutes I noticed a pale pink, almost directly in the center. It seemed like the glow of sunrise, but there was no form. Next we noticed an outline. The face was forming. We noticed two dark blurs that grew more distinct, and we saw that they were eyebrows and eyelashes of closed eyes. The lines of the mouth appeared, and the outlines of the head became visible, while the shoulders were distinct; and then the eyes opened out, giving a life-like effect to the portrait.

Was I dreaming? I felt like pinching myself to see. A woman's face was looking at us from between the canvases, beautiful in form and feature.

My friend had been told to suggest any changes he wanted during the formation of the picture. He now said that he would like the face turned a little more to the right giving more of a front view. Almost immediately the picture began to fade from the canvas, and it grew fainter until it lost every detail. The outlines of the head became indistinct. The eyes went out into mere dark rings. Presently we saw the face coming as before. The face seemed turned a little this time, though I am not positive that it was. I imagined that it was, and the doctor seemed better satisfied; however, the change was very slight if any. We were so carried away with the marvel of the performance, that reason gave place to sentiment. The very marvel was inspiring. This time the development was more rapid. The eyes opened again as before.

The doctor now asked that the eyes be made a little darker blue, more of a gray; and while he was speaking I noticed that the eyes were changing to a blue gray, or else my imagination was playing me false. He now suggested a slight change of the nose, which was made, and the lines of the mouth were altered at his suggestion. He now suggested that the face was a little too full, and it seemed to narrow slightly. The picture seemed to follow the doctor's thought. He was asked if he would have, as a hair ornament a crescent, a star or crown. The doctor suggested a crescent, and immediately a crescent of gold with gems of white appeared. Up to this time the shoulders seemed bare. He was asked to choose whether there should be a high or low collar. He suggested one of medium height and it at once appeared. On looking at the photograph, the doctor now saw a string of beads around the neck. Without speaking, the beads came into view about the neck, one bead at a time.

They changed in color from white to amber then to gold. He seemed to conjure the picture. As a dream follows the will, so this picture followed the doctor's thought. Meanwhile the background had changed in color several times, from white to light yellow, then to dark yellow or brown, and then to green with a tinge of red, after which it mottled beautifully until the effect was superb. The changes took place like waves of light passing upwards over the whole picture. The two canvases were now laid flat on the table, and a third canvas was then lifted from the floor and placed over them for a cover. We were then asked to place our hands on this, so as to 'set the colors.' Soon the portrait was uncovered, and I found the paint was a kind of greasy substance, as I rubbed some of it on my fingers.

My friend had enclosed a photograph of his sister, together with a letter to her spirit, between slates for a time, in the presence of these mediums, some three days before this sitting. It was then his appointment was made.

I have heard of the Hindu magician who plants a seed and grows a tree before your eyes, and of the turning of water into wine, but here was a phenomenon even greater; one that seemed to contradict every known law of nature; and now as I record this the day after, I am more bewildered than when I saw the work done. I do not believe the picture was painted before our eyes, for that is beyond rational belief, and by no process of reasoning can such an idea satisfy my mind. Where did the colors come from? How did they get between the close fitting canvases, and by what miraculous power were they intelligently spread over one of them?

We compared the portrait with the photograph; the psychics asked to see it, claiming never to have seen it before. The likeness was perfect. Any one could recognize it. There seemed to have been no opportunity for trickery or fraud, and everything was open and above-board. We could see all over the room at all times, under the table in front of us, and everywhere. Yet the work was contrary to natural law and all human experience.

One of these mediums said to me when speaking of their marvel, 'We are the only people in the world to-day, who positively and absolutely prove immortality.'

I expect to work out this problem somehow, somewhere, sometime. But there is no hurry. It will be the result of patient effort.

Another lady here had quite a large portrait made. It came in about five minutes. She said it seemed like a rain-storm on the canvas, the colors seemingly being pelted on in waves.

I also have a report from Thomas Grinshaw, the spiritualist lecturer, and President of the Missouri State Association of Spiritualists. He saw a portrait produced on a stage in the auditorium at Camp Chesterfield. An attempt was made to produce a portrait in the afternoon, but it resulted in an accident and nearly caused a fire. The attempt was repeated in the evening with more success. Clean canvases were selected by a committee and faced together, and placed in front of an ordinary wooden soap-box.

The box was first placed on a little table near the front of the stage. It had neither front nor back, and an ordinary kerosene lamp was placed in the box to shine through the canvases. A black cloth was then hung over the rear of the box so as to darken the room, and cut off all light except what passed through the canvases. A medium stood at each side of the box holding them. The portrait gradually materialized, then dematerialized, after which it again reappeared. He was particularly impressed by the making of the lace work around the neck. A large audience witnessed this production, and a large committee was on the stage and helped to select the clean canvases.

This is a very brief summary of his report. It will be seen that all of the main features are about the same as described by Mr. Eldredge.

—~—☼—~—

The above full quote is used, as it gives the reader a good understanding of the full procedure the sisters used on this occasion. Abbott struggled with the report furnished by Eldredge; "The more I thought, the greater the mystery became," he noted; after various experiments he succeeded in replicating an illusion which mimicked the process of Lizzie and May Bangs from Eldredge's narrative. It required a prepared painting, distraction and substitution, given that the blank canvases were examined by the sitter/s and marked; however, due to space the full report is too large to publish here in full. However, Abbott published his methods and one

can freely download "The Spirit Portrait Mystery – Its Final Solution", by David P. Abbott, originally published by "The Open Court", April 1913.

The interesting part is, of course, the appearance of the materialising image, dematerialising, changes in front of the sitter or audiences. This is what the magician says after the finished portrait was at the back of the first canvas due to professional substitution, etc.:

> "So the psychics, acting simultaneously, pin the soft black curtains at the side of the window to the front frame, and at the same time allow the back canvas to tilt back out of focus. The top curtain, still being very high, lets so much light into the room, that it helps to obscure what comes through the canvases, when the two are separated but an inch. But before the top curtain is drawn, completely darkening the room, the portrait must be moved or tilted further back. It must be remembered that the bottoms of the canvases stand on a table end directly in front of a window, with a psychic at each side holding the canvases and discoursing and gesticulating, so as to take and direct the attention where desired."
>
> "The sitter naturally thinks that his two chosen blanks are now in the window, and he seems to be seeing right through them and they appear clear and white. He does not dream that his portrait, all finished, is already in the window behind the front canvas, but merely moved back out of focus."
>
> "Next, everything being in readiness, the psychics have but to manipulate the rear canvas very slowly to get the effects. Meanwhile they skilfully employ suggestion announcing in advance each effect as it is to appear. The eyes seem to be dark blurs until the tops of the canvases are crowded together very closely, whereupon they appear to open. That is, the dark blurs dissolve into open eyes, giving them the appearance of opening out. This is particularly apparent when the eyes are colored a beautiful sky-blue. The use of suggestion before this effect, by the psychics announcing that "the eyes will now open," impresses this effect upon the sitter's mind.

> "By crowding together the top of the canvases first, the eyes open when the shoulders are still indistinct enough to appear indefinite or bare—that is, mere dark outlines. As the majority of the effects appear the last quarter of an inch, and nearly all of them in the last half-inch, if it be remembered that four or five minutes are used in this amount of motion, one can realize how very slowly the rear canvas must approach the front one. Also the use of so much time greatly adds to the effect when a miracle is supposed to be in the act of performance. The psychics seem to be trying so hard to hurry it up, and the stress of desire is so great, that the slowness of production produces the effect on the sitter's mind of great effort on the part of the spirits.[14]

[14] The drawing is taken from a 1905 newspaper ad: "The Bangs Sisters".

"After the eyes open, if one psychic crowds up the bottom of the canvas on her side, the lace work will begin to form on her side and the beads, etc., to appear. Then if the other psychic slowly crowds up the bottom on her side, this causes the lace work to finish and the beads to come one at a time. There is also an apparent change of color as each object takes on clear-cut detail. Naturally during this movement the background is working in most beautifully like waves of light, etc. The changes of color are, however, to a certain extent imagination; and this occurs easily among so many confusing details all coming at the same time. The hair ornament can be made to appear by skilfully pulling off a patch on the back of the portrait which has been stuck on with wax and with a thread attached, but I hardly think this necessary.[15]

"The choice is undoubtedly "forced" by suggestion; and if this occurs early in the performance, before the ornament appears, the psychics can announce its appearance when the right time arrives and thus produce that effect. For instance, one psychic would say to the other, "She ought to have a hair ornament. I think a crescent would be beautiful, don't you? Or would a star, or crown, be better?" The other would say, "Oh, it should be a crescent by all means; for I think a crown or star would be out of place and not at all artistic. Which do you think would be best, Mr. ....?" Naturally he would choose a crescent, and would afterwards think he had free choice. Should he choose a crown or a star, it would only be necessary to explain to him that a crescent is much more artistic, and he would be sure to yield to "superior persons who wield supernatural powers."[16]

"The effects of narrowing the visage, or of slightly turning it, or of altering the lines of the nose or mouth slightly, can be apparently effected by a slight jostling of the rear canvas and the use of suggestion at the time. Thus, if the sitter request the visage to narrow, the psychic can say "all right," and at that instant cause the portrait behind to move sidewise the slightest amount. The sitter will see the portrait move, and construe it to be a slight narrowing, for the vision being at the time concentrated on the point in question, will see only its movement. The same will apply to the lines of the nose or mouth, Also, at any time, a slightly tighter crowding of the canvases so as to make any feature come out brighter and clearer, coupled with suggestion, will carry the effect of an alteration of the portrait in response to the sitter's request.

"All of this is the real art of the performance, and what makes it "strong." It is not what you do, but how you do it. The strong way this has been dressed up and presented to believers, is the secret of the marvel and has made it what it is. The principle alone was not so much, but embellished with this incomparable art of presentation, it has been one of the wonders of the world."

—~—☼—~—

Abbott's illusion was widely performed by various magicians in England and France, as well as by a great American magician, Howard Thurston, under direct authority from David Abbott.

[15] Mr Eldredge in this statement may have helped Abbott: "The front canvas did seem to be stretching on the frame making a slight noise, as if the thumb were being drawn upon the side of the frame. Presently the noise stopped, and there appeared on the outer edge of the canvases, or rather between the two, a slight shadow. I did not notice it until our attention was called to it by the mediums."

[16] As far as information for an illusion goes, i.e., suggestion - it is demonstrated in various articles, for example by Admiral W. Unsworth Moore: "She [the spirit] wants this picture for your wife specially, as well as for you. She thinks that your wife would prefer to see her in the pose to which she is accustomed."

Editor's Note:

Elizabeth (Lizzie) and Mary (May) Bangs came from a family of mediums. They had two brothers, and their parents were Edward and Meroe. Their mother was a practising medium and when Lizzie and May were young girls the family entertained paying guests at their home demonstrating their mediumship. The editor of the Religio-Philosophical Journal, Steven Jones, published on August 3rd, 1872 "An Evening with the Bangs Children". It is difficult to state the exact ages of the girls but each was a young child/teenager at the time. The report suggests that the sisters were well-accomplished physical mediums at such a young age, moving pianos, etc.: a few quoted examples:

> "When we took our seat at the table, with two young girls, and one little boy, we were much amused at the readiness with which the spirits used the pencil. It is true the messages would only contain a single sentence or a single word, but they were expressive, and that's enough. The little girl placed the slate under the table—the pencil is heard to move—then tick, tick, tick, announced the close of the message. The slate is removed, and on it in a plain, bold hand, we find the name Martha. …"
>
> **"Cabinet Séance**
>
> was especially interesting. One little boy and one bright-eyed girl were securely tied with ropes, rendering it impossible for them to extricate themselves without assistance. Large hands were exhibited at the aperture of the cabinet, and one was extended far enough to thrum the guitar strings. This was startling—especially so. And then a partially-developed face appeared at the aperture, and we heard the name, "Bennie," distinctly lisped. It must be remembered that these mediums are young children. There is not a particle of deception in their nature. Their hearts are free from guile, and in all their actions they exhibit the innocence of their nature. No one would accuse them of deception. …"

Numerous exceptional claims were made in the article. It was under similar circumstances, years later in 1888, that they were raided and charged with fraud during a materialisation séance, as shown in this article. Pioneer, whenever possible, shows both sides of the articles researched, so that readers have an informed foundation on which to base their conclusions. Often writers produce only the positive results, leaving out the charges of fraud; these charges should not be disregarded, as they are part of the medium's history. It was the actual facts which surrounded these allegations where a richer analysis is formed. As found in the recent Pioneer three-part series, "A Question of Fraud!", although mediums are seized and without question in an act of apparent fraud, sometimes the accusations show a lack of total understanding of the process of mediumistic development, misrepresentation and a lack of awareness of the psychological psychic facts surrounding the phenomena and those involved; physical mediumship is a delicate balance of many factors involved. "A Question of Fraud!"[17]

It would appear that once Lizzie and May starting their precipitated paintings in the autumn of 1894 they met with great success. Their opposition did not stop their popularity over a long, successful career in precipitated paintings, etc.; magician David Abbotts duplicating the sisters' work successfully with on-stage acts did not demonstrate fraud. Duplicating a physical phenomenon is not to say that it is fraudulent: to move, for example, a pen in a séance room is an act of having the means to move the pen—we in the body have hands—whereas the spirit uses psychic force or ectoplasm.

Without doubt David Abbott could physically reproduce the Bangs Sisters' mediumship by illusion but only under rehearsed procedure. But the sisters' procedure varied in different reports, sometimes in public demonstrations with only one canvas, not on every occasion; a

[17] This starts in Pioneer, Vol. 7, No. 3.

photograph was placed between magnetised slates, as was the case with Mr. Eldredge. It was *his* report which was used as a template for Abbott to form the trick. Nor does Abbott explain how in numerous reports mental suggestions alone influenced the materialising images. His simple principle was only moving the rear canvas which contains a finished prepared portrait to give the illusion of seeing the opening and closing of eyes, etc.; in no way does he explain that sometimes the sisters did not touch the canvas.

Abbott and his fellow magicians were one hundred percent reliant on a photograph of the deceased person well before their shows in order to get it painted in a similar fashion. One important issue is—how good were the magicians' prepared paintings?

Eldredge noted:

> I found the paint was a kind of greasy substance, as I rubbed some of it on my fingers.

Admiral W. Unsworth Moore noted:

> The stuff of which the picture is composed is damp, and rubs off at the slightest touch, like soot.

Ron Nagy in his book, "Precipitated Spirit Painting", second edition, 2012, variously notes in his book the medium used to produce the paintings, for example on page 82:

> The portraits have been examined by art experts who cannot explain the medium used, as the paintings are not pastels, charcoal, oils, watercolors, or any other known substance. The medium has been compared to the dust on a butterfly's wings.
>
> I do not know who coined the phrase "dust on a butter-fly's wings," but I do know the art experts who originally examined the precipitated spirit painting of Lincoln were from the Eastman Kodak company of Rochester, New York. [18]

Eldredge also noted:

> My friend had enclosed a photograph of his sister, together with a letter to her spirit, between slates for a time, in the presence of these mediums, some three days before this sitting. It was then his appointment was made.

But did the sisters on *every* occasion ask for a photograph days in advance? Not all accounts suggest this; in Admiral W. Unsworth Moore's account he states:

> I had in my pocket a *carte-de-visite* of Iola taken in the year 1874. The mediums had never seen this or any other photograph in my possession.

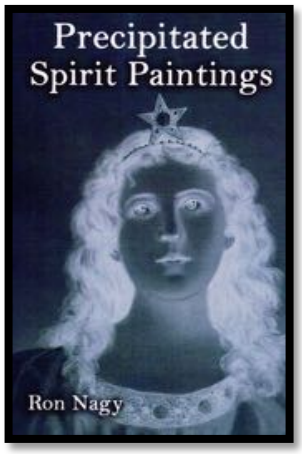
Abbott assumes that the Bangs Sisters *had* access to an image for their portrait in every instance or no spirit-precipitated painting; this is what he said:

> Of course it is unnecessary to explain how the photograph can be extracted from slates, or from pockets of coats which were left out in the hall, etc., so as to enable the mediums to get a "snap shot" of it. Any one reading the many slate tricks in my book will not need further enlightenment on this point. Where a portrait conforms to a photograph, an interval of a day or so is taken after the first sitting, before the psychics will give the portrait sitting. If forced to try for a portrait at once no results will be obtained, and it will have to be tried again later. This gives them time to make the portrait.

[18] Ron is talking generally about the Lily Dale precipitated painting by the Bangs and the Campbell Brothers – the spirit painting of Lincoln was by the Campbell Brothers.

If, indeed, the Bangs extracted an image a day or two before the appointment, given that the painting were on large canvases, one may wonder how such works of art were produced in such a short period; were Abbott's of similar quality and similarly presented, perhaps damp, greasy and soot-like?

Ron Nagy in his book notes:



Identifying a Precipitated Spirit Painting

WHEN TRYING to identify precipitated spirit painting, first look at the eyes. In a genuine spirit painting, there are no eyelashes and the eyes are penetrating and look alive. You will definitely receive a different feeling from the precipitated painting, as if the entity was actually compressed into the canvas. Check for brush strokes or sketch lines that are the human artist's telltale pre-painting routine.

Some marks may appear to be brush strokes, but this is not always the case. When the hair materializes on canvas, how else would Spirit form the hair but as a grouping of fine lines? The hair would only appear as a blurred blending of colors.

If the Bangs Sisters produced their own images, what a talent and to produce so quickly! The sisters did many summer seasons at Lily Dale with around three sittings a day. To conclude, there is an interesting observation in Ron Nagy's book: he notes:

> In all cases portraits appeared without eyelashes.

As previously noted in this article, it is interesting to note what Mr Eldredge stated:

> The face was forming. We noticed two dark blurs that grew more distinct, and we saw that they were eyebrows and eyelashes of closed eyes.

Whether or not the eyelashes appeared on the finished painting, we do not know; perhaps some of the lesser-known private paintings of the time—these most probably have not survived or are in an old dusty attic somewhere—or possibly some unknown painting may have had eyelashes, as it is not known whether or not their style of painting may have possibly changed over the years.

This article has but touched the surface of the mediumship of Elizabeth and Mary Bangs. Other than Ron Nagy's book mentioned, another book has been published on the Bangs Sisters: "Portraits from Beyond: The Mediumship of the Bangs Sisters", by N. Riley Heagerty. I must be honest, I have not as yet read this book but it is reviewed by the Society for Psychical Research by Tom Ruffles, available online.

The photographs shown in this article are a poor representative for the stunning originals

A Supplement to the December issue:

A MEANS OF SPIRIT COMMUNICATION

Designed from the Spirit World!

The Pioneer article on the Reflectograph and the Communigraph (as shown), which is displayed in the Britten Museum and Library housed at the Arthur Findlay College, see Pioneer, Vol. 3, No. 4, August 2016:

Britten Memorial Museum & Library – *enters into its original purpose.* [20]

The Pioneer December article, "A Means of Spirit Communication – *Designed from the Spirit World!"*, has generated much international interest from psychical researchers, Spiritualists and historians alike.

Historian Marc Demarest, who runs the excellent research website:

"The International Association for the Preservation of Spiritualist and Occult Periodicals" (IAPSOP) [21]

It can also be noted that IAPSOP archives Psypioneer, so often referenced in the SNU Pioneer. Marc contacted me on the publication of the December issue and kindly offered to further research primarily the people instrumental in the production and working of the Reflectograph and the Communigraph.

Below is Marc Demarest's valuable contribution:

Some Notes On The Reflectograph And Communigraph – December 2020

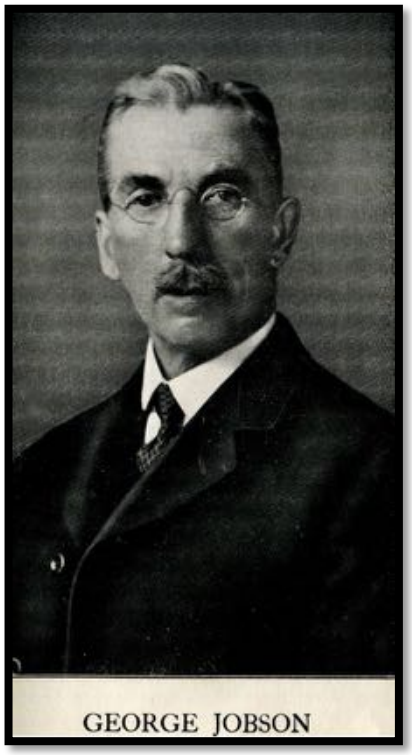
—~—☼—~—

The article on the Reflectograph and the Communigraph in the December 2020 issue of *The Pioneer* was a gift for a group of researchers who have been working on the history of those devices and their promoters for some time. As a gloss on Paul's fine article, we offer these notes on the historical figures associated with the design, development and promotion of the Reflectograph and Communigraph.

[20] Later renamed "Britten Museum and Library".

[21] See: http://iapsop.com

George Jobson



George Jobson was born in July of 1862 in Horncastle, Lincolnshire, and appears to have lived there throughout his life, dying on September 9, 1925 in his semi-detached home on Southfield Place, in Horncastle (which, as far as I can tell, is still standing, for those of us inclined to pilgrimage).

Jobson was the son of John Jobson (1825-1886), a carpenter and joiner sufficiently prosperous to leave an estate worth his family's while to fight over in court, and to allow his widow, Susan Needham Jobson (1821-1915), to live "on her own means" for the balance of her life. George had no higher education, entering the workforce at age 16 and becoming, before his 20th birthday, a "photographer's assistant", according to the 1881 census records. In the 1901 census records his occupation was listed as "assistant commercial traveler" and he was on the road, plying his trade in London, at the time of the census. In the 1911 self-reported census results he is living with his mother Susan and lists his occupation as "commercial traveler (photographic)". He never married.

When Jobson died in September of 1925, he left a variety of what local papers referred to as "novel" bequests in his will, worth enumerating as they tell us a great deal about Jobson the man, and his values. According to the Boston *Guardian* for 17 March 1928 (p. 2):

[Jobson] left £1,800, from the income of which there were to be provided, among other things, £20 per annum for two lectures on popular scientific subjects – one on Trafalgar Day and the other on the anniversary of the death of Sir Isaac Newton, 'he being a Lincolnshire man'; £10 per annum for a popular lecture to the children of Horncastle; £4 per annum for the town band for playing on Waterloo Day; and £1 per annum for playing on Boxing Day….Other bequests were 21s. and 10s. 6d. per annum for the ringing of the church bells on Waterloo Day and Boxing Day…; £30 per annum for a treat for the school children on Waterloo Day, when the political and historical results of the Battle of Waterloo were to be explained to them; £10 per annum to provide two prizes for two boys and two girls who 'best show by character, conduct and work that they will grow up worthy, reliable and respectable townspeople'; and £5 per annum for a bonfire on Guy Fawkes Day 'for the amusement of the children and townspeople of Horncastle.' Out of the residue 500 guineas was left in trust to apply the income for the benefit of the Horncastle War Memorial Hospital, on condition, among other things, that one bed was named the 'Jobson Bed.'"

Jobson's entry into the Spiritualist record occurs, for the first time, in late May of 1925, when Jobson gave an interview – or perhaps the draft of an article – to an unnamed reporter for the Lincolnshire *Standard*. In that article (23 May 1925, p. 8) we learn that Jobson had suffered a debilitating stroke in November of 1924, which "left him paralyzed in the lower part of his body; so much so that he has since been confined to his bed." Jobson tells his readers that he had his first experiences with spirit communication in the family circle as a child, and that he was pronounced a good medium, but (he implies) any youthful tendencies he may have had in that direction were scoured out of him by a decade of Wesleyan Sunday School lessons. Jobson claims that he went to work at the age of sixteen, that he

implemented the first telephone in Horncastle (consisting of two directly-connected stations in two classrooms in the Wesleyan Sunday School building "as a side-show during a bazaar"), and that he was responsible for bringing X-ray radiography to Horncastle, something entirely consistent with his lifelong occupational association with the photography industry. Readers also learn that he experimented with radium and that he constructed a wireless receiver that was able, in January of 1913, to receive "signals from the Eiffel Tower clock" – a reference to the time signals sent by the transmitter on the Eiffel Tower, which could be received as far away as the Atlantic coast of the US. Jobson describes his trip to the US for the Chicago World's Fair of 1893, his adventures in "astronomical photography", and, finally, his conversion to the Spiritualist hypothesis, which he prefaces by saying, "I trust my critics will give me credit for reasoning these matters out, and not show their criticisms by condemning me as a 'crank.'"

Jobson's conversion story is remarkable. Shortly after his stroke, in November of 1924, "I was visited by the unseen and for five nights demonstrations were made to me [MD: by spirit visitants] in my well-lit bedroom. The experiments were so impressive and so astounding, that as I lay in bed I was practically dumb-founded, until I was absolutely sure of my surroundings and conditions." These physical, visual and auditory experiences – which Jobson does not detail or describe in any other way – were sufficient to convince him:

"1. That there is certainly a life after death. 2. That we are seen. 3. That our conversation is heard and understood. 4. That gravitation seems to be ignored or overcome."

These unspecified physical demonstrations, which apparently involved levitation of some kind, were followed, in March of 1925, by persistent aural phenomena. "For three weeks during March I heard an unseen orchestra, which appeared to play at any time between daylight and 11 p.m.", during which times Jobson also heard "invisible spirits, conversing together, just through the wall near the head of my bed. There were two men and one woman." His attempts to drown out the invisible orchestra and the conversing spirits using his wireless radio headset and a broadcast London concert were signal failures (as it were): he reports that doing so amplified, rather than drowned out, the spirit conversation.

As the diligent self-taught scientist, Jobson offered the *Standard*'s readers his explanation for the mechanism that produced his aural experiences: "The only solution I can suggest is – the great length of nerve contained in our nervous system may act as a sort of indoor aerial, and so convey a wireless message or sound directly to the brain without operating the hearing organs," which, in his experiment, were in his view preoccupied with the sounds of the London concert broadcast.

This article is important for two reasons: [1] it is the source for later, less specific and consequently less accurate claims about Jobson's life and accomplishments (including the incorrect suggestions that he was employed as a wireless or telephony engineer) and [2] it brings to Jobson's door some time after its publication, a local milliner and property developer, Basil Keightley Kirkby (1887-1967), eager to bolster and shape Jobson's emergent faith in Spiritualism.

Basil Keightley Kirkby

B.K. Kirkby was born in April of 1887, in Lincoln, to William Kirkby (1855-1929) and his wife Sarah Keightley (1855-1923), and died in 1967 in Merton. William Kirkby was a coachman, who (unlike John Jobson) did not manage to rise economically, but Basil's upward mobility was unimpeded by his father's struggles. At 24, in the 1911 census, Basil lists his occupation as "hair dresser", and his position as "employer", suggesting he is running his own hairdressing establishment and employing others. A year later he is sufficiently well situated financially to marry one Sarah J. Peach (1886-1973), a draper's assistant, who no doubt introduces Basil to his next occupation: as a millinery establishment owner. By 1924 Basil is a man of property in Woodhall Spa, where his millinery is located, contributing substantially to the (ultimately unsuccessful) efforts being made at that time to make Woodhall Spa a watering destination in Lincolnshire, and is also clearly involved with the Spiritualist community there, as it is from Woodhull Spa that Kirkby tells us he travels, in 1925, for his first meeting with George Jobson in Horncastle – some seven miles from Woodhall Spa – beginning the interpersonal relationship that will give the world, in time, the Reflectograph.

How involved Kirkby was with the Spiritualist communities at Woodhall Spa and Skegness (where he moved some time c.1927) is unclear, as neither community reported its doings in the Spiritualist press we have readily available to us. Kirkby himself tells us that his conversion experience occurred when his mother communicated to him through "an old woman clairvoyant who did not know him at all" (*Psychic Science*, January 1933, p. 325), that is, some time in or after 1923, when Sarah Keightley Kirkby died. We do know, from the pages of the Lincolnshire *Standard* (23 March 1929, p. 3), that in 1928 – the year that the Reflectograph first came before the public [22] – Kirkby was the President of the Skegness Spiritualist Church (sometimes referred to as the Lighthouse Church, and one of two distinct communities of Spiritualists in Skegness, as the **other** community pointed out whenever opportunity afforded), and that Louise Eliza Bolt (1895-1982), known at that time as Mrs L.E. Singleton, was his church's primary medium.

[22] Curious readers may be led astray, as I was, by the registration, in November of 1922, of the Day Reflectograph Company Ltd. This company has naught to do with our Reflectograph; it pursued a line in cinema equipment and filmstocks.

Louise Eliza Bolt (Mrs L.E. Singleton)

Louise Bolt was born on 26 December 1895 in Brixton, Devonshire, to Simon Bolt (1850-1908), a stable hand, and his wife Miriam Voisey (1853-1924). As one child in a large working-class family, it seems logical that Louise was expected to make her own way in the world, and this she appears to have done, marrying her first husband, Robert E. Singleton (1895-1975), a mineworker, in Catsfield, Sussex in June of 1918. Louise and Robert had one child, Ronald Singleton (1921-2007), who was born in Hastings and who remained with his mother when she separated from Singleton sometime in the later 1920s.

Louise was a materializing medium, but – like the Spiritualist communities in Woodhall Spa and Skegness – we have been able to learn virtually nothing about her mediumship. Louise Bolt (whether we look for her as Miss Bolt, Mrs Bolt or Mrs L.E. Singleton) appears rarely in the Spiritualist record prior to the advent of the Reflectograph (of which she is the primary operator) in 1928.

From October of 1928, when the Reflectograph is demonstrated at the British College of Psychic Science, until 1935, when the Reflectograph ends its life as a rented novelty available from Kirkby for private parties,[23] Louise is associated with the Reflectograph as its **only** operator – even after the development of the Communigraph, which makes its debut in the fall of 1930.[24]

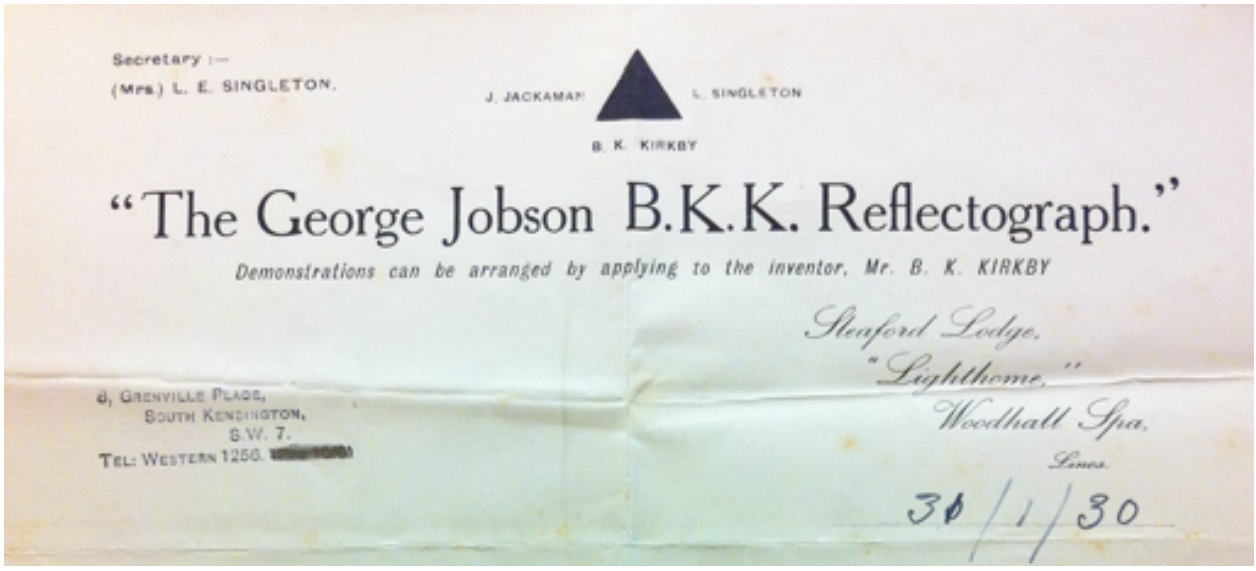
---

[23] A (to my mind, sad) advertisement in the *West London Observer* for 19 February 1937 (p. 10) is worth reprinting in full: "Sittings with the REFLECTOGRAPH, the wonderful machine for spirit communication referred to recently in the Daily Mirror, the Daily Sketch, the Sunday Chronicle, and other important London Newspapers can now be booked for private parties. Apply for details and a free interesting Booklet to B. K. Kirkby, the Jobson Research Centre, 10, Blenheim Road, Bedford Park, W. 4. Phone Chiswick 5110. Service each Sunday at 6:30. Direct Voice Séance on Thursdays at 3 p. m." The "interesting Booklet" was likely A.J. Ashdown's *The Ashkir-Jobson Trianion* (1931, available from IAPSOP's SSOC collection). The Blenheim Road address in the advertisement was used by both the Jobson Research Center and the Society of Progressive Souls, Ltd. (see the *Sunday Mirror* for 4 January 1937, p. 2), which had formerly met at Lady Zöe Caillard's home, the Belfry, in Belgravia. The Society of Progressive Souls, Ltd. itself warrants further investigation. Registered as a limited company in July of 1934, George Viscount Molesworth was its president, and Lady Molesworth its vice-president. Lady Caillard, its chairman, bequeathed her entire estate to the Society on her death in 1935. The Society's membership, according to secular press reports, included Kirkby, Singleton, a Native American known as Os-Ke-Nan-Ton, and a young Maurice Barbanell. In early 1937, at the time of the final mention of the Reflectograph in the public record, the Society of Progressive Souls (which may have succeeded in retaining Lady Caillard's modest bequest after several court challenges) was receiving from the spirit of Lady Caillard, through the Communigraph, a book – a sort of successor to *A New Conception of Love* – entitled *The Bird Goes Home*, which was mentioned in secular press reports but of which I can find no trace. After 1937 the doings of the Society are a complete mystery and the limited company is described as "defunct" in publications in 1938.

[24] Interested readers may find a summary of a Singleton-Kirkby séance featuring **both** the Reflectograph and the Communigraph in *The Two Worlds* for November 28, 1930, available at IAPSOP. The early public history of the Reflectograph is still somewhat murky, but the records of the secular press allow us to determine that, after its

J. Jackaman

Like the Ashkir triad – the three figures shepherding the Communigraph into the world – the Reflectograph was managed by three individuals represented as a triad: B.K. Kirkby, L.E. Singleton and a J. Jackaman, who appears on the letterhead of the Reflectograph group but who has otherwise disappeared from discussions of the Reflectograph's history.


Secretary :—
(Mrs.) L. E. SINGLETON.

J. JACKAMAN L. SINGLETON
B. K. KIRKBY

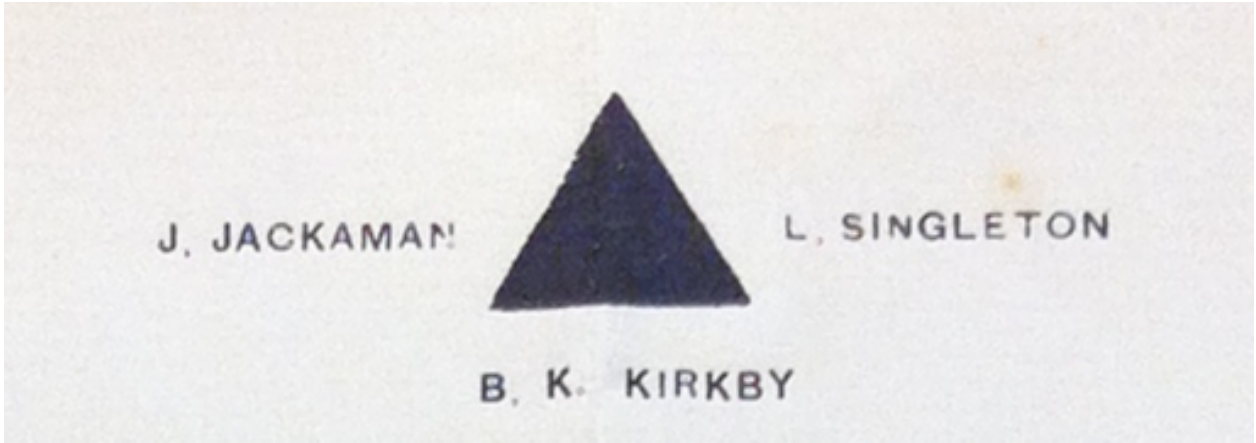
"The George Jobson B.K.K. Reflectograph."

Demonstrations can be arranged by applying to the inventor, Mr. B. K. KIRKBY

Steaford Lodge,
"Lighthome,"
Woodhall Spa,
Lincs.

8, Grenville Place,
South Kensington,
S.W. 7.
Tel: Western 1256. [redacted]

30/1/30



The disambiguated identity of J. Jackaman and the details of his role within the Reflectograph triad have yet to be discovered, but I offer as a likely candidate J(ohn?) L(ionel?) Jackaman (1904-1983), who was, in July of 1930, living at Linden Lea, Wainfleet Road, in Skegness, and operating as the leader of the Skegness Spiritual Lyceum. A year later, in 1931, Jackaman was the spokesperson for the United Spiritualist Church in Drummond Road, in Skegness. He was active in Spiritualism, in Skegness and elsewhere throughout the 1930s.[25]

private demonstrations at the British College of Psychic Science, Kirkby announced that it would be publicly unveiled at Horncastle to honor Jobson, promising in November of 1928 that it would be ready for unveiling "in a few months" (Skegness *Standard*, 14 November 1928, p. 8). In fact, the first advertised public demonstration of the Reflectograph was held in June of 1929 at Kirkby's Spiritualist Church in Skegness (Sheffield *Daily Telegraph*, 14 June 1929, p. 5). That public demonstration was followed in late July or early August by a specially-arranged demonstration for Conan Doyle and Lady Doyle (according to the Nottingham *Journal* for 14 August 1929, p. 5).

[25] See *The Lyceum Banner* for July of 1930, p. 124. As John L. Jackaman and J.L. Jackaman, Esq., he was active in the Spiritualist community throughout the 1930s; see, for example, the Lincolnshire *Standard* for 25 April 1931 (p. 7), Chester *Chronicle* for 11 February 1939 (p. 6) and the Manchester *Evening News* for 19 February 1939 (p. 10).

Presumably, Jackaman's skills and abilities offered, to Kirkby and Singleton, something that pair lacked, perhaps in technical areas, as there is no evidence that either Kirkby or Singleton had any technical training whatever. Certainly, A.J. Ashdown, Jackaman's successor and the identified "inventor" of the Communigraph, was such a person.

Albert Jasper Ashdown

The Communigraph – very different mechanically and aesthetically from the Reflectograph – owes its genesis to the inventor Albert Jasper Ashdown (1887-1983), who claimed to have received the details of the device from George Jobson directly (that is, through Mrs Singleton's mediumship). A well-educated, professionally-credentialed mechanical engineer and a naval telegraphist in the First World War, Ashdown had, by the time he joined Kirkby and Singleton in the development of the Communigraph, prospered sufficiently to marry Grace Iverna Gillham (1893-1967) in 1915 and to establish the commercial firm of A.J. Ashdown Ltd. c.1926, which manufactured and marketed his most well-known invention, the Ashdown Rotoscope.[26]

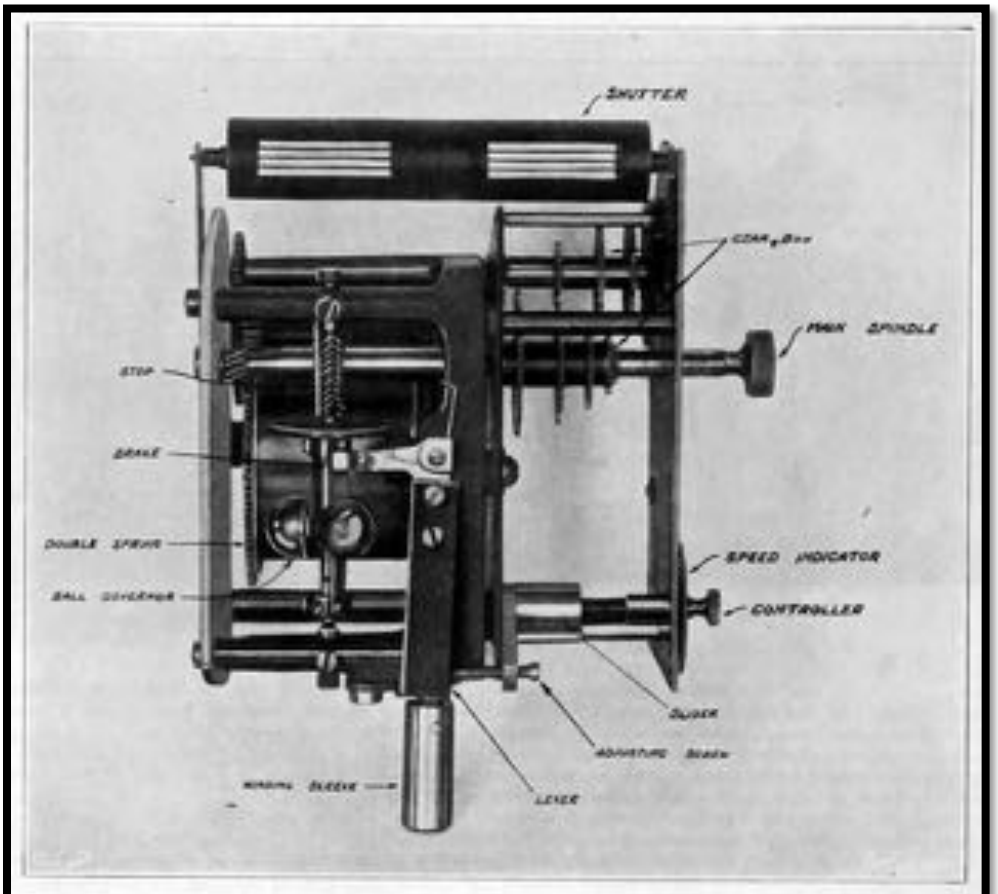


FIG. 6—MECHANISM OF THE ASHDOWN ROTOSCOPE
Mr. A. J. Ashdown, technical manager to the West inghouse Morse Chain Company, Ltd.

How Ashdown became associated with Kirkby and Singleton I have been unable to determine; there is no record of him in the Spiritualist press, prior to 1930, when he appears at the Stead Library (in September of 1930), lecturing on "The Communigraph and other

[26] The Rotoscope was a hand-held stroboscopic device, used to determine the revolutions per minute of a revolving object, and was, for a time at least, used to gauge the RPMs of aircraft engines. Many examples of Ashdown Rotoscopes are to be found in museum collections and, periodically, at auction – a Google search on "rotoscope" will produce interesting results. Curious readers who would like to examine Ashdown's 1934 application for admission to the Institution of Mechanical Engineers, which details his early education and work experience, should contact the author.

Aspects of Psychic Revelation" [27] and later (in October of 1930) giving lectures on "Some Scientific Facts with Regard to the Reflectograph." [28]

Ashdown appears to dominate the Ashdown-Kirkby-Singleton triad completely by the middle 1930s, much as his name appears first on the Ashkir Trianion. Kirkby fades from view entirely after the (Magna) Jobson Research Centre moves from London to East Molesey in early 1938.[29] Mrs Singleton – to judge from electoral records – moves into Ashdown's neighborhood some years earlier than that, and the 1939 England and Wales Register records both Ashdown and Mrs Singleton living in Ashdown's house, Tumbling Bay, Hampton Court, with a redacted third person, who may be Grace Ashdown. That record is ambiguous; what is much less ambiguous is Grace's location, alone in her home region of Glamorgan, in the 1946 electoral register, hard upon A.J. Ashdown's marriage to Louise E. Singleton, in Exmoor, in the spring of 1945.[30] A.J. and Louise remained married, as far as I can determine, until Louise's death in Exeter, in October of 1982

The last documented public appearance of the Communigraph – which was not advertised for sale or widely noted within the Spiritualist press – occurs in June of 1939, in an extended article by Bernard Gray in the *Sunday Mirror* for 11 June 1939 entitled "A Voice Said to Me 'You Will Never Die.'" Beginning with a dramatic hook – "In a house by the River Thames, at Hampton Court, a fully qualified engineer and an extraordinary woman medium are working together to apply modern science to Spiritualism" – the article describes Bernard Gray's afternoon spent in spirit communications with Ashdown and "Mrs. Louisa Bolt," an afternoon that led Gray to remark that "for the first time in my experience, a 'dead' relative whom I could identify spoke to me personally."

Ashdown and Louisa first demonstrate for Gray an unnamed communication device using an unwired and unpowered telegraph key on a glass-topped table, before shifting Gray's attention to the Communigraph:

"an ingenious bit of apparatus which everybody can understand. A metal rod, or pendulum, swings freely over a kind of circular track on which there is a stud for every letter of the alphabet. By depressing the pendulum a little, the circuit can be completed with any of the letters. Above, on a glass screen, the corresponding letters are illuminated, so that it is possible for anybody to see just what words are being spelled out. One of the stops below connects with a bell, which is rung at the end of every word. As the pendulum clattered around the stops, letters appeared on the glass screen with remarkable rapidity, staying long enough only for one to recognise them, then being replaced by others…. My knees went cold, due, I was told, to my proximity to the spirit influence."

The Communigraph was followed, both in history and in Gray's séance, by a third device, about which we know almost nothing: the Televox, first mentioned by name in the *Sunday Mirror* of 2 October 1938 (p. 2). Gray described the Televox in his June 1939 article as follows:

This [device] takes the place of a trumpet. It is rather difficult to describe, so it is simplest for me to say it is nothing but a revolving acoustic apparatus, with no wires, batteries or

[27] See, for example, *The Two Worlds* for 26 September 1930.

[28] See, for example, *The Two Worlds* for 24 October 1930.

[29] The Research Centre's address in February of 1937 is the Blenheim Road address shared with the Trianion and the Society of Progressive Souls. In January of 1938, when A.J. Ashdown contributes money to supplement the Jobson bequests in Horncastle, it is referred to as the Magna Jobson Research Centre and is addressed at Molesey. In November of 1938, the Centre's address is Tumbling Bay, Hampton Court Road, A.J. Ashdown's home.

[30] I have been unable to locate a record of Ashdown's divorce from Grace.

tricks attached to it. The televox was placed on a stand in front of us. A small bulb on its extremity gave enough light for us to determine its position exactly. And anyhow, there was enough light in the room for me to see its outlines. After a few moments it began to revolve slowly. With startling clarity came a voice. 'I am Lady Caillard,' it said."

It is possible that the Televox is the device described by Lady Zoë Caillard some years earlier as designed by her departed husband, Sir Vincent Caillard: "a microphone was installed, and through the trumpet, spirit voices used to speak into the microphone. Still following instructions from the Other Side, Lady Caillard arranged to have a special recording set made, so that permanent records could be kept of the spirit voices" (Skegness Standard, 1 November 1933, p. 8). This device, which was used to produce phonograph records of the voice of the spirit of Sir Vincent Caillard (among other things), is sometimes referred to as a communigraph in secular press reports (particularly at the time of Lady Caillard's death in 1935), though clearly it bears no similarities to the Communigraph proper.

Beyond this, the best device curator I know – Brandon Hodge – has been able to find only a single mention of the Televox in use anywhere in the Spiritualist record: a passage in Allan Barham's *Strange to Relate* (1984), in which Barham recounts Ena Twigg's remembrance of a séance "during the war" with "Mrs. Ashdown" and the Televox, which Twigg described as:

"a mushroom-shaped object, three feet wide, made of paper mâché, balanced on a jewel point so that it could revolve with the minimum of effort. Two spots of phosphorescent paint were on the mushroom, so that in the complete darkness, which was thought to be necessary for its use, it could be determined whether it was stationary or revolving. Why the Televox should help in the production of paranormal voices I have never been able to find out, but the proof of the pudding is in the eating, and on this particular occasion several voices were heard, their point of origin seemingly a little above the Televox. This was after the latter had begun to turn without any of those present touching it."[31]

No known image of the Televox survives. There may have been only one such device ever made.

Whether there was ever more than one Communigraph built is, to my way of thinking, an open question. It seems likely, given its complexity and bulk, that only one Reflectograph was ever made, and I have yet to find a record of a Communigraph séance **not** curated by Ashdown and Mrs Singleton/Mrs Bolt/Mrs Ashdown personally. Unlike the Reflectograph, the Communigraph was, clearly, **intended** for manufacture and sale: an offer in *The Ashkir-Jobson Trianion* allowed enrolled associates of the Trianion "to purchase from the Trianion or its licensees the Ashkir-Jobson Communigraph, and such other special instruments developed in the Trianion laboratories as are not available to outside persons and centers" (p. 14) and asserted that the Trianion "which is not a trading concern" had negotiated "a sole license to a large London firm of engineers to manufacture and sell its products" (p. 14). Yet no evidence of a Communigraph not in the possession of the Ashdowns has been found in the Spiritualist record to date. That suggests to me that the Communigraph in the collection of the Britten Museum may be not only the only surviving Communigraph but **the only Communigraph ever made**.

—~—☼—~—

[31] Allan Barham. *Strange to Relate* (London: C. Smythe, 1984), p. 32.

See also Psypioneer, Vol. 10, No. 1: "Allan Barham, Early Worker for CFPSS – *Quarterly Review*", "Direct Voice Mediumship – Allan Barham", and "Afterword – Brandon Hodge".

The Britten Museum and Library hold two photographs – ref BMT 0461 a, c.:

a) –Inside the 'Church of the Spirit', Skegness 1925. b) –Car in front of Clock Tower at Skegness c.1927; the notice on top of the car reads:

TRUTHS OF SPIRITUALISM
Services held each week end in the Co-operative Hall

This hints that there were two separate locations: photo a) is a Spiritualist church, as against the Co-operative Hall. It can be noted that the "Manual and Who's Who of Spiritualism and Psychic Research", edited and compiled by James Leigh, published in London, January 1st, 1936, gives only one address – Skegness National United Spiritualist Church, Drummond Road, Skegness, as noted in the above article. This suggests that the image inside the 'Church of the Spirit' is Drummond Road. The people in the photograph may be considered a striking resemblance to the church's primary medium, Mrs L.E. Singleton, and its president (centre), Basil Kirkby.

REV. SUSANNA HARRIS

American voice-medium

Reading about Arthur Conan Doyle's travels and lecture tour of Australia and New Zealand in his 1921 book, "The Wanderings of a Spiritualist", I noted Doyle's meeting and séance report with the American direct-voice medium, Mrs Susanna Harris.[10] Recently I was reading some of her British séance reports in the Two Worlds, etc., urging me to put together this article.

Doyle states:

As I am on the subject of psychic experiences I may as well carry on, so that the reader who is out of sympathy may make a single skip of the lot. Mrs. Susanna Harris, the American voice-medium, who is well known in London, had arrived here shortly after ourselves, and gave us a sitting. Mrs. Harris's powers have been much discussed, for while on the one hand she passed a most difficult test in London, where, with her mouth full of coloured water, she produced the same voice effects as on other occasions, she had no success in Norway when she was examined by their Psychic Research Committee; but I know how often these intellectuals ruin their own effects by their mental attitude, which acts like those anti-ferments which prevent a chemical effervescence. We must always get back to the principle, however, that one positive result is more important than a hundred negative ones—just as one successful demonstration in chemistry makes up for any number of failures.

We cannot command spirit action, and we can only commiserate with, not blame, the medium who does not receive it when it is most desired. Personally I have sat four times with Mrs. Harris and I have not the faintest doubt that on each of these occasions I got true psychic results, though I cannot answer for what happens in Norway or elsewhere.

Shortly after her arrival in Melbourne she gave us a séance in our private room at the hotel, no one being present save at my invitation. There were about twelve guests, some of whom had no psychic experience, and I do not think there was one of them who did not depart convinced that they had been in touch with preternatural forces. There were two controls, Harmony, with a high girlish treble voice, and a male control with a strong decisive bass, I sat next to Mrs. Harris, holding her hand in mine, and I can swear to it that again and again she spoke to me while the other voices were conversing with the audience.

Harmony is a charming little creature, witty, friendly and innocent. I am quite ready to consider the opinion expressed by the Theosophists that such controls as Harmony with Mrs. Harris, Bella with Mrs. Brittain, Feda with Mrs. Leonard, and others are in reality nature-spirits who have never lived in the flesh but take an intelligent interest in our

[10] Chapter VI, pages 139-142.

affairs and are anxious to help us. The male control, however, who always broke in with some final clinching remark in a deep voice, seemed altogether human.

Whilst these two controls formed, and were the chorus of the play, the real drama rested with the spirit voices, the same here as I have heard them under Mrs. Wriedt, Mrs. Johnson or Mr. Powell in England, intense, low, vibrating with emotion and with anxiety to get through. Nearly everyone in the circle had communications which satisfied them. One lady who had mourned her husband very deeply had the inexpressible satisfaction of hearing his voice thanking her for putting flowers before his photograph, a fact which no one else could know. A voice claiming to be "Moore-Usborne Moore," came in front of me. I said, "Well, Admiral, we never met but we corresponded in life." He said, "Yes, and we disagreed," which was true.[11]

Then there came a voice which claimed to be Mr. J. Morse, the eminent pioneer of Spiritualism. I said, "Mr. Morse, if that is you, you can tell me where we met last." He answered, "Was it not in '*Light*' office in London?" I said, "No, surely it was when you took the chair for me at that great meeting at Sheffield." He answered, "Well, we lose some of our memory in passing." As a matter of fact he was perfectly right, for after the sitting both my wife and I remembered that I had exchanged a word or two with him as I was coming out of *Light* office at least a year after the Sheffield meeting. This was a good test as telepathy was excluded.

General Sir Alfred Turner also came and said that he remembered our conversations on earth. When I asked him whether he had found the conditions beyond the grave as happy as he expected he answered, "infinitely more so." Altogether I should think that not less than twenty spirits manifested during this remarkable séance. The result may have been the better because Mrs. Harris had been laid up in bed for a week beforehand, and so we had her full force. I fancy that like most mediums, she habitually overworks her wonderful powers. Such séances have been going on now for seventy years, with innumerable witnesses of credit who will testify, as I have done here, that all fraud or mistake was out of the question. And still the men of no experience shake their heads. I wonder how long they will succeed in standing between the world and the consolation which God has sent us.

There is one thing very clear about mediumship and that is that it bears no relation to physical form. Mrs. Harris is a very large lady, tall and Junoesque, a figure which would catch the eye in any assembly. She has, I believe, a dash of the mystic Red Indian blood in her, which may be connected with her powers.

—~—☼—~—

Editor's Note:

Arthur Conan Doyle had made over the years a number of controversial statements! For example, his involvement and investigation in what were known as the "Cottingley Fairies", initiated by the Theosophist lecturer of a London branch of the Society, Edward Gardner. Arthur Conan Doyle wrote an article about the photographs that appeared in the December 1920 issue of *The Strand Magazine* and his subsequent 1922 publication of "The Coming of the Fairies". The acceptance of elementals includes former SNU president Ernest Oaten and Emma Hardinge Britten, all of whom are featured in Pioneer, Vol. 7, No. 2: "Elementals, Fairies, And Fairy Lore – Ernest Oaten, & Editor's Note."

Doyle makes an interesting remark in his book quoted above:

[11] Vice-Admiral W. Usborne Moore can be noted in Pioneer in his investigations into the Bangs Sisters: Vol. 7, No. 6: "Bangs Sisters – Precipitated Paintings".

"Harmony is a charming little creature, witty, friendly and innocent. I am quite ready to consider the opinion expressed by the Theosophists that such controls as Harmony with Mrs. Harris, Bella with Mrs. Brittain, Feda with Mrs. Leonard, and others are in reality nature-spirits who have never lived in the flesh but take an intelligent interest in our affairs and are anxious to help us."

No doubt this consideration by Doyle of the possibility that some spirit controls/guides could be *nature-spirits* caused some discussion in its day. "Harmony", the control of Susanna Harris, is claimed to be the medium's daughter, who in earth life was called Stella and was lost under tragic circumstances. After her death she attached herself to her mother's mediumistic work as her guide/control and comforter, using the name "Harmony". Other possible candidates mentioned by Doyle were Mrs Brittain's 'Bella' and Mrs Leonard's 'Feda'.

Annie Brittain and Osborne Leonard were at the International Spiritualist Congress (sixth) held in Glasgow on 3rd-10th September 1937 under the presidency of John McIndoe (Lady Conan Doyle, Hon. President). Papers were given by some well-known mediums on 'The Mediumistic Trance'; this is what Annie Brittain said about her guides/controls:

Mrs. Annie Brittain in the course of her paper, said: "During my professional career I have been entranced innumerable times by two controls—Wild Rose, a Hindu girl, and Belle, a Cingalese. The sensations felt whilst being entranced by these spirit guides are totally different from when strangers take control. With the former (the guides) the sensation begins with a blending of my personality and theirs. For instance—I nearly always begin to give a psychic reading to a sitter in the normal state.

"Should Belle decide to control, the first condition I notice is a clearer perception of the psychic surroundings of the sitter, followed by a tightening of the muscles of the forehead. There is a deeper state of concentration and the physical surroundings begin to disappear. I am still conscious of the presence of the sitter, but see and feel only the psychic conditions. Then comes a slight twitching or jerk, and I have lost consciousness and the spirit control has taken charge of the reading.

"When entranced by the latter (the stranger), I begin to feel that I am not myself; my own personal feelings are submerged or overshadowed. My mannerisms change, I perhaps change my position, crossing my legs in a way not natural to myself. It seems as if the muscular system is affected first, then I have a desire to talk about things unknown to myself and I feel as if I am gradually being overwhelmed and crowded into a small space and my mind-activity imprisoned. A feeling of impotence steals over me, the command of my body has gone, a wave of trembling passes through my nervous system over which I have no control, and the little spark of consciousness which remains to me flickers out, and all knowledge of the physical body and the sitter is lost until I return.

"The sensations are not always the same, they seem to vary with different controlling entities."

For further information on Osborne Leonard and other mediums on their own observations of the trance condition please see Pioneer, Vol. 2, No. 4: "The Mediumistic Trance". Further, Doyle mentioned that Mrs Harris's powers had been much discussed, i.e., she had no success in Norway and was examined by their Psychic Research Committee, Doyle suggesting that some of the problems were due to the mental attitude of the researchers, etc. This was in 1920, when Harris was tested in Norway over 25 séances; they concluded, and accused her of, fraud.

Susanna Harris, born in 1854 to Elizabeth and Henry Kuhn in Philadelphia, USA, was widowed in 1921. Later, on October 6th, 1923, she married Joseph Kay. Susanna Harris died in 1932.

Some six years earlier Harris was again brought to attention in alleged fraud in the Netherlands. A detailed report can be consulted, titled:

"H. N. de Fremery and the 'Harris Affair'"

This well-constructed report by Loes Modderman is available in Psypioneer, Vol. 10, No. 9 and can be downloaded on the link given on the index page of this issue or via my website given elsewhere in this issue.

Henry Nicholaas de Fremery (1868-1940) was an editor and lecturer on spiritist subjects and had attended many séances in Holland and overseas. Occasionally he came across fraud, which made him aware of some of the tricks fraudulent mediums used.

Henry de Fremery was convinced of genuine mediumship, one of his close friends being the well-known medium Alfred Voût Peters. De Fremery was not a scientist but was more interested in investigating the phenomena to rule out any possible fraud. This stood him very much alone in the spiritist community, as most people did not need his scientific interests as proof to believe and most mediums were not eager to cooperate in experiments. We can note here that Arthur Conan Doyle's and Henry de Fremery's investigations were at different ends of the scale, given Sir Arthur's words while mentioning the Norway affair:

> "I know how often these intellectuals ruin their own effects by their mental attitude, which acts like those anti-ferments which prevent a chemical effervescence. We must always get back to the principle, however, that one positive result is more important than a hundred negative ones—just as one successful demonstration in chemistry makes up for any number of failures."

Several planned séances with the American medium Rev. Susanna Harris were at the invitation of the *Vereeniging voor Psychisch Onderzoek* from March 31st to April 7th, 1914, in The Hague, with two additional séances on April 8th and 9th in Amsterdam [further dates were added]. De Fremery was in doubt about Mrs Harris, based on his experience of the séance on April 9th, and so he planned to attend the séance of April 16th to see whether this doubt was misplaced or not; this was his first experience of a direct-voice séance held in the Odeon theatre in Amsterdam.

This background information is taken from the article in question; given that it is a long, twenty-one-page report I will merely continue to quote here the *negative* conclusions regarding the séances held on April 9th and 16th, 1914:

> "De Fremery described the seance room: pitchblack curtains, doors where not a glimmer of light could get through." [12]
>
> "At the seance of April 9, 11 women and 13 gentlemen were present, who were instructed to hold each others hands; under no circumstances could the circle be broken, or dire consequences for the medium would follow."
>
> "If feeling a trumpet or something else touching one's body, one was instructed to say '*thank you*', and no one was to grip a trumpet. And the most important: no light, *or the medium could die.*"

This is how de Fremery graphically describes Harris's entrance:

> "The imposing figure of Mrs Harris, followed by her interpreter, entered the room, and the first thing she did was re-arrange the circle, by putting the 'positive and negative elements' alternately. Then, she opened her portmanteau from which she took three folded trumpets and a music box. Unfolded, the trumpets were 1 meter in length and by pouring water through them she showed that no devices were hidden inside. She put all three near her knees on the ground. Then she proceeded with an even stronger warning than the one given by the secretary of the *Vereeniging voor Psychisch Onderzoek* beforehand, mentioning a medium gone blind and another losing his memory because of sitters' misdeeds."
>
> "De Fremery was appointed to sit at Harris' left side and hold her hand. When everyone was sufficiently subdued, the seance could begin, with loud singing of our anthem in utter darkness. Then de Fremery told what happened next, and his scepticism is obvious. A deep voice next to de Fremery said loudly 'Good Evening' and he almost jumped out of his chair. A falsetto voice, '*Harmony*', answered. 'Spirits' were saying banal things, to sitters *who gave all the information away*. De Fremery was, understandably, not at all impressed. It was obvious to him that the medium was groping for information and that 'Harmony' used the vocal chords of the medium.
>
> "But the bass voice changed directions. De Fremery tried to find Harris's left leg with his right, but couldn't. He then felt a trumpet slap his head. A message 'don't you dare to doubt me', maybe?
>
> "De Fremery decided to give the medium, for now, the benefit of the doubt, but he had clear suspicions. So he did what every critical sitter should have done: listen to the medium's breath, and how that differed from, or synchronised with the voices, which proceeded to dialogue *alternately*. His listening at the chest of Harris was revealing: as a

[12] "The evening before, on April 8, one instant the softest light peeped through the windows, not having any effect on the complete darkness, but nevertheless, according to the medium 'no manifestations had been possible'."

voice stopped, she inhaled. The longer the talking, the deeper the inhalation. For De Fremery there was no longer any doubt about the voices: *they were Harris' own*.

"That evening De Fremery went home, pondering what he should do. He signed on for the seance of April 16, and decided to talk it over with G. J. de Bruin,[13] who was invited in the fateful seance to sit by her left side. He listened sharply, like de Fremery had done a week before, and came to identical conclusions.

"De Fremery, knowing that he would, had asked the sitters to stay a while after the seance, since he planned to confront the medium then and there, without the risk of physical damage to the medium.

"All would have gone according to plan, if not a **Mr Richter**, who had harboured his own suspicions, *had managed to crawl on hand and knees to grab the trumpets,* something that was strictly forbidden. He even took them apart.

"No 'spirit' protested. The medium, oblivious to what transpired, went on speaking through the third trumpet. Then Mr. Richter called out to make light. The medium was a fake, he announced, and to prove it he had taken two of her trumpets without any objections from the spirits or Mrs Harris. This was about 10 minutes before the planned end of the seance, for which every sitter paid f 5.-, quite a large amount in those days. De Bruin, in his capacity of chairman of Harmonia Amsterdam, tried to restore order, and everybody started singing again. Lights were switched on, the medium 'awoke' and was, mightily distressed.

"Mr. Richter, the real 'culprit', had his own story. He was a member of a spiritist circle, and there he heard from a medium friend that Mrs Harris was in the habit of hiding fresh flowers in her voluminous bosom to present them as 'apports'. Light during a seance would have exposed her and that the voices were all coming out of her own throat, said that medium, and Mr. Richter believed her. With a talent for drama he decided to test Harris in his own way. Later he said that he never planned what he did. He had just acted on the spur of the moment. It was a deadly test. The happy dialogues continued, and Harris never felt it, till Richter spoke out loud.

"Later de Bruin testified that Harris' left hand never left his, but her left foot was nowhere to be found. The woman on the right side of Harris told de Fremery that the medium's hand wasn't in hers most of the time. At strategic moments there were suspicious disappearances of hands and legs to where nobody could follow, De bruin testified.

"The absolute darkness and all the warnings were the conditions to keep the sitters in awe. Mrs Harris never realised that this darkness was also her undoing, since she couldn't prove she *wasn't* cheating either. After the seance she left in distress with her interpreter, and obviously nobody stopped her to confront her."

The arguments, conclusions and discussion which followed the fateful séances are well worth reading, bringing out many points of interest. Later followed a lengthy article, "Mrs Harris' Mediumship, Pro and Contra", by G. P. H. Zahn, who analysed several of the arguments given. Based on his own evaluation of what transpired, he concluded that

> … there is '*no absolute certainty that Harris was cheating, but also no definitive proof that she wasn't*'.

—~—☼—~—

[13] Mr G. J. de Bruin, chairman of Harmonia Amsterdam and the one responsible for the séance room.

However, there are sufficient reports of test-séances to equally endorse her genuine mediumship, for example by Dr Abraham Wallace, Estelle Stead, Felicia Scatcherd, etc. These examples can be found, along with Doyle's mention of the *coloured water in the medium's mouth*, in James Coates' "Is Modern Spiritualism Based on Facts or Fancy?" [14]

To conclude:

Dr William Jackson Crawford was born in New Zealand in 1881. Like Henry de Fremery he believed in adopting scientific methods when investigating mediumship; he was a lecturer in engineering at the Municipal Technical Institute, Belfast. Around the time of the article published below, taken from *Light*, December 5th, 1914, he had decided to investigate the physical phenomena of Kathleen Goligher and the group around her, known as the Goligher Circle, and make a prolonged study of the dynamics of telekinesis as demonstrated by Kathleen Goligher and her sisters; as his investigations continued this would lead to the production of ectoplasmic structures known as "The Psychic Structures at the Goligher Circle".

Crawford sat with the Goligher circle for six years until he committed suicide on July 30, 1920; for further information please see Pioneer, Vol. 4, No. 5: "Dr. W. J. Crawford & the Goligher Circle".

Here Dr Crawford addresses some of the points of the above-mentioned séances, which were made public in the British Spiritualist press of the day:

THE DIRECT VOICE AND ITS PROBLEMS.

NOTES ON THE MEDIUMSHIP OF MRS. SUSANNA HARRIS.

BY W. J. CRAWFORD, D.Sc.

Perhaps the following notes, having reference to a recent séance, with Mrs. Harris as the medium, may be of interest to some of your readers. It will be observed that I do not describe any of the many conversations between unseen entities and the sitters, for this kind of thing has, in my opinion, already been sufficiently done. What I endeavour to do is to record a few impressions—they are little more than impressions—received during the evening. Mrs. Harris invited me to sit beside her and to hold her left hand and wrist throughout, and in addition I controlled the movements of both her knees. The net result was that the least movement of any portion of her body was apparent to me.

(1).—BREATHING OF THE MEDIUM.

A Dutch correspondent has made the assertion in your columns that Mrs. Harris, by some mystery of respiration, produced the voices herself. Well, then, as soon as she was in trance, or what she says is trance, I put my ear to her back and listened intently. I could obtain no evidence of the assertion made by your correspondent. On the contrary, her breathing was easy, gentle, and long, and just like that of a young child asleep. She gave me the almost certain feeling that she was really asleep, and, moreover, this easy, deep

[14] "Is Modern Spiritualism Based on Facts or Fancy?", by James Coates, published in 1919: Chapter VI … Séance with the Rev. Susanna Harris under test conditions. Available as a free download at "The International Association for the Preservation of Spiritualist and Occult Periodicals" link given elsewhere in this issue.

breathing continued uninterruptedly while voices were speaking round and over all parts of the circle. Even when "Harmony" was controlling directly, and presumably using her vocal organs, the breathing was still easy and of the sleep-like quality.

(2)—BODILY MOVEMENTS OF THE MEDIUM.

There were many physical manifestations. Often three metallic raps were given on the trumpet lying on the floor more than a yard away. On these occasions a nerve or muscle in the back of the wrist I held moved in perfect synchronism. The movement was slight, but startlingly perceptible. The same thing has been noticed with Eusapia Paladino.[15] I am inclined to think it denotes "reaction." Only with impact movements, such as the rapping, was this wrist motion apparent. There was nothing of the kind with any steady movement, such as the carrying of the trumpets or the musical boxes round the circle and over the heads of the sitters. I wonder if there is a throat "reaction" in Mrs. Harris while trumpet voices are speaking !

When "Harmony" asked for a song "because the power is going done" or "because they are drawing strongly here," &c, Mrs. Harris would become slightly physically agitated in the sense that she would uneasily move her knees a little or give small spasmodic jerks with other portions of her body—which bodily movements would quickly subside towards the end of the song and before phenomena started again. It would almost seem that the operating agencies were, during this period of respite, working upon the medium for the purpose of throwing off further quantities of the mysterious "magnetism." I would like to emphasise the fact that none of these unconscious movements of Mrs. Harris were in any way violent as was the case with Eusapia.

(3).—MOVEMENTS OF MATERIAL OBJECTS.

Perhaps what surprises me most is that the entities can see perfectly in the pitch dark. An electric light wire hung from the ceiling right into the middle of the circle, with porcelain shade attached, but no lamp—gas was used when light was required. While a musical box was floating over our heads, I asked that it should be made to touch the electric wire, and, after a pause, it touched the porcelain shade neatly and perfectly, at any rate judging by the sound. If a trumpet was temporarily put down it was usually rested against my knee—so softly and easily that one could have sworn very deft fingers were at work. When it was required again I felt a circular movement of the part that rested on my knee, and when this circular motion had become pretty pronounced, it was deftly and noiselessly wafted away. I fancy the trumpet is, while in the air, in a state of whirl about its longitudinal axis for the purpose of adding to its stability. It is extraordinary that with two long trumpets, two musical boxes, chairs and people, and with an electric wire hanging down, the physical movements are so unerringly carried out, and that not anybody or anything is unwittingly touched.

(4).—THE "HOLDING" POWER OF THE VOICES.

If a voice is speaking to a sitter it is almost fatal, with this medium, to ask for a name directly. Names are frequently given, but it seems they must be spontaneously given by the voice. As a case in point, a friend—or one who represented himself as such—who recently died by accident in America, called out his surname to my wife. My wife asked for his Christian name. Result—trumpet dropped to floor. In a few seconds the trumpet was raised again and the conversation resumed, and then the entity gave particular details as to the manner of his death. My wife asked another direct question—sudden drop of trumpet to floor. In a few seconds the trumpet was raised again and more conversation

[15] See Pioneer, Vol. 6, No. 6: "Eusapia Palladino – Hereward Carrington".

followed. “Harmony” said that these direct questions broke the line of communication for the time being and that an entity should be allowed to talk, and questions should be put rather indirectly to him. This is feasible and rather likely. With Mrs. Wriedt the line of communication for the voice seems stronger, with the result that more sustained and definite conversation is possible.

(5).—THE PROBLEM OF VOICE PRODUCTION.

I asked Mr. “Jones” how the voice was produced. He laughed, and said, “That is for you fellows to find out.” He added that they on their side thought they had done their part in the fact of producing the voices at all. I gathered that Jones would find the explanation troublesome.

(6).—MEDIUM AND CONDITIONS.

When the entity previously referred to, who had met a sudden death in America, had departed, “Harmony” gave us a little lecture on “conditions.” She said the fact of her controlling the medium directly was beneficial in this respect, that it prevented the taking on by the medium of the last earthly conditions of illness of those who spoke to members of the circle. She said this was the object of the control. Otherwise the medium would experience more or less the last earthly pangs of the visitants, and would have her strength depleted and her usefulness impaired.

(7).—STATUS OF “ HARMONY.”

Many people believe that “Harmony” is a secondary personality of Mrs. Harris. I do not. I have many reasons which would take too long to detail here. “Harmony” sometimes speaks through the trumpet but usually controls the medium directly. While controlling, it would seem that she is to all intents and purposes a human being. She gives clairvoyant descriptions and little prophecies, and helps out difficult situations. She communicates with other entities by direct conversation, which surely would not be necessary if she were at the time a discarnate spirit.

(8)—THE CIRCLE.

There is nothing awe-inspiring or harrowing about it. The entities who speak seem very human and altogether good-natured and kind. There was never a cross word. Nothing was said that could by any stretch of the imagination be considered personal outside the dictates of good taste. Furthermore, if there had been any desire to injure anyone physically, that desire could easily have been carried out. The dropping of one of the musical boxes from the ceiling on to the head of a sitter would put him *hors de combat*. But I am convinced that the greatest care is taken of all present by the controlling entities.

(9)—SOME CONCLUSIONS.

I am convinced that Mrs. Harris is a medium of great and wonderful power. I am certain that she does nothing to produce the voices and physical phenomena by any known methods. What I think is that round her there exudes a field of energy, or at least a field of energy-capacity of such a nature that physical movements can be produced through and by means of it with unerring accuracy. What a pity it is that the whole thing cannot be sympathetically and scientifically studied ! Money is plentiful enough in this country and what is required is the raising of an adequate fund—given voluntarily by those who can afford it—for the express purpose of erecting and equipping a proper laboratory where rigorous study could be given to the whole question. Five years of such work would probably render plain many things now obscure.

—~—☼—~—

SUSANNA HARRIS

1854 – 1932

In Maurice Barbanell's column, "All Worlds Are One", in his newly-founded newspaper, 'Psychic News',[16] dated September 3rd, 1932, he published:

Not Afraid Of Death

Estelle Stead showed me a letter which she received from Susanna Harris, that well-known American medium, in which she wrote:

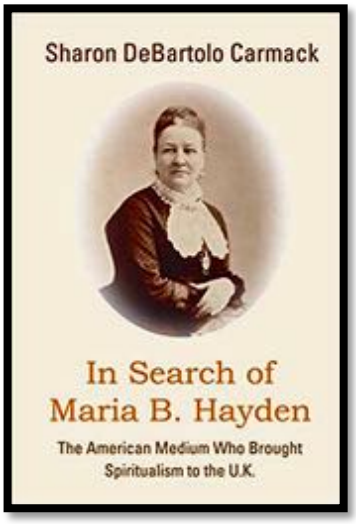
"I am getting old now and do not expect ever to cross over the water again. I often think of all those who have passed before me to the Higher Life—Miss Scatcherd, Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, Dr. Abraham Wallace, and now Dr. Lamond. I look forward to the time when I shall meet them and your father."

This is how a Spiritualist thinks of death.

[16] Pioneer, Vol. 8, No. 3: "Psychic News was Founded by Maurice Barbanell and Jack Rubens", "Psychic News in Perspective – Leslie Price", "Three "Dead" Men Began Psychic News – Maurice Barbanell".

JOHN B. CONKLIN

An Early American Pioneer Medium



Sharon DeBartolo Carmack DSNU has done some in-depth research into two of America's earliest mediums, one of whom is Maria B. Hayden, publishing a valuable biography in December 2020:

"In Search of Maria B. Hayden: The American Medium Who Brought Spiritualism to the U.K"

Sharon has kindly sent Pioneer a copy, which will be reviewed in due course.[18] In addition, more recently, Sharon has produced a paper on Emma Frances Jay-Bullene, an American trance medium who visited England in 1855; this so far has been published in the SNUi News, August 2021.[19]

Another early American medium was John B. Conklin

My research into J.B. Conklin began some years ago in Psypioneer, Vol. 5, No. 10, October 2009: "Nettie Colburn Maynard (part one)".[20] The second part was published in Vol. 6, No. 2, February 2010: "Dr. Walter Franklin Prince versus Simon P. Kase". It is during the second article that the alleged involvement occurred between John B. Conklin and President Abraham Lincoln. This research would bring into play a more critical look into Lincoln – Maynard – Conklin.

This further research was brought about by an article by Leslie Price, the founder editor of Psypioneer, published in Vol. 1, No. 4, August 2004:

Short quote:

ABRAHAM LINCOLN, SPIRITUALISM AND EMANCIPATION

> "In February 1872 a "Mrs Linder" stayed in Boston for ten days, making frequent visits to the medium Margaret Fox. She believed she was in touch with her husband, Abraham Lincoln, who had been assassinated as American president in 1865.
>
> "Lincoln's political career coincided with the rise of American Spiritualism and his interest was the subject of newspaper stories at the time. They continue today – thus on 31 January 1998, Psychic News (the Spiritualist weekly newspaper published in England) reported "Mediumship promoted the abolition of slavery" and gave an account of Col. Kase's activities, of whom more below. In contrast, the founder editor of the newspaper, Maurice Barbanell, had been personally interested in the Nettie Maynard testimony and republished her book in England.

[18] Maria Hayden and Emma Frances Jay-Bullene: please see Psypioneer, Vol. 2, No. 10, October 2006: "Mrs. Hayden's visit to England in 1852-3".

[19] Spiritualists' National Union International (SNUi) was set up as a Branch of the Union in 2009. It provides online access to information, education, and training to enable members around the world to take an active role in the Union and to promote Spiritualism in their own country. With a team of online tutors and opportunities to take part in online services, SNUi students are welcomed into an international community that forms a network of friendship and support. Please see Pioneer booklet SNUi as advertised elsewhere in this issue.

[20] "Was Abraham Lincoln a Spiritualist?" by Nettie Colburn.

"Dr Walter Franklin Prince (1863-1934) worked with the American SPR (1917-1920) and later with the Boston SPR, becoming president of the SPR in London for 1930-1. His great strength was in the analysis of documents. Typical of his work on a small scale was a paper, "The Aetiology of a "Psychical" Legend" in JSPR, December 1930, pp. 148-57. Members of the SPR today can read the paper through the Society's database. (Aetiology is the study of causes.)

"Prince examined the story told by Col. Kase that a medium had inspired Lincoln to free the slaves, a story which appeared in the newspaper "Spiritual Scientist" and was also quoted by Emma Hardinge Britten in "Nineteenth Century Miracles" (1884, pp. 484-7). Prince was able to show that at the date in question Lincoln was already well advanced in emancipation and that Kase's knowledge of the military situation was nil. Best of all, he was able to quote the testimony of the medium herself, Nettie Colburn (later Nettie Maynard), **who claimed no more than to have encouraged Lincoln in what he was already doing.**" … See the referenced article for further information.

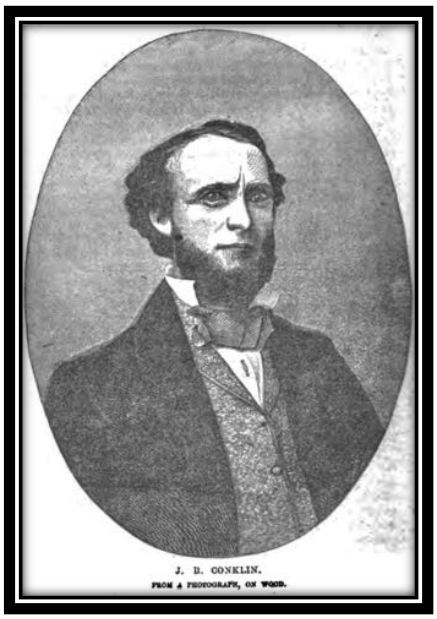
Who was John B. Conklin?

During the above-mentioned articles, I had no early biographical information on Conklin except that he was the medium whom Emma Hardinge first consulted in New York, as will be documented in this article. The early life of Conklin quoted below is taken from the valuable website run by historian Marc Demarest, "The International Association for the Preservation of Spiritualist and Occult Periodicals"[21] (IAPSOP). The site also archives the now defunct issues of Psypioneer (May 2004 until December of 2016) noted on the index page of the Pioneer issues.

Below is quoted from Nichols' Monthly:[22]

THE LIFE OF A MEDIUM

Or, the Spiritual Experiences of J. B. Conklin



THE LIFE OF A MEDIUM is a new, and will be, we think, an interesting feature of this series. We have known Mr. CONKLIN for some time past, as a *test medium*, of remarkable uses. He is a man of the most entirely honest, simple, unpretending character, who does what he believes to be his duty, uninfluenced by any worldly motives. By the advice of the spirits, he has taken a house in a central location, No. 134 Canal street, New York, which is open several hours every day, for free circles, where all inquirers are invited to come, without money or price, and test the reality of spirit communications.

He is supported in this expensive, and as his friends thought hazardous undertaking, by voluntary contributions, by the sale of a monthly paper, THE PUBLIC CIRCLE, published at six cents a copy, and by

[21] "The IAPSOP is a US-based private organization focused on the digital preservation of Spiritualist and occult periodicals published between the Congress of Vienna and the start of the Second World War. Our all-volunteer staff digitizes, indexes and makes available free-of-charge these periodicals, in our archive, for use by students and researchers: http://iapsop.com".

[22] A Magazine of Social Science and Progressive Literature, 1855-1857, Monthly, New York, NY, then Cincinnati, OH. Publisher: H. Watkin & Valentine Nicholson. Editor: Thomas Low Nichols and Mary Sargeant Gove Nichols.

private circles, at such hours as are not occupied with the public ministrations. It is our belief that this humble medium is in this way, the instrument of more spiritual good, than all the clergy of New York. We have not known any person to go to his rooms, in any proper spirit of candid inquiry, without being satisfied of the honesty of the medium, and the reality of the manifestations.

—~—☼—~—

"Life of a Medium" was serialised in Nichols' Monthly from June 1855 to August 1856, covering many aspects of this medium's early life and development and reflecting the early Spiritualist atmosphere in which Conklin worked and toured in these early days. The full account is downloadable from IAPSOP on the link given. Below I continue to quote from "Life of a Medium":

EARLY EXPERIENCES—STRIKING INTERPOSITIONS—FIRST MANIFESTATIONS:

"The great interest taken by the public in the spiritual manifestations of the present day, has made every fact in that connection of importance to investigators. At the solicitation of friends who are acquainted with some of the particulars of my spiritual experience, I propose to present a brief narration of incidents which have attended my career to the present hour, when I find myself engaged in making known, through the agency, as I must believe, of the spirits of those who have lived in the human form, the glorious truths of immortality.

"I was born in the city of New York, in 1825, and remained with my family till the age of nineteen years, when I went to sea. Up to this period, I had observed nothing that had directed my attention particularly to the spiritual nature of man, either in this sphere, or in the after life. True, I had been taught, and had received, the general doctrines of the Bible, as they had been expounded by those who had charge of my poor education; for I know little but what I have seen in my experience of life, and what the spirits have taught me. Without reflection, I embraced all the dogmas that were given me, not questioning the authority that proclaimed itself as the exponent of God's will and truth.

"An incident soon occurred in my new avocation, which served to awaken my attention to the ways of Providence in the government of individuals and of the world. My seafaring experience had made it easy for me to obtain employment with those who "go down upon the sea in ships." Accordingly, I was shipped as a seaman on board the pilot-boat "John McKeon," of New York, a fine vessel, of an admirable class, named, as is customary, in honor of a prominent citizen. The melancholy fate of that vessel, and of the "Gratitude," lost at the same time, will be sadly remembered by many of my readers, for not a man of their crews has been heard of since they sailed from New York. I had fully intended to sail in the "John McKeon," and went home, for the purpose of obtaining my clothing; but, on returning to the pier, I was much disappointed on ascertaining that the vessel had sailed about an hour previous to my arrival; the master, anxious to get to sea, having determined not to wait for me. This incident made a deep impression on my mind; for, had I sailed, my fate would have been that of the poor mariners who "were never heard of more."

"Another event, of a similar, but more decided character, deepened this impression. In 1841, I shipped for Thomaston, Maine, with Captain Dudley. I remained there three weeks, receiving from the Captain every kindness and attention, and was much attached to him, as he invited me to his own table, and patiently taught me navigation, encouraging me with the hope of becoming a mate. We loaded for New Orleans, but as we lay wind-bound, there came to me an inward monition, a mysterious influence, of which I then knew but little, which said, "*Leave !*" Though contrary to my views and inclinations, I felt compelled to obey the warning, and went ashore. It was in the dead of

winter. I had no money—no friends—no mode of subsisting—yet I obeyed that voice ! The Captain refused to pay me my wages, in order to compel me to return to the vessel; but all was in vain, and at last, finding me resolute in my seeming folly and obstinacy, he gave me my dues, and sailed without me; but not until after I had slept in a lime kiln, to prove that I was in earnest. There was another vessel in port, bound to New York. The captain of it would not take me on board, because he had an understanding with Captain Dudley.

"What was now to be done? Desperate necessities compel the use of desperate means. I took a skiff at night, rowed off to the vessel anchored in the stream, let the boat float away, and concealed myself in the forecastle, making my appearance when we were passing Owl's Head, and were well on our voyage, much to the surprise of the captain; who, finding me on board without his knowledge, made the best of it, put me in the mate's watch, and offered me a pleasant and lucrative situation. I had no *earthly* reason for this strange conduct. Every motive of inclination and gratitude prompted me to remain with my kind friend, who had taken a personal interest in my welfare. The true cause was known by the result. The "Zephyr" was lost on that voyage, and all on board, except the captain and one seaman, perished ! Was there no Providence in this ? Or was it only a strange coincidence, unaccountable, but meaningless. I must think that *effects* have *causes*."

Conklin would continue in the same line of work undergoing similar experiences, strengthening his conviction that he was *in the guardianship of some higher power*. Conklin continues his story:

"In 1845, I visited my sister, in Chesnut street, Philadelphia, where there occurred an incident which seemed to bring me into closer relations with my friends of the other sphere of being. One evening, while sitting in the back basement, and explaining Signor Blitz's thimble trick, for the amusement of the assembled group, the door of the room suddenly opened, and the rustling of what appeared to be a lady's silk dress was heard by all and so assured them of the presence of some stranger, that a general escape was made up stairs.

"I did not then know that that house was what is called "haunted;" and much less did I know that the front room, in which I was to sleep, was particularly liable to nocturnal visitations. I retired for the night, and after being on the sofa for a few minutes, and in expectation that my sister would remove my lamp, which I had placed near the door, I lay quietly awaiting its removal. I had been startled by the strange sound, but it had passed from my mind. As I lay here, a lady entered the room, took the light from its position, and placed it on the mantel-piece, where it remained burning till morning. Before she left the room, she put the clothes over me. I had supposed that this was the act of my sister, but on inquiry found that neither she, nor any other inmate of the house had entered my room !

"Since that time I have become better acquainted with this being, who represents that she was murdered in the room I occupied. Although strongly urged to make some examinations of this house, I have never attempted it, though time may reveal some relics of mortality beneath the floors. However, more useful investigations may be made in other directions, perhaps, though they may be less marvellous to those whose studies are prompted by curiosity.

"This anecdote will have little weight, I know, with many persons who believe that all ghost stories can be reasonably accounted for; and who will say at once, that it was my mischievous sister, making herself sport by working upon my credulity. I have entire faith in the honesty of my sister; and I am now too familiar with what is called the

supernatural, to distrust her, for the sake of accounting for one of a thousand of similar appearances, I have related the circumstance as an event in my experience.

"As I wish to make a frank, and as far as needful, a full record of my spiritual experience, that which I have had as a professor of religion, and a communicant of a Christian church, next demands my attention. Accepting the Bible, as taught and explained to me by the preachers of the denomination whose meetings I attended; conscientiously wishing to walk in the right path; susceptible to strong impressions; I became a convert and member of the Methodist Church; and for a time, I meekly submitted to its discipline, and received without questionings, the dogmas of its creed.

"My sincerity and piety, I think, were never questioned by the leaders of the flock. I was, for a time, as blind, as unreasoning, as teachable, as they could wish. When I heard of the "Rochester rappings," I believed them to be, either an ingenious fraud, or the work of the Devil. But as the subject became more and more noised about, my curiosity became excited; I felt an inward prompting to seek the truth; and when Mrs, Brown, one of the Fox sisters, came to the city of New York, I had the manly independence to visit her, and investigate for myself the claims of the alleged spiritual manifestations. I exposed myself to the ridicule, sneers, and scoffs of the unbelievers about me; the most bitter and bigoted of whom were members of the church to which I belonged."

Meeting Mrs Brown:

The eldest Fox sister during the initial events of 1847/48 at Hydesville was in Rochester teaching music and knew nothing of the rappings her family were encountering until they had moved from the Hydesville house and were staying with her brother David and his wife Elizabeth a few miles away. At this time she was known as Mrs Ann L. Fish; she had married Bowman Fish in 1829 and in 1850 she remarried 29-year-old Calvin Brown, who died a few years later circa 1853. In 1858 Ann Leah married Daniel Underhill, spending the rest of their lives together.[23]

Conklin continues:

"At my first visit to Mrs. Brown, the spirit of my mother-in-law, or an intelligent agency, purporting to be such spirit, and whose assertion I did not feel qualified to deny, made herself known to me, and stated that she had twice before communicated with me. It was true that I had seen her recently, in two dreams, of a very vivid character. Further communications were given to satisfy me of her identity, which I saw no reason to dispute.

"At this, my first interview, through a medium, with a departed spirit, I was directed to go home; to form a circle there; and was told that this spirit would then communicate with me further. The request seemed to me but reasonable—it would remove any possible suspicion of trick, or collusion; and I obeyed the injunction. The first circle consisted of myself, my wife, and child. We sat around the table, laying our hands upon it, and waiting for the mysterious rappings to commence. No rappings came; but to our astonishment, the table itself raised up upon two of its legs, gently, and came down upon the floor, producing the "tippings," as they are

[23] For further information please see Psypioneer, Vol. 4, No. 9: "The Fox Sisters: Riddle of the records", by Lis J. Warwood.

called; a mode of manifestation easier to investigate, perhaps, than the raps, as being subject to the three senses of sight, touch, and hearing.

"Efforts have been made to account for these tippings upon natural principles. They have been attributed, either to the trick of the medium, or the involuntary exertion of muscular power.[24] But no theory accounts for a tithe of the various manifestations. And, where it might be possible to suppose deception, voluntary or involuntary, in physical manifestations, the supernatural intelligence of the messages and responses still remains—a still more unaccountable phenomenon.

"The alphabet was soon called,[25] and there was spelled out the following sentence:

"***My dear children, these things appear strange, yet stranger things will soon convince you of their spiritual origin."*** "

"I was anxious to pursue the investigation.

"After supper we sat again 'in circle." Now something new astonished us. As if to satisfy my wife's incredulity, we had the rappings. The sounds came freely and loudly in every part of the house; and frequently they could be heard for two or three hundred yards from my dwelling. The village where I resided, was aroused like a barrack at the beat of the morning drum. Neighbors flocked in from all sides; and for two months, during the winter, my house was besieged by those who were ready to enlist in the cause of truth, or who wished to show their own strength by opposing, ridiculing, or denouncing what they considered either an imposture, or delusion of man, or the machination of the foul fiend.

"Here was I, a poor Methodist church member, ignorant of the world's lore, selected as an humble instrument to convince thousands, as I have had the privilege and satisfaction of since doing, of the immortal nature of man; of the *reality* of the unseen world, and of the Great Living Truth, that the spirits of the departed can and do hold communication with us who are going forward to the same destination; showing that the grave is no longer "that bourne from which no traveller returns."

"My Methodist brethren, with a blind faith in their religious system, now called upon me, remonstrated against my doings, and begged me to acknowledge that I had been playing tricks, to astonish the people. They would have had me done this, even against my own consciousness of truth and right, for the good of the cause of religion, and the overthrow of Satan; but as I could not become a party to such a falsehood—as I could not resist the evidence of my own senses, and of the verity of the daily manifestations, of which I was the involuntary medium, they considered me unfit any longer to be a member of their communion. I was invited to leave the church, because I was ready to receive to-day, those manifestations and interpositions, which they wished me to believe, only occurred two thousand years ago. I was called a "backslider;" I had "fallen from grace;" I was an "emissary of Satan," because I had been chosen to demonstrate to others the great realities of Eternal Life."

—~—☼—~—

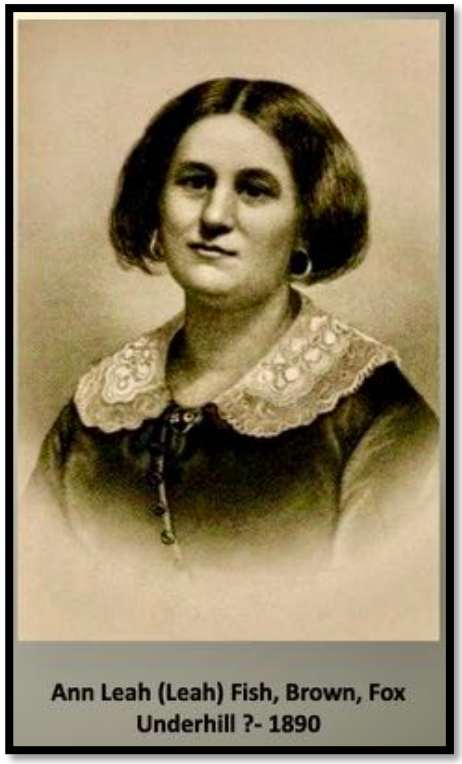
[24] English scientist Michael Faraday (1791-1867) considered table-turning to be the result of 'involuntary muscular action'.

[25] The calling of the alphabet was not devised by the Fox children on March 31st, 1848, as is often reported, but by William Duesler, a neighbour of the Fox family (and former tenant of the house) on the night in question. This process then became dormant until it was resurrected later by family friend Isaac Post in Rochester. This process, later used by the Fox sisters, led them to be known as the 'Rochester Rappers'. It was later used by the early mediums Maria Hayden, John Conklin, Ada Foye, Emma Hardinge, etc.

Conklin continued his experiences, investigations, and development from haunted houses to demonstrating what was then called *Spiritual Manifestations*; the term *Modern Spiritualism* would not become popularised until around the mid-1850s:

"I passed my evenings, for about three months, in sitting in a circle with two mediums. This was for the purpose of development, as it is called; a gradual and unconscious fitting of the spiritual element of the individual, to become the medium of impressions, or the instrument of spiritual action."

Conklin returns to the eldest of the three "Rochester Rappers", Ann Leah (née Fox) Brown:


Ann Leah (Leah) Fish, Brown, Fox
Underhill ?- 1890

"It was during the anxiety on my part to understand more clearly than I then did the modes and purposes of spirit communication, that I visited the distinguished medium, Mrs. Brown. I know not how many times I went there—perhaps it might have been twenty—but invariably nothing satisfactory was given to me, while others were surprised and gratified. I received nothing more than "not now," or "some other time," to all my inquiries. This was exceedingly perplexing to me, and cost me in time and money much more than I could afford. Yet I persevered—for the investigation of truth, when once commenced, is not easily relinquished, Finally, one evening, at Mrs. Brown's, I received a communication by the alphabet, in these words:

" "My son, thou hast not played thy part well. When thy minister and brethren smote thee on the right cheek, and set a mark on thy forehead, thou shouldst have bared thy bosom also, and permitted them to know that an honest man feareth not death. "GEORGE FOX."

"This astonished me; but as I was not the son of any person by the name of Fox, I was not satisfied, and felt some discontent, inquiring who it was. To which the reply came, as follows:

" "John, be candid, and accept a word from thy friend, for there is a new song about to be put in thy mouth, whose echoes will vibrate sweetly through the souls of men."

"Directions were then given me to sit for the purpose of developing myself as a medium, and the communicator asserted that he would be a father, brother, friend, everything to me, that I might desire. This was done to make me easy with respect to those sacrifices which every Spiritualist is called to make in these days, for the truth—when for its sake relatives must be held inferior in importance to those grand relations of truth and love which bind man to his Creator. The communicating spirit subsequently was ascertained to be George Fox, the celebrated Quaker; and through many trials I have had wise counsel from him, and he has proved, indeed, to be all that

could be desired, and even more to me than he promised. In the many difficulties which are liable to occur at public circles, I have seldom failed to receive his assistance, and he usually enables me to disarm very powerful sceptics.[26]

"Up to this time, I had never made any charge for my services, and was much averse to doing so, fearing the imputation of mercenary motives, when my only conscious desires were to seek and find the great truths of immortality, and to aid others in their investigations.[27] But, besides giving all my leisure time, business hours were often trespassed upon; and I felt the necessity of giving more attention to the requirements of my family. I finally compromised, by devoting all my time to my medial office, leaving those who might be benefitted to make me such contribution or compensation as they thought proper.

"This plan was, at that time, a total failure. I persisted, until I found that those who wished to attribute to me unworthy motives were never at a loss to do so; while candid and well-meaning people were often thoughtless of justice, and seemed quite unconscious of the fact that I could not give them my time without an equivalent. While some would not hesitate to occupy hours of my time, without a thought of remuneration, acting as if they had done me a favor by consenting to investigate a subject, which, it seemed to me, ought to be of quite as much interest to them as to me, others did not hesitate to say that a man must be insane, who would sacrifice his time, as I was doing.

"On consideration, and consultation with my guardian spirits, I therefore resolved to use such discretion as the circumstances demanded: to fix upon a moderate price for those who came to public circles, and a fair compensation for time spent in private ones; and in this way I was able to support my family, and to defray the cost of keeping open a room, in a central, and therefore expensive locality, for public use. But at no time, even when giving ten or twelve hours a day to public or private circles, was this compensation considerable. I was anxious to give every visitor the utmost latitude of investigation, and to have them fully satisfied with the result. With awkward questionings, and needless repetitions, and trivialities, much time was consumed; and the methods, adapted to the condition of inquirers, were slow. Still, every day and hour gave convincing tests, to all who had the candor or discernment to perceive them, of the reality of the Great Fact,

that spirits exist, and can, and do communicate with men."

With all this said and done Conklin became a Test Medium; this is not to say by committees who would put the medium/s through controlled tests like the Fox sisters,[28]

but for the sitter to test the spirits !

"I have been called a Test Medium, because my work has been almost exclusively that of giving persons their first convincing evidences of the immortal truths of spirit life and intercourse—a humble mission, but one which seems to be the basis of development, and the first step in spiritual progress. Before people can accept of the wisdom ready to flow into the minds of men from the spirit world, they must believe that spirits exist. And when their existence is tacitly admitted, as men admit the dogmas of religious creeds, without any vital and practical faith, their power to communicate with men in the form must be demonstrate."

---

[26] George Fox 1624-1691 (image shown) was the founder of the Religious Society of Friends, better known as the Quakers or Friends.

[27] For Emma Hardinge Britten's view on mediums charging for their services see Pioneer, Vol. 1, No. 4, page 108: "Mrs. Hardinge to the Spiritualists".

[28] See Pioneer, Vol. 6, No. 4, August 2019: " "*Ordered by the spirits*" – How the First Public Meeting Came About to Demonstrate".

One such *first-time* sitter was then known as actress Emma Hardinge, who attended a séance at Conklin's residence in Canal Street, New York. On Emma's part this did not go well at all! The image shown is c1860, when Emma was aged 37. Recorded in her Autobiography, Chapter II, page 16, is her response to her *first* experience in a Spiritualist circle in America:[29]

"… I became so deeply interested in the plain, straightforward account of spirit intercourse, and the wide-spread manifestations of spirit phenomena they related to me, that at length I consented to accompany Mr. Ranney, a worthy Canadian gentleman, who was one of the much dreaded "Spiritualists," to a place wherein, as I was assured, I could learn the truth of what he alleged for myself.

"Notwithstanding the fascination which this subject of possible Spirit return possessed for me, it required many conversations and much persuasion to induce me to visit the *Spirit depot*, as I contemptuously phrased it, where I was to obtain the promised evidences. When my scruples were at length overcome, I accompanied my new friend to a shabby looking house in Canal Street, and after ascending two or three flights of uncarpeted narrow stairs, I found myself in dismal ill-furnished room, where a number of commonplace looking people were sitting round a wooden table, watching with seemingly deep interest its heavy and incessant rockings to and fro.

"Although this "Circle room," as I was informed, was a public one, and open to any strangers who paid the stipulated fee at the door, my companion whispered to me that the party was in the midst of receiving a communication from "the *Spirits*," and we must wait quietly where we stood until it was completed, when no doubt we should be invited to join the circle. Without the slightest idea of what connection might exist between a Spirit communication and that rocking table, but keeping both eyes and ears carefully on the alert, I heard a thin, sad-faced looking man at one end of the table keep on repeating letters of the alphabet over and over again in a monotonous tone, until he at length stopped, when one of the party who seemed to have been engaged in writing something, said, speaking in a clear loud tone: "The Spirit answers, Immortality would be a mere fiction were there no other evidence of it than Bible teaching."

"This was enough for me. These horrid "ghoul" like looking infidels were pitching into the Bible ! Without having the slightest idea of the question which had called forth this answer, or by whom, or in what manner the answer came, it was enough for me to hear the words—"fiction" "Bible"'—jumbled up together in a slighting and irreverent way.

"Like hundreds of others whom I have since observed running away at the first moment they hear anything concerning their stereotyped faiths that they do not like, instead of stopping to enquire or reason about, I, too, ran away—or rather, I should say fled—rushing precipitately down the stairs into the street, and back to my own room, to fall on my knees and pray for forgiveness for having visited such an infidel place, and been found amongst such infidel people.

"It was some time before the shock which my *religious* nature had received subsided, and then, weary of the *ennui* which enforced idleness imposed upon me, …"

—~—☼—~—

[29] The Autobiography of Emma Hardinge Britten, posthumously published and edited in 1900 by Emma's sister, Margaret Wilkinson.

This strong reaction by Emma Hardinge may be considered as rather confusing, given her previous experiences as a member of an occult society where she served as a teenager—as an entranced clairvoyant and a mesmeric subject for an English occult society called "The Orphic Circle" (see Pioneer: "Emma—Floyd—Hardinge—Britten").[30]

After her experience at Conklin's séance, which she looked upon as unchristian and blasphemous, Emma was again, shortly after, persuaded to go to another test medium also having a lodging-house in Canal Street, New York. The medium was a *very young* lady called Mrs Ada Foye; she told Emma via the alphabet system of raps that she would become a great medium and Emma received a communication from her brother Tom, who had died ten years earlier, aged 16. When she got home her mother confirmed the details of the message from her brother Tom.

Emma Hardinge's life would soon change to that of a Spiritualist medium like John Conklin, whom she had run away from. Emma was further helped by Mrs Kellogg to awaken her spiritual powers of magnetism. The following year, 1856, Emma was giving public séances as a 'test medium,' also giving music lessons in the rooms of the 'Society for the Diffusion of Christian Spiritualism'.[31]

Emma Moves Way from Her Orthodox Faith ! [32]

> "… even up to my first great trial lectures at Troy, on July 5th, 1857, I had clung religiously, as I had termed it, to the orthodox faith in which I had been brought up, nor had my experiences as a test Medium contributed to shake that faith. Indeed I had sometimes listened with equal horror and indignation to what I designated as the *unchristian* and infidel talk of many of my Spiritual associates.
>
> "Thus, then, when the New York Spiritualists, stimulated by the glowing accounts of my *début* as given by Troy friends, invited me to occupy their platform on the succeeding Sunday, July 12th, I accepted the offer, confident that I, through my Spirit inspirers, could so severely rebuke the infidel spirit which I felt was existing amongst my New York associates, that in all probability I might convert many of them to the true Christian faith.
>
> "The Spirits had promised me that on that special occasion I should hear every word I spoke, and so I did, but the result of those same two New York lectures was, that instead of converting any of my audience to orthodoxy, I converted myself entirely away from it,

---

[30] Pioneer, Vol. 8, No. 3.

[31] Emma notes in her Autobiography, page 39: "One of my warmest and kindest patrons in the Spiritual ranks was a wealthy merchant—a Mr. Horace H. Day, well known in New York as the founder of large india-rubber works.

"Mr. Day had hired an entire building right in the business centre of New York, namely, 553, Broadway. On the steps of this building was placed a large board inscribed with the words SOCIETY FOR THE DIFFUSION OF CHRISTIAN SPIRITUALISM. Though Mr. Day was the entire of "the Society," and the Spiritualism diffused there was not in the slightest degree related to the term "Christian," it had pleased him to adopt that phrase, and to carry it still further by publishing in that very building a weekly newspaper entitled "The Christian Spiritualist."

"A certain portion of this house was devoted to the sale of the paper and the Spiritual books and pamphlets that, as early as 1850, had then been published. The upper floors were occupied by the printers of the paper, and in the large back drawing-room of the building the generous lessee had placed Miss Kate Fox, who, at a salary of twelve hundred dollars a year, was engaged to sit *free* for the public every morning. When Mr. Day heard of my intention to *give* my services to the public without pay, he kindly placed two handsome rooms, well furnished by his liberality, at my disposal for my séances. Being still too proud to accept of this generous arrangement rent free, I offered to edit his paper, and I continued to do so during the time that I occupied the apartments in question."

[32] Autobiography of Emma Hardinge Britten, page 52.

nor has my incessant study of ancient history, science, and God's Bible of Creation ever suffered me to relapse again into the mists of superstition invented by Priestcraft, or shaken my assurance of my own personal responsibility both here and hereafter, for all the good or evil I have ever done on earth."

—~—☼—~—

John B. Conklin to be continued in the next issue …

MORE ON DIRECT VOICE

Leslie Flint séances:

Direct voice (or independent voice, as it is also referred to) is an impressive form of physical phenomena; in this issue Susanna Harris is featured both in the positive and negative. Different mediums' presentation of the direct / independent voice naturally differs by their development and presentation.

We can note with Harris that she used up to three trumpets, whereas Leslie Flint did not usually use a trumpet, as noted in Pioneer (quote below);[33] her demonstrations were generally kept from twenty to twenty-five sitters per séance. Some reports suggest that she worked in a trancelike state, others report that she was fully conscious of the proceedings.

> Flint was able to demonstrate the direct voice while he was fully conscious, seldom going into a trance state. Flint did not speak in trance; he worked in total darkness and, unlike most mediums, he did not use a trumpet or any other physical devices to help produce the spirit voices. His ectoplastic larynx was formed on his left side and located some two feet away from the medium, where the spirit voices would speak into the manufactured replica voice box. The communicating spirit would concentrate its thoughts into the ectoplasmic voice box by lowering its frequency/vibration to produce objective speech.

Unlike Harris, Flint would hold large public demonstrations of audiences, sometimes well in excess of 2,000; this I believe was started and encouraged by the opportunities given by Noah Zerdin and Harold Chibbett in the formation of the "Link Association of Home Circles" in 1931, leading to large mass meetings for physical phenomena. Flint was a close friend of Zerdin. Mrs A.E. Perriman was the first voice medium for "The Link" in 1934 at the Æolian Hall; a year later Leslie Flint gave a large direct-voice séance at Bloomsbury's Victoria Hall.[34]

There is today an abundance of recordings made in Leslie Flint's home circle; however, these are mostly talks by well-known people like Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, Sir Oliver Lodge, other less-known personalities and, of course, Micky, Flint's boy control. The public demonstrations brought about personal communications, giving comfort and evidence of the survival of death.

Published below are two articles:

Sometimes a person who has little interest in what is taking place in a séance gives off negative thoughts disturbing the harmonious vibrations that have been put in place; or, more serious, a verbal outburst during a séance is nothing more than an ignorant person thinking that perhaps they are being clever—but in their total ignorance of the proceedings they destroy or disturb the very sensitive fabric which physical phenomena require to function in producing the necessary psychic fluids required to produce structures for the said phenomena. The article below, published in Psychic News, February 18, 1950, gives a good example of a public meeting being terminated by the sheer ignorance of the sitters' conduct:

---

[33] Pioneer, Vol. 3, No. 3: "Looking at the Independent Direct Voice".

[34] Pioneer, Vol. 7, No. 3: "A Question of Fraud! – Editor's Note".

Spirit Voice Fills Hall Without Microphone

GUIDE ACCEPTED CHALLENGE FROM INTERRUPTER

LESLIE FLINT'S PUBLIC DEMONSTRATION OF DIRECT VOICE AT THE CORN EXCHANGE, BEDFORD, ON WEDNESDAY WAS MARRED BY THE THOUGHTLESS BEHAVIOUR OF TWO PEOPLE, A MAN AND A WOMAN, IN THE AUDIENCE.

The woman was the first to start the decline. She infuriated the audience by her lack of response to a message being relayed by Micky.

Leslie Flint

Even when she was addressed in her own name by her mother in spirit she still displayed no interest.

That she was capable of answering properly was demonstrated by the bright way she replied when Micky, Flint's boy guide, first indicated her. His remark that he wanted "the lady who is sitting knitting," brought a ready response from her and a gust of laughter from the audience.

R.A.F. DROPS A "BOMB"

The spirit lad made gargantuan endeavours to get the message across, but his efforts were blasted by a young Air Force sergeant who interrupted and demanded that the microphone be moved from the front of the cabinet.

Mr. Abdy Collins, who was chairman,[35] asked what difference this would make, and the young man replied that for all he knew Micky might be speaking over another microphone concealed somewhere about the hall.

In the midst of this argument Micky's voice suddenly shouted out that the microphone could be moved if necessary.

It was placed well away to one side of the cabinet and Micky called loudly, asking if he could be heard at the back of the hall.

He was assured that he could and the microphone was replaced.

Mr. Collins then asked the sergeant if he was satisfied.

"PLANTS"

The young man agreed that the voice was obviously coming from the cabinet, but would not agree that it was necessarily the voice of a spirit.

As the normal sceptical outlook of the newcomer this attitude was understandable, but the sergeant finally ruined any hope of the meeting recovering its poise by suggesting that the two people who had so far received messages were planted in the audience.

[35] See Pioneer, Vol. 8, No. 3: "B. Abdy Collins – Psychical Researcher, Spiritualist and Author", "Jack Webber on the removal of the medium's coat", "The Explanation of Ghosts", & "Judge Converted Him to Spiritualism: Discussions on Golf Course – J. Arthur Findlay".

The audience, now thoroughly fed up, raised a wrathful protest, and Mr. Collins asked if the two recipients would stand and deny the accusation.

This they readily did, the woman obviously furious at such an outrageous suggestion, the man replying with such vigour that he silenced the sergeant once and for all.

But the damage was done. The conditions had deteriorated so much that although one of Flint's controls spoke a few words of encouragement, pointing out that it sometimes takes years to become convinced of survival, the meeting had to be terminated.

The one good message of the evening was the first to be delivered and went to the woman who was indignant at being accused of collusion.

She was Mrs. Bonning, of 3 Avenue Lodge, Avenue Road, Ramsgate, and she explained, during her testimony, that she had been on a visit to her daughter at Luton and had seen Flint's meeting advertised. Out of interest she had attended.

Her message began by Micky introducing a man named Punter, who, he declared, used to own a factory at Luton and was involved in a disaster.

Mrs. Bonning said she knew Mr. Punter and then the communicator himself spoke.

In a clear distinct voice he declared that he came from Luton where he had owned a hat factory.

Mrs. Bonning acknowledged this to be true and the communicator continued:

"We had a fire there and I tried to save some of the girls who were trapped."

Mrs. Bonning recalled the fire and added, ''You were attached to the Luton Spiritualist Church."

"No, that was my brother," replied Mr. Punter.

A few inconsequential greetings were exchanged, and after wishing to be remembered to his old associates and friends Mr. Punter took his departure.

MESSAGE FROM KITTY

But the communication did not end there for Micky went on to speak of a young woman named Kitty who was connected with the disaster, the inference being that she perished in the fire.

Mrs. Bonning acknowledged the name, and Kitty, in a hushed, breathless voice addressed her.

"You know I have been trying to get in touch with my people," she said. "Will you pass on a message telling them that I am happy, and send my love to them."

Mrs. Bonning told *Psychic News* that to her knowledge Flint would not have been aware of these facts.

The male recipient was addressed by a Jack Reid in spirit, the communication being placed.

Mr. A. H. L. Vigurs, past president of the Spiritualists' National Union, who addressed the meeting, spoke of the value of psychic research.

ARE WE OPEN-MINDED?

Its purpose, he said, was to bring home to man the knowledge of his own make up, but in people's investigations he advised caution.

"We approach this subject with what we think is an open mind," he declared, "but our minds are conditioned with all the inherited experiences of the world in which we live."

Psychic research was invaluable to this day and generation, but the tragedy was that one person's experiences were no good to another.

"At best," he said, "all they can do is to arouse interest and you will say, 'If that fellow is honest and sincere then there is something here which should be investigated."

—~—☼—~—

The second article is in the Home Circle where the sitters received more than the expected direct-voice and the rare entrancement of the medium (taken from Psychic News, April 22nd, 1950):

Father Shone Torch On Materialisation

"IT WAS UNDOUBTEDLY MY BOY !"

SITTERS AT A RECENT HOME CIRCLE HELD BY LESLIE FLINT, THE WELL-KNOWN DIRECT-VOICE MEDIUM, WITNESSED A SOMEWHAT RARE EXTENSION OF HIS PSYCHIC POWERS WHEN A YOUNG BOY IN SPIRIT PARTIALLY MATERIALISED TO HIS PARENTS.

While unable to fully materialise, the boy's head and face were clearly observed by the sitters and, more important still, by his parents. In fact, to obviate any possible error of identification the father shone a red light upon the materialised face.

"The moment I saw him side-face I knew it was him !" the father, Mr. H. J. MacDonald, told *Psychic News*, adding: "Then he turned his face full towards me and I shone the torch upon him. It was undoubtedly my boy."

SHAFTS OF LIGHT

Indication of phenomena other than the direct voice usually experienced at Flint's seances came when Micky, his child control, asked the sitters on either side of the medium to hold his hands. To ensure the full flow of power the entire circle linked hands.

Materialisation then began. Several shafts of light were seen close to the medium. These floated from the left to the right and were the prelude to the materialisation of a face that turned towards Mrs. MacDonald.

Simultaneously a voice spoke and declared itself to be Angus, Mr. and Mrs. MacDonald's son. He eagerly inquired whether his face was recognisable.

As Angus was recognised by his parents, his sister, Joan, was seen to be also attempting materialisation.

"HE KISSED ME!"

At one period they were observed together but not with sufficient clarity to ensure definite recognition. However, Angus, the more successful of the two, materialised again and this time his parents saw him by the light of the torch.

For his parents it was a memorable event: "He spoke to me and kissed me—it was wonderful," declared Mrs. MacDonald.

During the seance a girl was heard singing in the direct-voice and, returning again, continued to sing, her voice moving round the circle. As the girl appeared to be singing in a foreign tongue one of the sitters inquired of Micky who she was. Micky stated that she was a Javanese girl who had once been a temple dancer.

Further evidence of survival was received by Mr. MacDonald when he again attended the medium's home circle last week.

"LAGOS, 1902"

An unusual feature of this particular seance was the entrancement of Flint, who is usually conscious during manifestations.

Through the medium a voice addressed Mr, MacDonald and repeatedly called the name ". . . Saku ! . . . Saku !" and 'then—"Lagos, 1902."

Saku, Mr. MacDonald told *Psychic News*, was the name of a coloured boy who had worked with him during 1902-3 when he was employed by the Eastern Telegraph Company on one of their ships.

"I was a cable repairer and moved up and down the Gold Coast during that time on the Company's ship. I knew Saku very well and had a great liking for him," Mr. MacDonald later explained.

Transfiguration of the medium was effected by a number of spirit entities, several of the sitters declaring that the changes were definite and apparent. An illuminated plaque was also levitated during the seance.

In the next issue Pioneer will publish a public demonstration of Leslie Flint at Kingsway Hall before a two-thousand-strong audience, this time without interruption from any members of the audience.

LESLIE FLINT PUBLIC SÉANCES

—~—☼—~—

It was noted at the end of the last issue that Pioneer would publish a public séance by the direct – independent voice medium Leslie Flint, as shown below, taken from Psychic News, March 11th 1950

This is a facinating report of a public séance of direct – independent voice at Kingsway Hall, a popular venue of the time for large Spiritualist meetings to take place. This report includes an alleged spirit communicater using a member of the audience, a Mr Shead, to act as a *proxy* to get a message to the communicator's mother and father.

The image shown in the article below is from an earlier séance at Kingsway Hall by the "Link Association of Home Circles" in 1946, where over one thousand people witnessed direct voice. The photograph shows the cabinet Flint was sitting in; the microphone can be seen surrounded by Leslie Flint's home circle members.

Suicides Return And Prove They Could Not Die

HANGED HIMSELF ON BANISTERS DURING "A MAD MOMENT"

A FEW WEEKS AGO WHILST ATTENDING A SOCIAL GATHERING, A MAN NAMED SHEAD WAS DRAWN INTO CONVERSATION WITH A FELLOW-GUEST. INSTEAD OF THE USUAL PLEASANTRIES SO OFTEN DISCUSSED AT SUCH FUNCTIONS, THEIR CONVERSATION TURNED UPON DEATH AND TRAGEDY.

Mr. Shead's companion related a strange and moving story of his son's passing, of the rare circumstances surrounding the death, and the great shock it brought him and his wife.

On Saturday last, Mr. Shead sat in the Kingsway Hall, one of two thousand people who witnessed a direct-voice demonstration by Leslie Flint. Like the others, he probably hoped to receive some message from a loved one.

He did receive a message, but one that he could hardly have been prepared for, a message which showed that his conversation with the man at the social had been overheard and noted.

SPIRIT PUZZLES MICKY

A number of messages had been relayed when Micky, Flint's child control, spoke of the presence of a young man in spirit, who rather mysteriously refused to disclose his name.

This confounded Micky, who, naturally enough, wondered how it was possible to convey the spirit's identity without giving his name.

But the communicator was not confounded. He knew that Mr. Shead was present and he knew also that a detailing of the distinctive circumstances surrounding his passing would be sufficient proof of his identity.

Through Micky, he recalled how he had taken his own life whilst his parents were visiting the Empire Theatre at Hackney, East London.

"It was done in a mad moment—I regret it now—they came back and found me hanging from the banisters."

Immediately Mr. Shead's mind flew back to the social gathering and the strange conversation. "I know of that boy," he called out, adding, "His father told me about him."

"He wants you to tell them he is still alive—he knows that he shouldn't have done what he did. Joe Parrish has brought him," Micky replied.

After the meeting, Mr. Shead told our reporter that Micky's account of the spirit's passing had been the same, almost word for word, as that told by the father.

"Joe Parrish was a friend of my own son. He was drowned," he explained. "It was all perfectly true."

Very emotional and very moving was the reunion between a mother and son who had died at birth. The mother was Mrs. Wedge, of 21 Duncan House, Hackney, E.8.

GREW UP IN SPIRIT

With unmistakable pride in his voice, the boy informed her that he had grown up in the spirit world.

That he had quite recently helped his father who had been ill, was immediately confirmed by his father who was seated with the mother.

Special picture of the cabinet, the microphone and the circle at the great Kingsway Hall experimental seance (photo by Levine Bros.)

Then the boy withdrew and another voice came through the microphones. "Hello! I'm Lizzie Wedge. I brought Terry to speak to you. I'm just as excited as he is."

"Terry was still-born," Mrs. Wedge told *Psychic News*. "His voice was so like his brother's who is in the navy. It was marvellous." Mrs. Wedge had never met the medium before.

Behind another communication lay a story of friendship conceived during the war years and brought to a sudden end when the battleship H.M.S. Hood was sunk.

The threads of this friendship were renewed when Micky indicated the presence of a young sailor. Making contact with a woman, Micky proceeded to relay a description of the sailor and his passing, adding that Tony had brought him.

"His name is Michael. Your son and he were friends. They were transferred together from the Frobisher to the Hood. Had your boy not been recalled he too would have gone down with the Hood."

This highly condensed evidence was true in every detail, the woman, Mrs. Penn, of 32 Beachcroft Avenue, N, Malden, afterwards told our reporter. "Tony is my other son," she added.

CAPTURED IN BURMA

The very first message of the evening set a high standard which was maintained throughout this excellent meeting. The communicator, a Group Captain in the Air Force, delivered a graphic account of his death and the events preceding it.

Through Micky he stated that his name was Hank Moore and that he had belonged to the 73rd Fighter Squadron. Whilst in Burma, he continued, he had been captured and was placed on a Japanese prison ship which was torpedoed.

Mrs. Marchand, of 6 Hayes Road, Bromley, Kent, was able to confirm all these facts, and when Micky remarked that Roy had assisted the Group Captain to communicate, she called out: "Roy is my son."

"A short time ago I went to a reunion meeting of the 73rd Fighter Squadron and there met Hank's mother," she told *Psychic News*. "She told me how he had died."

The full effect of the return of Lilian Braithwaite, the famous actress, during this meeting was lost through the lack of response from persons in the audience whom she declared she knew.

Our reporter understands, however, that a group of people said after the meeting that they had known the actress and regretted not speaking up.

"I want a lady at the back by the name of Rogers. Her husband is here," was the beginning of yet another message which Micky guided, in his expert fashion, to a successful conclusion. Immediate response from a woman led to Micky asking: "Who is Winnie?" "I am Winnie," was the reply.

The contact established, Micky then said: "He's talking about Bentley." "That's where I live—Bentley House," the woman called out.

The conversation between the spirit and his wife was very emotional, but not so much so that the husband was unable to pick out a friend in the audience. "How are you, Hilda?" he asked.

When Mrs. Bullock of 116 Crofts Road, Kenton, Middlesex, was greeted by her husband, Arthur, from spirit, he spoke of being accompanied by a young man whose name he gave.

"He was in the Home Guard," Micky remarked, adding: "He wants you to tell his mother how sorry he is about what he did. He knows what a terrible shock it was for them when they found him in the kitchen. Give his love to Pearl."

"This man lived in the same village as I," Mrs. Bullock told our reporter. "He shot himself with his own gun and was found in the kitchen. Pearl was his girl friend."

Harold Vigurs, deputising for the Rev. Drayton Thomas, spoke clearly and lucidly on the mechanics of direct-voice communication.[16]

As at all previous public meetings conducted by Leslie Flint, the microphones were placed outside the cabinet.

—~—☼—~—

[16] Harold Vigurs, SNU President (1943-1948): see Pioneer SNU Presidents pdf booklet, as shown at the end of this issue.

Editors Note:

This is what caught my eye in the above article:

> **Behind another communication lay a story of friendship conceived during the war years and brought to a sudden end when the battleship H.M.S. Hood was sunk.**

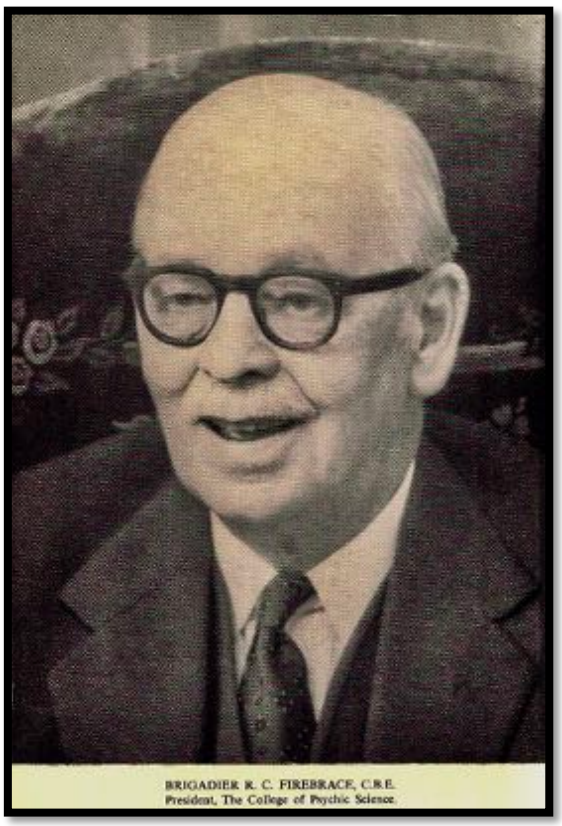
It was the sinking of the battleship HMS Hood, which was sunk at 06:00 hrs in the Denmark Strait on Saturday May 24th, 1941; it would be this incident which would put into motion the later arrest of Helen Duncan in 1944.

Later that day Roy C. Firebrace attended a séance with Helen Duncan in Edinburgh:

> **"There appeared during the séance the form of a control, Albert and he suddenly said a great British battleship has just been sunk"**

In 1958 Brigadier Roy Firebrace recounted his sitting:

> During the war I was head of Intelligence in Scotland and I had the opportunity of attending a seance with Mrs. Duncan in Edinburgh. There appeared during the seance the form of a control, Albert, and he suddenly said "a great British battleship has just been sunk". Well, I had no knowledge of this.
>
> After the seance I returned to my headquarters and as soon as I got back, about two hours after the sitting, I heard on the private line from the Admiralty in Scotland the news that the Hood had been sunk. And I was then able to check up that at the time of the seance the Admiralty had no knowledge whatever of the sinking of the ship.
>
> That was an instance of a materialised form, whatever you like to call it, which did give, I think the correct time, the fact about the sinking of the battleship. So you understand from the point of view of the authorities, Mrs. Duncan was a somewhat dangerous person.



> It is a fact that the police from Scotland Yard did come to the International Institute while these stories were current,[17] and consulted Mrs. Duncan there, and myself, as to how Mrs. Duncan could be prevented from giving this information out, because the authorities admitted that the information was authentic.

—~—☼—~—

Later that year another battleship was sunk: HMS Barham was sunk at 16:25 hrs, while steaming to cover an attack on Italian convoys on November 25th, 1941. Once again this incident was given in a séance, this time at Portsmouth, by the said control Albert—however, this time naming the torpedoed ship as HMS Barham.

Maurice Barbanell during lunch asked Percy Wilson if he had heard what happened at a Helen Duncan seance at Portsmouth the previous evening. Wilson was a senior official of the Ministry of War Transport and Barbanell told him that he had had a message that morning to say that at this séance a figure had appeared of a sailor with a capband reading HMS Barham and had given the information that the Barham had been sunk in the Mediterranean.

Wilson returned to his office:

> "I deliberately went along to Berkeley Square House to ask some of my senior colleagues and remember, the Ministry of Shipping was part of the Ministry of War Transport whether they had heard of the sinking of the Barham in the Mediterranean. No one had heard, but one of them said he would make an enquiry; and he told me later that afternoon that it was not known in the Ministry of War Transport. That was on the day after the message had been given in Portsmouth."

—~—☼—~—

The full interesting discussion on Helen Duncan with Psychic News editor Maurice Barbanell, former SNU President Percy Wilson,[18] and Roy Firebrace, who was President of the College of Psychic Science for 13 years,[19] is taken from part of a conference organised by the College of Psychic Science at Brighton on November 28th and 30th, 1958: "The Problem of Survival", published in its journal, Light, Spring, 1959.

Brigadier Roy C. Firebrace CBE, born in Halifax, Nova Scotia in 1889, had had a distinguished military career, acting as an observer and interpreter for Winston Churchill at the Potsdam and Yalta conferences; when Molotov visited London in 1942, he ran the War Office Russian Liaison Group and, while British Military Attaché at Riga, he formed a direct voice circle. In 1946 Firebrace retired from the army and died on November 10th, 1974.[20] At the end of this article his obituary is published from Psychic News, November 23rd, 1974, which gives some of his extraordinary experiences with Helen Duncan and Alec Harris; he was also involved in test sittings with Leslie Flint.

Flint on numerous occasions submitted to tests with an infra-red telescope, enabling the researchers to see in the dark séance; naturally, if you had something to hide it would not be a good idea to submit yourself to this type of investigation! Numerous fake mediums had been

---

[17] Pioneer, Vol. 6, No. 5: "International Institute for Psychical Research – The Case for Real Psychical Research by Arthur Findlay."

[18] See Pioneer, Vol. 3, No. 4: "Helen Duncan séance during her 1944 Trial – *New séance evidence!*"

[19] London Spiritualist Alliance, founded in 1883, changing its name in 1955 to The College of Psychic Science. Later, in 1970, it became The College of Psychic Studies, as it remains today.

[20] See Psypioneer, Vol 11, Nos. 4/5: "Direct Voice – Two Views"; "Direct Voice: Some Difficulties and a Warning by Marcy Phillimore"; "Direct Voice Phenomena by Brigadier R. C. Firebrace, C.B.E.".

caught through infra-red detection and publicly exposed in the psychic press.[21] Flint notes in his "Voices in the Dark", first published in 1971:

A favourite explanation of my voice phenomena is that I am some kind of super-ventriloquist-cum-mimic.

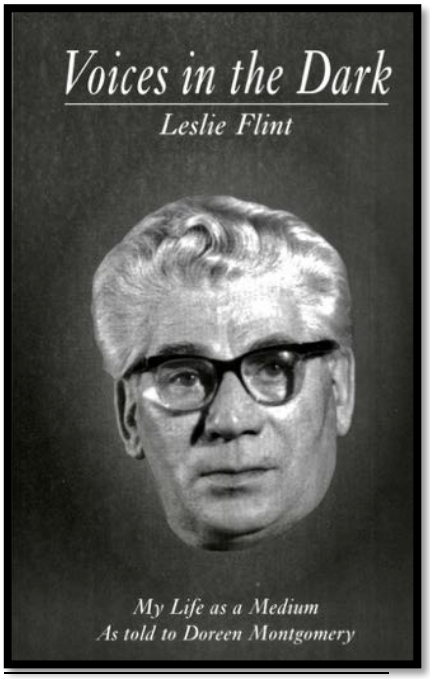
It is not possible for ventriloquism to work in complete darkness; it requires distraction. Psychical researcher and author Hereward Carrington (1880-1958), ably tackled this suggestion, "Ventriloquism, Considered as A Possible Explanation of 'Independent Voice' Phenomena", in his 1930 book, "The Story of Psychic Science"; this is published in Pioneer, Vol. 5, No. 6.

One of a series of stringent test seances, with members of the Society for Psychical Research, at which infra-red telescopes and throat microphones were used

Another test seance on the premises of the Society for Psychical Research with the Rev. Drayton Thomas and researchers from the Society

Leslie Flint in his book, Chapter 11, talks of the tests referred to by Brigadier Firebrace:

> In his capacity as a member of the Council of the S.P.R. Drayton Thomas had made contact with another psychical researcher who was an electronics expert and able to provide various devices which could be used to prove or to disprove the reality of my voices and a series of tests were held, some at the flat of the electronics expert, others on the premises of the Society for Psychical Research under the aegis of the Rev. Drayton Thomas and in the presence of such notable researchers as Brigadier R. C. Firebrace, C.B.E., Father Arthur Sharp, Mr F. Sibley and others too numerous to mention here.



The conditions under which I sat for these tests were: (*a*) my lips were sealed with plaster, (*b*) a throat microphone was attached to my throat and wired to amplifiers so that the slightest sound made through my own larynx would be magnified enormously, (*c*) the researchers were able to watch my every movement in the dark by means of an infra-red telescope and finally, (*d*) my hands were held by a sitter on either side of me.

Voices spoke at many of the tests under these conditions and on more than one occasion a researcher viewing through the infra-red telescope was able to see the ectoplasmic larynx through which the discarnate speak forming on my left side some two feet distant from me which is the point in space where the spirit voices are normally located during my seances.

[21] See Psypioneer, Vol. 4, No. 5: "Fraud Uncovered at Chesterfield Spiritualist Camp – Infra-Red Motion Pictures Reveal This Great Deception".

My thanks are due to Brigadier Firebrace for his courtesy in allowing me to quote an extract from his recent letter to me which speaks for itself:

> I well remember the test sittings I had with you and Drayton Thomas. At these sittings, during the seance we had an infra-red telescope focused on you and you had a throat microphone round your throat. There was an electronic expert present who watched the instruments which were attached to the throat microphone. I can well remember that under these conditions we got the direct voice without any indication on the instruments that it was registered by the throat microphone. But the voices were fainter than on previous sittings I had had with you. An interesting point was on the final occasion when with a voice speaking faintly the infra-red telescope suddenly fused; the voice immediately doubled in volume. This indicated to me that infra-red rays weaken mediumship in some way. I must add you could not possibly have known that the infra-red telescope was out of action. Altogether an impressive exhibition of mediumistic power.[22]

—~—☼—~—

Percy Wilson

Firebrace makes an interesting observation that the voice phenomena were substantially reduced with the infra-red telescope on the said occasion of testing. Once the infra-red telescope was off, the phenomena were immediately stronger! Former SNU President (1950-1953) Percy Wilson was well versed in technical work; to give some background, he was technical adviser to "The Gramophone" magazine from 1924 to 1938, and its technical editor from 1953 to 1966. Wilson wrote two books, "Modern Gramophones and Electrical Reproducers", in 1929 and "The Gramophone Handbook" in 1957. He was a founder-member of the British Sound Recording Association and also a member of the Audio Engineering Society, USA, with a citation award in 1966. It was Wilson who put together the infra-red telescope which was used at Kingsway Hall to keep the medium under observation.[23]

Published in the Two Worlds, January 7th, 1949: "The Infra-Red Telescope and Its Uses in Seances", by Percy Wilson, M.A., as published below:

> In some accounts of the recent Leslie Flint meeting at the Kingsway Hall the Rev. C. Drayton Thomas is reported as saying that the infra-red apparatus, through which he had kept Mr. Flint under observation during a dark seance, was on the Secret List.[24]
>
> That is not so. The apparatus Mr. Thomas has used with such encouraging results on three occasions was put together by me largely from ex-Service material. There is nothing secret about it. The infra-red image converter tube on which the design is based has been released for general sale for some time, and can be obtained for 14s. 6d. For the rest, there is nothing particularly difficult or "advanced" in the design to anyone with experience of electronic research. The most troublesome parts are first,

[22] "I was therefore doubly blessed when I met and was tested by men of the calibre of the Rev. Drayton Thomas, Father Arthur Sharp and Brigadier Firebrace who, when the tests they made were successful, publicly stated their conviction."

[23] There are many references to Percy Wilson in Pioneer, for example in the free pdf booklets "SNU Presidents", as shown at the end of this issue.

[24] Charles Drayton Thomas, a Methodist minister, an early sitter of Mrs Osborn Leonard; he wrote many books and contributed to SPR Journal and Proceedings numerous papers on the mechanics of mediumship that repay careful study.

to obtain the optical system required; and second, so to design and construct the apparatus as to safeguard the user from electric shock in every possible contingency, since a D.C. voltage in the region of 6,000 to 7,000 volts is used. (The corresponding apparatus of German design which is installed in the rooms of the S.P.R. uses over 17,000 volts in order to get better definition).

Two Warnings

Perhaps it will not be out of place for me to give two warnings to such of your readers as may be thinking of acquiring or building an infra-red unit.

First, remember that as yet we do not know whether infrared rays in the region where the image-converter operates will be deleterious to phenomena or medium. We have good reason to suppose that visible light is deleterious; and it would be a curious coincidence (or, possibly, a significant observation) if the border-line between the noxious and the innocuous were found to be the same as that between the visible and the invisible. Since, therefore, at present the infrared rays have to be "beamed" on to the object to be viewed through the telescope, it is an essential precaution to switch on the beam *before the seance starts* and not suddenly during the seance. In these circumstances the beam will be there before the medium goes into a sensitive state. Phenomena may be inhibited thereby (indeed, Mr. Thomas's experiments seem to indicate that there is interference) but at any rate the medium will be protected against the shock caused by sudden exposure.

May Mislead

The second warning is that there is on the "surplus" market at present an infra-red apparatus using a Zamboni Pile which may mislead the unwary. The apparatus was designed for use by Commandos as a "beacon marker" and is quite unsuitable for our purposes. The pile will give a voltage of some 2,000-3,000 provided that only a tiny current is drawn. But as soon as the infra-red illumination is increased to an extent sufficient to ensure even a faint definition, the current drawn by the image converter tube becomes more than the pile can deliver, and the pile therefore polarises, its voltage drops, and the image blacks out entirely.[25]

—~—☼—~—

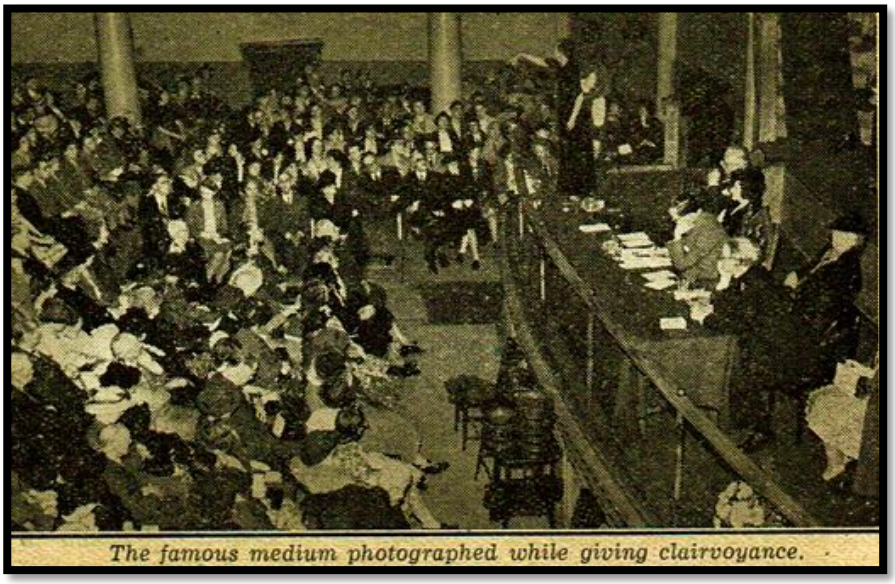
As previously mentioned, Kingsway Hall, Holborn, London, built in 1912 and demolished in 1998, was a popular venue for large Spiritualist meetings. It was considered to have the finest acoustics in London for recording orchestral and choral repertory; one can only imagine what it was like with seating for 2,000 people listening to Hannen Swaffer, Maurice Barbanell, and watching demonstrations through the likes of Estelle Roberts, Helen Hughes, etc. in this great hall!

In 1957 Spiritualist history was made when more than 1,000 people witnessed the first-ever attempt at public post-mortem portraiture by famous psychic artist Frank Leah, with Helen Hughes making the link clairvoyantly/clairaudiently at the Kingsway Hall, the meeting organised by Two Worlds.[26]

[25] Readers who are interested will find information about this infrared apparatus (though not enough to enable them to construct a telescope for themselves) in the *Journal of Scientific Instruments* for December 1947 and in *Electronic Engineering* for September and October 1948. An extended list of references is given in the latter articles.

[26] Pioneer, Vol. 4, No. 3: "Frank Leah – Psychic artist", "First-ever attempt at public post-mortem portraiture by Frank Leah partnered by the clairvoyant Helen Hughes".

Estelle Roberts gave her only public demonstration of direct voice in this hall. During the war years numerous meetings took place; this rather poor reproduction shown is Estelle Roberts seen giving clairvoyance at the Kingsway Hall on September 12th, 1942. Sitting at the table closest is Hannen Swaffer; next to him is Maurice Barbanell.


The famous medium photographed while giving clairvoyance.

The report was published in Psychic News the following week. The meeting was arranged by Psychic News in aid of its fund to supply free literature to the Forces; it is noted in the report:

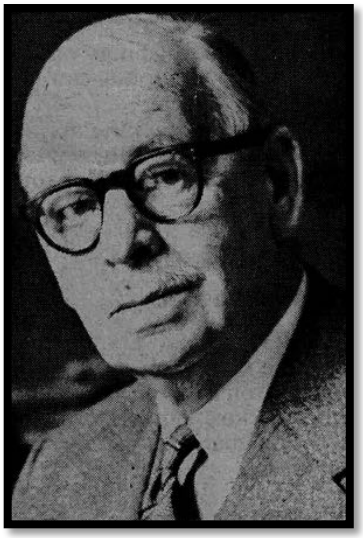
> Few of the 2,000 people who were at the Kingsway Hall, London, last Saturday, could withhold tears when Estelle Roberts, in a triumphant demonstration of clairvoyance, reunited a father and mother with their son who had passed on less than a year ago.
>
> The dramatic series of spirit messages began when the medium, pointing to two people seated side by side, asked:
>
> "*Which one of you two has a portrait of a young man with you ?*"
>
> When the woman answered, Estelle declared,
>
> "*You are his mother.*"
>
> Then the medium turned to the man seated by her and said:
>
> "*You are his father. I know because your son is here and he tells me.*"

—~—☼—~—

Below is Brigadier R.C. Firebrace's obituary notice as previously referenced:

There must have been a wonderful welcome for this doughty exponent in the spirit world, which is enriched by his presence.

—~—☼—~—



A MATERIALISED form speaking to him in Russian, a language he knew, was among the remarkable Survival proofs received by Brigadier R. C. Firebrace, 85, who passed on last week.

He became one of the most knowledgeable and experienced Spiritualists who had witnessed every phase of mediumship.

Yet his psychic quest began seemingly by accident when, as a young staff officer, he was stationed near Salisbury, Wilts. A lover of detective stories, he used to borrow them from a neighbour's collection.

Name appealed

One day he chose a book called, "Phantom Walls," which seemed a promising name for a thriller. He discovered it dealt with Survival evidence by Sir. Oliver Lodge. The neighbour was the famous scientist's daughter.

"I was struck by the evidence it presented," he said. "Later I met Sir Oliver. From then on psychics became my study."

As soon as he could he formed a home circle. It began with table tipping indicating letters of the alphabet that spelt out messages.

One communication promised the table would move when no one touched it — and it did.

Firebrace then had sittings with professional mediums. Through them, "I had convincing proof of the identity of my father, including facts entirely unknown to me which I had to verify from my mother."

Several mediums forecast he would get the direct voice in his own circle.

Direct voice heard

Specialising in foreign affairs, Firebrace became British Military Attache at Riga and later held the same post in Moscow.

An accomplished linguist, he was fluent in French, German, Italian, Russian and Hindustani.

At Riga he formed a direct-voice circle. After sitting regularly twice a week for nearly two years, the trumpet moved with great speed and freedom all over the room. The first spirit voice was heard.

The development continued, resulting in intelligible communications, sometimes lasting half an hour, of almost continuous speech on serious themes.

Among his outstanding experiences was attending a Helen Duncan materialisation seance. One solid-looking figure conversed with him in Russian.

"I consider this to be one of the finest proofs of spirit communication," he said. "No one could suggest Mrs Duncan's subconscious mind spoke Russian."

Firebrace made a pact with a friend who also spoke Russian. Whoever passed on first would try to return through a medium and repeat two Russian words. "I regret to say they were swear words," said Firebrace.

Full name given

Two years later his friend passed on. After an interval of four years, through an English medium the friend's christian and surnames were given.

The control said the communicator was trying to transmit something in a foreign language. With difficulty the control repeated phonetically the two Russian words.

Helen Duncan in 1942

Firebrace paid tribute to an Estelle Roberts voice seance he attended. "The evidence was clear cut and direct, full christian and surnames being given." [27]

He also praised an Alec Harris seance at Cardiff where 18 forms materialised. They varied from small children to a figure "six inches taller than I am" — he was a six-footer.

He was one of the few to witness the whole process of materialisation. It occurred at a seance in good red light with Louisa Bolt, who was roped to her chair.

First came what seemed like a puff of smoke from her spleen. This formed into vapour, at the end of which there emerged a perfectly-shaped hand, though cut off at the wrist. From the hand the vapour trail led back to the medium.

Firebrace asked permission, which was given, to touch the hand. It felt exactly like a human hand, complete even to fingernails, but was cold to the touch.

He participated in test sittings with voice medium Leslie Flint.

An infra-red telescope was focused on the medium, who wore a throat microphone. An electronic expert watched the instruments which were attached to this microphone.

Under these conditions the direct voice came without any indication on the instruments that it was registered by the throat microphone.

For 13 years Firebrace was president of the London Spiritualist Alliance, now the College of Psychic Studies.

He was the first and only president of the Survival Joint Research Committee. Its Spiritualist and research members have worked harmoniously in psychic experiments since the formation in 1963. [28]

---

[27] Pioneer, Vol. 3, No. 3: "Behind the scenes at Estelle Roberts' Voice Seances – Psychic News".

[28] "Survival Joint Research Committee Trust" (SJRCT), a charity founded in 1963, *exclusively concerned with the survival of human personality after bodily death.* The SJRCT have strongly supported my work for around fifteen years in connection with my research and publication of Psypioneer and this journal, Pioneer.

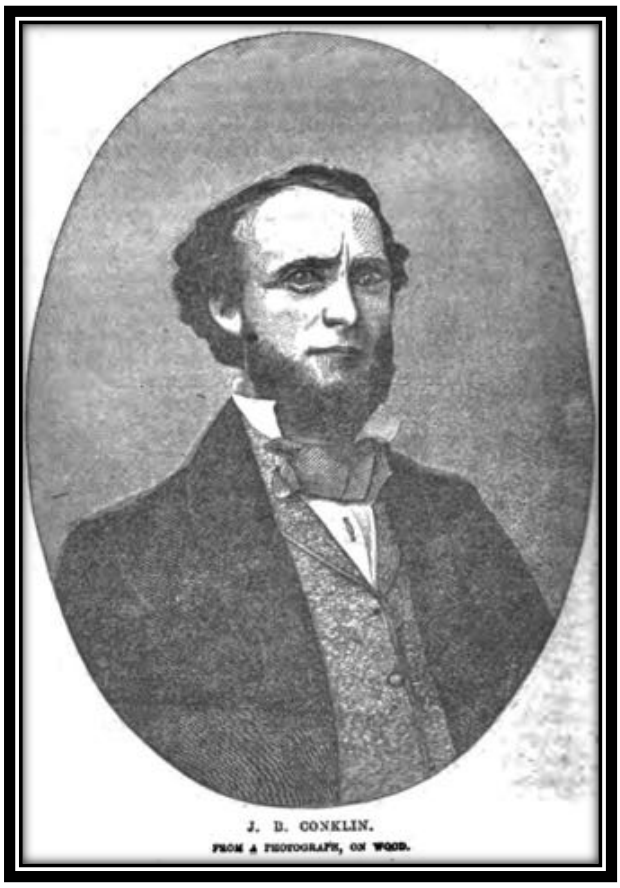
In addition to being a leading astrologer, Firebrace practised a system of healing by radionics based on diagnosing blood spots.

There must have been a wonderful welcome for this doughty exponent in the spirit world, which is enriched by his presence.

JOHN B. CONKLIN

An Early American Pioneer Medium

In the last issue of Pioneer it is noted:



My research into J.B. Conklin began some years ago in Psypioneer, Vol. 5, No. 10, October 2009: "Nettie Colburn Maynard (part one)" [29] The second part was published in Vol. 6, No. 2, February 2010: "Dr. Walter Franklin Prince versus Simon P. Kase". It is during the second article that the alleged involvement occurred between John B. Conklin and President Abraham Lincoln. This research would bring into play a more critical look into Lincoln – Maynard – Conklin.

At the time of the above-mentioned articles I had little early biographical information on Conklin. This came to light more recently from a Nichols' Monthly: [30] "THE LIFE OF A MEDIUM *Or, the Spiritual Experiences of J. B. Conklin*", which is archived at the valuable website run by historian Marc Demarest, "The International Association for the Preservation of Spiritualist and Occult Periodicals" [31] (IAPSOP). [32]

The last issue of Pioneer quoted from Nichols' Monthly John Conklin's early development as a medium, his meetings with the eldest Fox sister, then known as Ann Leah (née Fox) Brown, where Conklin eventually received a communication via the alphabet from a spirit to guide him through his work. It was claimed to be the celebrated Quaker George Fox. Conklin became a test medium; one first-*time* sitter was then known as actress Emma Hardinge.

In this issue Pioneer will continue to quote some of the research done in Psypioneer as previously noted in relationship to the alleged involvement occurring between the medium, John B. Conklin, and President Abraham Lincoln.

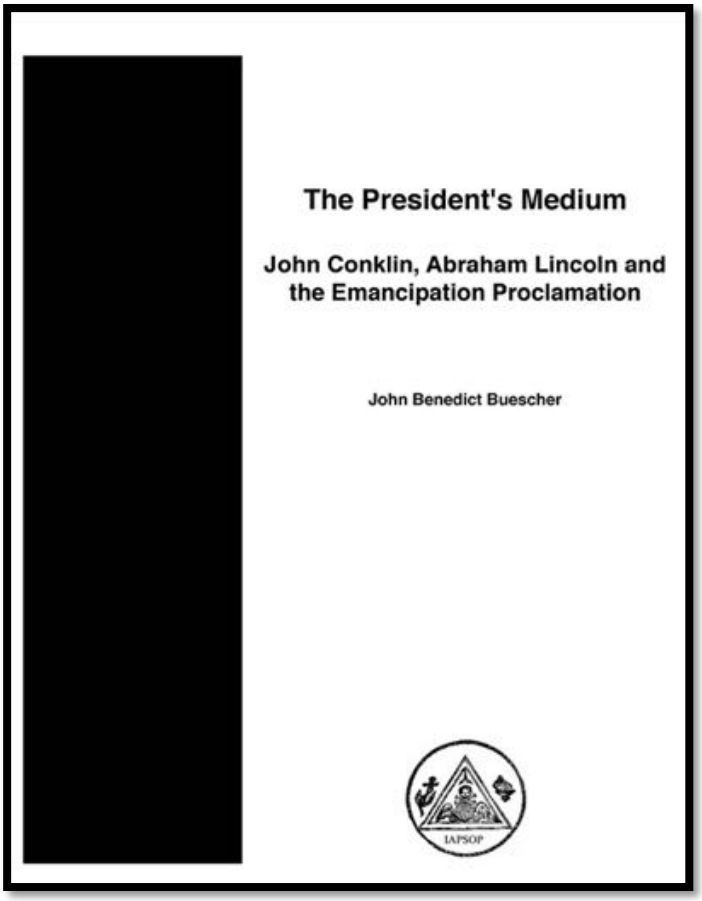
—~—☼—~—

[29] "Was Abraham Lincoln a Spiritualist?" by Nettie Colburn.

[30] A Magazine of Social Science and Progressive Literature, 1855-1857, monthly, New York, NY, then Cincinnati, OH. Publisher: H. Watkin & Valentine Nicholson. Editor: Thomas Low Nichols and Mary Sargeant Gove Nichols.

[31] "The IAPSOP is a US-based private organization focused on the digital preservation of Spiritualist and occult periodicals published between the Congress of Vienna and the start of the Second World War. Our all-volunteer staff digitizes, indexes and makes available free of charge these periodicals, in our archive, for use by students and researchers: http://iapsop.com".

[32] The site also archives the now defunct issues of Psypioneer (May 2004 until December of 2016) noted on the index page of the Pioneer issues.



After sending out the previous October issue of Pioneer I received an e-mail from Marc Demarest, where he noted: *Reading the latest issue of the Pioneer… wanted to make sure you were aware that there's a precedence issue, potentially*. Marc is referring to the excellent paper by American historian and author John Buescher, published in May 2015 and available as a free download,

"The President's Medium: John Conklin, Abraham Lincoln and the Emancipation Proclamation" [33]

I was not aware of Buescher's research into Conklin and Lincoln, whereas in the last issue I took a candid look at some of Conklin's early development as a medium from the autobiographical sketch referred to. Buescher gives a much more detailed insight into his life and his work as a medium, both positive and negative. Using genealogy, census reports and general research, we find that some of the timeline, birth date and some of the events are likely to be misplaced.

For example, John Buescher notes:

Conklin states: "I was born in the city of New York, in 1825"; however, his research has shown:

> "John Benjamin Conklin, born September 24, 1820, in New York City; died August 4, 1870; buried at the Cemetery of the Evergreens, Brooklyn and Queens, New York City."

Albeit his age may seem relatively unimportant on the surface it can throw some doubt on his seafaring days, where he claimed he was saved on occasions while at sea by *Providence* simply by the timeline of the *historic facts* by claiming to be born in 1825 rather than five years earlier in 1820.

John Buescher notes early in his paper:

> "Because no one has ever published any historical research on our man John B. Conklin, we are forced to begin by fishing for the most basic details of his life, without being able to get our bearings by consulting anyone's previous work."

Below is some of the research originally published in Psypioneer Vol 6, No. 2, February 2010, which appears to have been overlooked over the years.

[33] http://iapsop.com/jbb/2015__buescher___the_presidents_medium_introduction.pdf

Dr Walter Franklin Prince

versus

Simon P. Kase

Considering the worldwide attention that has been given to "*Was Abraham Lincoln a Spiritualist?*" by Nettie Colburn and to earlier accounts by Simon Kase, there is little ready information as to what actually happened and whether the scattered reports are authentic.

There is, to my knowledge, only one investigation into the accounts where the information is collated—by the prominent American psychical researcher, Dr Walter Franklin Prince (1863-1934) [34] —but this has remained rather obscure.

It should be noted that Dr Walter Franklin Prince spells the name of one of the central characters of the story, the medium J. B. Conklin, *incorrectly* as 'Conkling'.

Prince's research was published by the Society for Psychical Research (SPR) in its Journal (JSPR), December 1930, [35] then a private publication, unlike its Proceedings. We express our thanks to the SPR for supplying Psypioneer with a photocopy, which we republish below:

THE AETIOLOGY OF A "PSYCHICAL" LEGEND

BY DR WALTER FRANKLIN PRINCE

FOR half a century a certain story, in one or another form, relating to Abraham Lincoln, has been in circulation, and I do not remember to have seen in print any refutation. At last it has come to pass that a book entitled *The History of Spiritualism* [36] boldly affirms:

Walter Franklin Prince

"We may fitly end this short review of the early days in America by an event where spirit intervention proved to be of importance in the world's history. This was the instance of the inspired messages which determined the action of Abraham Lincoln at the supreme moment of the Civil War. The facts are beyond dispute....." And it has come to pass that a magazine purporting to be devoted to research [37] declares: "There is a remarkable story extant in regard to the influence which led Lincoln to conceive the idea of emancipation and to act upon it by the issue of his famous proclamation. It seems authentic and if so, it deserves to be widely known." When a legend has reached the point that it is sponsored by what to many readers are authorities,

[34] Prince was born in Detroit, Maine, on April 22nd, 1863. He became director of research and editor of publications, 1920-1925c, to the American Society for Psychical Research, (ASPR, founded in 1885 by William Barrett). He was one of the founders and research officer to the Boston Society for Psychic Research (BSPR, founded 1925) and later become President of the Society for Psychical Research, London 1930-31.

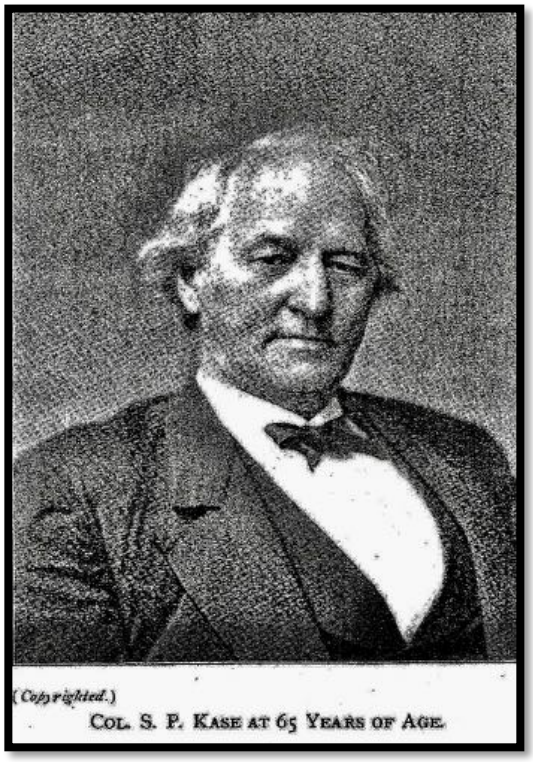
[35] JSPR, Volume 26, 1930, pages 148-157.

[36] By Sir Arthur Conan Doyle (1926), i. 146.

[37] *Psychic Research* (New York, March 1930), xxiv. 115.

when it then attracts editorial attention from the Boston *Herald*, and revives in Spiritualist [38] and other periodicals, it is time to confront it with an array of historical facts, and of interest to trace it to its origins.

The learned writer of the magazine article says that "the credit for the preservation of this story is due to Mrs M. E. Williams," [39] and after grateful acknowledgment that "our thanks are due to this lady for her kind permission to reproduce the story," proceeds to reproduce it as embodied in a pamphlet by Mrs Williams, and, she declares, told by Colonel S. P. Kase [40] of Philadelphia to her, and set down at her request so that it should not be lost to posterity. This version, in honour of Mrs Williams, who is thus credited with its salvation from oblivion, we will call the W-version.


(Copyrighted.)
COL. S. P. KASE AT 65 YEARS OF AGE.

According to the W-version, then, Col. Kase obeyed a voice which told him, as he was walking on a street in Washington, to enter the house of a medium named Conkling, who at once engaged him to carry a letter written by himself (Conkling) to the President. Conkling, however, accompanied Kase, but remained in an adjoining room while the latter, equally a stranger to Lincoln, presented the letter which stated that its writer had been sent "by spiritual influences to confer with you regarding the interests of the nation." Lincoln consented to see Conkling and did so the following Sunday. Four weeks later Kase was present one evening in a certain house, together with President and Mrs Lincoln and other persons, when a young girl advanced toward Lincoln with closed eyes and said: "Sir, you were called to the position you occupy for a very great purpose. The world is universally in bondage. It must be physically set free, so that it may mentally rise to its proper status. There is a spiritual Congress supervising the affairs of this nation as well as a congress at Washington. This republic will lead the van of republics throughout the world."

This is as Col. Kase remembered it at this telling, and he added: "This was a text on which she lectured the President for a full hour and a half, dwelling strongly on the importance of

[38] E.g. *Light* (London, 26 April 1930), 1. 199.

[39] Mrs Williams, the author of the pamphlet referred to (*Abraham Lincoln Facts Indisputable*, 4th ed.), was invited by prominent French Spiritualists, in 1894, to give sittings for the materialization of spirits in Paris, and planned a tour over Europe, which was suddenly terminated by her exposure in that city, in the Ironic of a Spiritualist, by Spiritualists, including M. Leymarie, of the *Revue Spirite*. She was "grabbed" and found in the pantaloons and other garments appropriate to a male spirit, and the mask and drapery which stood for another spirit, and other apparatus, were discovered. The whole matter was published in a special supplement to *Light* (1894, xiv. 545-52; cp. xiv. 566-9) and was extensively printed in American journals. I may instance the New York *Sun* of 23 November 1894, which published cuts from photographs of the paraphernalia. The lady has since had a variegated career. Within the last decade a clergyman and his wife, acting under my instructions, twice caught her impersonating a spirit.

[40] "Col. Kase was a very prominent Spiritualist of the more credulous type. I have an abundance of material showing that he was deceived by some of the most notorious tricksters of his time. His reports of what took place in his presence were so far from the facts that I would not trust his memory or judgment for anything he said on the subject of Lincoln and mediums, because I would expect that any interest which the President showed in the way of trying out mediums would be exaggerated and warped out of semblance to the reality. The fact that Col. Kase was "fully assured in his own mind" that Lincoln was influenced by messages through a medium to issue the Emancipation Proclamation, weighs little in view of the cases of fakery of whose genuineness he was also fully assured.

the emancipation of the slaves; saying that the war could not end unless slavery were abolished." He also thought he remembered hearing "the child" predict that the North would undergo no military reverses after the issue of the proposed proclamation. Then "the little girl" woke, and a lady began to play the piano. [41]

Finally, according to Kase, Lincoln, a few weeks afterward, issued the proclamation, to take effect on 1 January 1863, and Kase was quite certain that he was caused to do so by the message through "the child." [42]

But it happens that the world does not owe such a debt of gratitude to Mrs Williams, after all. Many years ago, at a time when that lady's illustrious career was not far advanced, Col. Kase told the story to Mrs Emma Hardinge Britten, who embalmed it in her *Nineteenth Century Miracles* (1884, pp. 484-7), published in 1884. This we will call the B-version. Moreover, as Mrs Britten informs us, the tale had been told by him still earlier, and printed in a Spiritualist paper called the *Spiritual Scientist,* and the B-version includes extracts from that organ.

There are many discrepancies between the two versions. [43] According to B "the President looked somewhat disappointed," and it is explained that the name sent in, S. P. Kase, gave Lincoln the impression that S. P. Chase, Secretary of the Treasury, had called. According to W, the President was "apparently a little frightened," and it is explained that Kase much resembled George Washington (to meet whom, in 1862, one would naturally be a bit startled). In each version Kase purports to give a copy of the letter; the two are not verbally identical, although essentially so.

The versions of the trance address verbally differ more widely, although the trend of thought is similar. This is shown by the first sentences of B: "You, sir, as President of the Republic, are called to the position you occupy for a very important purpose. The world is not only groaning under the weight of mental and spiritual bondage, but four millions, made in God's image, are enduring physical slavery. Their yokes must be broken, the fetters must be severed," etc. And by a sentence farther on: "This civil war will never cease; the shout of victory will never ring through the North, will never reverberate along the valleys of the South; the olive-branch of peace will never wave over your fields, and lakes, and mountains, till you issue a proclamation of freedom—a proclamation that shall set forever free the enslaved millions of your distracted country."

The effect of all this eloquence, says Col. Kase, "was that President Lincoln was convinced as to the course he should pursue; the command coming from the all-seeing angel world was not to be overlooked, so like a faithful servant, when convinced of his duty, he feared not to do it and to proclaim freedom by the Emancipation Proclamation to four millions of slaves. That Proclamation was issued on September 22, 1862, to take effect the first day of January, 1862." [Should read 1863]

I have no objection to any proof the "all-seeing angel world" may give as to the validity of its messages, but should lose something of my respect for Lincoln if he accepted a mere

---

[41] At this point the magazine omits the only sentences *of* the Colonel which make the piano interesting; his statement that one side of it hopped four inches above the floor, in time to the music, and continued to do so with four men roosting upon it.

[42] It may also be noted that according to Mrs Williams's pamphlet Mrs Maynard was for two years, 1863-1865, "engaged exclusively by President Lincoln, and made her home in the White House where she gave the President seances almost daily." This is a fearful perversion of the facts, as measured by the statements of Mrs Maynard herself, who claims to have given "a number of seances with President Lincoln and his wife" in February and March 1864, and mentions only seven other meetings with him, several of which were casual only.

[43] One queer item of Kase's story may be noted in passing. He reported that he advised the President to write a letter to Conkling making an appointment with him, although all the while that gentleman was sitting in an adjoining room. To those who remember how accessible Lincoln it was is incomprehensible that, having become interested in Conkling, he did not call him in then and there.

mediumistic harangue as proof. Still, if this is history, we must accept it. Fortunately the good Colonel said something else, which enables us to estimate his reliability as a historian.

In the version told to Mrs Williams, he added: "I believe we had twenty-six battles after this great event [the preliminary proclamation of *22* September], and all were successful on the Union side except possibly one or two unimportant skirmishes." This affirmation seemingly applies to the remainder of the war, and is an egregiously mistaken one. Of major defeats which the North afterward underwent there may be cited the battles of Fredericksburg, Chancellorsville, Chickamauga, Cold Harbor, Petersburg. Grant fought battle after battle with Lee in the Wilderness campaign, which battles certainly were not victories. Among minor defeats may be listed the battles of Drury's Bluff, Olustee, Sabine Crossroads, Pleasant Hill, Pine Mountain, Kenesaw Mountain, New Market. If the Colonel was capable of such contradiction of public records of his own day, how could one rest content on his uncorroborated story of an unrecorded mediumistic speech which took place years before the telling?

In the B-version, we find the Colonel saying that it was, not through the rest of the war, but "in the intermediate time" between the two proclamations that there occurred twenty-six battles, and now he says that "every one of them was a success upon the Union side." By the time of the W-version his formula had somehow got twisted, but the earlier one was only a shade less false. For between *22* September 1862 and 1 January 1863, came the terrible Union defeat of Fredericksburg, the defeat of Sherman at Vicksburg, the failure of Rosecrans at Stone River, the stalemate of even the iron-willed Grant, and on the very day of the final proclamation the rebels broke the blockade of Galveston. Instead of being a period of victory it was one of special gloom for the North.

Considering that Kase was able to imagine and allege a military Utopia which never existed, that he apparently recorded not a line of the trance address and only vaguely attempted to fix its date as "some three or four weeks" before the preliminary proclamation, that he told his story years after the proclamations and the war and Lincoln's death had passed into history, and that the sentences attributed to the medium cannot be verbally correct or they would not so markedly differ in the two versions, even if I knew no more, I should say that without impugning Col. Kase's honesty in the least, I could only infer from his yarns that the medium probably said *something* about freeing the slaves, about the war and about the country.

But I do know something more, as does every person familiar with American history, and that is, that on 22 July 1862, Abraham Lincoln read to his Cabinet the draft of a preliminary proclamation of emancipation, fully a month before, according to Kase, he listened to the trance-address from "the all-seeing angel world" which (still according to Kase) first convinced him that such a proclamation should be made. The only reason it was not actually issued that month was because it was thought best to defer it until after a Union victory. When Lee had been checked in the battle of Antietam, 16-17 September, it was determined that a fit time had come. This explodes the legend thoroughly.

Nettie Colburn Maynard

But there is more to learn. In the B-version we find that the medium was Nettie Maynard (really, at that time, Nettie Colburn). And she, as it happens, thirty-nine years ago wrote a book entitled *Was Abraham Lincoln a Spiritualist?* (Philadelphia 1891). Mrs Nettie

Colburn Maynard included in this book her version of what happened on the same evening with Lincoln which Kase had in mind, and of the trance-address. She had every motive not to minimize the facts.

The first particular which strikes our attention is that the medium, whom Kase remembered as "a little girl," (he calls her this thrice, and says that she reminded him of the scriptural passage about "babes and sucklings") in 1862, was, according to her own testimony, "a mere child" in 1845, and that she began to engage in public lecturing in 1856. That is, she was probably not less than *22* years old, and very likely older, [44] when she delivered the celebrated trance oration. [45]

The next fact which we discover from her testimony is that the trance address, the first time she ever saw President Lincoln, was not some time in August, as Kase remembered it (although even that date was fatal to the claim that she inspired the preliminary proclamation), but sometime in December 1862. [46] But the preliminary proclamation had been issued more than two months before, and this had declared that on 1 January 1863, all slaves in States then continuing rebellious would be legally free. The absurdity of claiming that Nettie brought about the act already *in esse*, *or* the one already *in posse*, needs no accentuation.

But Nettie herself does not make the claim, or anything like it. She admits that she knew that the final Proclamation was at hand. This is her entire account of the address, the parts she thought most important italicised as she italicised them. Beginning with the statement that no one but Lincoln seemed to understand her "until that portion was reached that related to the forthcoming Emancipation Proclamation," she goes on thus: "He was charged with the utmost solemnity and force of manner not to abate the terms of its issue, and not to delay its enforcement as a law beyond the opening of the year; and he was assured that it was to be the *crowning event of his administration and his life,* and that while he was being counselled by strong parties to defer the enforcement of it, hoping to supplant it by other measures and to delay action, *he must in no wise heed such counsel, but stand firm to his convictions and fearlessly perform the work and* fulfil *the mission for which he had been raised up by an overruling Providence*." [47]

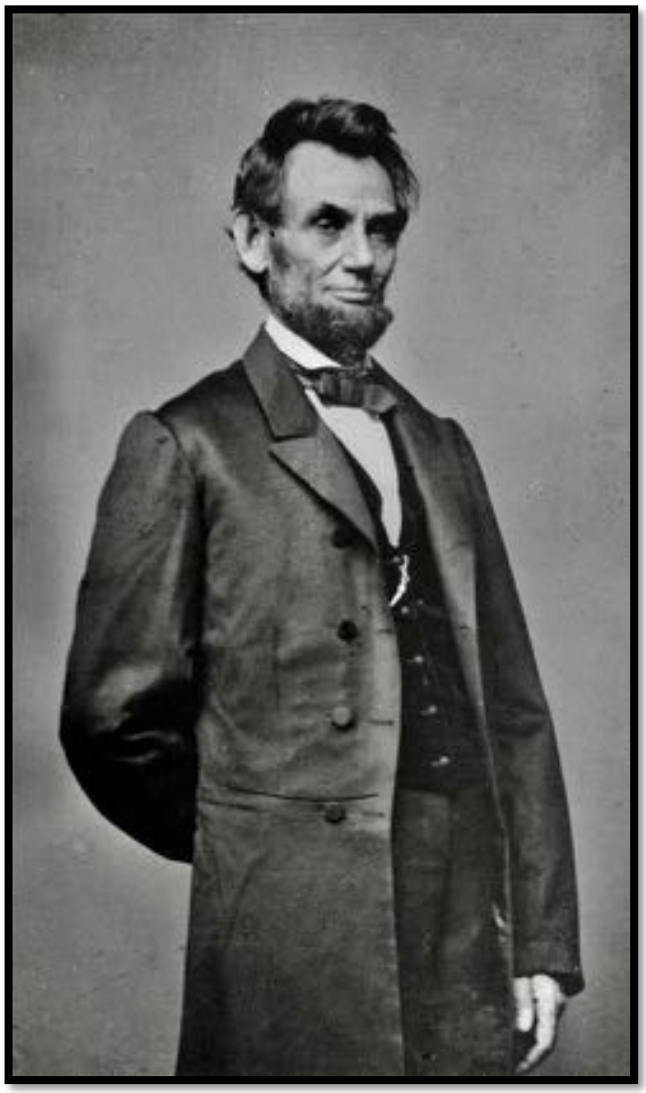
---

[44] Pioneer: Nettie Colburn Maynard also known as Henrietta Sturdevant Maynard 1841-1892.

[45] Mrs Maynard also told of the terpsichorean piano but stated that its saltations occurred before her oration, not after it as according to Col. Kase.

[46] A little chronology will be useful, to show the slow evolution of the idea of emancipation in Lincoln's mind. Lincoln from the beginning of the war favoured compensated emancipation. He brought about a joint resolution of Congress to pay for the slaves of any state not in rebellion, and signed it 10 April 1862.
16 April he signed an act abolishing slavery in the District of Columbia.
12 July 1862 he met a delegation from the border States and urged that these accept compensated emancipation.
13 July he told Secretary Welles that after much thought he had about come to the conclusion that it was a military necessity to proclaim freedom to all the slaves.
17 July he approved an act freeing slaves under certain military conditions.
21 July he read to the Cabinet a draft of a proclamation of emancipation to become effective on 1 January 1863, but it was judged best to postpone it until after a Union victory.
6 August he signed an act freeing all slaves employed in rebel military service.
13 September he made a long reply, which has been preserved, to a committee from Chicago religious bodies urging him to issue a proclamation of emancipation. In it he gave no hint of his intentions.
22 September he issued the preliminary proclamation, following the battle of Antietam, giving notice that on 1 January 1863, all persons held slaves in territory then in rebellion should be free.
1 December he again urged his plan of gradual compensated emancipation. This producing no results, on 1 January 1863 he issued the final Emancipation Proclamation.

[47] Since Mrs Maynard turned from the temptation of endorsing Kase's claim that she inspired Lincoln to emancipate the slaves and told so tame a story of what occurred, her honesty is beyond question. However, one is not compelled to accept her inference that since Lincoln glanced at Webster's portrait on the wall he implied a conviction that the "Defender of the Constitution" had been addressing him, nor that her memory of the conversation which ensued was verbally exact. I do not believe that an intelligent official asked the President if pressure had been brought to bear upon



Here is not a word about the world being universally in bondage, or about the impossibility of the war ending unless slavery should be abolished, or about victories which would result, or any of the hifalutin contained in Kase's two versions. She first saw Lincoln more than two months after the preliminary proclamation and within a few weeks (nobody gives exact dates) of the final one, which was already absolutely determined upon, and which nothing short of the surrender of the States in rebellion or the death of Lincoln could prevent. All that the medium did, according to her own account, was to exhort the President to do what he had announced he would do, to tell him this would be a very important thing, which he knew already, to entreat him to be true to his convictions, which was his life-long habit, and to direct him not to delay the enforcement of the Proclamation beyond the first of the year, whereas it was absurd to suppose that he could *enforce* it before the downfall of the Rebellion. [48]

Kase says that the lecture was "so grand and sublime" that the "little girl must have been under deep control of the spirit of some ancient philosopher." Mrs Maynard hints that this "ancient philosopher" was Daniel Webster!

I do not believe that Kase was a conscious liar, but that he was a very badly mixed up old gentleman. To remember a young woman hardly less, and very likely more than 22 years old, one who began to deliver public lectures six years before, as a "little girl," a "child," is alone sufficient to show that his memory was in a mussy condition. The date he assigns to the trance-address is inconsistent with the claim that it brought about the document already existent in writing. His varying but equally untrue affirmations regarding victories show how unreliable he was. And the statement of the medium herself utterly refutes his story, except

him to "defer the enforcement of the Proclamation." That word *enforcement* echoes the medium's naive assumption that the President could give the impending Proclamation immediate effect in the actual liberation of the slaves in rebellious States. Consequently it is unlikely that Lincoln replied: "It is taking all my nerve and strength to withstand *such* [my italics] a pressure," though he may well have said that there was opposition to his plan. And did not the medium know that? His message of 1 December to Congress had been printed in the newspapers, and that had said that "among the friends of the Union there is great diversity of sentiment and of policy in regard to slavery and the African race amongst us. Some would perpetuate slavery; some would abolish it suddenly and without compensation; some would abolish it gradually and with compensation," etc. The public knowledge of these utterances deprives the trance-oration of its last scrap of significance.

[48] *Nineteenth Century Miracles* was regarded as a Spiritualist masterpiece; it was in print seven years before Mrs Maynard printed her book, and it is impossible that she was not familiar with the Kase story. Her account of what really happened must be regarded as a conscious and deliberate contradiction of the tale credited by the *Spiritual Scientist* and by Mrs Britten. She did not expressly denounce that tale, probably out of respect for "the female St Paul of the movement" (see Doyle's *History of Spiritualism*, i. 138), whose book had given it wide circulation.

for the commonplace facts that Nettie was there and harangued the President about his proclamations concerning which everyone then had knowledge.

Incidentally a pretty story told by the medium Conkling to Mrs Britten must go into the ash-barrel too. Roused probably by the interest taken in Kase's dreamy memories imparted to the *Spiritual Scientist*, one of which was that Conkling spent four Sundays with Lincoln, this medium told Mrs Britten that his spirits "spelled out, letter by letter, the preliminary draft of that famous document. The result of these interviews was the President's proposition to his Cabinet to issue such a proclamation." Alas! Kase informs us that these four Sundays immediately preceded the occasion when Nettie first met the President, and she tells us that she first met him in December. But the preliminary draft had been read to the Cabinet in July, and, substantially unaltered, had been issued in September!

The stages in the evolution of the legend, then, were somewhat as follows:

1. Nettie Colburn, in December 1862, when all the country was on tiptoe awaiting the final Emancipation Proclamation, had the opportunity to display her mediumistic oratory before President Lincoln. Stimulated by the stirring events happening and about to happen, she, in what purported to be a trance state, made a very ordinary address, telling him that the freeing of four millions of slaves would be the greatest act of his life, and exhorting him to stick to his announced purposes against all opposition—as any country parson might have preached to him.

2. During the years that followed, Colonel Kase, so credulous that he was the delight of tricksters, and so befuddled that the last three months of 1862 appeared to him a period of uninterrupted Union triumph, really remembering that Nettie had told the President something about a proclamation freeing the slaves, and that she had appeared to him to be very eloquent, gradually and unconsciously concocted for her, in his mind, an unstable speech, and developed the conviction that it first suggested to Lincoln the idea of issuing a proclamation of emancipation, guileless of the fact that the date he assigned to the interview by itself defeated the claim.

3. After the incident had become thoroughly transformed in the laboratory of the Colonel's mind, its importance impressed him to the point of telling it in the *Spiritual Scientist*.

4. The tale attracting wide attention among Spiritualists, the medium Conkling became dissatisfied with the minor part assigned to him therein, and gave out the story that his controls dictated, "letter by letter," the preliminary proclamation, although again dates refute the claim and, were it true, it would completely annul Kase's allegation that the President was indebted to Nettie for the idea. Kase, although so familiarly associated with Conkling, was evidently ignorant of this feature. [49]

[49] The two stories, (1) that Nettie Colburn inspired the preliminary Proclamation, and, (2) that Conkling dictated it verbally rest, each upon the testimony of one person alone. But the cynical Muse who presides over the growth of legends has perpetuated the one which long ago was repudiated by its heroine, and allowed to lapse into "innocuous desuetude" the other, which has never been refuted until the present writing.

5. "The narrative in substance was given to the author," that is to Mrs Britten, by Col. Kase himself, but as she passes on, for the most part, the *Spiritual Scientist* version, she probably made no written record of the tale he told her, consequently we do not know what variations it contained.

6. Mrs Nettie Colburn Maynard, the heroine of the Kase tale, demolished it in a book of her own, but it already had too much impetus to be thus stopped.

7. Kase told the story with many verbal and a few factual variations to Mrs Williams who, not being addicted to research, supposed that she was the discoverer of it, and printed it anew.

8. Ignoring the medium's own repudiation of the claim that she influenced President Lincoln to declare emancipation, and neglecting its historical chronology not difficult of access, a professed history insists that Nettie Colburn "determined the action of Abraham Lincoln at the supreme moment of the Civil War," and that "the facts are beyond dispute," [50] a professed researcher is impressed that the story "seems authentic," a newspaper which professes nothing but a desire to impart news thinks the claim worth editorial attention, the legend starts again on its world-wide travels, and the indignant ghost of Mrs Maynard protests in vain.

—~—☼—~—

Editor's Note:

In my editor's note I brought forward some possible points of discussion or, more simply, *food for thought*, with some further information to evaluate more fully Dr Walter Prince's conclusions and deductions regarding the Simon P. Kase story; now over a decade later some of the observations are still relevant albeit I have lightly edited some of the material below:

On the surface Prince has given a detailed, well-researched perspective on the entire story—but was he governed by his own opinion of Simon Kase? [51] Kase was only the storyteller; Dr Prince throughout his research has put all the discrepancies, contradictions and historical incorrectness entirely on the shoulders of Kase, who had come to Washington on a business trip! It is surprising that Prince makes no allowances that the various publishers of his story might have added their own interpretation, or exaggerated, or perhaps wrongly formatted Kase's experience!

Prince was comparing the W and B version comments on Kase's "reliability as a historian" but Simon Kase was only relating his experience; he was a businessman, not a historian.

We could counter Dr Prince's remark about Kase's "reliability as a historian"; he states in footnote 48, for example:

> Nineteenth Century Miracles was regarded as a Spiritualist masterpiece; it was in print seven years before Mrs Maynard printed her book, and it is impossible that she was not familiar with the Kase story. Her account of what really happened must be regarded as a conscious and deliberate contradiction of the tale credited by the *Spiritual Scientist*

---

[50] Doyle bases his certainty, strange to say, not upon the Kase story, but that of Mrs Maynard, which does not in a single sentence, or by any inference that Sherlock Holmes himself could draw from it, support the notion that Lincoln was influenced in the least by any medium on earth to emancipate the slaves.

[51] Prince gives Simon P. Kase very little credibility in his relating of his story; we note that he regards Kase thus—"Col. Kase was a very prominent Spiritualist of the more credulous type"—"His reports of what took place in his presence were so far from the facts that I would not trust his memory or judgment for anything he said on the subject of Lincoln and mediums, because I would expect that any interest which the President showed in the way of trying out mediums would be exaggerated and warped out of semblance to the reality"—"I do not believe that Kase was a conscious liar, but that he was a very badly mixed up old gentleman," etc.

> and by Mrs Britten. She did not expressly denounce that tale, probably out of respect for "the female St Paul of the movement …"

Nettie Maynard states in her Author's Preface:[52]

> Some years ago, at the request of that scholarly writer, the late Prof. S. B. Brittan, I prepared a manuscript, which he offered to edit for publication, but his death following shortly, the MS. was lost and never recovered. The present one has been prepared at intervals during the past three years by the aid of an amanuensis.

Samuel Byron Brittan died in July 1883; Nettie Maynard's *original* manuscript would have predated the above-referenced published account in *Nineteenth Century Miracles,* which perhaps is a consideration given Dr Prince's remarks.

On continuously reading the Dr Prince report, it appeared to me that there are probably two stories here that have become confused and mixed up and are being presented as one event; or possibly some dates used by Prince are erroneous. We have seen this all too clearly in the Hydesville story, the formation of the Seven Principles, etc., how *facts and dates* become interchanged, exaggerated and distorted.

As noted in the Dr Prince paper, there is contradiction of the *facts* brought forward by S.P. Kase and Prince presents these in the two versions—W and B (Williams and Britten). Dr Prince tends to put his narrative into a time-frame to emphasise his point, i.e. to show contradictions in the Kase story.

Dr Prince firstly claimed that "the preservation of this story is due to Mrs M. E. Williams..." We come against the problem of not knowing the actual date of the 1st edition of Mrs Williams' pamphlet—*Abraham Lincoln Facts Indisputable*. Prince references the 4th edition but does not give a date. However, the first teller of the Kase story is reported to be of dubious character (Materialization with Mrs. Williams was grabbed and found to be the medium in disguise); [53] this version of the story he calls the "W-version". Below are Dr Prince's points of reference regarding the medium Conklin. [54]

Dr Prince's "W—version":

> According to the W-version, … then, Col. Kase obeyed a voice which told him, as he was walking on a street in Washington, to enter the house of a medium named Conkling, who at once engaged him to carry a letter written by himself (Conkling) to the President. Conkling, however, accompanied Kase, but remained in an adjoining room while the latter, equally a stranger to Lincoln, presented the letter which stated that its writer had been sent "by spiritual influences to confer with you regarding the interests of the nation." Lincoln consented to see Conkling and did so the following Sunday.

Dr Prince's "B—version":

> Col. Kase told the story to Mrs Emma Hardinge Britten, who enshrined it in her Nineteenth Century Miracles (1884, pp. 484-7), published in 1884. This we will call the B-version. Moreover, as Mrs Britten informs us, the tale had been told by him still

[52] *Was Abraham Lincoln a Spiritualist?* Rufus C. Hartranft, Philadelphia, 1891, pages 3-4.

[53] Dariex, X. (1894). Le flagrant délit de la célèbre Mrs Williams. [The flagrant misdeed of the famous Mrs Williams]. *Annales des sciences psychiques, 4,* 333-354.

[54] This is the correct spelling for the medium J. B. Conklin, as previously pointed out. Dr Price incorrectly spells his name as Conkling. It should be noted that the quotes in the B Version of the *Spiritual Scientist* also spell his name incorrectly as Conkling.

> earlier, and printed in a Spiritualist paper called the *Spiritual Scientist*, and the B-version includes extracts from that organ.

In referring again to Conklin, Prince states only:

> In each version Kase purports to give a copy of the letter; the two are not verbally identical, although essentially so.

In the B-version we find also:

> Incidentally a pretty story told by the medium Conkling to Mrs Britten must go into the ash-barrel too. Roused probably by the interest taken in Kase's dreamy memories imparted to the *Spiritual Scientist*, one of which was that Conkling spent four Sundays with Lincoln, this medium told Mrs Britten that his spirits "spelled out, letter by letter, the preliminary draft of that famous document. The result of these interviews was the President's proposition to his Cabinet to issue such a proclamation." Alas! Kase informs us that these four Sundays immediately preceded the occasion when Nettie first met the President, and she tells us that she first met him in December. But the preliminary draft had been read to the Cabinet in July, and, substantially unaltered, had been issued in September!

This gives a timeline on Dr Prince's research—Kase gave his experiences to Mr E. Gerry Brown, editor of an American weekly Journal, *Spiritual Scientist*, published in Boston, founded in 1874. [55] Mr Brown would have published the Kase article sometime between 1874 and 1878, making this the earliest known version at the time of the Prince investigation. Next was Emma Hardinge Britten, 1883, [56] followed by Mrs. Williams. It may seem, with the little information Prince provides, that he probably did not in fact see the *Spiritual Scientist* article and relies solely on Mrs Britten's narrative.

The final reference to the medium Conklin is to be found in his conclusion.

The stages in the evolution of the legend, then, were somewhat as follows:

> 4. The tale attracting wide attention among Spiritualists, the medium Conkling became dissatisfied with the minor part assigned to him therein, and gave out the story that his controls dictated, "letter by letter," the preliminary proclamation, although again dates refute the claim and, were it true, it would completely annul Kase's allegation that the President was indebted to Nettie for the idea. Kase, although so familiarly associated with Conkling, was evidently ignorant of this feature.[57]

Looking further afield we find that Conklin did have other *reported* dealings with Abraham Lincoln; however, this was before the alleged meeting between Conklin and Kase in Washington, which happened to be in the same room that Kase had occupied in 1850! Dr Prince makes no mention of any other possible relevant material that may have been available to him.

Below are some references regarding Conklin and Lincoln:

---

[55] A weekly journal of spiritual science, literature, art and inspiration, edited E. Gerry Brown, 1874-1878.

[56] Nineteenth Century Miracles 1884, pp. 484-7; the English edition, published by William Britten, was 1883.

[57] Note by Dr Prince: The two stories, (1) that Nettie Colburn inspired the preliminary Proclamation, and, (2) that Conklin dictated it verbally rest, each upon the testimony of one person alone. But the cynical Muse who presides over the growth of legends has perpetuated the one which long ago was repudiated by its heroine, and allowed to lapse into "innocuous desuetude" the other, which has never been refuted until the present writing.

In Emma Hardinge's (Britten) statement given verbally, dated Tuesday 2nd February 1869, before the London Dialectical Society, she refers to a Conklin séance in Washington at which she claims Lincoln was present: [58]

> Any strong emotion, Mrs. Hardinge considered, was also detrimental to the exercise of spiritual power. Mr. Conklin, of whom she had previously spoken, was invited to attend a number of séances at Washington with some five or six gentlemen, who were evidently desirous not to be known. The manifestations were very marked and decisive, until Mr. Conklin discovered that one of the gentlemen present was no other than President Lincoln; when his anxiety and surprise became so great as entirely to stop the manifestations, which were not again renewed till a mutual explanation had restored him to his normal state of mind. Thus, it would seem, that any very strong emotion had also the effect of rendering the magnetism positive, and neutralising the action of the spirits.

Further, in *Modern American Spiritualism*, Hardinge gives another account of Conklin—Lincoln: [59]

> Immediately after the election of the late lamented President Lincoln, [60] an article appeared in the Cleveland *Plaindealer* which the timid feared, and the antagonistic hoped, would greatly prejudice the cause of the popular Republican leader, by associating his name with Spiritualism.
>
> In the expectation that he would give a public denial to what some interested parties were pleased to consider "a most injurious statement," the article in question was submitted to the President, who quietly glanced over it, and in answer to the earnest request that he would furnish a contradiction to the papers, replied: "The only falsehood in the statement is that the half of it has not been told. This article does not begin to tell the wonderful things I have witnessed."
>
> The anti-spiritual friends of President Lincoln were henceforth silent on such subjects; but rumor was less obliging and constantly circulated reports of the *séances* in which the noble and greatly harassed martyr communed with the spirits of wise and perfected men, through whose prescient power and far-seeing judgment, counsels were poured into his ear, which bore mighty and fateful fruit.
>
> A gentleman lately resident in Washington and only known by his most intimate friends as a strong physical medium, became familiarly acquainted with the contents of many an eventful state paper before it ever saw official light—aye, even whilst it was being issued from the spiritual press over the telegraphic wires which run between the mortal and immortal worlds. Doubtless the human "wire-pullers," who surround the seats of office and plant their batteries of influence so as to make the nation's welfare bear primarily on their own, imagine they have exerted an immense power in the great ultimates of national destiny, but they little deem that there are also invisible machinists at work inclosing themselves no less than the country in a network of hidden causes, whose woof is spun by the hands of mightier statesmen than earth, and rulers whose viewless batteries of power galvanize even the very stones beneath men's feet into preachers of their resistless purposes.

---

[58] Taken (edited) from: *Report on Spiritualism, of the committee of the London Dialectical Society*, J. Burns edition, 1873, pages 111-112.

[59] Modern American Spiritualism, published by the Author, New York, 1870, pages 301-302.

[60] Abraham Lincoln (February 12, 1809 – April 15, 1865) was the 16th President of the United States, serving from March 1861 until his assassination in April 1865.

The paragraph in the Cleveland *Plaindealer*, above referred to, is as follows:

"THE PRESIDENT ELECT A SPIRITUALIST"

"It so happened that Conklin, the test medium from New York, was in Cleveland on the day when President Lincoln arrived on his way to Washington. Being a Republican himself, and not wishing to run an opposition to the distinguished visitant, he broke up his own levees at the Johnson to attend that of President Lincoln at the Weddell. The moment he set eyes on Mr. Lincoln, he recognized in him a very peculiar individual who had formerly been a frequent visitor at his room in New York, but whose name he had never been made acquainted with. He used to come alone, sit silently, question mentally, and depart as he came, unnoticed. On one occasion he got a remarkable test, which was published in the *Spiritualist* at the time, in New York. On referring to a file of that paper, Mr. Conklin furnished us with the narrative, which ran as follows: [61]

" 'A GOOD TEST

" 'A gentleman who has often visited Mr. Conklin, called upon him on the evening of March 23, for the usual purpose of communicating with his spirit friends.

" 'After asking some twenty or more mental questions, which he briefly stated were answered correctly, he put the following, question: 'Can you inform me of Mr. K.'s condition?'

The answer, written through Conklin's hand, was: 'Yes; he is present now.'

Q. When did he die?

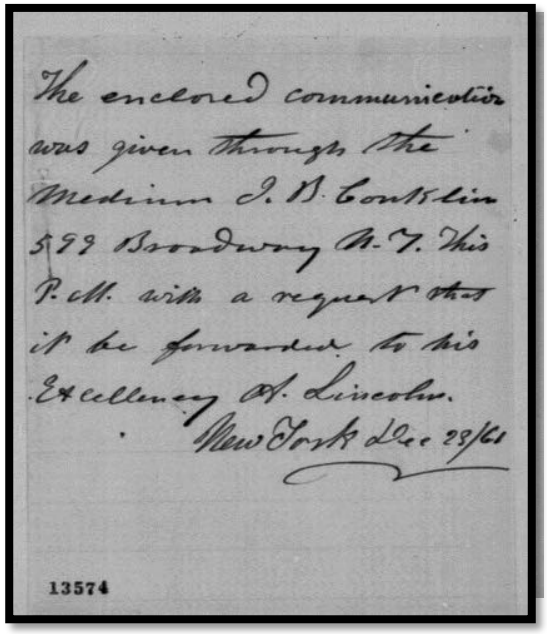
A. Yesterday morning; he is happy, but cannot communicate. The gentleman departed from his generally taciturn conduct to say this was a very remarkable case, for the friend he had inquired for and whom that communication stated to be present, he had left three days previously in Wisconsin, twelve hundred miles distant, alive, and though indisposed, pronounced by his physician to be fast recovering from a long illness. At Mr. Conklin's solicitation he promised to inform him if the communication should prove correct. In accordance with his word, the stranger did call on Conklin the next morning and informed him that he had just received a telegraphic dispatch from a brother-in-law of Mr. K.'s, announcing his death on the previous morning, and at the hour stated by the spirit. Mr. Conklin says that Mr. Lincoln is the identical gentleman referred to in the *Spiritualist*; that he remembers him from the peculiarity of his appearance, from his frequent calls, and as the recipient of this particular test.' "

—~—☼—~—

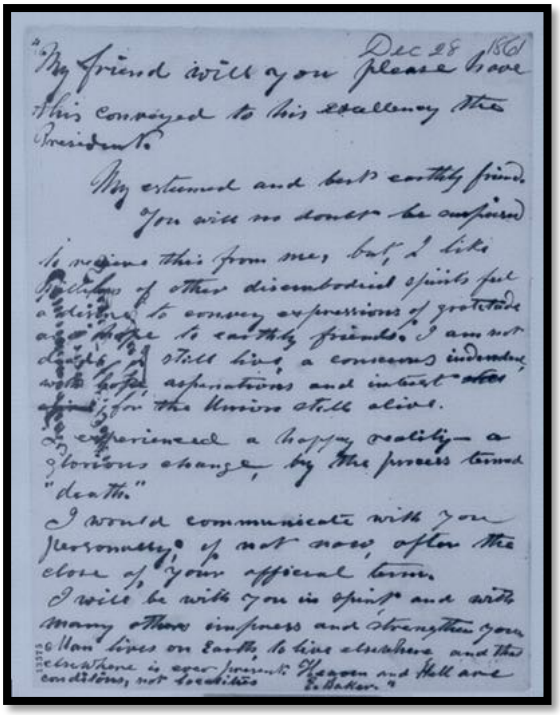
[61] To my knowledge there was no journal in America named "The Spiritualist"!

The evidence that Conklin had some early involvement with Lincoln is naturally open to much more dedicated research. However, we know that on occasion Conklin certainly sent President Lincoln written communication from the spirit of one of Lincoln's close friends, Edward D. Baker. [62] These two letters shown are a part of eight letters sent to President Lincoln from J. B. Conklin: note that they are recorded as I. B. Conklin, rather than the correct initials J. B.

Abraham Lincoln Papers at the Library of Congress. Transcribed and Annotated by the Lincoln Studies Center, Knox College, Galesburg, Illinois. [63]


The enclosed communication was given through the Medium I. B. Conklin 599 Broadway N. Y. this P. M. with a request that it be forwarded to his Excellency A. Lincoln.
New York Dec 28/61
13574

From I. B. Conklin to Abraham Lincoln, December 28, 1861.


Dec 28 1861
"My friend will you please have this conveyed to his excellency the President.
My esteemed and best earthly friend.
You will no doubt be surprised to receive this from me, but, I like millions of other disembodied spirits feel a desire to convey expressions of gratitude and hope to earthly friends. I am not dead. I still live, a conscious individual, with hopes, aspirations and interest for the Union still alive.
I experienced a happy reality—a glorious change, by the process termed "death."
I would communicate with you personally, if not now, after the close of your official term.
I will be with you in spirit and with many others impress and strengthen you. Man lives on Earth, to live elsewhere and that elsewhere is ever present. Heaven and Hell are conditions, not localities
E. Baker."

The enclosed communication was given through the medium I. B. Conklin 599 Broadway N. Y. this P. M. with a request that it be forwarded to his Excellency A. Lincoln.

New York Dec 28/61

"My friend will you please have this conveyed to his excellency the President.

My esteemed and best earthly friend.

You will no doubt be surprised to receive this from me, but, I like millions of other disembodied spirits feel a desire to convey expressions of gratitude and hope to earthly friends. I am not dead. I still live, a conscious individual, with hope, aspirations and interest; for the Union still alive.

I experienced a happy reality—a glorious change, by the process termed "death."

I would communicate with you personally, if not now, after the close of your official term.

I will be with you in spirit, and with many others impress and strengthen you. Man lives on Earth, to live elsewhere, and that elsewhere is ever present. Heaven and Hell are conditions, not localities

E. Baker." [64]

[62] Edward Dickinson Baker (February 24, 1811 – October 21, 1861).

[63] Google: Abraham Lincoln Papers at the Library of Congress, using the keyword Conklin. There are other numerous letters, for example by Robert Dale Owen. The keyword 'Spiritualism' brings up, for example, Judge John W. Edmonds. Another early letter sent to Lincoln by J. S. Hastings, Saturday, September 7, 1861 (Spiritual communications with John C. Calhoun, Daniel Webster, and others), however, has no transcription.

[64] Lincoln's friend, Edward D. Baker, had been killed in the battle of Ball's Bluff on October 21, 1861.

In Conclusion:

1) Conklin's letter content and later meeting/s, etc:

W version: "by spiritual influences to confer with you regarding the interests of the nation." The President met Conklin the following Sunday—Conklin was not mentioned again.

B version: "I have been sent from the city of New York by Spiritual influence pertaining to the interest of the nation. I can't return until I see you. Appoint the time. Yours, etc., " '(Signed) J. B. CONKLIN.' "

Re meeting: "President Lincoln seemed very much interested and said: 'Tell Mr. Conklin that I will see him on Sunday, between 9 and 10 a.m.' 'Oh, no,' was my reply; 'write him a letter.' This is the last we hear of Conklin; "we returned to our respective lodgings." (E.H. Britten).

In addition, in the B Version we have the *Spiritual Scientist* bold claim: "For four succeeding Sundays Mr. Conkling was a guest at the Presidential mansion."

The editor (1874-1878) of the *Spiritual Scientist*, E. Gerry Brown, continues: "Mr. Conkling has himself alleged to the author, that the Spirits not only urged the subject of the emancipation proclamation, but that they, in the name of the Independence Fathers, spelled out, *letter by letter*, the preliminary draft of that famous document."

As at present we do not know what date this article was published, [65] not having read the original text by Brown, it is difficult to comment, except to say that Brown must have obtained this *alleged* story from Conklin some years prior to the *Spiritual Scientist*, as J.B. Conklin died in 1870c. [66] In the B Version E.H. Britten dates the Kase visit as 1862, but with no indication of the month; the *Spiritual Scientist* quoted in her narrative is not dated by the editor.

2) When President Lincoln read the letter given to him by Kase, did he immediately consent to see Conklin, because he already knew the medium J. B. Conklin? Because he had attended séances: "*who* [Lincoln] *had formerly been a frequent visitor at his room in New York...*" as reported by Cleveland *Plaindealer*. The report *certainly, if correct*, furnished the President with excellent evidence of Conklin's ability.

There is also Emma Hardinge Britten's report to the London Dialectical Society: "*The manifestations were very marked and decisive, until Mr. Conklin discovered that one of the gentlemen present was no other than President Lincoln...*"

3) It may be that the medium Conklin does not *fully* belong in the Kase narrative in the dates presented by Dr Prince!

4) Dr Prince places much of his conclusions on the date (in general) that Kase, Nettie and Conklin came into contact with President Lincoln; he states that this was August/December 1862, but on 22nd July 1862 *Abraham Lincoln read to his Cabinet the draft of a preliminary proclamation of emancipation*.

---

[65] E. Gerry Brown, "How Spiritualism Abolished Slavery in the United States," *Spiritual Scientist* 7.2 (March 1878). Taken from "The President's Medium: John Conklin, Abraham Lincoln and the Emancipation Proclamation", by John Benedict Buescher, May 2015.

[66] An undated obituary appears in *The Year-Book of Spiritualism for 1871* by/edited Hudson Tuttle and J.M. Peebles, William White and Company, Boston, and James Burns, London, 1871, page 221. The book, it appears, was completed by October 1870 from its various contributors, then published in 1871.

5) Dr Prince had consulted two, perhaps three accounts of Simon Kase's story, as given by Williams, Britten and the *Spiritual Scientist*. There is little information as to the correct dating of all these associated events. As I have already mentioned, Nettie's MS was lost, [37] so while on her death-bed she had now to dictate the entire book; at this point she was unable to write (this was over a three-year period).

In her Author's Preface, page 1, she states:

> There may be some inaccuracy in dates, as the more prominent events occurred many years ago; but the circumstances as stated are correctly recorded.

It should be noted that Nettie Maynard does not mention the medium Conklin in her book, and only briefly Kase as being present. It is mentioned in the Publisher's Preface, pages XVi, and only mentioned once on page 90 (first edition).

6) Dr Prince himself made date errors in his paper, recording the proclamation date incorrectly (no doubt a typing error) in one part of his paper. Some of his dates referring to Kase, etc. he does not reference, so one wonders as to its origin, as the whole story depends on correct dating! Dr Price appears not to have furthered his research and had accepted that the few references he had to hand finalised the story. The arrival of Simon Kase, the Conklin letter, and the young entranced medium, who spoke to the President, all depend on the dates that they allegedly took place! If reference could be found that all this allegedly took place earlier, this would certainly add a new perspective to the entire Simon Kase story.

Further research was done into John Conklin with his visit to England in around 1864. Part of his visit was spent with the veteran Spiritualist, Robert Cooper, at Eastbourne. This proved to be very successful; his mediumship is recorded by Cooper in his book, "Spiritual Experiences". However, from the Cooper household he continued to Glasgow, where his mediumship was suspected of fraud…

See Psypioneer, Vol. 8, No. 8, August 2012:

Mr. J. B. Conklin and the Founding of Glasgow Association of Spiritualists

KNOCK, KNOCK – WHO'S THERE?

It is said that it was William Shakespeare who first penned the immortal: **"**Knock, knock! Who's there?**"** in his play Macbeth, Act 2, scene 3, written between 1611 and 1612 and first performed in 1623. In the last issue of Pioneer "Hydesville Day – March 31st – Let's get it right", where an alleged brutally murdered pedlar circa 1843 came Knocking. This article received a large amount of feedback; we can note from the various stories about Hydesville that it is often stated, three knocks for *yes* and one knock for *no*, etc. But we can note from the article that this was not the case; it tended to depend on who was asking the questions—there was no set code and no code devised by the Fox sisters, albeit William Duesler devised the Alphabet Code on March 31st 1848, which would later become the standard code for the early mediums.

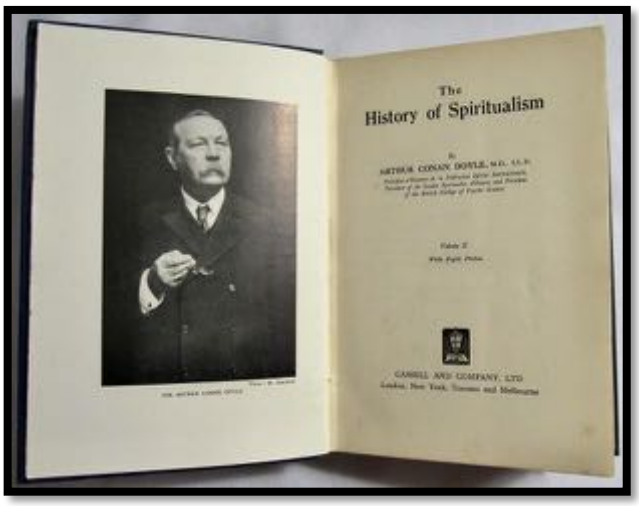
The raps would be generally categorised under the heading of physical mediumship and are unique from the point of view that physical phenomena generally require darkness or defused red light or similar colour. But from March 31st it was demonstrated in daylight! More than once, it is clear that those who witnessed this phenomenon claimed the rapping *was not* a sound one could mimic simply with one's knuckles. The word "rap" conveys the wrong idea of the sound; it was a muffled percussive sound and seemed to come from within the substance of an object, resulting in a vibration which could be felt. Reports suggest that the raps varied in intensity from the tiniest tick to deep thuds to sledgehammer blows; fragile tables, etc. were struck with tremendous blows but were not damaged. It is not a physical blow in the normal sense – but psychic in origin.

It was noted in Mrs Margaret Fox's statement:

> The noise continued while we were hunting, and was heard near the same place all the time. It was not very loud, yet it produced a jar of the bedsteads and chairs, that could be felt by placing our hands on the chair, or while we were in bed. It was a feeling of a tremulous motion, more than a sudden jar. It seemed as if we could feel it jar while we were standing on the floor.

Hydesville was not the first house to experience rapping, but from Hydesville came a clear intelligent two-way communication; it appears that the actual house was the battery—the psychic force—the platform required for the communications to take place.

Given the consistency of raps which continued for around a five-year period, peaking in 1848, they were not reliant on any one person being present. The mediumship of the Fox girls, as noted, began shortly after the family moved from the house to their brother's farm.



The article published below is by Leslie Curnow and gives an interesting historical account of the Raps;[1] firstly, we note that Curnow assisted Sir Arthur Conan Doyle in his 1926 two-volume book, "History of Spiritualism". Unfortunately, the book's account of the events of Hydesville is poorly researched and inaccurate.

[1] Psypioneer, Vol. 7, No. 11: "The Physical Phenomena of the Past, An Historical Survey – Leslie Curnow".

Psypioneer, Vol. 5, No. 8 noted:

ACD's AUSTRALIAN HELPER

The name of Leslie Curnow is known to every reader of ACD's "History of Spiritualism", since the author early explains:—

"It was clear that such a work needed a great deal of research – far more than I in my crowded life could devote to it. It is true that my time was in any case dedicated to it, but the literature is vast, and there were many aspects of the movement which claimed my attention. Under these circumstances I claimed and obtained the loyal assistance of Mr. W. Leslie Curnow, whose knowledge of the subject and whose industry have proved to be invaluable. He has dug assiduously into that vast quarry; he has separated out the ore from the rubbish, and in every way he has been of the greatest assistance. I had originally expected no more than raw material, but he has occasionally given me the finished article, of which I have gladly availed myself, altering it only to the extent of getting my own personal point of view. I cannot admit too fully the loyal assistance which he has given me, and if I have not conjoined his name with my own upon the title-page it is for reasons which he understands and in which he acquiesces."

This raises the question, of course, of whether Curnow was responsible for any of the errors in the "History of Spiritualism". At any rate, he took a natural interest in the impact of the book and called attention in Light, October 16, 1926, p. 484, to some reviews.

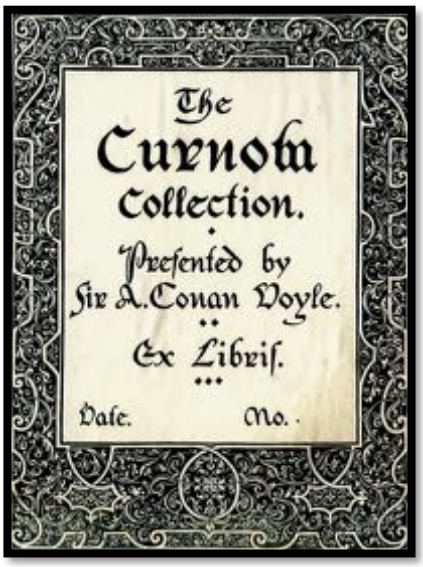
—~—☼—~—

Sadly, Leslie Curnow died shortly after the publication. The Psypioneer issue, noted above, published his obituary, etc.

It is further noted:

Fortunately, a solution was found to the problem of the library. There was only a brief report but it was enough to set minds at rest, in Light, June 18, 1927, p. 293:

THE LATE MR. LESLIE CURNOW'S LIBRARY.—We are asked to state that in disposing of Mr. Curnow's library, it was found necessary to divide it. One portion was purchased by the Marylebone Spiritualist Association, and the other by Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, who is handing over the books acquired by him to the Library of the Britten Memorial Institute in Manchester.[2]



Duncan Gascoyne, curator of the Britten Museum, kindly checked "Two Worlds".

"The only reference I could find was in the Secretary's Report of the Britten Memorial Fund Annual General Meeting held at the Britten Memorial Library, 65 Bridge Street, Manchester on Saturday June 9th 1928, which states:—

"The Secretary's report covered all the activities of the year, special mention being made of the valuable gift from Sir Arthur Conan Doyle of half of the "Leslie Curnow" collection of psychic books. He hoped that sanction from the Charity Commissioners would be received at an early date to permit the Library being used until such time as we could establish a permanent Library and Institute."

—~—☼—~—

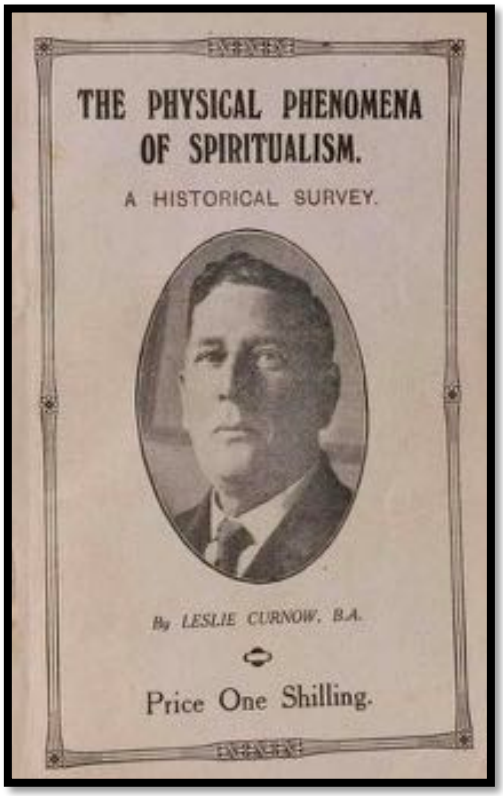
[2] See Pioneer, Vol. 3, No. 4: "The Story of the Britten Memorial – 1899-1933 – The Two Worlds".

Taken from the "Two Worlds", October 10th, 1924:

The Physical Phenomena of the Past, An Historical Survey

The Rap— "God's Telegraph"

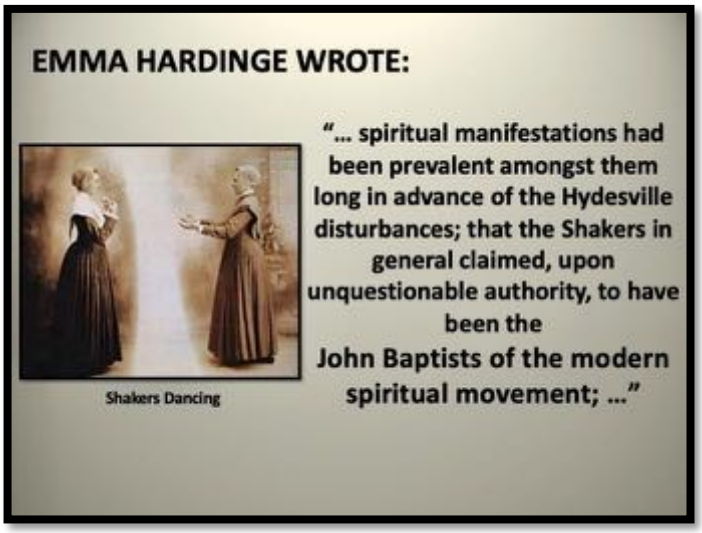
By W. Leslie Curnow, B.A.[3]



A RAP that sounded in the year 1848 at Hydesville, an American village, has gone on ever since reverberating round the world. Its coming was predicted ten years previously, as well as the fact—how grotesque it seemed!—that it was to echo down the corridors of time, and was destined to effect a mighty revolution.

The simple folk who first took an interest in this phenomenon—sturdy pioneers, though they knew it not—were called Rappers, just as at an earlier stage another band of noble pioneers who experienced psychic manifestations were known as Quakers, and yet another band as Shakers.

What a rich field for psychic investigation a study of the Shakers reveals ! In 1830 they were familiar with spiritual manifestations occurring amongst themselves that were not known to the world until many years later. It was about 1838 that the Shakers received from a spirit source the definite prediction of a world manifestation of spiritual activity that was to start ten years later.



As we know, it duly happened at Hydesville in 1848. All should read that remarkable book, *The Autobiography of a Shaker*, by Elder Frederick W. Evans, published in Glasgow in 1888. He says that the spirits declared again and again that when they had completed their work among the Shakers "they would do a work in the world of such magnitude that not a palace nor a hamlet upon earth should remain unvisited by them." True enough to-day surely.[4]

Then, soon after the manifestations started with the Fox girls, these mediums were told by the spirits, "You must proclaim these truths to the world. This is the dawning of a new era." [5] Are we not now in the full flush of that dawn ?

---

[3] Member of the Society for Psychical Research and late Assistant Editor of "Light" (Two Worlds reference).

[4] Pioneer, Vol. 2, No. 1: "When did Modern Spiritualism begin? 1848?"

[5] This quote can be found in Leah Underhill's book, "The Missing Link", 1885, pages 4849, and is quoted in "The Failure of Spiritualism in the Past" by Herbert Thurston, pages 49-56.

And the "new era" started with a Rap!

How mean and paltry a method of rending the veil, of getting in touch with the Great Beyond ! How petty and puerile a way of communicating with "our sacred dead" !

Yes, as mean and paltry as watching the twitching of a frog's leg or the steam forcing up the lid of a boiling kettle. Yet the first gave us electricity, and the second the railway and the steamship.

The Rap has done far more. It has brought us in close touch with another grand and mysterious world, or, to express it better (after Sir Oliver Lodge), it has revealed to us the momentous fact of the daily intermingling of the two parts of one great world. It is all a matter of how one views it. The Fox girls, in their simple trust, and with wonderful prophetic vision called the Rap "God's Telegraph"—a beautiful description.[6]

How, in a single article, can one expect to cover the field of Rapping phenomena ? Frankly, it cannot be done. A whole book could be written on the single experiences of the Fox sisters. In the series of articles, of which this is the first, devoted to a survey of some of the chief Physical Phenomena of Spiritualism, an effort will be made to indicate as far as possible what has occurred in each branch of the subject. In this way we hope to treat, among other things, Lights (or Luminous Phenomena), Automatic Drawing and Panting, Scents, Levitation, Fire Tests, Apports, Music, Movements of objects, Voices, and Materialisation.

EARLY RAPS

A chapter could be filled with a mere list of instances of Rappings that happened before the Hydesville incident in 1848. One that is a favourite case of mine, because of its dramatic character, its lawsuit that extended over two years and its abundance of witnesses, is the famous Molesworth Case in Edinburgh in 1835. Those interested will find full particulars in Mrs. Crowe's *Night Side of Nature*, vol. ii., pages 292-4, and Rogers' *Philosophy of Mysterious Rappings*, pages 48-49. Briefly, Captain Molesworth, the occupant of the house, tore up flooring boards and fired his gun at the walls in his efforts to discover who or what was causing the raps and noises with which he was troubled; and the owner sued him for damages.

The Senior Partners (as some students love to call them) or the "unseen operators," as Dr. W. J. Crawford named them, have had a plaguey time with us poor, stupid humans, and they have shown inexhaustible patience. Let us take three illustrations. In each there is the same method (by Raps), and in each the same apparent failure to achieve the end they had in view.

(1) 1661-1663.—At the home of Mr. John Mompesson, of Tedworth (Wilts), where drumming and noises occurred over a period of two years the unseen intelligences were asked to give "three knocks and no more," which was done: then "five knocks" which was also done.

(2) 1716.—At the Wesley home at Epworth Parsonage, Samuel Wesley knocked with his stick against the joists of the kitchen, and "It answered me as often as and loud as I knocked."

(3) 1835.—At Captain Molesworth's house, near Edinburgh, correct answers were supplied by Raps to questions that could be expressed numerically, as, "How many people are there in this room ?"

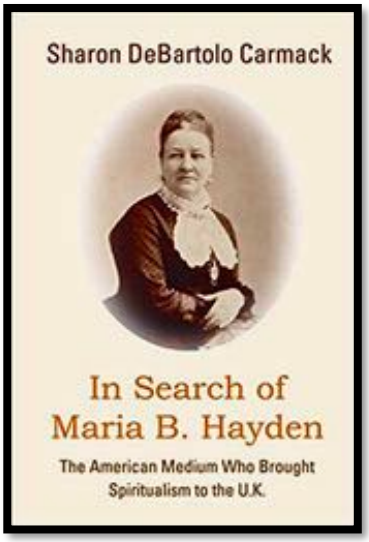
[6] It is a pity the author gives no reference to this quote.

Many more cases of the same kind might be cited, but these are sufficiently illustrative. Confining ourselves to these cases, we see that the unseen operators had achieved an exactly similar result in nearly 200 years. But the only result was a nine days' wonder. Then they tried again in 1848 with the Fox family. In the previous instances they had experimented with people of position in the world. Now they came to the very lowly and obscure, and here at last they GOT THROUGH. They had tried among millions before they found the right vessels. The "weak things of the world" were chosen to "put to shame those that are wise."

Many might say with Fenimore Cooper, the novelist, on his death-bed, "Tell the Fox Family I bless them . . . They have prepared me for this hour."

RAPPING MEDIUMS

After Hydesville a furore was created, and many in America who were led to experiment found themselves possessed of mediumistic powers. The first of these Rapping mediums were Mrs. Sarah A. Tamlin and Mrs. Benedict,[7] both highly endowed psychically, particulars of whom will be found in Capron's *Modern Spiritualism: Its Facts and Fanaticisms*, Boston, 1855.



The first medium for the Raps in England was Mrs. Maria B. Hayden,[8] though there is a single mention (*British Spiritual Telegraph*, vol. iii., pages 55-6) of Mrs. Mary Marshall, afterwards well known as a wonderful Rapping medium, in 1835.[9] Mrs. Hayden arrived in London from the United States in 1852, and the story of her brief visit of a year is a fascinating one. We can only mention here the two very notable converts she made—Professor Augustus De Morgan, the eminent mathematician and author, and Robert Owen, Socialist and reformer, the former to the facts, and the latter to both the facts and the philosophy of Spiritualism. De Morgan, in the clever and striking preface he wrote to his wife's book, *From Matter to Spirit*, 1863, tells how he obtained, through Mrs. Hayden, correct answers by Raps to mental questions.[10] He sent a distinguished man friend, who, on obtaining a similar result, confessed that he was "awe-struck."

Next comes Daniel Douglas Home. Raps were only an incident in his wonderful mediumship, but they occurred almost continuously in his presence. As the books written by Home and his widow, in which full particulars are given, are obtainable, we forgo description, and pass to less accessible data.

Catherine (or Kate) Fox, the youngest of the three Fox sisters, was pre-eminent in producing Raps. She came to London in 1871.

---

[7] Pioneer, Vol. 6, No. 4: " "*Ordered by the spirits*" – How the First Public Meeting Came About to Demonstrate".

[8] Psypioneer, Vol. 2, No. 10: "Mrs. Hayden's visit to England in 1852-3 and the Conversion of Robert Owen".

[9] This date would be incorrect, see Psypioneer, Vol. 7, No. 11: "Mrs. Mary Marshall – Paul J. Gaunt". She was the first English public medium; the story is a little confusing, as there were two Mary Marshall's.

[10] Sharon DeBartolo Carmack DSNU has done some in-depth research into two of America's earliest mediums, one of whom is Maria B. Hayden, publishing a valuable biography in December 2020: "In Search of Maria B. Hayden: The American Medium Who Brought Spiritualism to the U.K" Sharon has kindly sent Pioneer a copy, which will be reviewed in due course.

Mrs. Everitt was another fine medium (private) for Raps.[11] My friend Mr. David Gow (Editor of "Light"), who knew her well, has described to me many of the phenomena he witnessed, and there are published accounts of raps in her presence in such odd places as in a church, in a theatre, in a railway train, and when riding in a cab through London streets. I have also heard Mr. Henry Withall[12] tell similar stories about her, Edmund Dawson Rogers, in his *Life and Experiences*, gives a good account of Mrs. Everitt.[13]

A PERSONAL EXPERIENCE

How vivid are the personal experiences, and how convincing ! Though what happens to us may be insignificant compared with something of the same kind that has occurred elsewhere, yet our tiny blade of grass is more to us than a whole forest of giant trees. So I am tempted to related how Raps came to me when all alone.

In my study at the Hampden Club last year late at night, when all was still, I was writing at my desk when I thought I detected a wee sound on the table in front of me. I am always on my guard against letting myself imagine the presence of "spirits" in every crack of furniture or rattle of a window, so I dismissed this sound as probably due to a rustling of papers with which my table is usually covered. As I went on writing the sound became more definite—a succession of little taps. In front of me lay an empty cardboard box that had held fifty cigarettes, and a tiny fusillade appearing to come from that direction, I place the box to my ear. Quite distinct came a rain of light blows, such as the point of a lead pencil would make. I mentally asked, "Rap three times," and three raps were given in response. I repeated this several times, asking for different numbers, and each time received the number I asked for. I replaced the cigarette box in the original position and went on writing, and from time to time I could hear the fairy tattoo, which seemed to say, "We are here ! All is well." As I was engaged in "their" work, it is possible that spirit presences sought in this way to make themselves known. At other times I have heard loud raps on the chair alongside my bed after retiring, but the little incident of the cardboard box remains my most convincing experience of this kind.

CHARACTER OF RAPS

It is clear that in the phenomenon of Raps we are seeing the operation of some higher physics or chemistry, at present beyond our ken. Here are some of the descriptions.

"As if a heavy piece of artillery had been discharged in the vicinity" (Leah Underhill).

"Not unlike distant thunder or the discharge of artillery" (*Spiritual Magazine*)

"Some delicate as the ticking of a watch, others as loud as if made by kicks of horses" (*Spiritual Magazine*)

"A succession of raps all over the table, like a pelting shower of rain" (Mrs. Hayden).

"I was received with a chorus of raps such as fifty hammers, all striking rapidly, could hardly produce" (Cromwell Varley, with Kate Fox).

But the best account of all comes from Sir William Crookes. He writes (*Researches in the Phenomena of Spiritualism*, 1874, pages 86-87):—

"The popular name of "Raps conveys a very erroneous impression of this class of phenomena. At different times during my experiments I have heard delicate ticks, as with the point of a pin, a cascade of sharp sounds as from an induction coil in full work; a

[11] See Psypioneer, Vol. 3, No. 3: "Early Spiritualism in England Continued: Mediumship of Mrs. Everitt".

[12] Psypioneer, Vol. 7, No. 8: "The late Mr. Henry Withall – Dawson Rogers".

[13] Psypioneer, Vol. 5, No. 2: "Reminiscences of a remarkable medium – H. A. Dallas".

cracking like that heard when a frictional machine is at work, sounds like scratching, the twittering as of a bird, etc.

"These sounds are noticed with almost every medium, each having a special peculiarity; they are more varied with Mr Home, but for power and certainty I have met with no one who at all approached Miss Kate Fox. . . It only seems necessary for her to place her hand on any substance for loud thuds to be heard in it, like a triple pulsation, sometimes loud enough to be heard several rooms off.

"In this manner I have heard them in a living tree, on a sheet of glass, on a stretched iron wire, on a stretched membrane, a tambourine, on a roof of a cab, and on the floor of a theatre. Moreover, actual contact is not always necessary. I have had these sounds proceeding from the floor, walls, etc., when the medium's hands and feet were held, when she was standing on a chair, when she was suspended in a swing from the ceiling, when she was enclosed in a wire cage, and when she had fallen fainting on a sofa. I have heard them on a glass harmonicon, I have felt them on my own shoulder and under my own hands. I have heard them on a sheet of paper, held between the fingers by a piece of thread passed though one corner.

"With a full knowledge of the numerous theories which have been started, chiefly in America, to explain these sounds, I have tested them in every way that I could devise, until there has been no escape from the conviction that they were true objective occurrences, not produced by trickery or mechanical means."

HOW PRODUCED

Ectoplasm is probably the material used in the production of Raps. Dr. Eugene Crowell (*The Spirit World*, Page 186) says they are done by the action of materialised hands. Dale Owen (*Debateable Land*, page 270), under the intriguing caption of "Seeing Raps," describes how he saw them produced by "spirit lights," striking the floor or the table. These lights, we now know, are probably of ectoplasmic formation. He says of such a light: "It rose and fell, as a hammer would, with which one was striking against the floor." At each stroke a loud rap was heard. "It was exactly as if an invisible hand held an illuminated hammer and pounded with it." Similar testimony is given by Signor, a well-known investigator of the early days. Speaking of a seance with Mrs. Jencken (Kate Fox), he says (*Light*, 1883, page 570) "A beautiful spirit light was also brought into the room by the materialised hand of a spirit dear to the host. With that light the spirit touched the sitters, rapping with it answers to questions." Another case of just the same kind is related by Benjamin Coleman, another early investigator.

THE WEDDING RAPS

My way sometimes takes me along Marylebone-road, and I never pass the Parish Church, where the marriage of Catharine Fox and Mr. H. D. Jencken (barrister-at-law) was celebrated, without recalling with emotion the scene at the subsequent wedding breakfast when the unseen spirit guests rapped merrily all about the room, and tipped the festal board.[14]

Leslie Curnow's series continues in Psypioneer, Vol. 8, No. 4: "Spirit Lights – Marvels Unknown to Science", by W. Leslie Curnow, B.A.

[14] Psypioneer, Vol. 5, No. 9: "Marriage of Miss Kate Fox – The Spiritualist".

THE LEVITATION
Of Daniel Dunglas Home

There are numerous contradictory accounts of what appears to be a remarkable psychic event in the history of Spiritualism, for example:

'On December 13th, 1868, the English medium D.D. Home floated out of the window of his apartment on the third floor in front of three impeccable witnesses and returned through another one. This is how it is described in this chalk drawing hanging in Conan Doyle's "psychic" museum.' [15]

The first task, of course, is to try to get the facts correct: Home was a Scottish medium and it was not his apartment, as quoted. Other available information has different addresses as to where it is said that Home drifted out through one window and came in at another seven feet or so away, and, also, variations of the lighting at the time, i.e. full moon or in darkness, and the séance date, etc. of the alleged levitation; however, the location and date confusion are more easily accounted for, as will become apparent.

The account of this extraordinary feat of levitation was first recorded by one of the three witnesses, Viscount Adare, in "Experiences in Spiritualism with Mr. D. D. Home", published privately in 1869. This is available as a download from the valuable website run by historian Marc Demarest, "The International Association for the Preservation of Spiritualist and Occult Periodicals".[16]

Adare gives the séance date and location, which includes Home's levitation, as *No. 41.—Séance at 5, Buckingham Gate, on Wednesday, December 16th*, 1868 on pages 82-83, which is quoted below (only the levitation part of the séance is quoted here, not the full séance) in the presence of the three witnesses, Viscount Adare (later the fourth Lord Dunraven), the Master of Lindsay (later the Earl of Crawford) and Captain Charles Wynn (Adare's cousin):

> Home then got up and walked about the room. He was both elongated and raised in the air. He spoke in a whisper, as though the spirits were arranging something. He then said to us, "Do not be afraid, and on no account leave your places;" and he went out into the passage. Lindsay suddenly said, "Oh, good heavens ! I know what he is going to do; it is too fearful."
>
> ADARE: "What is it ?"

[15] Published in UHU Magazine, November 1927 (reference not checked). Doyle's "Psychic Bookshop, Library & Museum" is featured in Psypioneer, Vol. 5, No. 5: May 2009.

[16] "The IAPSOP is a US-based private organization focused on the digital preservation of Spiritualist and occult periodicals published between the Congress of Vienna and the start of the Second World War. Our all-volunteer staff digitizes, indexes and makes available free of charge these periodicals, in our archive, for use by students and researchers: http://iapsop.com". The site also archives the now defunct issues of Psypioneer (May 2004 until December 2016) noted on the index page of the Pioneer issues.

LINSAY: “I cannot tell you, it is too horrible ! Adah [17] says that I must tell you; he is going out of the window in the other room, and coming in at this window.” We heard Home go into the next room, heard the window thrown up, and presently Home appeared standing upright outside our window; he opened the window and walked in quite coolly. “Ah,” he said, “You were good this time,” referring to our having sat still and not wished to prevent him. He sat down and laughed.

CHARLIE: “What are you laughing at ?”

HOME: “We were thinking that if a policeman had been passing, and had looked up and seen a man turning round and round along the wall in the air he would have been much astonished. Adare, shut the window in the next room.” I got up, shut the window, and in coming back remarked that the window was not raised a foot, and that I could not think how he had managed to squeeze through. He arose and said, “Come and see.” I went with him; he told me to open the window as it was before, I did so: he told me to stand a little distance off; he then went through the open space, head first, quite rapidly, his body being nearly horizontal and apparently rigid. He came in again, feet foremost, and we returned to the other room.

It was so dark I could not see clearly how he was supported outside. He did not appear to grasp, or rest upon, the balustrade, but rather to be swung out and in**.** Outside each window is a small balcony or ledge, 19 inches deep, bounded by stone balustrades, 18 inches high. The balustrades of the two windows are 7 feet 4 inches apart, measuring from the nearest points. A string-course, 4 inches wide, runs between the windows at the level of the bottom of the balustrade; and another 3 inches wide at the level of the top. Between the window at which Home went out, and that at which he came in, the wall recedes 6 inches. The rooms are on the third floor. Home presently got up again, told us not to be frightened or to move, and left the room. Adah Menken told Lindsay that they were going to shew us the water test; but for some reason or other I suppose they were unable to do so, for Home came in again directly, sat down and said “Dan must awake now, he will be very nervous; but you must bear with him, it will pass off.” I asked Lindsay how Adah had spoken to him on the three occasions. He could scarcely explain; but said it did not sound like an audible human voice; but rather as if the tones were whispered or impressed inside his ear.

When Home awoke, he was much agitated; he said he felt as if he had gone through some fearful peril, and that he had a most horrible desire to throw himself out of the window; he remained in a very nervous condition for a short time, then gradually became quiet. Having been ordered not to tell him, we said nothing of what had happened.[18]

—~—☼—~—

[17] Adah Isaaks Menken was an American actress acquainted with both Home and Adare etc.; she died in August 1868.

[18] Pioneer: The text is reproduced as given by Adare, despite the confusion caused by much of the evidence of Adare being mixed up in the paragraph under the heading “Home”.

It is clear that the *original* account is not so well defined as some later reports suggest inasmuch as all the three witnesses *claim* to see Home float—levitate—between the two windows, i.e. exit and return in one action.

Home met Viscount Adare in 1867 soon after he was living with Adare at his residence at Ashley House, Westminster. It was here that some of Home's manifestations took place and were recorded in Adare's book, "Experiences in Spiritualism with Mr. D. D. Home". Home remained at his friend's residence until just before Adare's marriage in April 1869.[19]

Much research was done by Trevor H. Hall in his 1984 book, "The Enigma of Daniel Home: Medium or Fraud?"; albeit the tone of the book is to discredit the mediumship of Home, some of his research is nevertheless valuable. The author notes in his chapter on "The Levitation", page 111:

> It is perhaps surprising to have to record first of all that students of the case have always found difficulty in ascertaining where the famous levitation actually took place, because the observers, for some incomprehensible reason, succeeded in enveloping this simple piece of information in a fog of confusion. Adare incorrectly headed his account of the evening "No. 41. Séance at 5, Buckingham Gate, Wednesday, December 16th," following this immediately in his text with a contradiction: "On Sunday last, Charlie Wynne and I went over to Ashley House after dinner. There we found Home and the Master of Lindsay. Home proposed a sitting."
>
> The séance evidently took place on Sunday, 13 December 1868, in a building known as Ashley House, which was certainly not 5 Buckingham Gate, the London home of Adare's father, the Earl of Dunraven. These muddles naturally caused confusion among later writers, including Madame Home herself, who on page 299 of *D. D. Home: His Life and Mission* gave the wrong date. Harry Price, on the other hand, on page 276 of *Fifty Years of Psychical Research* offered the correct date of 13 December but for some reason said that Home's aerial journey took place in Victoria Street;[20] while Frank Podmore, on page 255 of the second volume of *Modern Spiritualism*, repeated both the mistakes made by Adare. Miss Jean Burton said that the medium and Adare lived together at 5 Buckingham Gate. She ventured no opinion regarding the date of the levitation, but said that the account of it was "microscopically examined for discrepancies." She said that the date of *Experiences in Spiritualism*, which she called "the little book," was 1870 (Heyday of a Wizard, pp. 192-93, 201).
>
> The two addresses are distinguished in *Experiences*, séances having taken place at both, but for some reason Adare never indicated in his text the street in which Ashley House was situated. Madame Home, in one of her books, simply said that Adare and Home were staying together in the former's rooms in Ashley House in London.[21] Adare himself, in later life, when challenged on the incorrect address of 5 Buckingham Gate, admitted the mistake but was still infuriatingly uninformative about the location of

[19] Image of Windham Thomas Wyndham-Quin, 4th Earl of Dunraven and Mount-Earl (12 February 1841-14 June 1926), styled Viscount Adare between 1850 and 1871.

[20] Pioneer: Ashley House was close to Victoria Street, which is parallel to Ashley Place, where it was situated.

[21] Hall: The Gift of D. D. Home (London, 1890) pp. 270 and 279.

Ashley House in his letter responding to an inquiry from Mrs. W. H. Salter of the SPR of 6 May, 1924:[22]

> The discrepancy is unfortunate, but it is, I think, easily explained. I frequently stayed at my father's house—5 Buckingham Gate—and Mr. Home often stayed there with me. In my father's and mother's absence the house was, of course, shut up, and my recollection is that I and Mr. Home just had bedrooms there and lived out.
>
> It is plain from the context of the book that we frequently went from Buckingham Gate to attend séances at other places. I take it that the heading in the "Experiences" is copied from the letter which I wrote to my father from Buckingham Gate, and probably on Buckingham Gate notepaper, relating to the séance which took place at Ashley House on the previous Sunday. The correct title should have been, "No. 41. Séance at Ashley House, Sunday, December 13th." The discrepancy applies to the date as well as the address, as the title states Wednesday the 16th and the context commences "On Sunday last."
>
> There can be no doubt whatever but that the séance was held at Ashley House on Sunday, December 13th and that the notes concerning it were posted by me from 5 Buckingham Gate on Wednesday, December 16th.

—~—☼—~—

Naturally, for historical reasons the correct address and date is required but, more importantly, in this case it is crucial, given that during the séance details are given about the outside measurements of the building where it is said that Home took his aerial flight, so the correct location is vital:

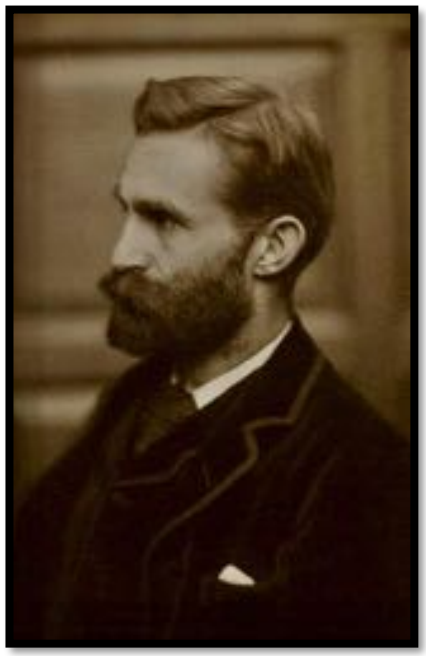
> It was so dark I could not see clearly how he was supported outside. He did not appear to grasp, or rest upon, the balustrade, but rather to be swung out and in. Outside each window is a small balcony or ledge, 19 inches deep, bounded by stone balustrades, 18 inches high. The balustrades of the two windows are 7 feet 4 inches apart, measuring from the nearest points. A string-course, 4 inches wide, runs between the windows at the level of the bottom of the balustrade; and another 3 inches wide at the level of the top. Between the window at which Home went out, and that at which he came in, the wall recedes 6 inches. The rooms are on the third floor.

Ashley House was located on the corner of Ashley Place and Carlisle Place, Westminster, London. Hall obtained from a friend, an architect named Peter A. Bond, an illustrated report, with plans and photographs of Ashley House before it was demolished; a photocopy is shown here.

[22] Hall: SPR Proceedings, June 1924, pp. 152-53. Mrs. Salter evidently noticed the discrepancy when the SPR reprint of 1924 was being prepared.

Bond calculated and claimed it to be *within a matter of inches* that the height of the building from street level to first-floor balconies was 12 feet, first floor to second approximately 11 feet, second floor to third approximately 9 feet 6 inches, which shows that the levitation was approximately 32 feet 6 inches above ground level.

However, in the account of the levitation given in "Experiences in Spiritualism with Mr. D. D. Home" in 1869 only the *first* account is given by the same three witnesses, as noted by the critical psychical researcher Frank Podmore[23] in his "Newer Spiritualism", published in London in 1910, pages 66-70:



> The more famous incident took place in December of the same year, 1868, a week or two later than the case just recorded. Mrs. Home [24] gives the date as the 16th of the month. But this date appears to be founded on a misreading of Lord Adare's account (the only account known to the present writer in which any date is given). His record is headed "Séance at 5, Buckingham Gate, Wednesday, December 16th." But the report of the séance commences "On Sunday last," *i e*., December 13th. […]. The fullest account is that of the Master of Lindsay. In his evidence before the Dialectical Society he is reported as saying:
>
> "I saw the levitations in Victoria Street when Home floated out of the window. He first went into a trance, and walked about uneasily; he then went into the hall. While he was away I heard a voice whisper in my ear, 'He will go out of one window and in at another.' I was alarmed and shocked at the idea of so dangerous an experiment. I told the company what I had heard, and we then waited for Home's return. Shortly after he entered the room, I heard the window go up, but I could not see it, for I sat with my back to it. I, however, saw his shadow on the opposite wall; he went out of the window in a horizontal position, and I saw him outside the other window (that in the next room) floating in the air. It was eighty-five feet from the ground."[25]
>
> In a letter written two years later he writes:
>
> "I was sitting with Mr. Home and Lord Adare, and a cousin of his. During the sitting Mr. Home went into a trance, and in that state was carried out of the window in the room next to where we were, and was brought in at our window. The distance between the windows was about 7 feet 6 inches, and there was not the slightest foot-hold between them, nor was there more than a twelve-inch projection to each window, which served as a ledge to put flowers on. We heard the window in the next room lifted up, and almost immediately after we saw Home floating in the air outside our window. The moon was shining full into the room; my back was to the light, and I saw the shadow on the wall of the window-sill, and Home's feet about six inches above it. He remained in this position for a few seconds, then raised the window and glided into the room, feet foremost, and sat down."

[23] Pioneer: Image of Frank Podmore.

[24] Podmore: "Life of D. D. Home", p. 299.

[25] Podmore: Report, p. 214.

Lord Adare's account of this incident is as follows:

"We heard Home go into the next room, heard the window thrown up, and presently Home appeared, standing upright outside our window; he opened the window and walked in quite coolly."

Lord Adare's account appears to have been written a few days after the incident. In February, 1877, the third witness, Captain Wynne, gives his testimony, in a letter to Home, as follows: "The fact of your having gone out of one window and in at another I can swear to."

Here we have three separate accounts of what purports to be the most stupendous marvel of modern times. Let us examine each account separately. Lord Lindsay was the chief spokesman. What did he see and hear? He heard a sound which suggested to him that a window in the next room was being lifted up. Subsequently, sitting with his back to the window, he saw on the wall a shadow which he interpreted as that of Home "floating" outside the window, opening the window, and gliding into the room feet foremost. Even if the outside illumination had been good, and the shadows on the wall quite sharply defined, Lord Lindsay's testimony would amount to very little.

The shadows, we are given to understand, were cast by the moon, and Lord Lindsay could not of course determine from the shadow on which side of the window Home was standing. At most, he could testify that there was a space between Home's feet and the window-sill. But were the shadows sharply defined ? On reference to the almanack, it will be found that the moon was new on December 13, 1868. A three-days-old moon (on the improbable assumption that the date quoted by Mrs. Home was correct) would not have afforded much light; a new moon is, of course, invisible. The only light which came through the window, it would seem, was that of the stars and the diffused light from the streets of London, eighty-five feet below.[26] Did this light enable Lord Lindsay to see anything at all?

But we have two other first-hand accounts. What do the other witnesses say? Captain Wynne, eight years afterwards, says he can swear to the fact. Lord Adare says: "We heard the window open, and presently Home appeared . . . outside the window." Appeared to whom? Lord Adare tells what he heard. Why does he not tell us what he saw? Is it not a little curious that two of the witnesses to this stupendous marvel should be content to give so meagre an account, without any details, and couched in such ambiguous language ? And is it not still more curious that the task of describing the details should have been undertaken by the one member of the party who from his position could see nothing?

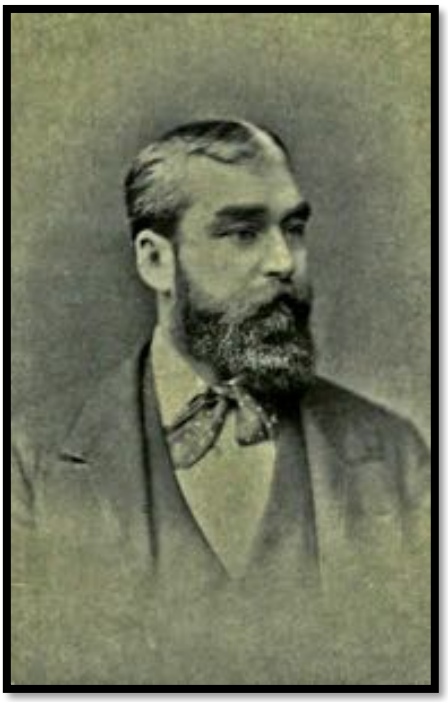
If Lord Adare had really seen the whole drama, is it likely he would have left it to be told practically at second-hand ? A comparison of the three accounts, and the ambiguous wording of the testimony given by Lord Adare and Captain Wynne, suggest that possibly none of the witnesses had their faces turned directly, towards the window, and that Lord Lindsay was the only one of the three who made the attempt to distinguish between what he saw and what he inferred. For Lord Adare is not generally chary of detail. He records much more fully an incident which took place immediately after, an incident of which he was the only spectator:

At Home's request he had shut the window in the next room. On his return to the séance-room.

[26] Podmore: Lord Adare states that the room was on the *third* floor. Some one has blundered. Perhaps 85 is a misprint for 35.

"I remarked that the window was not raised a foot, and that I could not think how he [Home] had managed to squeeze through. He arose and said, 'Come and see.' I went with him; he told me to open the window as it was before. I did so; he told me to stand a little distance off; he then went through the open space, head first, quite rapidly, his body being nearly horizontal and apparently rigid. He came in again feet foremost, and we returned to the other room. It was so dark I could not see clearly how he was supported outside. He did not appear to grasp, or rest upon, the balustrade, but rather to be swung out and in. Outside each window is a small balcony or ledge nineteen inches deep [*i.e.*, apparently, nineteen inches wide], bounded by stone balustrades eighteen inches high."

Podmore then speculates on how Home could have possibly achieved the levitation by normal means. The chain of events so far is clearly contradictory and constructed on numerous errors and confusion; given that the story is only told about on one *singular event*, lasting no more than a few minutes, by the three witnesses present, it is by no means straightforward and clear.



Further, it is recorded that Adare, then Lord Dunraven, gave a handwritten account of Home's alleged levitation at Ashley House to Sir Francis Burnand (1836-1917), an English comic writer and prolific playwright; later Sir Burnand referred to this in his memoirs, "Records and Reminiscences", published in two volumes by Methuen, London, 1904. [27] Lord Dunraven's account is, unfortunately, not quoted by Sir Burnand verbatim and the author makes no reference to the date when Lord Dunraven gave the report to him. It is published in Vol. II; below is the full account on pages 109-12:[28]

Lord Dunraven's story as to Home floating in the air, which I think appeared in some magazine, but of which his Lordship kindly furnished me with an account written out in his own hand (I have it by me now among my "archives"), may be by this time forgotten. In a few words I can, and I think I ought to, recall it, as it certainly tends to clear Home's character and to make us wonder what sort of weird creature he was. Before and since the time of Simon Magus, to float in the air is, as I gather from certain occult works on "signs and wonders," one of the recognised manifestations of supernatural agency.

We have the evidence of Holy Writ in confirmation of the phenomenon. It is, as we know, as dangerous as is "playing with fire," since, though the magician may "go up like a rocket," yet, the spirits being notoriously untrustworthy, he *may* "come down like a stick."

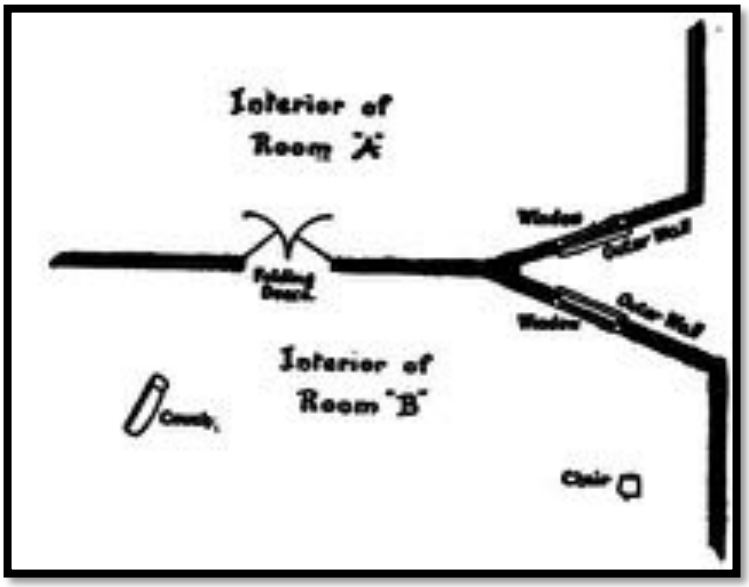
Lord Dunraven, then Lord Adair, had, I believe, rather "taken up" Mr. Home, who had been raised to the rank of a Lion of the Season, and had gone in for spiritualism, just

[27] Pioneer: Image of Sir Francis Burnand, circa 1870s.

[28] Pioneer: Available as a free download. It can be noted that Sir Burnand was acquainted with D. D. Home, having previously with his wife attended a gathering with Home and remained undecided: "Whether Home's "spirits" were "above" or "below Proof," I have never as yet been able to decide."

as, being of an inquiring turn of mind, his Lordship in his time has tried his hand at many, if not at most, things.

It was in Lord Dunraven's rooms, not on the occasion of a formal professional *séance* as I understand the account, but of a casual visit paid by Home, who found Lord Dunraven at home chatting with a friend. There were two rooms which communicated with each other by folding-doors. A window of one room faced a window of the other. Each being on opposite sides of a triangle, as in the plan here shown—[29]



The rooms were on the first floor with, therefore, a formidable drop into the area below.

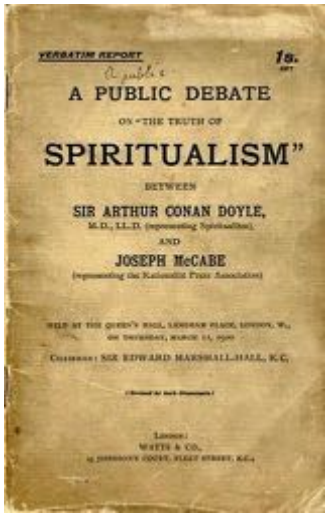
Lord Dunraven and his friend passed from room A into room B, leaving Home in the former. He had gone to sleep, or, as he afterwards described it, "had fallen into a trance."

While Dunraven and friend were seated in B, discussing the pros and cons of spiritualism, his Lordship's attitude towards it being that of "philosophic doubt," a tapping was heard at the window, and turning towards it, they, to their amazement and horror,—for the result of a slip, on so small a space for standing securely as the ledge afforded, would have been fatal,—perceived Home erect on the ledge. Lord Dunraven opened the window, and Home entered. He still appeared to be in a trance, and his action was that of a man walking in his sleep. He sat down; and very gradually awoke.

Such is the plain unvarnished tale, for the truth of which Lord Dunraven vouched, though, he added, that he committed himself to no sort of opinion as to means whereby this phenomenon was produced. If Home's aerial flight had an object, that object must have been primarily to gain over entirely to his side this philosophic nobleman, whose support would have been of the greatest value to him socially, and therefore financially. In this object he failed. Lord Dunraven was puzzled: that was all. But how did Home contrive to open one window and at the risk of his life jump, for it was more than a mere step could have accomplished, from one ledge, on which he scarcely had a footing, to another that afforded him no greater rest for the sole of his foot, and all this without anything whatever to cling to? I have never heard it explained; and, personally, I find it impossible to explain on any ordinary **un**-supernatural hypothesis.

—~—☼—~—

[29] Pioneer: The plan supplied by Adare or made up by Burnand re the facing of the windows shows no resemblance to the official photograph of Ashley House shown elsewhere in this article.


VERBATIM REPORT 1s.

A PUBLIC DEBATE

ON "THE TRUTH OF

SPIRITUALISM"

BETWEEN

SIR ARTHUR CONAN DOYLE,

AND

JOSEPH McCABE

Trevor Hall records in his book, "The Enigma of Daniel Home: Medium or Fraud?", that Lord Dunraven wrote a later, third account, as published in the "Weekly Dispatch" issue, March 21st, 1920 (unfortunately I have not been able at present to find a copy), which stimulated a public debate held at the Queen's Hall, London on March 11th, 1920 between Sir Arthur Conan Doyle and Mr Joseph Martin McCabe, who was extremely critical of the Spiritualist movement. Hall notes: "… the Home levitation was the subject of a violent if somewhat uninformed dispute."[30]

Doyle wrote a pamphlet, "Spiritualism and Rationalism: With a Drastic Examination of Mr. Joseph M'Cabe", dated July 30th, 1920, where he briefly refers to the debate mentioned by Hall on pages 10-12:

Mr. M'Cabe in the recent debate centred himself upon the case of levitation in Ashley Place in 1868, when in the presence of Lord Adare, Lord Lindsay, and Captain Wynne of the Guards, Mr. Home is alleged to have passed out of the bedroom window in Lord Adare's lodgings and floated seventy feet high over the street, entering in through the sitting-room window. Three excellent witnesses were present, each of whom agreed that this extraordinary thing occurred. Mr. M'Cabe, who, of course, was not present, explains after his fashion what really happened, and that they saw not what they said they saw, but something entirely different. We must always presuppose in order to get Mr. M'Cabe's point of view that everybody present was either a liar or an incompetent idiot who needs a man of sense—Mr. J.M. for choice—to set him right and dry-nurse him lest he be the victim of a delusion.

Let us consider Mr. M'Cabe's explanation of this incident. I say "explanation", but on carefully reading over what he has said I do not find that he has offered any explanation at all, though he has given a most grotesque account of what took place. He begins by making the legitimate point that whereas Lord Lindsay said the moon was shining upon December 16th, the almanac shows that on that date it was only three days old. That is fair enough, though, as I pointed out in the debate, when a man sees so wondrous a sight as a figure floating in the air, he may well be excused for making some mistake as to whence the light came from.

But bar this one point, there is no common sense in any of Mr. M'Cabe's criticisms. He is under the strange delusion that these three men who were expecting that Home would attempt this feat and had been warned of it, sat with their backs to the window. Could anything more absurd be imagined ! Why should they sit with their backs to the point where they expected a wonderful manifestation to appear ?

They actually sat with their faces to the window, as any reasonable beings would sit. They then saw, not "a shadow on the wall", as Mr. M'Cabe so perversely supposes; but the shadow of the man outside thrown across the window sill in front of them. "Home's feet were six inches above it," says Lord Lindsay. "We heard Home go into the next room, heard the window thrown open, and presently Home appeared standing upright outside our window," says Lord Adare. "I can swear that Home went out of one window and came in at the other window," says Captain Wynne. What quibbling it is to suppose that there is anything nebulous about this evidence, or that these gentlemen are bolstering up some doubtful case ! I repeat that many historical events have been accepted upon far slighter evidence.

[30] Pages 105-106.

Up to this point, Mr. M'Cabe is not open to any more serious charge than that of having twisted the facts in order to produce some vague feeling of deceit which he cannot apparently himself define. But there follows a *suppressio veri*, which must forever shake confidence in Mr. M'Cabe as a controversialist. Both Lord Lindsay and Lord Adare have stated that the latter then went into the bedroom with Home, and finding the window only slightly open, wondered how he could have got through. Says Lord Adare, writing at the time to his father Lord Dufferin [*sic*]:

"He told me to stand a little distance off; he then went through the open space head first quite rapidly, his body being nearly horizontal and apparently rigid. He came in again, feet foremost, and we then returned to the other room." Mr. M'Cabe, not being able to explain this incident in any way, has omitted it altogether. Surely it is a very weak case which has to pick its evidence in this fashion, and a very wild advocate who winds up his impotent criticisms by saying, "the supposed levitation of Home was the most hollow piece of charlatanry in the whole history of Spiritualism." Such a saying is on a par with a previous assertion that "Home lived on his spiritualistic gifts from his sixteenth year to the year in which he died." It is not true, and anyone who reads the man's life must know that it is not true, and that it is a posthumous slander upon a most ill-used and noble man.

—~—☼—~—

Editor's Note:

The reports given above give the reader some idea of the confusion about one of Spiritualism's greatest stories: the levitation of Daniel Dunglas Home. The different accounts of the same story and the different variations of added or changed material are normally accumulated over years, as we have seen with Hydesville, the Seven Principles, etc., but the confusion here is created by just three of the *first*-hand only witnesses within just a few years of the actual event taking place and where they were all present at the time it took place.

In my view, it is most important to stress that this was an impromptu séance by three young friends, one a close friend of Daniel Home. Given this fact it was not a controlled experiment under any kind of test situation, etc., but this séance nevertheless resulted in one of the biggest stories in British Spiritualism, which ideally needs to be told in context and foundation. However, the contradictions and the changing of the story by those involved over a short period of time have naturally drawn the attention of historians and psychical researchers outside and within the Spiritualist moment. It has shown good cause to be skeptical and in some avenues it can be seen that the whole thing can be explained as being done by normal means, as well as by psychic phenomena.

The point regarding the wrong address and date of the alleged levitation has been, to my mind, satisfactorily explained, but, of course, our history books had already recorded the confusion over the location and date of the séance. It is understandable that Adare cloaked in mystery the location of "Ashley House", the residence which he shared with Home, as Home was well-known within the public eye, so privacy would no doubt have been welcome.

I have not, of course, published above all the reports from the three witnesses, for example Lord Lindsay told his story twice, firstly as written evidence on July 6th 1869 to the Committee of the London Dialectical Society, who were appointed to investigate the claims of Spiritualism. His contradictory evidence is quoted within the above reports. He later sent a letter to the then weekly Spiritualist journal in 1871, "The Spiritualist". One of the numerous examples of the problems of the contradictions and story changes is apparent. The original report by Adare states: "It was so dark I could not see clearly how he was supported outside." Lindsay in his report the following year, some seven months later, states: "The moon was

shining full into the room". I need not give more examples given the previous statements in this article.

From the critics' and psychical researchers' point of view—and naturally some Spiritualists—they can see the possibility that fraud could occur under the cover of darkness, given that, as some accounts state (unlike Lindsay), it was a new moon, with only the stars to light the rooms. There were possibly street lights below but whether or not any street lights would be on in the Victorian era approaching midnight I cannot say. There is also the matter of the various heights given of the levitation by the witnesses, etc.; Lindsay said eighty-five feet above the ground, Doyle gave seventy feet. However, the modern calculations are more probably realistic, as given by Hall, at approximately 32 feet 6 inches; this was also noted by Frank Podmore as probably thirty-five feet.

As already noted in my editor's note, this was not a controlled séance in any way, it was simply between friends, so no blame for inaccuracies should be attached to Adare's estimates of the outside structure of Ashley House (albeit they appear to be precise). However, as he included it in the first 1868 report it has become of interest to some historians and psychical researchers.

As previously noted, Adare stated:

> It was so dark I could not see clearly how he was supported outside. He did not appear to grasp, or rest upon, the balustrade, but rather to be swung out and in. Outside each window is a small balcony or ledge, 19 inches deep, bounded by stone balustrades, 18 inches high. The balustrades of the two windows are 7 feet 4 inches apart, measuring from the nearest points. A string-course, 4 inches wide, runs between the windows at the level of the bottom of the balustrade; and another 3 inches wide at the level of the top. Between the window at which Home went out, and that at which he came in, the wall recedes 6 inches. The rooms are on the third floor.[31]

Trevor Hall notes on page 120 of his book, "The Enigma of Daniel Home: Medium or Fraud?", referring to the architect Peter Bond:

> Lord Adare said in *Experiences in Spiritualism* that the windows and balustrades at Ashley House were 7 feet 4 inches apart. Peter Bond calculates that the distance was nearer to 6 feet 6 inches. Both these estimates, however, relate to the distances between the windows of *adjoining houses*. As can be clearly seen from the photograph reproduced, however, if the windows are in the same house they are much nearer; and Peter Bond calculates from the large-scale official photograph of Ashley House taken before demolition that the distance between the two windows of the adjoining rooms on the third floor with which we are concerned was about 4 feet 2 inches. He considers that the ledge that connected the two balconies was probably somewhat wider than Adare's estimate of 5 inches.[32] It is clearly visible in the photograph. Each balcony was surrounded by a low balustrade.

—~—☼—~—

[31] Pioneer: We can note in Sir Francis Burnand's report that he stated the levitation took place on the first floor: it can be assumed that this is an error either by Adare or Sir Francis, as there is no doubt it was the third floor.

[32] Hall: I can find no reference to this claim.

In conclusion:

It is, of course, almost impossible to furnish ourselves with a clear picture of the actual events which took place; it seems that none of the witnesses *actually* saw Home float between the two windows, as claimed in much of the literature! Adare's first report: "Do not be afraid, and on no account leave your places;" (D. D. Home) and he went out into the passage …" where he claimed to go out of the window in another room. "We heard Home go into the next room, heard the window thrown up, and presently Home appeared standing upright outside our window; he opened the window and walked in quite coolly. "Ah," he said, "You were good this time," ".

Sir Francis C. Burnand's report to Adare's handwritten letter to him, albeit not verbatim, states: "While Dunraven and friend were seated in B, discussing the pros and cons of spiritualism, his Lordship's attitude towards it being that of "philosophic doubt," a tapping was heard at the window, and turning towards it, they, to their amazement and horror,—for the result of a slip, on so small a space for standing securely as the ledge …" This shows they had their backs to the window! And why state "Dunraven and friend …"? Which friend? Or can we assume that the missing one of the three was Lindsay? His statement to the Dialectical Society is perhaps suggestive that he was in the room where Home was said to have exited; he said: "I heard the window go up, but I could not see it, for I sat with my back to it. I, however, saw his shadow on the opposite wall; he went out of the window in a horizontal position, and I saw him outside the other window (that in the next room) floating in the air. It was eighty-five feet from the ground."

It is, of course, difficult to understand what position he was in to view from both rooms, but these two accounts do show that all three had their backs to the window/s or were not paying attention. We can note in Doyle's public debate with Joseph M'Cabe, who suggested this scenario, that Doyle replied: "He is under the strange delusion that these three men who were expecting that Home would attempt this feat and had been warned of it, sat with their backs to the window. Could anything more absurd be imagined ! Why should they sit with their backs to the point where they expected a wonderful manifestation to appear ?"

I have always believed that to reach an informed, balanced overview of any claimed phenomena one requires as much flexibility as possible to reach an informed personal decision with the available information, negative and positive. On the negative side, researchers have put forward feasible suggestions of how this could be achieved by normal means, given Adare's comment; "It was so dark I could not see clearly how he was supported outside." Some base their conclusions on this, others on mesmerism. Trevor Hall looks at the outside structure and, of course, the profound darkness, but he was no doubt urged on by the architect Peter Bond's later estimation of the space between the windows and the width of the ledge etc.; this is what Hall concludes on page 120:

> I do not think it can be doubted that an active man *who had no fear of heights*, could stand on one balcony, holding the balustrade for support, place one foot over the balustrade on to the ledge, and stride with safety onto the other balcony with the other foot, using the other balustrade as a second hand-hold.[33] The fact that Home was quite fearless of heights is demonstrated on page 77 of *Experiences in Spiritualism*, when during the séance (séance No. 40) immediately before that of the levitation he actually opened the window and stepped out on to the balcony. Adare and Lindsay were alarmed for his safety, but he stepped calmly back into the room, chiding his friends for their lack

[33] Hall: As regards the feasibility of what I believe Home did, it is worthy of note that the late Harry Houdini, whose head for heights and agility were excellent, like those of Home, recorded privately in his diary on 6 May, 1920, that he "offered to do the D. D. Home levitation stunt at the same place that Home did it in 1868." B. M. L. Ernst and H. Carrington, Houdini and Conan Doyle: *The Story of a Strange Friendship* (London, 1933, p. 47).

of faith in him. This highly important incident, which in my view was part of the psychological preparation of the observers for what was to happen at the next séance, …

It appears that none of the three witnesses actually saw the alleged levitation of Home floating out from one window and into the other.

There is no indication that they watched Home leave from the first window or viewed him outside the building floating and returning in mid-air to their location at the second window.

Much on D.D. Home can be found in the Pioneer pdf booklet, "Physical Mediumship", as advertised on the last page of this issue.

LORD DUNRAVEN'S FINAL WORDS ON THE LEVITATION OF D.D. HOME—50 YEARS LATER!

The last issue of Pioneer published "The Levitation of Daniel Dunglas Home", which resulted in some interesting feedback and no doubt has caused much discussion. One important piece of feedback was received from the Italian psychical researcher, Massimo Biondi, who noted in his email to me:

> On page 92 of your overview on the levitation, you refer to a (presumed) "third account" that in 1920 Dunraven published on "Weekly Dispatch" (on March 21st); account about which A. Conan Doyle and J. M. McCabe would debate (on March 11th). Well, I really think that the Dunraven's account was not an account: it was a letter, simply reporting a few paragraphs of the ancient letter published in "Experiences in Spiritualism…" (see later); Doyle and McCabe debated about Home's levitation on March 11th, and *after their public dispute* Dunraven sent his letter to the "Weekly Debate" to reiterate his version of what was happened.
>
> An exact transcription of Dunraven's text published in "Weekly Dispatch" is contained in Houdini's book "A magician among spirits", pages 273-275, where all this is explained. I am attaching at the present email only the pages of the Houdini's volume that interest us here; but the entire book can be downloaded.[5]

As quoted below:

Lord Adare's Story.

That is the way Spiritualistic chroniclers tell this story, but Lord Dunraven, in a letter to the Editor of *The Weekly Dispatch*, London, Eng., March 21, 1920, gives quite a different version of the occurrence, and because of its intrinsic worth as refutation of the loud claim made by Spiritualists I am reproducing the entire article including headlines:

"MEDIUM'S ENTRY BY WINDOW

"WHAT I SAW AT ASHLEY HOUSE

"By Lord Dunraven.

"My attention has been drawn to accounts of a debate on 'Spiritualism' on March 11 between Sir Arthur Conan Doyle and Mr. Joseph McCabe, in which the latter is reported to have described the alleged wafting of Mr. D. D. Home from window to window as one of the greatest pieces of trickery to be found in the whole Spiritualistic movement.

"Assuming the substantial accuracy of the report, I, as the sole survivor of those present on the occasion, think it my duty, in justice to the dead, to mention the facts as recorded by me at the time.

"They are extracted from a long letter descriptive of the evening to my father, who was much interested in the subject. Whether my letter was submitted to the others present I cannot now say for certain. I have no

[5] Thanks are due to Massimo Biondi for bringing to attention Lord Dunraven's third account; Massimo for the last year or so has been the main contributor of an Italian newsletter on parapsychology, psychical research, Spirit(ual)ism etc., which is freely distributed through email: Notiziario Italiano di Parapsicologia.

doubt that it was, for my custom was always to ask others present to test the accuracy of any record that I kept.

"The date was December 16, 1868.[6] Those present were myself (then Lord Adare), the late Lord Crawford, (then Master of Lindsay), a cousin of mine, Mr. Wynne (Charlie) and Mr. D. D. Home.

"ON THE THIRD FLOOR

"The scene was Ashley House (in Ashley-place). Speaking from memory, it consisted of two rooms facing the front—that is, looking on Ashley-place—a passage at the back running the length of the two rooms, a door in each room connecting it with the passage. The locality is thus described in the letter to my father:

"Outside each window is a small balcony or ledge, 19 in. deep, bounded by stone balustrade, 18 in. high. The balustrades of the two windows are 7 ft. 4 in. apart, measuring from the nearest points. A string-course, 4 in. wide, runs between the windows at the level of the bottom of the balustrade, and another, 3 in. wide, at the level of the top. Between the window at which Home went out and that at which he came in the wall recedes 6 in. The rooms are on the third floor.

"The following account of the incident is extracted from the letter to my father:

"He (Home) then said to us, 'Do not be afraid, and on no account leave your places;' and he went out into the passage.

"FROM ROOM TO ROOM

"Lindsay suddenly said, 'Oh, good heavens! I know what he is going to do; it is too fearful.' Adare: 'What is it?' Lindsay: 'I cannot tell you; it is too horrible! Adah says that I must tell you; he is going out of the window in the other room, and coming in at this window.'

"We heard Home go into the next room, heard the window thrown up, and presently Home appeared standing upright outside our window. He opened the window and walked in quite cooly. 'Ah,' he said, 'you were good this time,' referring to our having sat still and not wished to prevent him. He sat down and laughed.

"Charlie: 'What are you laughing at?' Home: 'We are thinking that if a policeman had been passing and had looked up and seen a man turning round and round along the wall in the air he would have been much astonished. Adare, shut the window in the next room.'

"I got up, shut the window, and in coming back remarked that the window was not raised a foot, and that I could not think how he had managed to squeeze through.

"OUT, HEAD FIRST

"He arose and said 'Come and see.' I went with him; he told me to open the window as it was before, I did so; he told me to stand a little distance off; he then went through the

[6] Pioneer, Vol. 9, No. 3: "The Levitation of Daniel Dunglas Home" looked at the confusing, contradictory reports and the inaccuracies surrounding the alleged aerial flight of D.D. Home in December 1868, where it is *generally* claimed that Home levitated out of one window and came in through another, witnessed by his three friends. The article puts forward the correct facts as far as possible, as given at the time by the *only* witnesses. The numerous contradictions, for example "It was so dark I could not see clearly …", "The moon was shining full into the room …", opened the door to many questions by some critical psychical researchers suggesting ways in which the alleged levitation could have been done by normal means. The article shows that the date of the séance where the levitation is recorded was Sunday, December 13th; the date of December 16, 1868 was the date of the letter by Adare to his father, not the séance date referred to.

open space, head first, quite rapidly, his body being nearly horizontal and apparently rigid. He came in again, feet foremost, and we returned to the other room.

"It was so dark I could not see clearly how he was supported outside. He did not appear to grasp, or rest upon, the balustrade, but rather to be swung out and in."

"Such are the facts as narrated at the time. I make no comment except this. Rigorously speaking, it is incorrect to say, as I think has been said, that we *saw* Mr. Home wafted from one window to the other.

"As to whether he was or was not, I am concerned only to state the facts as observed at the time, not to make deductions from them."

In view of this publication, it is quite natural to infer that Sir Arthur Conan Doyle was cognizant of it at the time of its appearance, because of his controversy with Mr. Joseph McCabe, on that subject; therefore, it is difficult to reconcile that thought with the fact of Sir Arthur's unmitigated praise and endorsement of a man such as all adduced evidence has branded a charlatan.

This I believe brings us clearly to the end result without further speculation as to what the three witnesses actually *saw* (or did not see) on that dark December night in 1868; the Pioneer article concluded that it was doubtful that any of the witnesses could have witnessed the alleged levitation outside the building, as they had followed Home's instruction to them: "on no account leave your places." Home then went through the passage into the other room alone; next, he was seen outside their window. "Home appeared standing upright outside our window. He opened the window and walked in quite cooly. 'Ah,' he said, 'you were good this time,' referring to our having sat still …".[7]

Fifty years on, Viscount Adare, as he was then known, wrote to his father, the Earl of Dunraven, detailing what he and his two friends had witnessed with their friend, D.D. Home. Lord Dunraven is quite clear in his conclusion:

"Rigorously speaking, it is incorrect to say, as I think has been said, that we *saw* Mr. Home wafted from one window to the other."

Image of Windham Thomas Wyndham-Quin, 4th Earl of Dunraven and Mount-Earl (12 February, 1841-14 June, 1926), styled Viscount Adare between 1850 and 1871.

[7] It should be noted that the Master of Lindsay's reports are confusing and conflict with Lord Dunraven's; please consult the article in the last issue of Pioneer.

Transfiguration Séance

Below is an interesting account of a transfiguration séance published in the Two Worlds, March 13th, 1936, by Mr Herbert Everett, who was the President of the Brighton National Spiritualist Church for forty years, 1911-1951. Herbert, at the time this article was written, had over thirty-five years' experience as an investigator into the phenomena of Spiritualism. It can be noted that it was a National church, i.e. affiliated to the Spiritualists' National Union. The church was founded in 1902, holding its meetings for some decades at various premises; in 2019 it was amalgamated with Hove Central Spiritualist Church, then becoming Brighton and Hove National Spiritualist Church.[16]

Herbert Everett would later become a Minister of the Spiritualists' National Union. He wrote various articles in the Two Worlds weekly journal; the week before he published "Spirits Speak Foreign Tongues - Still-Born Child Returns to her Mother". It is from this article that I have taken the images shown here. Everett in his articles refers only to the "medium"; the only information given as to who the medium was is in the caption under the medium's photograph, "Miss Scoggins The Medium".

Miss Scoggins was Annie L. Scoggins, a member of the Brighton church and a circle member. Annie held an SNU Intermediate Certificate (as did Herbert Everett), both under category "B" as a Normal speaker. Annie would later become Mrs. Everett. Her mediumship included the development of transfiguration, which resulted in holding weekly transfiguration demonstrations in her church, naturally attracting many people to attend and raise much-needed funds.

Mrs Annie Everett would become the church President from 1951 to 1960.

In the article below Everett ably gives an excellent overview of a Scoggins transfiguration séance at Brighton church. Everett in my opinion hits on one important problem in transfiguration mediumship which can bring the sitters to perceive the developing *ectoplasmic* mask as having, for example, a moustache. This can be due to the moving of the head back and forwards, etc.; the defused light source is directly shone into the medium's face, sometimes casting shadows, often under the nose—which can sometimes be mistaken as a moustache.

Everett is critical of such problems of séance lighting, eliminating such problems so that *no shadows appear on the medium's face, ...*

[16] See: https://www.snu.org.uk/brighton-spiritualist-church

Due thanks is extended to the President of Brighton and Hove National Spiritualist Church, Michelle Lieberman, for her kind permission to publish the wedding photograph of Herbert and Annie, who were married on July 24th, 1937, as shown above. Further, Michelle adds that Herbert Everett was born in Hackney in 1873 and passed on November 12th, 1965, while Annie Laura Scroggins was born in Brighton on October 15th, 1892 and passed on January 21st, 1966, both within a few months of each other.

Michelle Lieberman became the seventh church President in 2020, having been involved within the church for the last twenty-five years, 17 years as Secretary and a healer since 1998. The church holds an impressive history over its 120 years of service to Spiritualism, which is reflected in its website: www.brightonandhovenationalspiritualistchurch.com

THE LADY WITH MANY FACES

Extraordinary Transfigurations

I have witnessed with this medium, who is known as a transfiguration medium, the building-up of many distinct types of faces of men and women of various nationalities, some of which I can enumerate as Chinese, Japanese, French, Danish, Nubian, English, etc. Some of which have been unable to speak a word of English until, by the fact of continual co-operation, they have learned to say a few words, and, in some cases, have progressed to giving lengthy discourses.

In my opinion, transfiguration holds the key to a door through which a flood of light may penetrate to those who are searching for proof of survival. The process can be shown to a body of sympathetic sitters in dull red light, shining direct on the face of the medium. It has been my practice to have the illumination so arranged that no shadows appear on the medium's face, even when moved whilst under the influence of the various spirits operating. In the early days of experimenting with the lighting, I found that shadows spoiled the results, and I have learned how to obviate them.

I here want to say that mediums, generally speaking, desire that their work shall be proved to their own satisfaction, and the medium of whom I am speaking is no exception. In order to bring this satisfaction it was necessary to photograph the various faces. I was beset by a problem, as, in the ordinary way, you cannot photograph in red light. After a deal of experiment I found that it was possible to use a blue light, which made very little difference to photography, although it makes observation from the sitter's point of view rather difficult. Up to this point you will observe I claim that the faces are a reality, but as I am a Spiritualist, and disposed to accept it, I had to put myself in the place of the ordinary observer. I was fortunate in having been an amateur photographer from an early age, developing my own plates and doing my own printing, and priding myself in knowing something of how photographs may be faked.

One of the early controls was a Chinaman, and he is still very much in evidence. He is a very powerful fellow, who exercises a great deal of paternal affection and love for his medium. He was an excellent subject for my photographic experiments. With a little perseverance I was able to photograph him. His name had been given to me as "Whang Foi" and we addressed him as such whenever he came. A lady—a Spanish artist,—of whom we had no knowledge, came to one of our seances in June, 1934. It transpired eventually that she was a student of occult matters, and had lived in the East. She was so enthralled by the presentation of this Chinaman that she sketched his portrait, and took the trouble to go to the Brighton Public Library for the purpose of verifying his identity and origin.

She discovered that such a man had existed in the early dawn of China's civilisation, that his various names were Hwang Ti, Fu Hi, Hwang Fohy. He was the first monarch of China, son of "Moye," his mother. He took the Yellow Robe at the age of seventy-seven, and died when one hundred years old. Long before I had any idea of photographing faces, this Chinaman had prophesied that his picture should go all over the world. This prophecy will be fulfilled, for we have been approached by the lady artist to allow it to appear in a book that is shortly to be published by her, with a "Foreword" by her friend, Mr. Paul Brunton, a traveller and student of the East, and author of *Secret Egypt*, etc.

To come nearer home, we have had the sweet companionship of a little spirit, who was a French dancing girl when in earth-life. There is a striking contrast between the stern dignity of the Chinaman and the vivacity of this little girl. Her photograph is reproduced here, showing her winning expression and the telling language of her eyes as she always manifests her presence. She is known as "Celeste," and when she appears brightens up the whole assembly, for she comes with all gaiety. To photograph her was a difficult matter for she never keeps still.

When one is following work of this kind, and especially in the private developing circle, one takes all that comes as part of the development of the medium, proving identity when possible, and rejecting or reserving judgment on that which cannot be proven. Amongst the many peculiar expressions we had the manifestation of a Nubian, who gave his name as "Zara." He, too, was never still, and it was difficult to obtain a photograph of him. He is, however, very important in collecting psychic power.

I was also successful at this time in obtaining a photograph of an elderly English lady, who had been fully recognised as a very dear friend of a lady sitter, to whom she manifested. It must be remembered that all these manifestations have taken place at public seances, and been visible to many different people. It is not to the exclusive few that these demonstrations are given. Incidentally, we had over 750 people at these seances during last year, and, whatever can be said regarding the mental evidence I have mentioned in viewing them from the aspects of telepathy, subconscious mind activity, etc., the camera, which has no consciousness and cannot imagine, or be fooled into picturing something which does not exist, has recorded undeniable proof of facial representations of those spirits purporting to communicate. No photograph I have here reproduced has been retouched or altered in any way.

I now submit that the evidence I have given of survival through mediumship can only point to one thing, that manifestation of discarnate intelligences knows no barrier of race or cast.

We have Chinese, Nubian, French, English, a still-born babe (one might naturally include children), all manifesting their presence. They also show that they bring back their own individual characteristics, which, speaking from a Spiritualist standpoint, shows that

there is no barrier to spirit-life, and, speaking of character and memory, that men and women are the same five minutes after death as they were five minutes before.

Throughout the work there has been borne upon me continuously the fact that discarnate beings of all nationalities, with their varying religious creeds and traditions, some in the light of the Western world classed as heathens, some who, on earth, were materialists, with no belief in a hereafter, mingle and co-mingle in common brotherhood of service. The unbaptised baby, the sweet spirit of a nun, who, whilst working with us, still claims that she is a good Catholic, the spirit of a German chemist, who, on earth, had no thought beyond that which the physical world could teach him, all returning, proclaiming that they continue to live as their common birthright through the operation of natural law.

The gentleman who had been indicated as possessing the power of spirit-photography was a young chemist of thirty-five years of age. He had brought his own photographic apparatus and material. After the seance two cameras were placed in different positions in the same room, and simultaneously exposed. On the development of the film next day, to their great surprise the films contained excellent extras of Beethoven, the musician.

It would be thought that the young chemist would be overjoyed at such a remarkable result. On the contrary he took the view that he was quite satisfied it was not spirits who had produced the results, and refused to assist in any further seances.

Mr. Charles Wagner next made inquiries from a well-known musician as to the number of Beethoven's compositions, and was told by a musical authority that they numbered one hundred and thirty-five. It is interesting to note, however, that according to the *Musical Journal*, of Geneva, Dr. Ernest Ferand, Director of the Institute of Music, at Hellerau, recently discovered two compositions composed by Beethoven, under the title, "Marches of Luxemburg," which brings the total number of Beethoven's compositions to one hundred and thirty-seven, and thereby verifies our communications.

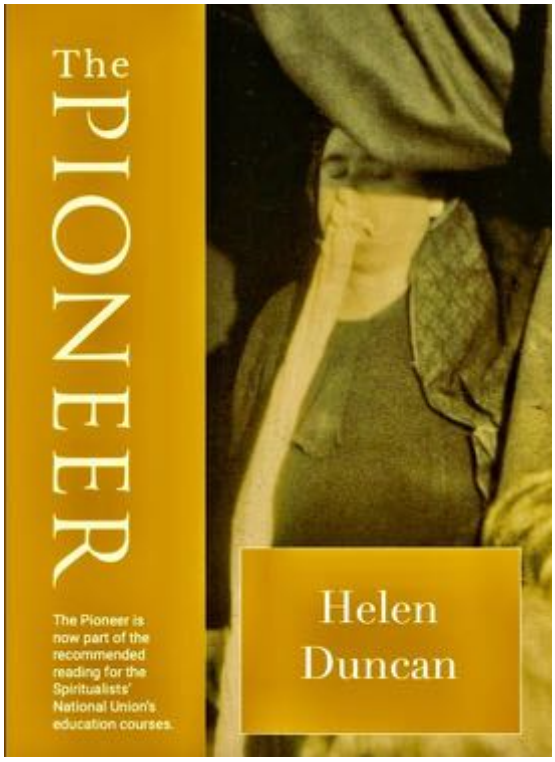
Beethoven has figured frequently in spirit communications. Mrs. Emma Hardinge Britten, who was herself no mean musician, since at the early age of sixteen she composed music, particularly masses, which were used at the services of St. Mary's, at Bristol, always claimed Beethoven as one of her band of spirit-guides. As long ago as 1871 she obtained a spirit-photograph of him through the mediumship of Mr. Mumler, the first medium to obtain spirit-photography. It portrays him very faintly holding a musical instrument in his hand. We have had to prepare our reproduction from a very faded photograph, but it shows the outline of the form.[17]

[17] The image shown here is of much better quality than originally published in the Two Worlds article. Please see Pioneer, Vol. 4, No. 2: "Spirit Photograph of the Great Composer".

A few years prior to the above report the Brighton church had a series of sittings with the Scottish materialisation medium, Helen Duncan, commencing on October 3rd, 1932. The report for the Two Worlds published on October 21st was written by Annie L. Scoggins; below is the report as published:[18]

THE DRAMAS OF THE SEANCE ROOM

On Monday, October 3rd, the first of a series of seances was held with Mrs. Duncan at the National Spiritualist Church, Mighell Street, Brighton. The usual conditions for such seances were observed, and resulted in a very wonderful and instructive experience for the majority of the sitters.



After a general introduction Mrs. Duncan retired into the cabinet, and it was not long before Albert made his presence known. In a beautifully modulated voice he briefly introduced himself, and gave instructions regarding the light. He then announced his intention of showing himself alone, and also with his medium. From my seat immediately in front of the cabinet it was possible to hear and see the majority of what took place, and the light was sufficiently good to show the medium standing side by side with Albert, whose features, however, could not be clearly discerned.

In all, including Albert and little Peggy, ten materialised forms were seen, five of whom gave evidence of identity as relatives and friends of the sitters, the others as guides.

To Dr. James Coates, who was present, a form appeared who claimed to be his wife, but, unfortunately, owing to failing sight and deafness, he missed much of the beauty of the manifestation.

The most evidential, although very pathetic, incident of the evening was the appearance of a girl who had been attached to the Church, and passed away with consumption about two years ago. Albert announced that a girl was present who was a relative of "the young man with his hands in his pockets, whose name began with W." Immediately we heard sounds of coughing and painful breathing, and the tall form of "Edie" slipped from between the curtains and called to her brother.

She disappeared again into the cabinet crying, and Albert was heard reassuring her and telling her that she was quite well, and that her cough had left her with the death of the physical body. He urged her again to come out of the cabinet and talk to her brother Will.

Then ensued a very painful scene, for "Edie" could not understand why she could not stay. "Look," she said, "I am real,'' and she smacked her leg with her hand to emphasise her words. "I have a real body and hands and feet; why can't I stay ?" Her brother explained that the body, in which she appeared so physical, was really built of material borrowed from someone else, who had been kind enough to lend it for a time. Gradually she

[18] For further reading on Helen Duncan please see the Pioneer pdf booklet as referenced on the last page of this issue.

understood, and asked "Who is the lady asleep in here ?" and the answer was given that the lady was the medium who was giving "Edie" physical expression for the time being. "I understand, and must go now. Good-bye," and she disappeared into the cabinet, kissing her hand of her brother.

Another striking incident was the appearance of "Reg.," a Lyceumist, whose body was blown to pieces in the war.

Albert announced that a boy was present who had passed over under tragic circumstances, and, after a few seconds, a form appeared at the opening of the curtains, saluting in military style, and whistling a gay signal. He disappeared again into the cabinet, and there was a great deal of billowing of the curtains, and an icy breeze, and then he suddenly appeared again by the side of the cabinet. He seemed in gay humour, and, taking the loud speaker of the wireless set from its place, beat a lively tattoo upon it, and then threw it on the ground. Then he vanished through the side of the curtain, and reappeared at the opening again.

I called him by name, and he asked for pencil and paper. When I handed these to him, his old-time characteristic "Ta" left no room for doubt as to his identity. I peered closely into his face whilst standing by him waiting for the written message, and there was no doubt at all but that he was "Reg." Then kissing his hand in sign of farewell, he said "Cheerio," and passed into the cabinet whistling and keeping time with his feet. When the light was turned on at the close of the seance it revealed three words upon the paper in my hand: "Ever yours.—REG."

Everyone was interested in little Peggy, who sang her song, "Daisy, Daisy." She called out to ''Daddy Coates," and prattled to Mr. Everett, the President of the Church, about his pretty hair. She told him that she was the little girl who had played the trumpet in our circle the previous Tuesday, because she had paid us a visit to see what sort of place her medium was visiting next.

A very striking figure was that of a nun, who approached Mr. Everett, announcing herself as his guide, known as "The Peaceful Dove." She talked very earnestly to him about future spiritual work to be accomplished, and then told us that although she had passed over, she was still a good Catholic. At the second seance she came again, made a short appealing speech, and sang Albert's favourite hymn at his request in a clear sweet voice.

The second and third seances were remarkable for the amount of evidence given, and the beauty of the spirit lights which the forms carried in their hands. Albert called Mr. Everett's attention to one light, which seemed to be made up of hundreds of little lights, giving the impression of a light shining through gauze.

One would like to dwell long on the various points of interest, evidence, beauty, and education, which such experience affords, for every form had a special peculiarity of its own.

We watched the form of a baby elongate until it became that of a tall and graceful girl, and we listened to the voice of a Polish Jew, who had materialised, talking to his son in their native tongue. Such were the varied experiences of the week.

Through it all Albert's beautiful voice, gentle encouragements to those manifesting, and kindly advice to the sitters, made the seances something to be remembered by all who participated in them.

—~—☼—~—

Editor's Note:

Transfiguration mediums in our history have not been plentiful. Probably the most well-known and tested was Mrs Elizabeth Frances Bullock; although not confirmed, I have noted that Annie Scoggins sat with Bullock in her development. Psypioneer, Vol. 8, No. 6, June 2012, reported on Elizabeth Bullock, a pioneer of public transfiguration séances, who cooperated with researchers in infra-red photography.

The International Institute for Psychical Research referred to in the article was formed in 1934 for the purpose of investigating psychic phenomena on strictly scientific lines; it enrolled a number of distinguished scientists both in an active and in a consultative capacity. J. Arthur Findlay was its Chairman and an Honorary Vice-President.[19]

Below is quoted from the Psypioneer issue from the year 1935:

INFRA-RED CINEMA FILM OF MRS. BULLOCK'S TRANSFIGURATIONS

PSYCHICAL Research history was made last Friday (February 22nd), at the International Institute for Psychical Research, London, by the taking of an infra-red cinema film of the transfigurations of Mrs. Bullock, the Manchester Medium.

In the presence of a small group (a doctor, a physicist, a chemist, the Research Officer and two ladies), the Medium passed into trance. Her face was illuminated by four powerful reflectors enclosed in light-tight metal boxes behind infra-red filters. The visible light, however, was so dim that Mr. Leon Isaacs, the honorary photographer of the Institute, standing two yards away behind the cine-camera, could only see a red blur and had to be given, for start and stop, signals by the Research Officer, who was peering into the Medium's face. At the rate of 24 exposures per second, the camera recorded the changing of Mrs. Bullock's face into that of a Chinaman.

The Chinaman, apparently, was disconcerted by something. He disappeared soon and "Mooney," an African control, came and asked that the Medium's earrings should be removed, as the Chinaman dislikes wearing them. The request was complied with and the Chinaman came back.

There were other unidentified facial representations which are available for study. Two infra-red and two ultra-violet "stills" were also taken.

The only complaint made by "Mooney" was about the whirring of the cine-camera, which caused the Medium discomfort, but she stood the trying moments with admirable courage.

The end piece of the film was immediately cut off for a trial development. The pictures came up sharp and distinct. Mr. Isaacs had no hesitation in declaring that the cinema record was quite successful. It will stand more than life-size projection, promising thereby an excellent chance for a searching study.

—~—☼—~—

[19] See Pioneer, Vol. 6, No. 5: "International Institute for Psychical Research – The Case for Real Psychical Research – by Arthur Findlay".

The images below are not credited, so it is uncertain whether these were taken by Leon Isaacs. They were published in the "*Two Worlds"*, April 15th, 1950; Elizabeth Bullock died in 1965, aged 79.

In Search of Maria B. Hayden

The American Medium Who Brought Spiritualism to the U.K.

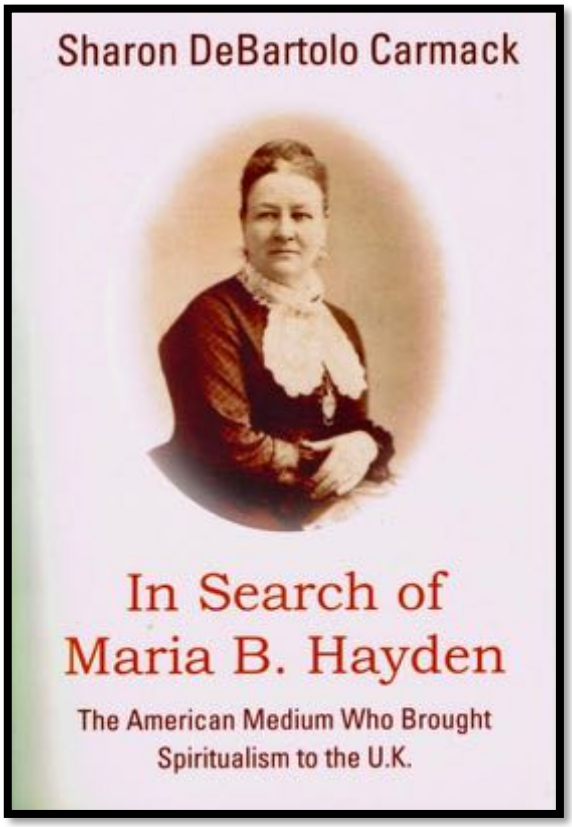
By Sharon DeBartolo Carmack

During the Hydesville rappings, as they peaked in the early evening of March 31st, 1848, a neighbour, Mr William Duesler, a former tenant of the house temporarily rented by Mr and Mrs Fox and their two young children, was called (among others) to the disturbances.

Later that evening, Duesler developed an alphabet code in an effort to communicate with the alleged pedlar. The following year, at Rochester, New York, this code would bring the Fox sisters to fame using Duesler's alphabet code and it was this code, the *calling of the alphabet*, which Maria Hayden introduced to the U.K. in 1852.

—~—☼—~—

Book Review by Paul J. Gaunt:



When people come into Spiritualism and start to look into its early beginnings they would find the names Andrew Jackson Davis, Hydesville and the Fox sisters, Emma Hardinge, D.D. Home and Maria Hayden all well within the first decade of the *general* date of 1848, when Modern Spiritualism began, albeit this is not strictly true.[1]

Enquirers would find sufficient available reading materials and photographs until they came to the American lady who introduced Spiritualism to England in October 1852—Mrs Maria Hayden.

This scholarly biography is in no way a casual overview of Hayden's introduction of Spiritualism into the U.K but a dedicated, thoughtful investigation into her life, those who were close to her, and those behind the scenes, expanding into other relevant areas of the period and giving the reader a broader understanding of the surrounding environment in which Spiritualism was moving.

Carmack's skills as a professional genealogist cautiously put together the early beginnings of the young Maria B. *née Trenholm* Hayden born in Nova Scotia, Canada in 1824,[2] leading up to her meeting physician Dr William R. Hayden in the late 1840s and resulting in their marriage in 1850; soon after the Haydens would discover Spiritualism primarily at the home of Laroy Sunderland, who in Boston, July 1850, launched the "Spiritual Philosopher" after one volume became "The Spirit World", the first Spiritualist newspaper in America.[3]

---

[1] Please see Pioneer, Vol. 2, No. 1: "When did Modern Spiritualism begin? 1848?"

[2] To find correct birth dates at this period is not always a simple task, as different records hold contradictory information; the date given here does not appear on her gravestone (see page 17 of the book).

[3] The scope was wider than Spiritualism, for the editor, Laroy Sunderland (sometimes called Leroy), was a noted reformer, with his own take on mesmerism called Pathetism.

By 1851 Maria had found her direction as a medium. Her husband William began to move away from medicine and lean more towards his journalistic skills and making a name for himself. Now with a newborn baby daughter in the latter part of the year, as their married life begins to take shape, as Chapter 4: *New Pursuits*, reveals, family tragedy hit hard the following June with the loss of their daughter Adelaide. Carmack takes the reader through the Haydens' grief and their *First Spiritualist Services*, as Spiritualism continued to spread throughout Boston, where the Haydens resided. They started holding meetings at their home as Maria's mediumship became more recognised and popularised, attracting both *believers and skeptics.* One such believer was a medical mesmerist called George W. Stone.

Although the Haydens had been previously influenced to go to England, Stone offered to sponsor their visit. Stone was well known in his field of mesmerism; he had published a book in England in 1850 and had also lectured widely in London, Manchester, Liverpool, etc. on electro-biology. Before Stone agreed to take the Haydens to England he tested Mrs Hayden's physical mediumship, as he wanted to make sure that others would be convinced. Taking her to a house in Boston, which he was certain she had never previously entered, and after "proving beyond all doubt" that the manifestations were undeniable, Stone persuaded the Haydens to accompany him to England, as Carmack explains in Chapter 6: *The Decision to Go to England*.

One doubt which the Haydens held about coming to the U.K. Carmack notes on page 97:

> "They also "feared that the English mind was not yet prepared to receive the truth of manifestations …[but] being continually assured by our invisible guardians" that they would be welcomed, William and Maria agreed to make the trip.

At this point British Spiritualist history was made on their arrival to England on October 14th, 1852. Naturally, at the start Stone conjoins the advertising between himself and Maria; as regards Hayden's séances a leaflet was produced, "Rules to be Observed at the Séances." The séances were, generally speaking, for the well-to-do, at a guinea per person at their residence. In the séances *the calling of the alphabet* was a simple process. Letters and numbers were placed on a board and each letter or number was pointed at in turn; a rap indicated whether it was the correct letter or number. The process was repeated for the second character and so on, producing the message letter by letter, word by word—no doubt laborious but effective.

The Haydens' visit, of course, caused a storm of debate, interest, acceptance and downright denial within the public press of the day; much of it was between the many eminent men of the day such as Sir Edward Bulwer Lytton, where Maria's first known professional séance took place in his residence at Knebworth House. Others in debate included Dr Charles Hoyland, Dr John Ashburner, Dr John Elliotson and Robert Owen, etc. Carmack brings the stories back to life, giving a detailed overview of Hayden's historic visit of *the American medium who brought Spiritualism to the U.K.* Reports, letters, statements, etc. are given to furnish the reader's understanding of the trials and tribulations of bringing these séances and their Spiritualist claims to the U.K.

Carmack widens the reader's interest with some of the more controversial, damning reports in Chapter 9, "Slanders of the Zoist—The Rapping Phenomena", for example, on page 132: "[Dr. John] Elliotson accused Maria of cold reading by being an astute observer of body language and facial countenance, and stated there were many incorrect answers." Further, "More damming was Elliotson's hypothesis on how Maria duped her clients. He claimed that she, or an accomplice, tapped her shoes against the legs of the table or her chair…" Naturally, these skeptical assertions were to be expected from some of the men of science, but these were combated with positive reports of her mediumship which echoed satisfaction with the likes of Dr John Ashburner and Robert Chambers. Some skeptics such as Augustus De Morgan, Professor of Mathematics at University College, London, together with his wife Sophia, became strong supporters of Hayden's mediumship. The séances are detailed in

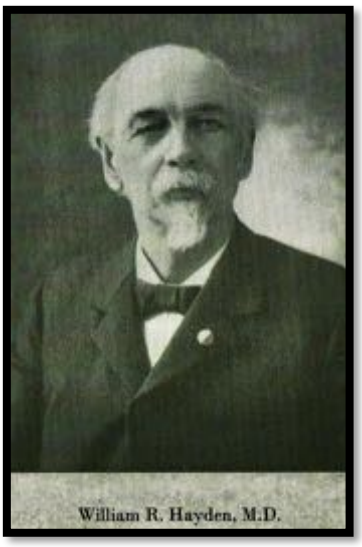
Chapter 14: *Final Months Abroad* and this concludes the Haydens' visit as they head to Dieppe, France before returning home to Boston on October 31st, 1853.[4]

On their *Return to Boston* generally favourable reports followed the Haydens. Maria gave birth to her second daughter on July 4th, 1854 and the following year the Haydens, with their baby daughter Elizabeth and another medium, Miss Jay, made another trip to London, arriving on April 23rd, 1855, but this time there was very little interest in their visit. Carmack, in Chapter 16: *A Second Trip to England*, notes: "The London correspondent for the *Spiritual Telegraph* [5] said he had hoped there would be a renewal of excitement upon Maria's return, "but we have been sadly disappointed. Mrs. Hayden has come once more…without being noticed by the press." "

Throughout the next few chapters Maria moves towards healing, a new phase of mediumship for her, working in unison with her rapping. Her husband's business was back more fully in the medical field with his friend George Stone. Moving on to Chapter 18: *A Healing Medium*, Andrew Jackson Davis was known for his clairvoyant ability to see disease inside the patient's body. In April 1856 Maria was publicly recognised within the press for her ability to diagnose and heal. In the autumn of this year, as her success continued, Maria was once again pregnant.

On pages 229-30 Maria termed her healing mediumship as "clairosympathic",

"… the power of obtaining knowledge by *sympathy of the mind with matter* …."



By merely *taking one's hand, her mind is impressed with the exact state of the physical system in all its minutiae*. Further, in 1857 William Hayden published "Seven Years with the Spirits". It is interesting to note that the author throughout the book mentions her difficult, almost never-ending search and identification for a photograph of Maria; eventually, on page 234, via a descendant, a portrait image is found of Maria as shown on the book's front cover. Moving on to April 1858, Maria would refer to her mediumship as a "clairvoyant physician", as per the title of Chapter 20. The Haydens moved in the direction of dedicating their skills to healing. They had moved to New York City in the late 1850s. Carmack gives an overview of the newspaper's advertisements, for example on page 247 the "New York Herald" on March 6th, 1859,

"… remarkable powers as a clairsympathist in examination and location of disease, when existing in the human system, are so widely and favourably known on both sides of the Atlantic."

Further mention is made of William Hayden's work on page 246, published in the "New York Tribune", February 9th, 1859:

"William run an ad to demonstrate his "lung vapor bath" …"

---

[4] Editor's Note: The Haydens would leave a lasting impression on British Spiritualism. On April 9th, 1855, D.D. Home came to London, staying at Cox's Hotel in Jermyn Street, (Mayfair), London, coincidentally the same hotel where Robert Owen lived. But Home's mediumship was only accessible to the select few. It would not be until the time around Mrs Mary Marshall's arrival in the 1860s that public mediumship would start to move forward in the U.K. See Psypioneer, Vol. 7, No. 11: "Mrs. Mary Marshall – First English public medium".

[5] Editor's Note: The early British journals can be a bit confusing with name changes: *The Yorkshire Spiritual Telegraph* (Keighley), April 1855-1857, changed its name to *British Spiritual Telegraph*. It was first published weekly, then monthly, by W. Horsell and ended in December 1859, followed by the *Spiritual Magazine* (London), January 1860-1877.

As the years passed, healing became the Haydens' primary focus. On page 256 Carmack notes that in "The Progressive Annual", edited by Andrew Jackson Davis for the years 1863-4, Maria was listed under the headings: "Magnetic Operators, Clairvoyants, and Medical Mediums" and "Magnetists, Clairvoyants, and Mediums", respectively. It is further noted by Carmack that after this period Maria *did not appear* to advertise her services as a medium elsewhere, for in the New York City directory for 1864-65 Maria was under the heading "Physician".

During the Civil War Maria, at the age of 39, gave birth to the Haydens' fourth child, leading into Chapter 22: *Medical School*. Post-war, we find that William and Maria have enrolled at a new Eclectic Medical College in New York City, starting its first term in October 1866. Maria was now 42 and with three children; no doubt for a woman in the 1860s it would have been a daunting task with her family commitments given the amount of study time required to achieve a medical degree, not to mention the required costs for both parties.

William made giant steps in the purchase of a pharmaceutical company, relocating to Bedford, Massachusetts, as outlined in Chapter 23: *Bedford Springs*; in 1885 he became a registered pharmacist. While William built his business, Maria was making her name, still living in New York City, as Chapter 24: *A Remarkable Diagnostician*, suggests. Maria moved from strength to strength in her medical career as "Mrs. Wm. R. Hayden, M.D." At the Eclectic Medical Society (EMS) AGM in January 1870 Maria presented her first paper, "Veratrum Viride", with the added honour of it being recommended for publication. The veratrum viride was a remedy, an arterial sedative, controlling the heart's action and bringing down the pulse considerably without stopping the action of the vital forces.[6]

As their careers flourished, moving forward in the medical world, unfortunately their marriage did not and they drifted further apart. Maria's accomplishments did not end with obtaining her medical degree: she was also serving on committees, preparing papers and/or working as a Censor. In 1877 she moved her practice to Manhattan, while William continued in Massachusetts. Maria would continue with her Spiritualist interests: she studied another aspect of psychic ability with Doctor Joseph Rhodes Buchanan, an honorary member of the EMS, who later accepted the position of Professor of Physiology.

Buchanan was the father of psychometry, *measuring by the soul*, who coined the name in 1842, as discussed in Chapter 27: *A Psychometric Genius*. Maria studied and practised psychometry under Buchanan's guidance, where she excelled.

Albeit this review comes to its end, the book continues with much more information and an in-depth Appendix, genealogy sections and more. In this review I have kept to the Haydens and not spilled over to the many well-known pioneers of our movement which the author sidelines throughout the book, given that the Haydens rubbed shoulders with so many well-known pioneers in the history of the Spiritualist movement.

In Search of Maria B. Hayden – The American Medium Who Brought Spiritualism to the U.K., by Sharon DeBartolo Carmack. The book is well-illustrated, containing 592 pages and giving, for the first time, an in-depth look and valuable *referenced* insight into the life of Maria B. Hayden, *The American Medium Who Brought Spiritualism to the U.K.*

Available on the Spiritualists' National Union website:

http://www.snu.org.uk/shop/in-search-of-maria-b-hayden

The book is published by Scattered Leaves Press, Salt Lake City, Utah, December 2020, and is also available on all Amazon marketplaces

[6] This first published essay is published in full in the book's Appendix.

PSYCHOGRAPHY

Direct - Independent Writing

William Crookes:

"This is the term employed to express writing which is not produced by any person present. I have had words and messages repeatedly written on privately-marked paper, under the most rigid test conditions, and have heard the pencil moving over the paper in the dark.

"The conditions—pre-arranged by myself—have been so strict as to be equally convincing to my mind as if I had seen the written characters formed."

"The first instance which I shall give took place, it is true, at a dark *séance*, but the result was not less satisfactory on that account. I was sitting next to the medium, Miss Fox, the only other persons present being my wife and a lady relative, and I was holding the medium's two hands in one of mine, whilst her feet were resting on my feet. Paper was on the table before us, and my disengaged hand was holding a pencil.

"A luminous hand came down from the upper part of the room, and after hovering near me for a few seconds, took the pencil from my hand, rapidly wrote on a sheet of paper, threw the pencil down, and then rose up over our heads, gradually fading into darkness." [13]

—~—☼—~—

The last issue of Pioneer reported on automatic writing, which generally falls under the heading of mental mediumship, as opposed to direct writing, which is independent of the medium's hand—hence direct or independent mediumship using the medium's psychic magnetism, for a better description; this phase of mediumship was referred to by some as "psychography" or "abnormal writing", a phrase used by M.A. (Oxon), an early pseudonym of William Stainton Moses. Below is taken from "The Facts of Psychic Science" by A. Campbell Holms, first published in 1925:[14]

Direct Writing—Slate Writing

"In the presence of a suitable medium spirits can write directly without the intervention of the human hand. This is known as psychography, or direct spirit writing. A sheet of paper and a pencil having been laid on the table of a darkened séance room, a luminous hand has been seen to pick up the pencil, write a message on the paper, and then disappear. On rare occasions a visible hand may appear and write in a lighted room. Or a pencil may be seen to get up and write apparently unaided.

[13] "Researches in the Phenomena of Spiritualism", by William Crookes, F.R.S., published in 1874.

[14] A. Campbell Holms, "The Facts of Psychic Science", published in 1925; it was later reprinted in 1969 with a new foreword from Leslie Shepard.

"The most convenient way of obtaining spirit writing is by means of ordinary school slates, on which in a brightly lighted room the sound of the writing may be heard while in progress. Describing one of the many procedures: two slates are placed face to face, so that the wooden frames only are in contact, and, though not essential, a tiny fragment of slate pencil is put in the space between them. The medium and sitters then place their hands on the slates as they lie on the table, writing is heard, raps signal its completion, and, on taking the slates apart, they are found to have writing on them, perhaps only a word or two, or a statement or messages covering both slates.

"Though a common phenomenon in the past, slate writing is now very rare.[15] Its success is due to the fact that the slates themselves provide the ideal condition of a dark, secluded chamber for the occurrence of the actual phenomenon. Also, as the hands of the medium and sitters may be placed close to the writing, their psychic force is effectively concentrated. The fact that the space between the slates is contracted, is no hindrance, for spirits can write on surfaces in actual contact.

"Conjurers, by means of trick slates and tables, pretend to obtain writing on what a moment before was a blank surface.[16] Their slates, however, are not ordinary school slates such as mediums use, but are carefully made apparatus in which what appears to be a single slate is really two thin pieces of slate to face, one of which is detachable and can be dropped when required, perhaps into the frame of another slate, and thus display new surfaces previously written on."

"The calligraphy of direct spirit writing is not usually recognisable as that of the deceased friend it purports to come from; probably because the actual writing is usually done by the medium's controlling spirit, who, having experience and skill, acts as amanuensis. In many cases, however, it is recognisable, especially the signature; and its sense is often strikingly applicable, and evidential as regards the identity of the communicating spirit.

"Investigators of slate-writing phenomena often use their own slates, but writing comes more freely on those of the medium, which, through contact with him, have absorbed some of his "magnetism" or psychic energy. With a strong medium, however, the newness of a slate is little hindrance to the phenomenon. Sometimes two slates are hinged together, so as to open like a book, and they may be provided with a good lock, so that a sitter, having cleaned the slates and written a question or name of a deceased friend, can lock them and retain the key until the answer is written.

"Sometimes two slates are fixed together with screws through the frames by the sitter, in private, after writing his question, and unscrewed at his leisure after the séance. Otherwise, they may be bound together with string and sealed. None of these precautions

[15] Mrs. Pruden of Cincinnati is one of the few available public mediums for this phenomenon. Sir Conan Doyle had a successful sitting with her in 1923, which he mentions in his *Our Second American Adventure*, Lond., 1923 (p. 44), and he describes her as "one of the great mediums of the world."

[16] Many of these tricks are described in Robinson's *Spirit Slate Writing*, New York, 1898.

are really necessary, however, because everything may be done in broad daylight, and repeated under the eyes of the sitter.

"One of the simplest methods is merely to lay a clean slate on the table with a particle of slate pencil under it. The medium and sitters may then place their hands on it, but when the conditions are good the medium need not touch it, nor the sitters either. In most cases, however, the sitters and medium join hands, and one at least, touches the slate; and sometimes the writing will only proceed so long as contact is maintained, ceasing immediately it is broken. Another common way of using a slate is for the medium to place it underneath the table top (usually one with a folding flap), clamping it against this by placing his fingers under the slate and his thumb above the table; his other hand is then placed on the table so that both are in sight all the time.

"A slate-writing medium is not usually entranced; often, however, he is in a state of semi-trance. With most mediums the writing is accompanied by the display of considerable psychic energy, during which he appears to suffer physically, his muscles contracting and twitching convulsively. The hands of the medium, Henry Slade, seemed to be charged with electrical and nervous energy, which was communicated to those he touched. Sometimes detonating noises came from the slates and table, and there are records of slates, during and after a séance, being shattered into fragments, as if from accumulated internal stress (*Light*, 1886, p. 236). Herr Gossman relates that in May, 1878, when sitting with Slade, he saw a slate which had been placed under the table shivered into fragments as if by lightning (Zöllner, *Transcendental Physics*, p. 224). And Mrs. Louisa Andrews records in *The Spiritualist* for 1879, p. 237, having twice seen this happen with Slade; on one occasion she was holding a corner of a slate when it was suddenly reduced to a coarse powder.

"Dr. Gibier records that at a séance with Slade ten slates were broken in pieces under the table. He states that they were very strongly framed with hard wood, and that when he endeavoured to break them by striking them against the table he could not even crack them.[17]

"Slate-writing phenomena seem to occur best with a small number of sitters. Slade preferred only one or two, but successful séances have been held in public halls. It is interesting to note that W. E. Gladstone met the medium W. Eglinton at a house in Grosvenor Square, on October 29th, 1884, and had satisfactory answers to questions in a locked double slate, in Spanish, French, and Greek. Eglinton only knew a little French. Gladstone took careful notes of all that happened and appeared to be much impressed.[18]

"Direct writing on paper laid on a table is rarely obtained except in complete darkness. When a blank sheet of paper is initialled and all is ready, the light is extinguished, a few seconds elapse, raps signal the completion of the writing, and the light is turned up for its inspection. The celerity with which such writing is done is almost incredible, a rate of a hundred words per second has often been recorded, and

[17] Le Spiritisme, Paris, 1882. Cited in Richet's *Thirty Years of Psychical Research*, p. 411.

[18] *Light*, Nov. 8th, 1884.

elaborate drawings may be made equally fast.[19] The explanation usually given is that the writing is not done in the usual way, but is *deposited*; this explains in a measure how it can be done in a restricted space, such as that between two slates or the leaves of a closed book, but though the explanation may satisfy to some extent our material notions, it is far from adequate. That it is true, so far, is evident from the fact, often noticed, that the paper, though thin, shows no sign of indentation by the pencil.

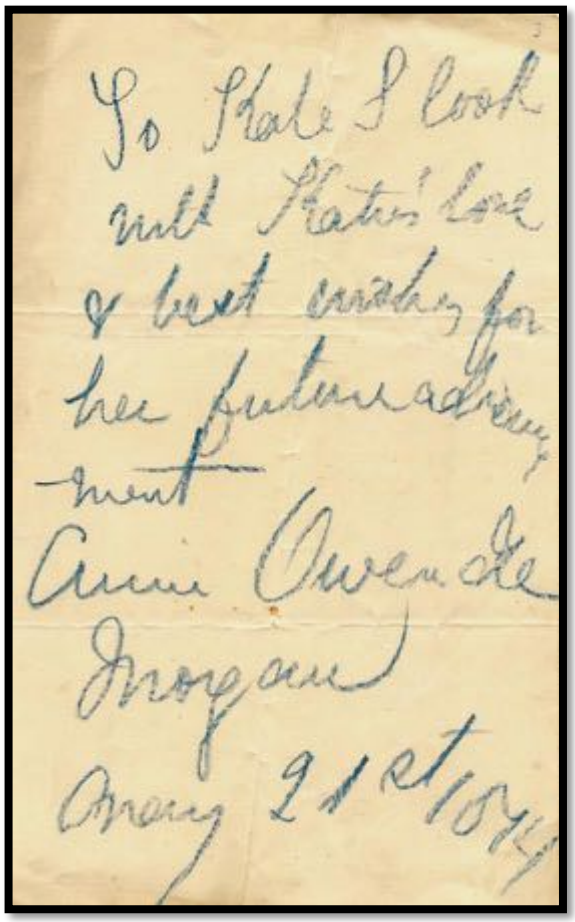
"Direct writing can be produced on paper in a lighted room if the paper is placed between two slates, or in a closed box, or between the pages of a closed book. It can also be produced if the paper and pencil are placed on the floor beneath the table, where they are in semi-darkness, and, what is equally important, secluded from the gaze of the sitters, which has an interfering action similar to that of light on psychical phenomena. The provision of a pencil is not essential, for some spirit operators can produce its equivalent at will. Writing has also been produced on paper laid on the table in the light, but, except in very rare cases only when covered by a handkerchief or cloth; for the latter gives some obscurity and hides the actual writing from the sitter's gaze. The movements of the pencil in writing can then be seen by the movements of the handkerchief.

"In order that the sheet of paper when written on may be identified with the original blank one, a corner should be torn off the latter by a sitter and kept by him, for, of course, there is no other sheet in the world that this corner will exactly fit. Otherwise the sitters may initial the blank sheet."

—~—☼—~—

Editor's Note:

As noted, the above quotes are taken from Archibald Campbell Holms' (1861-1954) "The Facts of Psychic Science". In my opinion it is a most valuable and comprehensive encyclopaedia of Spiritualist phenomena; much of the contents of its 512 pages are well referenced for research purposes. Much of the above-quoted material has numerous references, quotes, etc., but far too much to publish here, though I will publish some examples below; the above images of the slates shown belong to the Britten Museum and Library housed at the Arthur Findlay College, Stansted Hall.


To Kate S Cook
with Katie's love
& best wishes for
her future advance-
ment
Annie Owen de
Morgan
May 21st 1874

In addition, the Britten Museum holds a valuable note produced by direct/independent writing at Florence (nee Cook) Corner's farewell séance held on May 21st, 1874 with her alleged spirit guide, Annie Owen Morgan, better known as Katie King. The message written was for Kate S. Cook, Florence's younger sister, who herself would follow her elder sister in later years as a materialisation medium.[20]

[19] *The Spiritualist*, July, 1874, p. 75.

[20] Florence (Florrie) Cook, who in April 1874 married Captain Edward Elgie Corner. Following Florence's death on April 22nd, 1904 from pneumonia, aged 47, he married her sister, Kate Selina Cook (1859-1923), in October 1907.

It should be noted, to save any confusion in reading any further reports, that there were three farewell séances according to William Harrison, the editor of "The Spiritualist Newspaper" (1869-1882).

They started on Wednesday May 13, the next on May 16, and the final séance on May 21, 1874, William Crookes attending all three. However, just prior to these dates there was another farewell séance, held on May 9th; Crookes was again present at this séance. A report of the final séance is given by Harrison and he notes who was present: Mr Crookes, Mrs Corner, Mrs Ross-Church, Mr W.H. Harrison, Mr G.R. Tapp, Mr and Mrs Cook and family, and the servant Mary (Cook residence). Many of these reports can be read on-line in "New Light on Immortality", by Fournier d'Albe, 1908.

Below are given two quotes from Holms' book, "The Facts of Psychic Science"; all the information in this article, unless stated, is taken from Chapter XIII, "Direct Writing—Slate Writing".

> The following quotation is from an article in *The Spiritualist*, for October 12th, 1877, by Epes Sargent. It describes a slate-writing séance at which he was present alone, with the medium, Charles E. Watkins. It was on the 18th September, 1877, in Boston, U.S.A., at noon in a bright sunlit room. Sargent says:—
>
> "He now handed me two slates, which I cleaned thoroughly with a wet towel, which I had asked for. The theory that by some chemical process there might be some writing upon a slate ineffaceable by scrubbing, but made visible after a minute or two, was wholly disproved by subsequent occurrences. Mr. Watkins did not touch the slates after I had washed them. He simply placed a crumb of slate-pencil between them, and told me to hold them out at arm's length. This I did, first satisfying myself once more that they did not bear the mark of a single letter on any of their surfaces. I held the two joined slates out in my left hand, the medium being four feet distant from them. 'Do you hear writing ?' asked he. I put my ear down, and distinctly heard the light scratching of the bit of slate-pencil. 'It is finished,' said he, as a slight rap came on the slate.
>
> I did not see how there could have been time for more than a simple name to have been written; but when I took one slate from the other, on the surface of the lower slate, was a letter of *fifty-four words*, signed with the name of a deceased brother, which name I had not written down among those on the pellets (referring to a previous pellet test). The letter was characteristic, but gave no startling proof of the writer's identity. The hand-writing had a general resemblance to my brother's, but I omitted to take steps to compare it carefully before the writing was rubbed out."
>
> Sargent, describing Watkins, says that he was twenty-nine years old, and a man of a highly nervous and sensitive temperament. He writhed as if in torture every time the slate-writing took place. It was evidently accompanied by some powerful nervous excitement on his part. Sargent brought with him two slates of his own, which gave equally good results. But the medium explained that he usually charged extra when sitters used their own slates, as they caused him greater nervous exhaustion than his own well-charged slates. It is a well-known fact that spiritualistic manifestations occur more readily when the material objects employed have been used by them before, and have thus been charged or surrounded by the necessary psychic aura.
>
> Watkins was offered 50,000 dollars by Mr. Hiram Sibley, of Rochester, N.Y., if he would disclose to him the "trick" of his slate-writing, and he further offered to give a bond not to disclose the secret. Unfortunately for Watkins, he was, of course, unable to earn this tempting reward. Epes Sargent had a letter from Sibley, dated May 10th, 1880, confirming the fact of his offer.[21]

—~—☼—~—

[21] *The Spiritualist*, Aug. 20th, 1880.

Stainton Moses obtained much direct spirit writing through his own mediumship. The following experience is interesting as showing how easily a spirit operator can get over a supposed physical difficulty. Quoting Stainton Moses' words: [22]

> "I have known such writing to be almost instantaneously produced; and experiments, to which I shall refer in their place, confirm me in the statement that the process employed is not always the same. Whereas at times the pencil is seen to write as if moved by a hand, at times invisible, but at others visibly guiding and controlling its movements, at others the writing would seem to be produced by an instantaneous effort without the use of the pencil. . . .
>
> "I was present at a séance held at the house of an intimate friend, three friends only present. Paper, previously initialled by each of us, was put on the floor under the table, together with an ordinary black-lead pencil. One of us, feeling the pencil against his boot, put his foot upon it, and held it there till the séance was over. Writing, however, was found on the paper; and we debated the question how it could have been done, seeing that no pencil was available for use.
>
> The paper bore our marks, and had not been removed, so far as we could tell. We met again during the same week, and I privately provided myself with the means of testing the matter. I brought a bright green pencil, and substituted it without remark for the black-lead, keeping my foot upon it all the time. When the paper was examined, the writing—a very short scrawl—was found to be in green. The pencil, therefore, was used in some way unknown to me."

—~—☼—~—

To conclude:

Fred P. Evans was a well-known medium for direct/ independent writing on slates, who demonstrated to large public audiences; he produced not only writing (some in colour) but also drawings, portraits on the slates. Some of his demonstrations included messages for the audiences with multiple messages for different people appearing on one slate, sometimes in different foreign languages. [23]

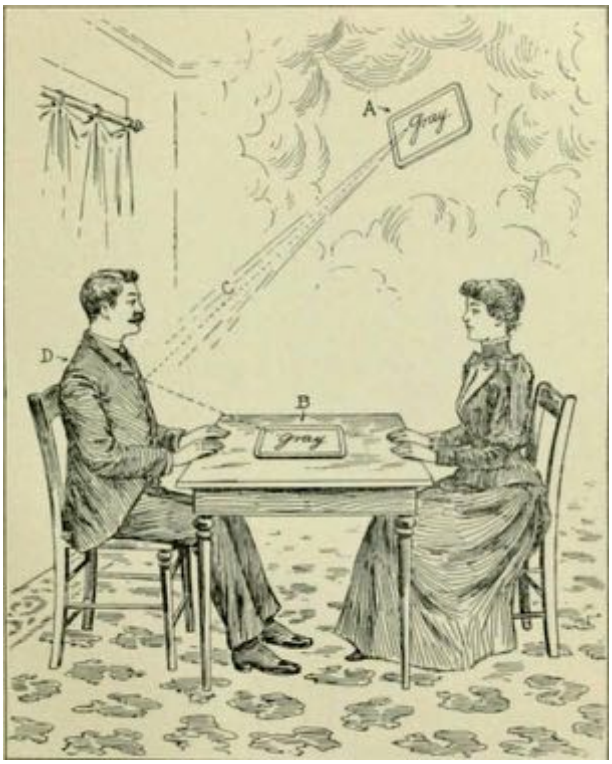
In 1893 James J. Owen published "Psychography; marvelous manifestations of psychic power given through the mediumship of Fred P. Evans, known as the "independent slate-writer.", which contains many images of his work. [24]

On pages 208-210 of the book Evans' control, John Gray (1816-1837), explains some of the methods as to how the messages get on to the sealed slates:

[22] *Psychography*, by M. A. (Oxon).

[23] For further information see Psypioneer Vol. 4, No. 10: "Profiles… Fred Evan's Mediumship".

[24] Available as a free download.



"Now, the writing is not produced either by personal contact of the medium or his spirit friends. Everything done in the spirit world is governed by a natural law, and it would be an unnatural law that would permit a materialized hand to go between the surfaces of slates one-sixteenth of an inch apart and grasp a pencil with which to write. The principal methods that we use to transmit messages are by a law that is beginning to be well known and understood by you mortals on earth, viz.: electricity and magnetism. Psychography is produced exactly as telegraphic messages are produced. Let me explain: Suppose A, in New York, wishes to send a message by telegraphy to B, in San Francisco, is it necessary for him to come to San Francisco to do so ? Certainly not; he merely operates on his key in New York, and every letter or sound is reproduced in San Francisco. Suppose I wish to send a message by psychography. I write on slate A (see diagram) in the spirit world. The medium being a sensitive, I establish a circuit or current, C, (we need no wires to conduct the current, and in the near future you mortals will learn to dispense with them) to and through the medium D to your mundane slate B, so that every movement made by us on the spirit slate is responded to by the pencil on the mundane slate, and is reproduced. So you see we use the medium for a battery, and your earth plane for a ground, to establish our circuit.

[Slate of twelve languages, produced under absolutely test conditions through the psychic power of Fred Evans.]

"We also have other methods of producing the writing, etc. One of them is by transference, that is to say that we can prepare sufficient writing or pictures in the spirit world to fill the surface of the medium's slate, and then transfer it instantaneously upon said slate (one example of this kind was produced through this medium in the presence of Professor A. R. Wallace). To produce this manifestation we must first thoroughly sensitize the slate to be operated upon, and disintegrate the pencil into fine powder and precipitate it evenly over the surface of the slate. The transfer is made somewhat similar to photography. The color writing is produced through somewhat the same method, except that the color matter is procured on your earth plane and brought into the room and on the slates in almost invisible dust or powder, and precipitated on the slates the same as the former. These latter methods are much more difficult to produce, and better conditions are required. …"

[This picture was taken by independent spirit power, between closed slates, in the hands of the author, the time occupied in its production being less than one minute.]

JOHN GRAY.

The "Substance"

One of the most controversial issues in Spiritualism, probably more so in psychical research, is the word "ectoplasm" and, furthermore, the usage and meaning of other related names such as psychic force, teleplasm, psychoplasm and ideoplasm, which are to be found in our history books and can create some confusion. Readers of Pioneer will be familiar with some of these terms and the problems which mediums and researchers have encountered, especially in materialisation mediumship.

To my mind, what greatly adds to the confusion on this subject is the lack of knowledge and understanding of the subject in general in what we read, especially on the internet, where the information is often misinterpreted, misrepresented, sensationalised, with false and unreferenced quotations owing to the lack of understanding on the subject in hand. Much is often done to discredit the medium, the researcher or Spiritualism in general.

Without doubt, there has been, and still is, fraud in physical mediumship, which has been the case ever since its inception under the title of Modern Spiritualism. Spiritualists and researchers have publicly brought many fraudulent mediums to justice by exposing them publicly in the Spiritualist press of the day, by those who had years of experience in the subject and understood, as far as possible, the vital complexities of the *impressionable* structure of the psychic fluid or plasms required for materialisation, etc.

This is a far cry from the claims of fraudulent mediumship today!

One simple example is taken from the Wikipedia entry: "Ectoplasm (paranormal)". I will use Helen Duncan, as many will know the name (I have touched on only a few claims from the page):

Firstly: *... best known as the last person to be imprisoned under the Witchcraft Act ...*

Helen was the *only* Spiritualist medium to be imprisoned under a clause from this Act.

The claim *... ectoplasm which was proven to be made from cheesecloth*: This rather sweeping allegation cannot be accepted in the way it is presented; Helen did undergo three seizures during her séances but *no* cheesecloth-like materials were found. Further, it states: *Helen Duncan was well known for using dolls and other props as ectoplasm in her séances*. I personally would love to see references for *well known for using dolls and other props*. These negative claims are quite pointless, as obviously there is no authority behind them, but many readers accept this as being factual.[1] It can be argued in part that there may be some substance in these sweeping statements but not within these contexts.

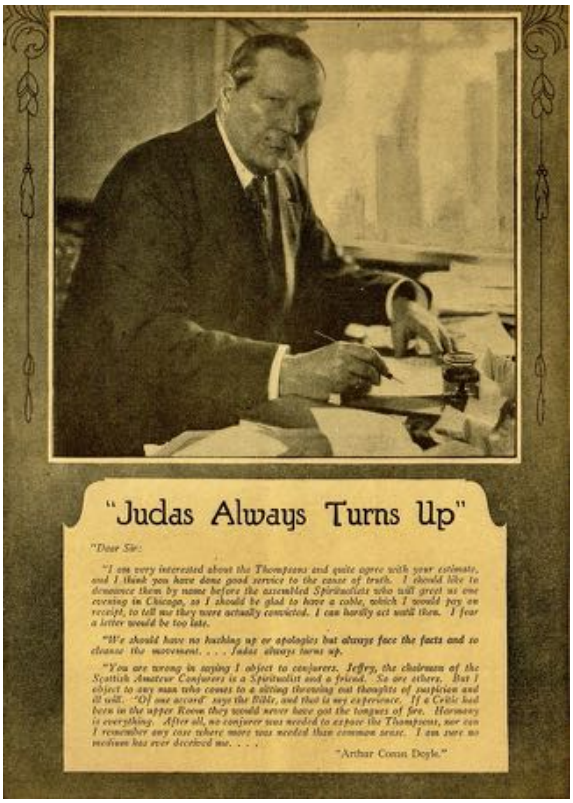
This issue will be about ectoplasmic substances simply to put into context some of the various names for the "substance"; for example, Helen's alleged spirit control, Albert Stewart, called the substance "psychoplasm', while those who investigated her early in her mediumship called the substance "teleplasm". These variously-named plasms are required for physical mediumship as termed by the early researchers.

[1] This is also true with positive information: some readers accept what they read as fact but the information on many sites is incorrect. A good example of this is the unfolding events at Hydesville. See Pioneer, Vol. 9, No. 1: "Hydesville Day –Let's get it right".

The information in this issue is intended solely to put forward some of the history of this mysterious substance—however, for suggested reading for background and additional information please see the pdf Pioneer booklets, “A Question of Fraud” and “Physical Phenomena”. Please see the last page of this issue for information.

Charles Fulton Oursler (1893-1952), an American journalist, playwright, editor and writer, was a notable author of mysteries and a series of detective fiction under the pseudonym Anthony Abbot. Charles Oursler was also an amateur magician, who aided Harry Houdini in his crusade against fraudulent mediumship.[2] Oursler worked under another pseudonym of Samri Frikell, who himself had exposed a number of fraudulent mediums. Under this pen name, which Oursler used for his writings on Spiritualism and magic, he wrote in 1930 “Spirit Mediums Exposed”, revealing the techniques of fraudulent mediums.

During Sir Arthur Conan Doyle’s first American tour in 1922, Charles Oursler interviewed Sir Arthur under his pen name and this is published in full below. It appeared in “Movie Weekly”, August 12th 1922: “Sir Arthur Conan Doyle Predicts Spirit Moving Pictures”, by Samri Frikell.



“Judas Always Turns Up”

"Dear Sir:

"I am very interested about the Thompsons and quite agree with your estimate, and I think you have done good service to the cause of truth. I should like to denounce them by name before the assembled Spiritualists who will greet us one evening in Chicago, as I should be glad to have a cable, which I would pay on receipt, to tell me they were actually convicted. I can hardly act until then. I fear a letter would be too late.

"We should have no hushing up or apologies but always face the facts and so cleanse the movement. . . . Judas always turns up.

"You are wrong in saying I object to conjurers. Jeffry, the chairman of the Scottish Amateur Conjurers is a Spiritualist and a friend. So are others. But I object to any man who comes to a sitting throwing out thoughts of suspicion and ill will. 'Of one accord' says the Bible, and that is my experience. If a Celtic had been in the upper Room they would never have got the tongues of fire. Harmony is everything. After all, no conjurer was needed to expose the Thompsons, nor can I remember any case where more was needed than common sense. I am sure no medium has ever deceived me. . . .

"Arthur Conan Doyle."

Around the time of the interview Oursler had met Sir Arthur on more than one occasion. In “Spirit Mediums Exposed” he gives the full story of one of his exposures and the arrest of the mediums, the Reverend William Reilly Thompson and his wife, Eva Allan Thompson, who were ministers of the First Spiritualist Church of New York City. The exposure was fully backed by Doyle, and the article includes some copies of Doyle’s letters regarding the case; unfortunately, it is far too long to reprint here, but shown is a snippet by Doyle from the article.

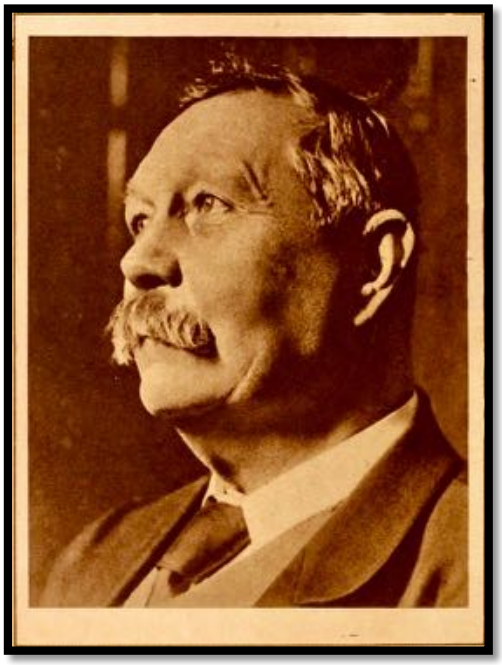
The interview with Sir Arthur is an interesting one. It may not be generally known that Baron von Schrenck Notzing used a kinematograph to produce an early movie film—cinematography was a more common term at the time—with a young Polish physical medium known as “Stanislava P”, showing the process of withdrawing the substance back into the mouth; sections of the film are reproduced in Schrenck Notzing’s “Phenomena of Materialisation”, first published in 1914. Samri Frikell uses Fig. 179 from the book in his interview to illustrate, and it is shown at the end of the article, together with a second additional plate filmed a little later. It can be noted that in the following article Frikell spells Schrenck incorrectly as “Schrenk”; also noted is the word “ectoplasm”, as the term used by von Schrenck Notzing would have been “teleplasm-teleplastic”.

[2] See Pioneer, Vol. 3, No. 2: “Houdini & Conan Doyle – Story of Strange Friendship and an Historic Quarrel”.

Sir Arthur Conan Doyle Predicts Spirit Moving Pictures !

An amazing revelation of what spiritualism may do for motion pictures.

By Samri Frikell



THE spirits of the dead are going into the movies?

Before long, scientists are now predicting, it will be possible to film and screen the shades of the departed, as a final and positive evidence of the survival of identity beyond the grave, and the return of ghosts to the earth.

These predictions are based on the results already obtained with still cameras, together with one reel of movie film. During his recent lecture tour of the United States, Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, author of the "Sherlock Holmes" detective stories, and now the foremost spiritualist of the world, exhibited a series of startling spirit photographs.

In spite of the charges hurled against him that these pictures were clever fakes, Sir Arthur stoutly maintained that they were genuine, and brought forward evidence to show they had been secured under the strictest of test conditions, eliminating all possibility of trickery.

It is the contention of Sir Arthur that the science, the philosophy and the religion of spiritualism is still in its infancy. Undreamed of wonders, he declares, are still in store for the world, and therefore, motion pictures of ghosts are in no wise to be called impossible.

These pictures must not be confused with the motion pictures which Sir Arthur brought with him to the banquet of the Society of American Magicians, and which created such a tempest in a tea-pot, following their screening in the dining hall of the Hotel McAlpin. Those were admittedly faked pictures, taken to illustrate one of Sir Arthur's novels, and were offered in a humorous spirit, to have a little joke on the wise-acres among the mystery men.

But the photographs of phantoms, ghosts and spooks which Sir Arthur exhibited in his public appearances are of an entirely different character. He insists they are absolutely genuine.

And, Sir Arthur demands, if it is possible now to secure still photographs of the shades of the departed, why will it not be possible, by continuous experiment, to attract the dead to the studios ?

Attracting the spirits to Hollywood, Fort Lee or Long Island, and capturing them with the camera, will be only a matter of patience, care and the use of competent mediums !

During an interview which I had with Sir Arthur, while he was stopping at the Hotel Ambassador in New York, I brought up this and a number of kindred subjects of interest to the movie world. Before going to see him, I had fortified myself with all the

information I could get on the subject, especially with regard to experiments which had been made with motion pictures at seances.

I speedily learned that this was almost a virgin field. Very little attention, apparently, had been given to it, perhaps because of the expense attached to such experiments, and the extreme difficulty under which the experiments were conducted. However, I did learn that Baron Von Schrenk Notzing, the eminent Munich savant, had made a series of attempts with his celebrated medium, "Eva C."

The entire scientific world has been startled by the experiments of the Baron. He has published an enormous volume, describing his seances with "Eva C.," in which there are almost three hundred flash-light photographs which he took of the miracles performed by this strange woman. Under the strictest control, and with every precaution taken to prevent dupery, he secured whole scores of photographs, on which strange faces and figures appear.

It then occurred to the Baron that he could film these figures in the process of materialization—show how the white mist, called ectoplasm, streamed out of the medium, formed itself into ghosts, and then melted gradually away into the air.

When the first attempt was made, there were eight still cameras and one motion picture camera trained on the cabinet. On the eight still negatives, ghost impressions were secured. But there was nothing on the motion picture film.

But later, they did succeed with the motion picture camera !

This success came by the use of another medium, a Polish woman whose name is given in the Baron's book as "Stanislava P." While at the time of this spectacular sitting she was considered a novice by the distinguished scientists who investigated her, and ranked far below the "Eva C." already mentioned, nevertheless she did succeed in transferring to the celluloid the strange wonders which she wrought while in trance.

In the Baron's account of the sittings, he goes into great detail as to those present, the location of the cameras and cabinet, the illumination of the room, and other evidential details. Finally the medium was hypnotized and the seance began.

At these and other subsequent seances, a wisp of white gas was seen to emerge from the mouth of Stanislava, and coil down upon her breast. The book contains photographs of this, plainly developed, together with pictures showing this wisp of mist forming itself into the semblance of a human hand.

During all these extraordinary performances, the motion picture camera was clicking away.

Whole sections of the film are reproduced in the Baron's book, showing how this substance emerged from the medium's mouth, formed itself into spirit hands and features, and then was drawn back into the medium.

Here was a distinct achievement. True, it did not include the transference to the film of the weird faces and forms obtained on the still negatives, but it did reproduce the strange appearance and disappearance of the ectoplasm, under conditions which amply prevented the possibility of trickery.

Beyond these experiments, I was unable to find any other records of successful experiments with motion pictures at seances, and when I arranged the interview with Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, I was anxious to learn his views on the subject. Why was it that the motion picture camera failed, while the still machines caught the spectres? And

would it be possible to eliminate the difficulties now present, and obtain motion picture records of the seances of the future?

These were the questions in my mind when I walked up Fifth Avenue one brisk and windy morning, distinctly curious, withal, as to the type of man I was on my way to meet.

Allow me to say at once that the first impression of this gifted novelist, and courageous spiritualist, is his complete sincerity. I have heard a great deal of discussion about Doyle and his theories, and very frequently I run up against the man who says:

"Why, do you think Doyle believes all this guff himself ? Not on your life ! He's in it for the cash ! He's got hold of a new sensation, and he's making it pay. That's all there is to that !"

No one who has ever talked with Sir Arthur would say that, or believe that. He is in the last degree removed from the theatrical type of mystic. Instead I shook hands with a lusty, manful Britisher, with the face of a lion. In his greeting he was jovial, good-natured and dignified. But what I noticed most was the serene and honest glow of his eyes, and his granite poise and power. He suggested nothing so much as a physician—which was the role in which he first entered the stage of public life. One rather looks to him to be standing by the bedside and asking for a glass of water and a spoon.

After a very few preliminaries in politeness, Sir Arthur threw himself down on a divan, clasped his hands behind his head, and instructed me to "Fire away !"

"Our interest in spiritualism," I explained, having told him that I represented "Movie Weekly," "is entirely practical. Our field is the cinematograph, as you call it in England. What we want to know is, can these spirits be captured by the motion picture camera ?"

Sir Arthur's reply was characteristic, and shows how restrained and careful are his judgments.

"Questions like that," he answered, "cannot be answered authoritatively off hand. They need mature consideration, investigation and experiment. That is already being practiced, on the Continent, I believe. It must not be forgotten that this science is still in its infancy. We are distinctly not in a position to dogmatize. Moreover, I must confess that this phase of the subject is new to me. It would certainly merit the fullest investigation. But I do not think there is any doubt that such pictures can be taken, when we understand the conditions better. If ordinary photography can compass it, why not the cinematograph ?"

I asked Sir Arthur how he accounted for failure in movie cameras and success in others. He replied that it was generally because harmony was lacking in the sittings, and harmony was sometimes exceedingly difficult to secure.

"I object to any man," he declared, "who comes to a sitting, throwing out thoughts of suspicion and ill will. 'Of one accord,' says the Bible, and that is my experience. If a critic had been in the upper room, they would never have got the tongues of fire. Harmony is everything !"

"What about the charges that your still photographs are fakes ?" I inquired.

"As to faking photos, that is easy enough," he chuckled. "These expert photographers who are always rushing into print explaining how I am deceived in my pictures seem to think I don't know anything of these methods. *It is when you get photos of the dead which are like them, but differ from any taken in life that you are beyond the reach of*

rogues. All this talk of fake is absolute nonsense. These self-advertisers are parasites on the movement !"

As he developed this thought, Sir Arthur became more and more enthused with the boundless possibilities of mediumship in the future.

"We must not forget," he declared earnestly, "that we are on the threshold of an entirely new world. What seemed impossible, even fantastic before, may now become entirely normal when we understand spiritualism better. Certainly our experiments with still cameras should give us good cause to expect some startling motion pictures before we have exhausted all the possibilities.

After a moment's pause, the great novelist developed a new twist to the discussion which took me entirely by surprise.

"Not only may one expect motion pictures of spirits," he remarked, "but what is to prevent the spirits from aiding us in the writing, directing, acting and general production of pantomime drama ?"

"That !" I cried, "is certainly a new and astounding idea !"

"I confess that it is new to me," continued Sir Arthur. "But we may well ask ourselves, whence come our inspirations ? What the motion pictures need is inspiration. The chief criticism made against them is the machine-like quality of their stories. You have wonderful photography, splendid settings—but the inspiration is lacking from the plots. Now I have always been inclined to believe that what we call inspiration comes from within ourselves. What seems to well up in our minds, independent of our normal brain, really comes from the sub-conscious mind. That is the generally accepted theory—but I am now beginning to believe that it is not always a true theory.

"Every person who does creative, artistic work does reach the point where he must realize that the highest of our creations do *not* evolve from within ourselves. There comes a day when a thought is projected like a bullet through your brain. That inspiration is from the beyond. It has come from on high. Some spirit has given it to us.

"Now that fact is of tremendous importance to the makers of motion pictures !

"It must not be forgotten that there are only a very few spirits who know anything about the motion picture business. It is such a new enterprise altogether, and a development of the last quarter of a century, that most of its pioneers are still alive, I suppose. The proportion of living motion picture men to dead ones is very large. A hundred years from now you would have a greater reservoir to draw from, because more will have died. Thus the motion picture business is like spiritualism in that it is just beginning to find itself. You have very few veterans on the other side.

"But even now there is a possibility of helping hands being extended, to the motion picture men not only, but to every phase of creative effort. In more elevated moments of inspiration we can contact with higher intelligences. We all know that there is an ebb and flow of inspiration. Occasionally I am convinced we can draw down mighty thoughts from mighty thinkers—artists, painters, musicians, poets who have passed away. All such material could be utilized in making better motion pictures, I should imagine. There is certainly that definite possibility and unquestionably it fits in with the general spiritual hypothesis."

There was also the possibility of motion picture stars getting spiritual assistance in delineating great roles. The wonderful actors and actresses of the past—Modjeska, Ellen Terry, Robert Keene, Booth, Barrett, Macready, Forrest—all the geniuses of the

footlights might be summoned through mediumship, and their help and inspiration gained by modern players.

Sometimes, when one is listening to such an eminent scholar as Doyle discussing miracles of spiritualism in matter of fact terms, one is apt to rub one's eyes to be sure one is not dreaming. It all seems so preposterous. Motion pictures of spirit land ! Stills of your dead great grandfather ! Getting actors and actresses, long mouldy and rotten in their graves, to coach you in a part !

It sounds like stuff and nonsense, doesn't it?

And yet, for a moment, pause and reflect!

What would your old school days' friend George Washington have told you, if you predicted to him the steam railroad, the electric railroad, the modern ocean liner, the subway, the skyscraper, the telephone, the telegraph, the phonograph, the air-plane, the submarine, the radio, or the moving picture?

You know what George would have thought about you ! He would have said it was all stuff and nonsense, and turned back to his chess board.

With such a record of achievement behind us, it is not wise to sneer too loudly at these men who insist that they have spoken face to face, voice to voice with their dead. Some of them rank as the foremost scientists of their time—Sir Oliver Lodge, Sir William Crookes, Charles Richet, Lombroso, Von Schrenk Notzing and a cloud of other witnesses.

In every land and clime, reports are rising constantly of the marvels wrought in seances by mediums in the condition known as trance. Inquire quietly of your neighbors and you are certain to find some one who has had a ghostly experience they cannot explain. The subject is in the air. The belief is spreading. It may all be stuff and nonsense, that is true. But again, there may be something in it.

At all events, this much is true—that some of the cleverest men of science in the world declare they have seen these spirit forms; that there are more than a thousand spirit photographs in existence, and that Von Schrenk Notzing and his assistants did actually succeed in recording some of the seance phenomena on motion picture film.

Now, Sir Arthur predicts that the day is coming when these authentic reports will become the common property of mankind, exhibited in every movie theatre in the land.

It is something worth waiting for anyway !

—~—☼—~—

Samri Frikell noted on the first image below:

A selected cinematograph showing the substance known as ectoplasm being absorbed again into the medium's mouth. From this substance, faces of departed ones were formed... This is the first motion picture taken of this phase of Spiritualism.

Fig. 179. Selected cinematograph pictures of 25 June, 1913, showing absorption of the substance into the mouth.

Fig. 180. Selected cinematograph pictures of 13 July, 1913, showing widening and narrowing of the substance, and its recession into the mouth.

Below is what is actually stated in "Phenomena of Materialisation" by Baron von Schrenck Notzing; the first English edition was published in 1923 and can be freely downloaded.

SITTINGS OF THE 25TH JUNE AND 13TH JULY 1913.

Conditions, illumination, and plan of the sitting as before. Professor B. and the author undertook the initial and final examinations of the medium and the cabinet on 25th June, and Dr C. (physician) and the author on 18th July.

In these sittings the veil phenomenon already mentioned was again produced. The curtain was only opened after the material had been formed.

On both evenings we succeeded in working the kinematograph for several minutes. These were the first occasions on which this had been done. The film taken on the first evening comprises about 360 pictures, and that on 13th July over 400. The two films in Figs. 179 and 180 show the recession of the material into the mouth, and the second film also shows the broadening and narrowing of the substance. On 30th July some photographs were taken with a portion of the matter still attached to the mouth, and finally the mouth was shown after the material had disappeared. The changes, visible on Fig. 180, might not suffice for the proof of an independent inner motion of the substance, however remarkable they may be. That the changes in the volume are produced by motions of the head is hardly suggested by the kinematograph. The objection will no doubt be raised that Stanislava probably drew the veil-like substance with her tongue into her mouth, and then swallowed it.

It is not denied that this is physiologically possible, but such an explanation would, in any case, assume an occurrence experienced only in a few rare cases by specialists in digestive diseases. The mere proof by photography of such a fact in the case of the medium would be a novel achievement worthy of mention for this reason alone. In any case, in both sittings the mouth was examined after the phenomenon had disappeared, without any remnants being found. Although this occurrence is not, by itself, evidential, as regards the disappearance and change in volume of the substance, the success of the kinematographic record of a mediumistic materialisation phenomenon represents such a considerable progress in method that, for this reason alone, the publication of some selected pictures of the series in both films should not be omitted. The investigator must in all his work state the truth, without considering whether it corresponds to his expectations or not.

RESULTS OF THE OBSERVATIONS.

The proof of the mediumistic faculty in Stanislava P. is not only found in her materialisation phenomena, but also in certain telekinetic actions spontaneously occurring, in her case, in daylight, as the author has several times had occasion to observe. If one only judged by the appearance of the products exposed in the sittings, which partly resembled large flat men's leather gloves, or compact woolly masses up to the size of a forearm, or veil materials of fairly coarse structure, the decision would not be in her favour. Besides, the structures produced by her are all coarse and imperfect in their form.

Now, it has already been pointed out by Colonel Peter [3] that, during materialisation phenomena, the apparel, *i.e.,* the dress materials, produced and partly used for clothing the phantoms, give the strongest handle for the criticism advanced by sceptics, as soon as it is shown that they resemble terrestrial materials, or are composed of them. Peter has shown, by careful examination of such cloth samples as the finest crépe, which were

[3] *Joseph Peter, Die Gewundung der Phantome (the Dress of Phantoms), Zentralblatt fur Okkultismus, July 1902.*

obtained from phantoms of different mediums under conditions excluding fraud, that they do not differ in any way from materials produced by the weaving loom. The creation of such materials is not more wonderful than the materialisation of living members, so that, in judging this point, we always come back to the conditions of production.

The initial and final examination of the bodily surface regularly carried out with Stanislava P., the wearing of a special séance costume, and the large volume of the material represented by the photographs, speak against the possibility of hiding them on or about her body. This also disposes of the objection of a scientific witness whose only reason for refusing to vouch for the genuineness of the phenomena was that the medium did not give him permission for a gynaecological examination.[4]

Quite apart from this question, the genuineness of the mediumistic performances can be vouched for by the character of the phenomena themselves.

Thus, with Stanislava P. the author could, on several occasions, and under conditions excluding such manipulations as are referred to by Ochorowicz, in his essay on "Involuntary Production of Unconscious Fraud," observe a structure resembling a hand, which carried out movements, and grasped and threw away objects held out to it. In this case, the medium's hands are visible, holding the curtain, her feet and knees were in their place, as was proved by the author during the phenomenon, by touching her knees several times, and her head was also visible in the red light. The author sat immediately in front of the curtain, and again and again verified the entire inactivity of the medium's limbs during the investigation. Under the same evidential conditions (immobile, visible body of the medium) a handkerchief held out by the author into the back of the cabinet was grasped and drawn away with considerable force, as was a handkerchief laid on the hands in the medium's lap in another sitting, while her head was visible. These examples suffice to show the evidential character of certain phenomena in themselves.

In the suspicions cast upon all mediums, even now, and in the attempts at negative explanations, we find performances assumed which have not been successfully accomplished under the same conditions even by the cleverest conjurors, and which in themselves require a proof of their possibility as manual tricks. That many phenomena, especially among those presented by mediumistic beginners of undeveloped power, can be imitated, is not to be denied, especially if the experimental conditions are not

[4] Image (Fig. 169) "Phenomena of Materialisation" by Baron von Schrenck Notzing: During the second series of experiments in Munich, June to August 1913, we often used a black tricot for the whole body which had only to be closed down the back. A veil securely sewn to the neck of the garment covered the whole head, and was closed with ribbons at the neck (Fig. 169). Along the slit on the back, and on the veil, there were a large number of black rings through which a string was drawn. The knot was sealed with a lead seal. If we also take into account that the hands were contained in white or black sacks of veiling sewn to the sleeves, one must admit that it is altogether impossible to smuggle objects for a fraudulent purpose out of this prison enclosing the whole body.

carefully chosen. But does this circumstance alone suffice to support a serious imputation of fraud ? Surely not.

The objections should be further tested in other sittings, and proved facts should take the place of mere suspicions and vague possibilities.

In the photographs of the sittings of Stanislava P. we may distinguish two groups, those of January and February 1918 and those of June and July 1913. The former shows, in four pictures, a fairly long white substance emerging from the mouth, and in two other pictures flat, badly-drawn hand-shapes. The substance used for these seems to be the same in all three cases. In the second group, including the kinematograph reproductions, the mouth is again the origin of the long veil-like substance which hangs down her breast and penetrates the tulle veil covering her head.

In the first veil photograph the material shows the structure of unravelled vegetable fibres, while the fundamental structure in the second experiment shows a resemblance to irregular distorted crochet work in wool threads. Although this point cannot be decided from the kinematograph pictures, on account of their smallness and indistinctness, we appear to have to deal with a structure resembling vegetable fibre. In neither case do we find the characteristic marking of the squarely arranged threads of purchasable silk veils. The conditions of the veil phenomenon excluded the possibility of fraudulent production. Like Eva C., Stanislava P. produces flat forms resembling sketchy hands. The emergence of the material from the mouth, and its disappearance into it, which was also observed in the case of Eva C. under evidential conditions, was found again with Stanislava P., and even recorded by the kinematograph. We also find remarkable analogies between the two mediums in the bizarre and irregular formation of the structures, and in the veil-like, fibrous condition of the material produced.

—~—☼—~—

To address some of the points in the above observations:

SITTING OF THE 23RD JUNE 1913.

Present.—Herr von Kaiser, Herr Sch., Princess R., and the author.

Stanislava put on the whole tricot, with wide full bags for the hands, and a white veil covering over the head. The fastening of the head veil and the tricot were lead-scaled. All other conditions and control were as in the sittings of January and February 1913.

8.30 P.M. Hypnotisation by the author. Red light switched on, curtain closed. After about half an hour a long veil-like strip was shown, which came out of the medium's mouth and appeared to penetrate the veil. A flash-light photograph was taken. Sitting closed at 10 P.M., Final examination of the medium and cabinet negative. All the veils and lead seals intact.

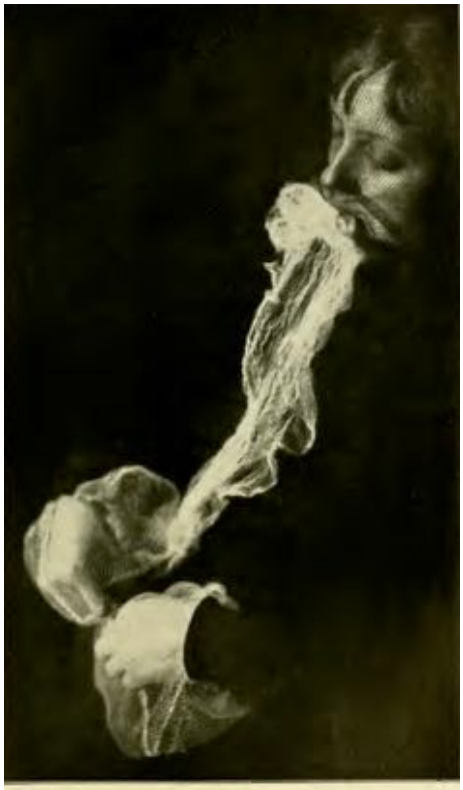


Fig. 173. Author's flashlight photograph, 23 June, 1913.

The enlarged photograph (Fig. 173), taken from the left within the cabinet, shows the medium's head in a black veil, and her hands in white veils. From the mouth down to the left hand there extends a broad fibrous material passing through the veil, which at its upper end shows a thick bulge, and is marked by a transparent pattern which, in its branchings, recalls vegetable fibres rather than textiles. It is interesting to note the difference between the regular square thread structure of the white veil, covering the hands, and the marking of the mediumistic product. A piece of the black veil seems to be drawn back into the mouth by Stanislava, so that the process of the penetration of the veil is not clearly shown. For this reason the experiment was repeated under the same conditions, with the head veil drawn more tightly, and the suggestion was made not to draw it into the mouth. But the experiment, in any case, is evidential, since the medium had no materials at her disposal with which she could have brought about such a result, outside her dress.

Fig. 176. Enlargement of Fig. 174.

The second plate shows an enlargement of a séance photograph taken a week later, July 1st 1913, which shows a different structure of the materialised substance.

Schrenck Notzing notes:

On the photograph, taken from the front the forms of the body are clearly marked out through the tricot. In this case, the veil was drawn more tightly over the face and showed fewer folds. The upper lip is covered by a white substance, which appears to penetrate the veil, broadening out on the outside. There is a remarkable difference from the drawing of the structure of 23rd June. While the former recalls vegetable fibres, the present photograph shows a structure of lace-work, of woollen threads of various sizes, with thickened edges) Fig 176).

—~—☼—~—

The views from the right and from the left (Figs. 177 and 178) corroborate these details, and hardly leave a doubt that the materialised substance, in a veil-like form, has penetrated the veil mask.

Fig. 177. Side view from within the cabinet. (*Right.*)

Fig. 178. Side view from within the cabinet. (*Left.*)

Below is Some Background Information on Stanislava P. [5]

PHENOMENA WITH STANISLAVA P.

INTRODUCTION.

The Polish medium, Stanislava P., at the author's invitation, placed herself at his disposal in Munich for a series of sittings extending from 29th September 1912 to 21st February 1913. The mediumship of this nineteen-year-old girl, who was employed as a cashier in a business at Warsaw, was discovered a year before and developed by Mr S. at Warsaw in a series of sittings.

In her eighteenth year Stanislava P. experienced in her room a telepathic hallucination by the optical appearance of her friend Sophie, of the same age, who, as it was afterwards found, had unexpectedly died at that moment. This experience directed attention to her mediumistic faculty, and suggested experiments with Stanislava in conformity with the spiritistic tradition. After this, the personification "Sophie" played the leading part in the manifestations.

Stanislava P. came of a good family, but lost her parents at an early age, and was adopted by a gardener. Up to her tenth year she remained illiterate, and when, at eighteen years, she took part in the sittings for the first time, she could not yet read or write perfectly. She showed, in accordance with her degree of education, a very limited comprehension of the necessary conditions of these experiments, only consenting to them with reluctance, to oblige her benefactor, and in order to earn her living. In her case, there is a great æsthetic awkwardness and a lack of disposition towards plastic art, and this is clearly seen in her materialised products. "Spiritism" she did not know even

[5] Taken from the "Phenomena of Materialisation", by Baron von Schrenck Notzing, pages 251/252.

by name, when the first experiments were made with her, thus any assumption relating to a possible training in conjuring are devoid of every foundation.

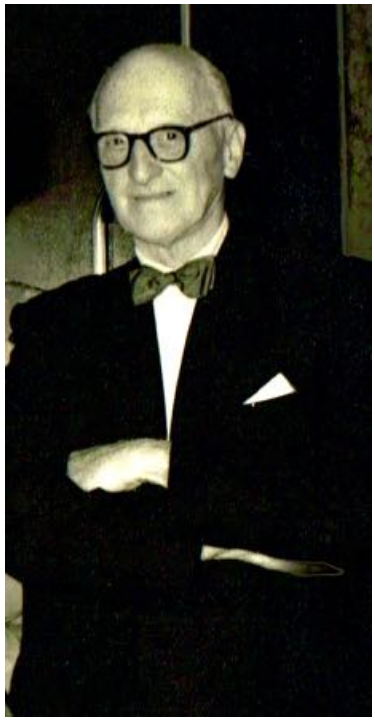
On the other hand, it should be mentioned that Stanislava P. created the most favourable impression on the persons whom she met in Warsaw and Munich by her modest, simple, and amiable character. But her excessively developed modesty, her great timidity, and emotional disposition rendered the application of rigid experimental conditions difficult. Any new method of control she regarded as an aspersion upon her honesty, and this was often followed by emotional excitement, tears, sleepless nights, and negative sittings. She did not permit an examination of her naked body by the author or any other male person, whereas she had no objection to the presence of ladies while she undressed and put on the séance costume (tights and apron dress, as in the case of Eva C.). For this reason ladies had to be admitted to the sittings. After her return, a lady physician sent the author a virginity certificate concerning the medium.

The arrangement of the experiments required, from the beginning, a delicate adaptation to the peculiarities of her character, but especially a discreet consideration for her well-developed sense of female honour and modesty, if positive results were to be achieved at all. Finally, we must not forget that in Stanislava P. we have a young novice whose mediumistic career hardly a year old, cannot be compared with the experience and education of Eva C., extending over nearly ten years. For that reason, conditions which could be applied, after four years, to Eva C., as the result of long and laborious training, could not be immediately applied to Stanislava. Under these circumstances, some of the phenomena presented by this mediumistic debutante are less evidential and convincing than the manifestations of Eva C. Yet there has never been any indication justifying the suspicion that she had introduced fabrics, veils, hands, gloves, etc., into the cabinet in any form. Before every sitting Stanislava usually undressed completely in the presence of a lady, and put on the séance costume which was prescribed by the author, consisting of tights with a black apron tunic. The two articles of apparel were not sewn together, as even if that had been done it might have been maintained that the medium could touch her skin, so long as she had the use of her hands. The medium's condition and history exclude the use of the vagina as a hiding place, but so long as the character of the phenomena is such that they cannot be imitated under the same conditions, such objections may be disregarded in any case.

During the second series of experiments in Munich, June to August 1913, we often used a black tricot for the whole body which had only to be closed down the back. A veil securely sewn to the neck of the garment covered the whole head, and was closed with ribbons at the neck (Fig. 169). Along the slit on the back, and on the veil, there were a large number of black rings through which a string was drawn. The knot was sealed with a lead seal. If we also take into account that the hands were contained in white or black sacks of veiling sewn to the sleeves, one must admit that it is altogether impossible to smuggle objects for a fraudulent purpose out of this prison enclosing the whole body. Besides, the material of the tricot is sufficiently transparent to show the whole surface anatomy and the main shades of the epidermis. Since the cabinet was also strictly searched beforehand, we may assume that under these conditions it would be an absolute impossibility to produce previously hidden objects, and to manipulate them through the delicate veils with the hands. The practical results achieved by this method may be considered as of equal value to those obtained by Eva C. Of the whole photographic results obtained with Stanislava P., only those are here communicated which are of interest for the present work on account of their agreement with those of the Paris meetings

—~—☼—~—

HARRY DAWSON



The lecture published below, "Materialisation Phenomena", is by the former Spiritualists' National Union President, Harry Dawson (1953-1958), who held a distinguished record within the SNU. He had served under six former Presidents when his appointment to the Union's highest office was announced on July 4th 1953.

Harry Dawson's introduction to Spiritualism was during WWI while reading "Spirit Teachings", by Stainton Moses, regarded by many as the Spiritualists' bible. This was followed by study of another book, "Harmonial Philosophy", by Andrew Jackson Davis, founder of the Lyceum movement, which catered for Spiritualist youth. Dawson joined a Spiritualist church at Crewe, where he met Billy Hope, the psychic photographer. Then he moved north, joining Gateshead Spiritualist Church in 1918 and giving years of service in various offices before becoming Church President. Here he made his mark on the Northern District Council, which led to his appointment as its Area Representative to the National Council. For some years he acted as President of the Northern District Council.

Because of his interest in healing, a subject to which Dawson devoted many years, he was asked by the SNU to take over the secretaryship of the committees which looked after education, exponents and healing. His own children were brought into the Lyceum's education system, leading Dawson to spend much time on the SNU's educational activities. Some indication of Dawson's own mediumship can be found in the "Two Worlds", April 23rd, 1937, on the "Readers Page", by A. Reynolds (D.N.U.), Ipswich, quoted below:

> "I joined the Movement, and became a member of Eden Progressive Church in Gateshead, where Mr. Dawson was president.[6] He was perhaps the most outstanding trance speaker and healing medium in the North. Fine addresses in big, rolling sentences, illustrating spirit-life, laws and philosophy, were expressed through him on the platform. These lectures by the spirit-doctor were very illuminating—a joy to all thoughtful spiritualists, but like other prophets the honour which was his due was not accorded him. He was too near to us and our times.
>
> "I shall never forget the uniquely intimate conversations we had with Mr. Dawson's controls—Red Eagle, the Doctor and Joe; as well as numerous other entities who were passed through the medium for instruction, awakening and rescue. The weekly circles, held in my home for some years, were characterised by simplicity, friendship and tolerance. There was nothing "religious" about them, no hymn-singing or prayers; just conversation on the subject so near and so dear to our hearts—Spiritualism.
>
> "While talking or tinkering with the wireless—then in its infancy,—for Dawson is an electrician, he would slip quietly under control and a spirit-visitor would be joining in the conversation.

[6] Eden Progressive National Spiritualist Church, Rectory Hall, Cuthbert's Place, Bensham, Gateshead was founded in November 1897. On September 22nd-28th, 1997 it celebrated its Centenary; the speakers, demonstrators, etc. included SNU President Judith Seaman, Duncan Gascoyne, Mary Duffy and Coral Polge. Spiritualism in Gateshead can be traced back at least to the early 1880s with the 'Gateshead Society for the Investigation of Spiritualism'.

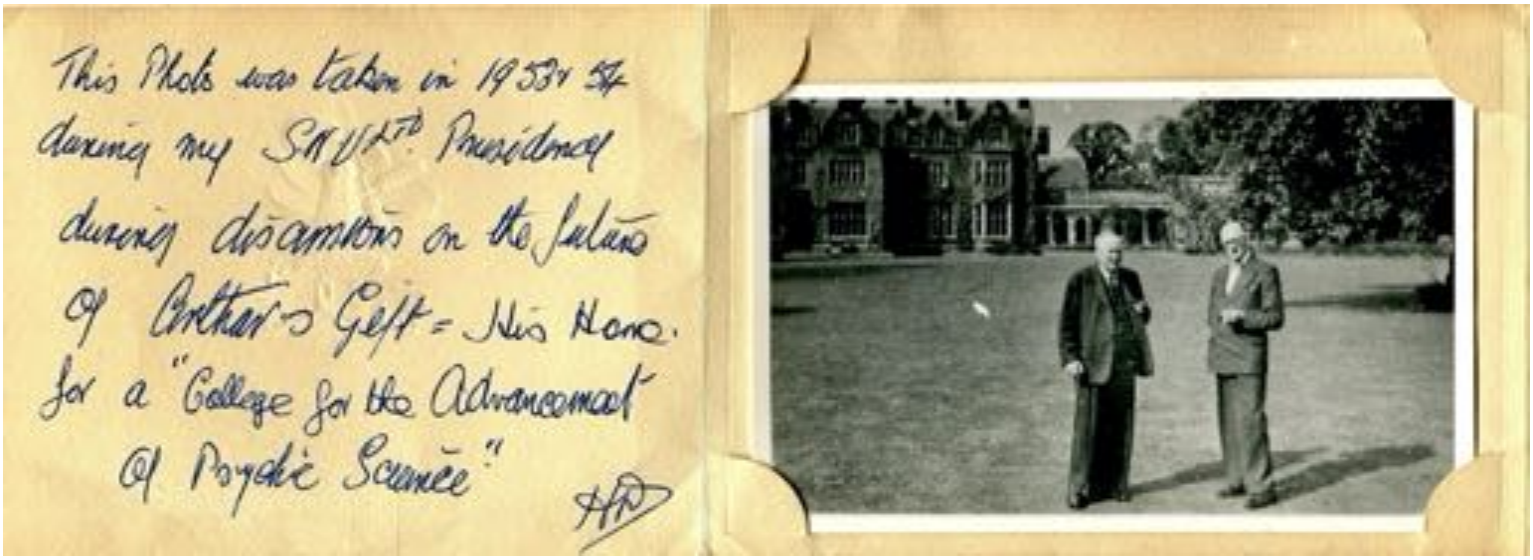
"His body, which I often felt in the first stages of control, was of icy coldness, and hard and solid as frozen meat. The characteristics of the controlling entity followed. With the Indian Chief a lengthening by some 8 inches or 9 inches, so that trousers became almost knee breeches, and waistcoat almost bursting with chest and shoulder expansion; the Doctor produces slimming and contraction, with concave chest; and Joe, foreshortening, stooping, etc."

"Joe, another control, was although perhaps less progressive, a very valuable guide regarding mundane affairs. Joe loved to predict when allowed to do so. The higher guides, however, believed Joe's predictions tended to make things too easy for us. They would, they said, weaken rather than strengthen our character. We must face up to life and solve our own problems. We learned more of the lower spirits and their struggles towards the higher spheres from Joe than from any of the others. They had progressed—he was still too near the earth."

A touching memory is published in the "Two Worlds", April 7th, 1956, page 7:

"My wife was weeping but smiling when she brought me the telegram. It said, 'Congratulations to the new president.' " Alas, Mrs. Dawson was to share her husband's success for only a few months. She passed in October, l953—leaving instructions that there were to be no flowers at her funeral and asking that the money which would have been spent on them be donated to the SNU fund of benevolence for which she had striven for many years.[7]

During his presidency negotiations were already in progress with J. Arthur Findlay, who first approached the Union regarding Stansted Hall when it was occupied by the Red Cross as a convalescent home and when he resided at Rockingham Castle, Market Harborough. This was followed in 1950 by personal contact with W. Lorraine Haig, then President of the Union, who appointed a President's Committee to investigate and report on a College for Spiritualism. But it was not until January 1954 that Mr Findlay wrote to Mr H. Dawson, who had been elected President six months previously, followed by a meeting at Stansted, and that a direct and close liaison between the Hall and the Union was established.



Dawson notes – regarding the photograph shown of himself and Arthur Findlay during discussions on the future of Arthur's gift

[7] The Fund of Benevolence (FOB), was founded by Mrs Minnie Harriet Wallis (1854-1939) in the 1890s. For further details please see Pioneer, Vol. 1, No. 3, April 2014: "Badges, Symbols, and Emblems of the Spiritualists' National Union".

The lecture below was delivered at the SNU South Wales Summer School 1958. The popularity and success of these events is published in Pioneer, Vol. 2, No. 5: "What we did before Stansted." The article is taken from "Psychic News", August 30th, 1958:

Materialisation Phenomena

Harry Dawson, former president of the S.N.U. delivered a lecture on some further facts about materialisation at this year's South Wales Summer School. Here is Mr. Dawson's lecture, in abridged form, to make a feature article of absorbing interest.

The phenomena of materialisation introducing mediumistic teleplastics is in my opinion, still a subject for the private home circle and the research laboratory only.

Contrary to general opinion, I do not believe that physical manifestations are less frequent nowadays than in former times—they are under cover. I personally know of many who will not come into the light of publicity.

Of the many mediumistic phases, there is one whose subject matter and phenomena is not completely satisfactory to offer to the general public—materialisation.

Why, you may ask? I can suggest several good reasons, and the first is that there is insufficient knowledge of the subject.

To illustrate this point, think of the dangers to mediums by the foolish introduction of persons who have not even an elementary knowledge of this intricate and very personal subject.

Many of you who have given study and thought to this matter, or who have been fortunate enough to witness demonstrations by tested and more or less reliable mediums, and certainly those amongst you who have had to deal with the after effects of interference with mediums during sittings, will fully realise the dangers that can ensue, both to our cause and to the medium.

I have in my own search for knowledge on this vital subject during the last forty years been privileged to participate in many physical seances with well known good-class mediums—and with some not so good, either in will or purpose.

During my investigations I have found that many of the ideas so fondly cherished as being essential (for example, holding hands over long periods, sitting upright on hard-backed chairs, questionable singing, various coloured lights, etc.), have made little difference to the quality of the phenomena.

Yet, when none of these supposed essentials has been in use it has been my experience that the tragic need of some individual has often brought evidence of the first order.

There are many aspects of the technique of this work on which there appears to be insufficient knowledge. It is my firm opinion that no completely uninitiated person should attend a physical seance.

Many people expect a materialisation seance to be a simple matter; they know nothing of the various intermediate stages of etherialisation until the solidified figures are able to manifest.

There is another aspect—under certain conditions not yet fully understood or known to us, we get what appears to be fraudulent phenomena.

Sometimes the spirit people work under considerable difficulties; when for example there is only a limited supply of ectoplasm.

The medium in deep trance is under the control of the entity who wishes to manifest and speak to you but to supply proof to you this entity must be recognised; consequently the spirit people do the best thing possible with the limited amount of ectoplasm, using it on the face of the medium.

It has been known in such cases, in order to complete the manifestation, the spirits have made use of apports. This is a perfectly legitimate thing but it has given rise to queries in many cases.

Spirit people have been known also to take material from clothing of the sitters in order to help the presentation of the manifestation, and many regular sitters have noticed that the clothes reserved for their seance work sometimes become very threadbare or have unexpected holes in the fabric.

The first essential for any group is to establish and maintain a close co-operation with the spirit operators, who will instruct them. There have been many occasions in my own experience when I have asked the spirit operators, "Well, what sort of conditions will obtain tonight? Will it be spirit forms, or can you use this plastic stuff in some other way?"

Indeed the spirit people are co-operative in genuine research.

FOR EXAMPLE, IN A SERIES OF TEST SITTINGS WITH ALEC HARRIS, THE AUSTRIAN SCIENTIST IN CHARGE OF PROCEEDINGS ON THE OTHER SIDE ON SEVERAL OCCASIONS SAID TO ME: "PROVIDING YOU GIVE US WARNING THAT YOU ARE GOING TO DO CERTAIN THINGS, WE HAVE NO OBJECTIONS TO REASONABLE EXPERIMENTATIONS OF ANY KIND."

On one occasion Mrs. Gladys Mallaburn[8] was present; from a child she has had long experience with seances and has profound knowledge of these matters.

It was interesting therefore, to note that on one occasion, upon the invitation of the Austrian scientist, she was admitted into the cabinet to watch the actual process.

She witnessed the building up from a heap of ectoplasm on the ground, a rudimentary figure, and then saw a spirit hand working upon this plastic material, moulding the draperies and touching up the actual features. And finally there came a complete form from the cabinet. This is a wonderful thing and yet many people would be sceptical.

In a conversation some years ago, with Dr. Hettinger,[9] the question of a suitably qualified panel for testing purposes was raised.

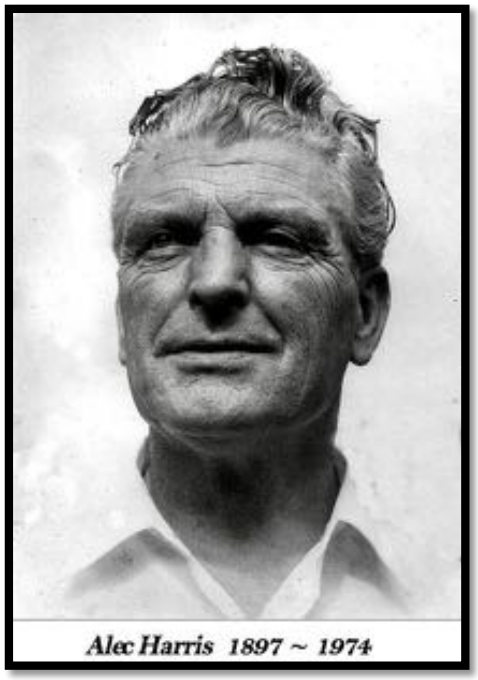
It was agreed that a biologist was essential; then there should be chemists, both organic and inorganic; in addition there must be a spiritual person, someone of full spiritual understanding and sympathy. Finally, of course, there must be the demonstrator and at least one other person who would keep complete records.

---

[8] Gladys Mallaburn was a Spiritualists' National Union Minister (MSNU); for some further information on Mallaburn please Google "The Mallaburn Circle by Maurice Barbanell". There is still today the Gladys Mallaburn Trust within the SNU: "The fund was established in 1978 to provide that interest on investments be utilised towards the general administration expenses of the head office of the Union, the fund to be invested in dated Government stock and any capital accretion at the redemption dates being added to and forming part of the trust for reinvestment."

[9] John Hettinger: Author of various books and papers, primarily on Psychical Research.

One of two supremely interesting examples stand out in my memory from the many seances it has been my privilege to attend over the years. There was one occasion of a sitting with Alec Harris. With me were Ernest Oaten, John Stewart, Percy Wilson and Ernest Thompson.


Alec Harris 1897 ~ 1974

DURING THE PROCEEDINGS A LITTLE STOCKY FIGURE CAME OUT OF THE CABINET, AND STOOD BY ERNEST THOMPSON WHO WAS A VERY BIG MAN. THIS LITTLE STOCKY FIGURE PROCEEDED TO LIFT ERNEST RIGHT OFF THE FLOOR. I MYSELF WAS SO FASCINATED I WENT DOWN ON MY KNEES IN ORDER TO WATCH THE PLAY OF THE MUSCLES IN THE CALVES OF HIS LEG.

As a Physiotherapist I know something about muscles. At the same time the Austrian spirit scientist in charge of proceedings invited another member of the group to reach out and ascertain that the medium was still in his chair.

Another incident, which has been frequently reported as a classic example of the co-operation between the spirit operators and ourselves, took place years ago at a sitting with Harris. Certain critics had suggested to me that it would be possible for the medium to come out of the cabinet and to pass himself off as a female figure.[10]

On this occasion the materialised form of a girl came over to me from the cabinet, stood in front of me and opened her spirit robes. And there was the naked form of a young girl.

The spirit in control requested me, in view of my many years of experience as a physiotherapist, to give the figure a complete examination and to assure myself that it was in fact the figure of a young girl and not that of the medium.

THE MORE I LEARN OF THESE MATTERS THE MORE VITAL IT SEEMS THAT A GREATER KNOWLEDGE OF THE SUBJECT SHOULD BE ACQUIRED AND I DO FEEL THAT IT IS DANGEROUS TO TAKE THE IGNORANT AND THE UNINITIATED INTO THE SEANCE ROOM.

The selection of members of test panels—particularly in this phase of mediumship—must surely be a matter for great care and thought.

Some of the reactions of so-called experts at physical seances have revealed a deplorable lack of knowledge of the subject, often allied to a sanctimonious attitude that was positively ludicrous.

What is available nowadays for the younger generation?

There is evidence collected and published by a number of famous men—Dr. Schrenck Notzing, Dr. Crawford, Sir William Crookes, Dr. Gustave Geley and many others.

[10] Alec Harris: "The Full Story of His Remarkable Physical Mediumship", by Louie Harris, available on the SNU website: https://www.snu.org.uk/shop/alec-harris-the-full-story-of-his-remarkable-physical-mediumship

The evidence they have accumulated is in the library at Head-quarters in Manchester,[11] and in the libraries of many S.N.U. Churches.

Those churches who do not have such books available can obtain from us a parcel of say twenty-five or thirty books on loan for serious study by interested groups.

Now let us consider the work of Ernest Vickers, of Orpington, Kent—one who held the Fellowship of Union for a thesis entitled "Psychic Physiology". Vickers shared with C. Victor Miller, of San Francisco, the unusual ability to produce materialisations of varying types **whilst not in trance**.

Thus he was able to witness and be aware of all that happened and to be conscious of the pains and penalties that materialisation mediums suffer.

This remarkable characteristic of consciously producing the extrusion of his own physical substance to build up bodies temporarily, whilst the spirit entities manipulated them to give evidence of survival makes the miracles of the Bible (psychic happenings) fall into their natural place in accordance with the fulfilment of Natural Law.

Ernest Vickers was able to prepare a number of diagrams to show the methods whereby the spirit operators manipulate the ectoplasmic substance extruded by the medium.

The copyright of his work was left to the Union—and it is hoped that in the near future the National Council will exert itself to fulfil its promise to publish his book as one of the text books of the physical phase of the study. I know of no finer book for the physical medium of tomorrow.

At the last of the Psychic Sciences' Conventions held at Dunbar,[12] I took the opportunity to ask some questions during the last series of Ernest Vickers' lectures. One question was:

"Did you at any time during your contact with your guides obtain any information or details relative to the elements composing this "Ectoplasmic Stuff" as you call it, and more particularly, the composition of the ectoplasmic draperies used by spirit forms?"

He replied that he was informed that the material that passed from his body to build these forms was in the first place invisible, being in the form of a gaseous substance and also of liquid substances.

THESE GASES AND LIQUIDS, DIRECTED, MIXED AND EXUDED BY PSYCHIC FORCE, WERE THEN SOLIDIFIED AS REQUIRED AND TOOK DIFFERENT FORMS, FROM SMALL BODIES SUCH AS HANDS, FEET, UP TO FULLY DEVELOPED FIGURES.

This I maintain is of great interest to the student and to the experimental investigator. So far as I can ascertain, Dr. Schrenck Notzing was the only investigator to give the formula for "ectoplasmic stuff"—a term used by several well known scientists.

I wonder how long we shall wait until some keen investigator will corroborate his formula of the past.

---

[11] This refers to the "Britten Memorial Library", then housed at the SNU Registered Office, "Britten House", at 12 Tib Lane, Manchester (purchased in 1948), later moving to the Annex at Stansted Hall in 1971. Today the SNU Registered Office is just a few metres up the path and is called Redwoods.

[12] These were SNU Psychic Science Conventions, which were held annually for several years.

One very interesting feature of materialisation history, carried out under the direction of several famous men and assisted by equally sound feminine investigators and mediums, reveals that the spirit operators choose with care the types of investigators.

Dr. Schrenck Notzing was a noted physician and psychologist—Dr. Crawford was a Professor in Mechanical Structures at Dublin University—Sir William Crookes a noted chemist—Dr. Gustave Geley a well-known Paris psychologist.

Each of these famous savants, it will be noted, received suitable materialisation evidences relative to their particular fields of science and medicine.

—~—☼—~—

Editor's Note:

Readers of the SNU Pioneer electronic journal will be aware of some of the points made by the former Union President, Harry Dawson, as much of this is outlined in the Pioneer series, "A Question of Fraud", and further information in the Pioneer PDF booklet, "Physical Mediumship" (details on the last page of this issue).

Dawson draws the reader's attention to Ernest Vickers and to his important contribution to the Spiritualist movement in general. Vickers' interests could be said to have been twofold. Early on he realised the importance of education for the young, which led him into the British Spiritualists' Lyceum Union (BSLU), becoming its President during WWI;[13] equally, he was involved within the SNU and served as one of its Ministers. As noted by Harry Dawson, he achieved a prestigious award by earning a Fellowship of the SNU.

Firstly, I will briefly note part of Vickers' contribution to BSLU, which was published in Psychic News, April 6th, 2002: Tom Haver, the then Secretary of the Spiritualists' Lyceum Union Education Committee, wrote:

"The Divine Image is within, and it is the aim of true education to develop that image in such a way that the child's individuality will not be impaired. The highest aim of education is to reveal the life and form of that individual. This can be done through the learning process in a painless way. The Spiritualists' Lyceum Union has operated an education system since its inception. Revolutionised in 1910 by a Sheffield businessman called Ernest Vickers,[14] a scheme was set up which worked on the basis of children learning aspects which adult Spiritualists took for granted. Annual examinations were held each year for older Lyceumists and for younger ones oral testing was found to be the better option.

This scheme, after being tried and tested to see if it was workable, was eventually confirmed as the best method of teaching at that time, and was fully approved by the SLU National Conference in 1915. This system lasted for 70 years till 1985 when the then President, Minister Allan Millichamp, introduced the present day method …"

—~—☼—~—

[13] The British Spiritualists' Lyceum Union: In Manchester 1889 a committee was appointed to draw up a constitution for a proposed Lyceum Union, which included John Pemberton, Samuel Chiswell, W.H. Wheeler and Edward Wallis, with Alfred Kitson as Secretary. With forty delegates in attendance at the Oldham Conference on May 11th, 1890, under the presidency of Harry A. Kersey, the constitution for the Federation of Lyceums was formed.

[14] Subsequently known as the "Vickers Scheme".

Returning to the focus of physical mediumship:

Vickers himself was a mental and physical medium. Dawson pointed out that he had achieved a Fellowship of the Union for his thesis entitled "Psychic Physiology"; this in part included the rare ability to produce materialisations of varying types whilst *not* in a trance state, enabling him to observe, and to be fully aware of, all that happened and its procedure, at the same time being conscious of the sensations, pains and penalties that materialisation mediums might suffer.

Consciously producing the extrusion of his own physical substance, i.e., psychic force, psychoplasm, ectoplasm, etc., required to produce an objective form in conjunction with the spirit controls to manipulate the fluids to produce the required features, characteristics of a materialised form, is quite remarkable. Ernest Vickers was able to prepare a number of diagrams to show the methods whereby the spirit operators manipulate the ectoplasmic substance extruded by the medium.

Harry Dawson had asked the medium at the last of the Psychic Sciences' Conventions held at Dunbar:

> "Did you at any time during your contact with your guides obtain any information or details relative to the elements composing this "Ectoplasmic Stuff" as you call it, and more particularly, the composition of the ectoplasmic draperies used by spirit forms?"
>
> He replied that he was informed that the material that passed from his body to build these forms was in the first place invisible, being in the form of a gaseous substance and also of liquid substances.
>
> THESE GASES AND LIQUIDS, DIRECTED, MIXED AND EXUDED BY PSYCHIC FORCE, WERE THEN SOLIDIFIED AS REQUIRED AND TOOK DIFFERENT FORMS, FROM SMALL BODIES SUCH AS HANDS, FEET, UP TO FULLY DEVELOPED FIGURES.

"Psychic Physiology" was published circa 1951. Dawson made mention regarding the copyright of this work being left to the Union and hoped the National Council would republish it but unfortunately I have been unable at present to find any trace of this valuable book. Vickers gave a series of lectures to the British College of Psychic Science (BCPS)[15] on "Psychic Physiology"; Light published a short snippet on March 14th, 1935:

PHYSICAL MEDIUMSHIP

> MR. ERNEST VICKERS, A.M.I.M.E., was the lecturer at the British College of Psychic Science, South Kensington, on March 6th. With gifts ranging from clairvoyance—objective and subjective—clairaudience and auric sight, to indications of physical mediumship, Mr. Vickers is giving close attention to the last-named, reserving all his time and strength for this with a selected group. Retaining full consciousness during the experiments, he is able to make a very full record of his mental and physical reactions, which should be invaluable in any later study of physical mediumship.
>
> He emphasized the suffering endured by a Medium in the process of drawing out the etheric force from practically every organ of the body—heart, lungs, limbs, bones, blood, brain, etc. Usually such sensitives are entranced and suffer less, and this is perhaps the first time we have a record by a Medium himself of such experiences. Cold winds, many varieties of scents and smells, and the sensation by the sitters of masses of nebulous substance, is the present extent of the phenomena. Several charts exhibited by the lecturer gave an idea as to the various methods used in collecting the psychic force

[15] See Pioneer, Vol. 6, No. 5: "International Institute for Psychical Research".

from sitters and concentrating it on the Medium, and excellent advice was given as to the necessity of quiet and repose of mind and limitation of sittings if such work was to be successful.

A large audience appreciated Mr. Vickers' confidence in giving these details, and a good discussion followed. Mrs. Hewat McKenzie occupied the chair.

—~—☼—~—

Further, the British College of Psychic Science quarterly journal published a synopsis of its then Autumn programme for 1935, with Vickers' upcoming October and November lectures at the College; this gives some indication of the extent of the subject:

PSYCHIC PHYSIOLOGY

By ERNEST VICKERS

The following is a synopsis of a very valuable series of lectures beginning on Monday, October 14th, 5.30 p.m., which appears on the Autumn College Programme, of which it is hoped many will take advantage. Mr. Vickers has practical experience of both mental and physical mediumship and for the first time it is possible to hear what a private scientist who has carefully recorded his sensations has to say of the reaction of mediumship on the physical organs and on the nervous system.

PSYCHIC PHYSIOLOGY

The general accepted definitions of the terms, Psychic, Psychic Research, and Physiology, are as follows :-

Psychic. Pertaining to or connected with the human soul, spirit, or mind.

Psychic Research. A scientific study of the more obscure and unexplained activities of the human spirit or spirits in general.

Physiology. The science that treats of the vital functions of the human body.

Psychic Physiology. Is a combined study of the activities of the human soul, spirit and mind, during its association with the physical body.

In this connection, study and research reveal the following:

1. The effect and reactions produced by the power of mind on the organs and physiological structure.

2. In the case of extreme sensitiveness, known as mediumship, the mind of the medium comes under the power of mind exerted by spirit guides. Contacts in all phases of mediumship are first established in this way.

3. To produce the necessary states in the body of a medium, the mind and brain of a medium, according to the degree of sensitiveness, is influenced by spirit guides either in a state where consciousness is wholly or partially maintained, or during deep trance.

4. Actions are produced on the organs and the physiological structure in general by spirit guides, to establish a flow of force and elements, for use in psychic productions.

5. A study of innervation, and strong stimulation by the nervous system, on the organs and periphery of the body, reveal that the states produced are the means of exuding force and elements from the body of a medium.

6. Actions on the bones, blood, glands, tissue, nerve substance, and all the vital organs, are the means of providing data for continuous and complete study and research in the science of Psychic Physiology.

7. Conclusions are possible of the character of the material exuded and the biological changes produced, during the actions. In this respect, a study of the bony system, blood circulation, organs, nervous system including ganglia, glands and brain is necessary.

8. How psychic force from a medium is withdrawn and used. Under this heading, knowledge on the following is ascertained :—

(a) The influence and effect of the power of mind, exerted upon mediums.

(b) Exudence and suction.

(c) Extraneous forces of suction and attraction, exerted upon the exudence from mediums, viz; psychic force, ectoplasm, psychoplasm, and gases.

(d) The power of mind which spirits exert during the processes of materialisation.

9. That for investigators in psychic research, mediums, medical men and others, it is essential to progress that a study of Psychic Physiology be undertaken.

10. Generally, attention has mainly been concentrated upon research in Psychic Science, but it is claimed that scientific study and research in Psychic Physiology is of equal importance for the well being of the human race, and by progressive research, knowledge made available for future generations.

—~—☼—~—

Ernest Vickers died in May 1953;[16] his obituary notice from Psychic News, May 23rd, 1953 is published below:

FORMER LYCEUM UNION PRESIDENT PASSES

ERNEST VICKERS, WHO PASSED ON IN THE EARLY HOURS OF WEDNESDAY MORNING LAST WEEK, WAS WELL-KNOWN IN SPIRITUALIST CIRCLES, BEING CONNECTED WITH THE MOVEMENT FROM AN EARLY AGE.

His particular interest was with children and young people, so it was not surprising that he became an ardent Lyceum worker. During the 1914/18 war he was President of the Lyceum Union.

He instituted several educational schemes and he wrote a number of books and pamphlets on subjects of interest to young people.

In addition to these pursuits, Vickers was a physical and mental medium of some repute. He contributed a number of pamphlets to S.N.U. Conferences on physical mediumship, and was the author of a book on the same subject entitled "The Development of Physical Mediumship."

Another book, "Psychic Physiology," completed only two years ago, earned him a fellowship of the S.N.U. It dealt with the sensations of a physical medium and the manifestations which occur. He presented it as a gift to the Union.

[16] The SNU North Yorkshire District Council website, "Yorkshire Pioneers", incorrectly states that Ernest Vickers was killed in action at Flanders on July 10th, 1917.

Ernest Vickers was also a minister of the S.N.U. and although holding a high business position and an Associate of the Institute of Mechanical Engineers he still found time to serve many churches. Prior to living at Orpington, his last home, he was for many years an active figure at Letchworth.

One of his last public appearances was at the Easter Congress of the London District Council at Brighton.

Harold Vigurs, who was a close friend of Vickers, tells us that only recently he received a peculiar telephone call from Ernest asking him to attend to the necessary arrangements in the event of the caller's death.[17]

Vigurs was very puzzled by this as Vickers always seemed very healthy. However, the following Saturday afternoon he met Ernest for lunch prior to their attending the May Convention of the LDC.

Mr. Vigur's wife was to play a selection of pianoforte solos and Vickers was particularly anxious to hear her. He was very musical himself, playing both the piano and the organ in his own home.

Vickers seemed perfectly well when they met and there was no mention of the telephone call; but during the meal he was taken ill, and became so bad that they were forced to abandon the idea of going to the meeting.

By the time Vickers reached Orpington again he was in a very ill condition but refused to be taken to hospital. His one thought was to return to his home.

Finally when he reached there and retired to bed he became immediately unconscious, from which sleep he did not wake.

The burial service was to be held on Tuesday.

—~—☼—~—

There is no need here to repeat the research so far undertaken in Pioneer with regard to the early phases of materialisation, where the early mediums' externalised forms very closely resembled the mediums themselves, as well as problems encountered by insufficient psychic force[18]—for simplicity the term "ectoplasm" is used—where the supply of ectoplasmic drapery was not enough to cover the form, and the measures employed to address this problem.

It is often said that materialisation mediumship is more apt for the researcher, rather than general séances, due to the nature and complexity of the production of the phenomena, coupled with inexperienced sitters. Ectoplasm in itself does not prove survival. William Crookes, for instance, *did not accept* that the materialisation of the alleged Katie King was a spirit of a dead person.

Miss Felicia R. Scatcherd (1862–1927) was a well-known figure within the SNU and in psychical research, who produced numerous papers and books on Spiritualism and research. It

[17] Harold Vigurs, SNU President 1943-1948, is well featured in the pages of Pioneer; see Pioneer PDF booklets "SNU History" and "SNU Presidents" (details on the last page of this issue).

[18] A term used by William Crookes, basically related to the existence of a nervous atmosphere or vital force, i.e., nervous energy. The term "psychic force" was coined by a colleague of Crookes, Serjeant-at-Law Edward William Cox (1809-1879). He was sceptical of Florence Cook at the time of the Crookes investigations into her materialisations in 1873-4. Cox had worked with Crookes in his early investigations of May 1871 with Daniel Dunglas Home (1833-1886). Cox, incidentally, was convinced of the genuineness of Home, although he did not accept the spirit hypothesis. He had first used the term "psychic force", publishing a booklet to this effect in 1872, *"Spiritualism Scientifically Examined with Proofs of the Existence of a Psychic Force"*.

was Scatcherd who proposed the term "skotographs"—spirit writing, images or thought photography impressed on to photographic plates in unopened packets, etc. She wrote an essay, "Ectoplasm as Associated with Survival", which was published in various outlets; this was later printed separately in a small booklet in October 1926, partly quoted below:[19]

Ectoplasm as Associated with Survival

"THE term ectoplasm is made up of two Greek words, ἔκτός (outside) and πλάςμα (a thing formed).

"Prof. Chas. Richet was the first to use the word as applied to the substance out of which materialisations are produced.

"An objection urged against the term is that it is already in use in connection with zoology.

"Madame Bisson prefers the word "substance," and invariably refers to "*la substance*" when describing the phenomena concerned with the manifestation of ectoplasm. She was the first investigator to place these phenomena on record in such a manner as to compel the attention of the scientific world. In a sense the term substance seems preferable to that of ectoplasm, as being more inclusive of the ascertained facts concerning this living mode of matter in its various degrees of manifestation. American investigators have tried to popularise the terms *Plasma* and *Plasmology*, with regard to objective psychic phenomena, but the term ectoplasm has caught the popular fancy, and those who denied all reality to psychical phenomena talk glibly about ectoplasm and think they know all about it. In truth, up to the present very little is known about this "basis" of objective psychical phenomena. One of the oldest and most illustrious of living investigators tells us:

" "We must not hide from ourselves the fact that these phenomena cause us to penetrate another world, a world unknown and as yet entirely unexplored."[20]

"If real progress is to be made in the exploration of this unknown world, ectoplasm, and its kindred psychic problems, must be studied with dispassionate ardour and due observance of the conditions essential to secure results.

"Dr. Franz Hartmann was of the opinion that all psychical phenomena were to be attributed to a nervous force producing mechanical and physical effects outside of the human body.

"Even a limited experience of the phenomena in question would prevent the acceptance of this hypothesis rejected by Flammarion, Mme. Bisson and other investigators, including Dr. Geley.

"All theories of the subconscious are seen to be equally inadequate to explain the facts as observed with Eva C. [image below] and other mediums.

[19] The full booklet is published in Psypioneer, Vol. 10, No. 2.

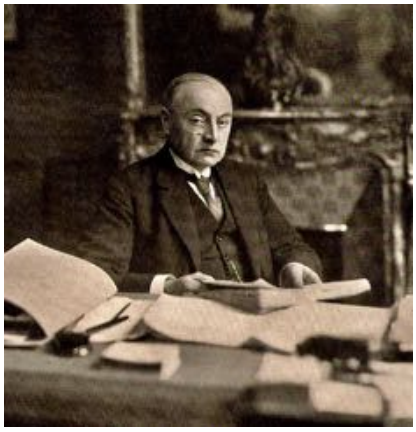
[20] Camille Flammarion, *Les Forces Inconnues*.

" "A portion of force, intelligence and matter can be exteriorised from the organism, act, perceive, organise and think outside of the muscles, organs, senses and brain. It is none other than the lofty subconscious portion of the Being. It constitutes truly a subconscious exteriorisable being, coexisting in the ego with the normal conscious being."[21]

"The word *being* or *être*, is evidently used as our word self, and should be thus translated.

"Dr. Geley, however, has himself modified this view so as to cover the whole field of phenomena. In a later work[22] he expresses himself thus:—

" "During the whole time that the materialisation lasts it is in obvious physiological and psychological relation with the medium . . . every impression received by the ectoplasm reacts on the medium and *vice versa*; the extreme reflex sensitiveness of the forms is closely connected with that of the medium. Everything goes to prove that the ectoplasm is in a word the medium herself, partially exteriorised. I am speaking of course only from the physiological point of view and not at present from the purely psychological side of the matter" (page 63).



"All experiences in materialisation phenomena tend to demonstrate the existence of one primordial substance, of which living forms are but representations. Dr. Geley, a consistent and clear thinker, goes on to complete his views of the problem thus :—

(*a*) The essential unity of organic substance.

(*b*) The evidence of a superior dynamism implied by the necessity of admitting a superior, organising, centralising and directing dynamism.

(*c*) The conditioning of the dynamism by the idea.

"The third factor is the most important of the three, maintains Dr. Geley. It implies the complete reversal of materialistic philosophy, for it means "the modelling of living matter by an idea"—ideoplasticity, and when to this is added the fact of teleplasticity, denoting the same phenomenon of ideoplasticity taking place at a distance from the dematerialised organism, the ground of ascertained facts with regard to materialisation he holds is fully covered.

"Baron von Schrenck-Notzing, whom I have known longer than almost any of the other eminent psychical researchers, was one of the few who did not accuse me of inventing excuses for fraudulent mediums, when I brought forward this fact of ideoplasticity as an explanation of what seemed fraud on the part of a medium. I had discovered independently this fact of ideoplasticity (calling it the image-forming faculty) as possessed by myself and other sensitives when dealing with certain phases of ectoplasmic phenomena, especially that of psychic photography.

"In his foreword to Mme. Bisson's work on materialisations published in the same year as his own volume, Baron von Schrenk-Notzing singles out this ideoplasticity as the most mysterious of all the enigmas associated with the marvellous living substance known as ectoplasm."

[21] Dr. Geley, *L'Etre Subconscious.*

[22] *From the Unconscious to the Conscious*.

Scatcherd further noted:

"Ectoplasm was at first understood to indicate the substance exuding from a medium in visible form, perceptible to all the sitters and capable of being photographed. It is now applied to any mode of mediumistic emanation which renders possible the various forms of physical phenomena (including psychic photography) from simple raps to partial or complete materialisations, the latter in every way resembling a normal human being.

"Prof. Chas. Richet, when describing the Bien Boa materialisation, [23] possessed all the attributes of life, walking, speaking and breathing, just like a human creature—having a body that manifested both resistance and muscular strength."

"So perfect often were these full-form materialisations such as Crookes's Katie King and Richet's Bien Boa, that, as Prof. Richet himself has pointed out, the choice lies between two hypotheses, and two only: that of a phantom possessing all the attributes of life, or of a living person simulating a phantom.[24]

"The average outsider usually adopts the second hypothesis.

"Commenting further on the subject, Prof. Richet said that as a physiologist he could not make up his mind to admit the fact of materialisation. He would only assert that it was a profound mystery that must change our ideas of nature and of life from top to bottom. This was written in 1906. I met him in the early part of December of that year when we discussed the question of survival. I wonder whether he remembers saying:

"Oh, mademoiselle ! I sometimes almost wish I could do violence to my conscience as a physiologist and accept the hypothesis of human survival. You ask me why I feel like that ? Because I might then entertain the hope, even if it were only for once, of shaking hands with Socrates."

"Prof. Richet has now admitted the facts of materialisation, though he still rejects the only adequate, explanatory hypothesis, that of survival.

"Madame Bisson met Eva C. in 1910 and her observations were published in 1914, as were those of her fellow-observer, von Schrenck-Notzing.[25] Their careful records confirm and illustrate, in every essential detail my own sporadic experiences of 1906, and onwards. Until these studies were published, my statements were received with amused contempt or crude denunciations, and I utterly failed to interest any member of the S.P.R. except Sir W. Crookes, who had his time fully taken up with other matters.

---

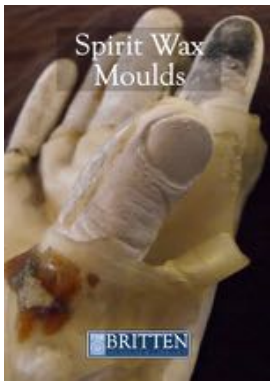
[23] *Annals of Psychic Science*, April 1906.

[24] *Annals of Psychic Science*, 1906.

Pioneer: Richet's observations of the materialised Bien Boa, said to be a 300-year-old Hindu, via the mediumship of Marthe Béraud, better known as Eva C. The images of Bien Boa in Schrenck-Notzing's book, "Phenomena of Materialisation", resemble a figure which was made from a large cardboard cut-out; in other sittings Charles Richet reported that Boa was breathing, had moved around the room and had touched him (in the image shown the legs of the seated medium can be noted, but nothing appears to be supporting the alleged materialisation).

[25] This is incorrect insomuch as Mme. Bisson was sitting with Marthe Beraud (Eva C) prior to 1910.

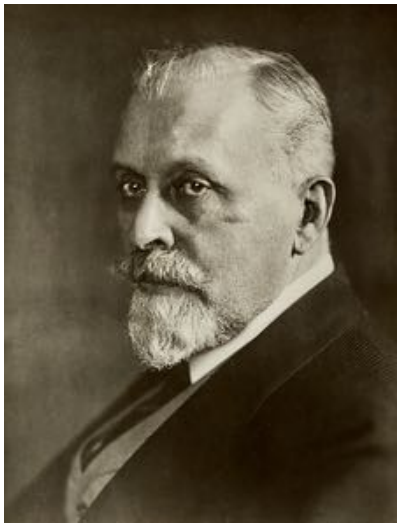
"Dr. Geley's conference at the College de France, on "So-called Supernormal Physiology"[26] further elucidated and confirmed the observations of Bisson and von Schrenck, whose names, together with those of Richet and Geley, will for ever be associated with those discoveries which are making possible a new biology and a new physiology.



"Ectoplasm as such does not demonstrate survival. But when, with more than the rapidity of thought, it builds up and breaks down, or dematerialises *at the word of command*, producing by means of materialised hands and feet, seamless wax gloves, from which no living hand or foot could be withdrawn without damaging the glove, it demonstrates intelligence other than that of the experimenters.[27]

"When it reproduces by the agency of a temporary materialisation, or of a supernormal photograph, a death-wound, unknown to any of those present, but afterwards verified, survival as associated with ectoplasm is as clearly proved as any fact can be in this wonderful but relatively imperfect world, for here we have an instance of memory. Memory pre-supposes mind: both imply thought and all three demand conscious life, or rather self-conscious existence, as an essential pre-requisite for any similar manifestations whatsoever."

—~—☼—~—



The above is intended only to show some information on the process of *recorded information* on the "substance" known more widely as ectoplasm. The book, "Phenomena of Materialisation", published in 1914 by the German physician Albert von Schrenck-Notzing (translated into English in 1923) is available as a free download. The book records séances involving Madame (Juliette) Bisson, some with her husband Alexandre, and from 1909 to 1913 with the physical medium Marthe Beraud. Around 1909 she changed her name to Eva Carrière (known as Eva C); she is referred to in the book only as Eva C. The researchers as mentioned by Scatcherd have, as in most cases, come under critical fire and accusations about their work from other psychical researches and authors, but the sole purpose of this article was to gather information on the subject of ectoplasm.

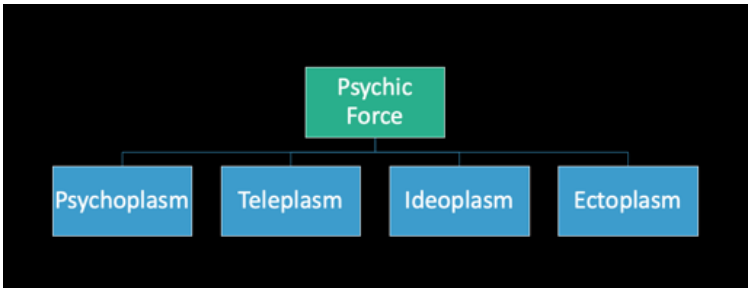
Numerous researchers have been noted for the various names of the *substance required*—making the invisible visible—objective phenomena—physical mediumship in general. There are numerous other names, e.g. magnetic fluids, and sub-categories from researchers which I have not included. The most well-known terms to suite the purpose of this article include psychic force, teleplasm, ectoplasm, psychoplasm, ideoplasm. In my opinion the various names given to the *different phases* of materialisation mediumship from the early 1870s are for all intents and purposes similar in structure and interchangeable—any modifications are in relation to the development of the mediumship and the style of its presentation.

---

[26] Gustav Geley, *La Physiologie dite Supernormale*. *Bulletin de I'Institut Psychologique*, 1918 (January, June).

[27] Both Richet & Geley researched this extraordinary phenomenon. In November 1920 Geley extended his experiments until his death in 1924 (b. 1886) in an aeroplane accident; he was returning from experimental séances in Warsaw. All the moulds obtained during the séances with Franek Kluski were, I quote: "... in a little bag which Dr. Geley was holding in his hand at the moment of this death; the aeroplane's crash broke the moulds into tiny bits."

Please see: Pioneer, Vol. 5, No. 2: "Britten Museum & Library "Wax Spirit Hands" booklet — Reviewed by the SPR" & "Houdini & Wax Gloves — Joseph F Rinn".



For further information on the fundamental substance required for the production of materialisation and other related physical phenomena in the séance room and the coinage origin of the various names used:

Spirits of the Trade: Teleplasm, Ectoplasm, Psychoplasm, Ideoplasm [28]

By Marc Demarest [29]

Let's start with a snippet from A. Campbell Holms' *The Fundamental Facts of Spiritualism* (Jamaica, NY: Occult Press, 1927, pp. 35-6), a book for which I have a soft spot, as Holms wrote it late in his life after years spent trying to make sense of Spiritualism:

> It is not known exactly in what respect the organism of a medium differs from that of ordinary people, but it has been ascertained that the production of objective phenomena depends on their ability to emit a mysterious substance termed teleplasm, ectoplasm, psychoplasm or ideoplasm.
>
> The fact that teleplasm is essential to the production of physical phenomena has long been known to spiritualists, for it was described in spirit communications as long ago as 1867 (see Kardec's *Book of Mediums*, p. 91) and it has often been seen from that time to the present day. Recent experiments by eminent European scientists, working with exceptionally gifted mediums, have established its reality beyond dispute, for it has been observed at close quarters, handled and photographed by flashlight; and several scientific monographs have been written describing it in detail, with many photographs showing its various modes of manifestation, and the human-like forms it may assume.

The section of Kardec to which Holms refers is the communication from the spirit of St. Louis on the nature of the *perispirit*. I don't know what precisely Holms is referring to (in the 1874 English edition, p. 91 is a bit off-point) but it may well be this (from pp. 87-8 of the 1874 Emma Wood English translation):

> It has been said that the density of the perispirit, if one may so express it, varies according to the states of the world; it appears that it varies also in the same world according to individuals. Among the morally advanced spirits, it is more subtle, and approximates to that of the elevated spirits; among the inferior spirits, on the contrary, it approximates to matter, which is the reason these spirits of low state preserve so long the illusions of the terrestrial life; they think and act as if they were still living; they have the same desires, and we might almost say the same sensuality. This coarseness of the perispirit giving to it more affinity with matter, makes the inferior spirits more fitted for physical manifestations. It is for the same reason that a man of the world accustomed to the labor of intellect, whose body is frail and delicate, cannot carry a heavy burden like a porter. Matter, with him, is in a manner, as it were, less compact, the organs less

[28] http://ehbritten.blogspot.com/2013/02/spirits-of-trade-teleplasm-ectoplasm.html

[29] Marc Demarest, who runs the excellent research website, "The International Association for the Preservation of Spiritualist and Occult Periodicals" (IAPSOP). It can also be noted that IAPSOP archives Psypioneer, so often referenced in the SNU Pioneer: http://iapsop.com

> resistant; he has less nervous fluid. The perispirit being to the spirit what the body is to the man, and its density being according to the degree of inferiority of the spirit, it takes the place of muscular force; that is to say, gives him, over the fluids necessary for manifestations, a greater power than those have whose nature is more ethereal. If an elevated spirit desires to produce such effects, he does what delicate people amongst us do; he has it done by a ***spirit of the trade*** [MD: emphasis original].

(For the moment, I have to walk past this metaphor, which is every bit as potent, revealing and damning as Freud's early use of *house* metaphors, complete with servants at the door, deciding what is admitted to consciousness. But we'll come back here some day).

These two snippets form the bookends of the problem at hand, as well as any might. From 1850 onward, we have various and sundry notions of a force (and the complex psycho-physics behind that force) necessary to produce physical phenomena, from raps, tips and turns to (eventually) full-form spirit manifestations; from the 1870s onward, we have the (scientific?) motivation to separate this force from its controversial milieu and its (to many eyes, tawdry) productions (a motivation best expressed in the life and work of Serjeant Cox), to name it, study it, bend it to the will of man, and the will of the market.

What might be said about the origin of word *ectoplasm?* This is the Richet coinage question. Did Charles Richet coin the term ectoplasm, and if so, when? The answer is usually "Yes in 1894". Often we're treated to a nice etymology in conjunction with the assertion.

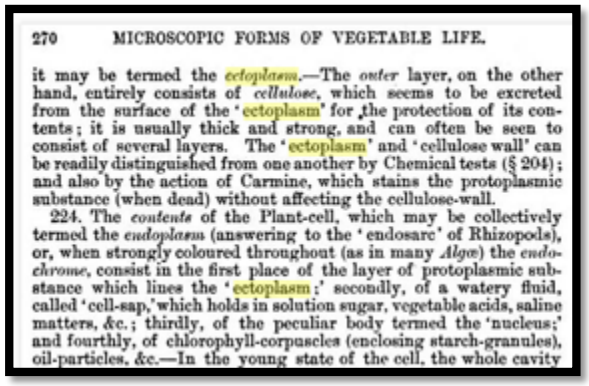
Arguing about who first used a word -- the first-use game -- is largely a waste of time, particularly in a discipline where unique names for a common theoretical object allowed one to establish a commercial or academic precedence for one's self that translated into hard currency, or social currency (think, for example, about the number of -isms under which magnetic theory went, in the 1840s and after -- my favorite is Le Roy Sunderland's Pathetism. "No, no, it isn't magnetism -- It's Pathetism. Only I have it, and it can be yours for three payments of...").

And we've known for quite some time -- nearly a hundred years -- that the canonical assertion "Richet coined the term *ectoplasm*" is false. Henry Holt, the publisher and Spiritualist, blew Richet's cover in an article entitled "A Review of Richet," which discusses Richet's *Traité Metapsychique*, in the *Journal of the ASPR* for 1922:

> III. Ectoplasm on page 656 (of Traité) he [Richet] says that he devised (imaginé) the word ectoplasm. It was apparently an unconscious recollection -- and an unfortunate one. He has unwarrantably lifted the term from a permanent covering of certain protozoa on to an occasional exudation from the highest organism we know. Geley has suggested teleplasm, which fits in well with the rest of the teles and seems more suggestive than ecto. Richet defines his word as referring to "the formation of objects which in most cases seem to come out of the human body and take on the aspect of material reality (garments, veils, living bodies)." In this definition he leaves out the case of Crawford [MD: Crawford's "psychic rods," to explain telekinesis in the Goligher circle, I believe] and others where the exudation seems to serve as the vehicle for telekinesis, yet he often alludes to them elsewhere. M. Richet's absorption with ectoplasm leads him to say that ectoplasm is the basis of the whole subject of Metaphysics. Well, probably everything we know has a physical basis, nevertheless, it would seem rather queer to call Physics the basis of Metaphysics, and there are students of Metaphysics who will consider that placing ectoplasm at the bottom has not yielded as inspiring results from the Paris school as placing ostensible spirit communications -- or shall we say telepsychosis? -- at the bottom, as yielded from the London school. Such students will not find as much in this great book of Richet or in the great book of Schrenck-Notzing as they have found in the great book of [F. W. H.] Myers.

(In its multi-volume work on the Margery mediumship -- when I think of ectoplasm, I think of Mina Crandon. J. Malcolm Bird inserts a telling footnote, reading: "The original records of this period employ always the words ectoplasm, ectoplasmic. Inasmuch as the Society has abandoned this term, turning it over to orthodox biology in the interests of its long established use there in another connection, I have throughout substituted the newer and more expedient terminology." That newer and more expedient term: *teleplasm*).

Ah, well. This is why they call forgery **utterance**. Three minutes with Google books will suffice to convince anyone of the correctness of Henry Holt's point, and the incorrectness of his understanding of the prior use of ectoplasm, which was a term of art in microscopy and cell biology. W. B. Carpenter (yes, **our** W. B. Carpenter), used the term in **1881** in his book *The Microscope And Its Revelations*.


270 MICROSCOPIC FORMS OF VEGETABLE LIFE.

it may be termed the *ectoplasm*.—The *outer* layer, on the other hand, entirely consists of *cellulose*, which seems to be excreted from the surface of the 'ectoplasm' for the protection of its contents; it is usually thick and strong, and can often be seen to consist of several layers. The 'ectoplasm' and 'cellulose wall' can be readily distinguished from one another by Chemical tests (§ 204); and also by the action of Carmine, which stains the protoplasmic substance (when dead) without affecting the cellulose-wall.

224. The *contents* of the Plant-cell, which may be collectively termed the *endoplasm* (answering to the 'endosarc' of Rhizopods), or, when strongly coloured throughout (as in many *Algæ*) the *endochrome*, consist in the first place of the layer of protoplasmic substance which lines the 'ectoplasm;' secondly, of a watery fluid, called 'cell-sap,' which holds in solution sugar, vegetable acids, saline matters, &c.; thirdly, of the peculiar body termed the 'nucleus;' and fourthly, of chlorophyll-corpuscles (enclosing starch-granules), oil-particles, &c.—In the young state of the cell, the whole cavity

Charles Richet did not coin the term *ectoplasm*; he traduced the term *ectoplasm* from cell biology, unconsciously or otherwise, while claiming the invention of the neologism in print He was the first person, so far as we know, to use the term *ectoplasm* to describe the formation of the accouterment of materialization séances (the "garments, veils, living bodies" above).

OK, but we still have to give Richet his due for applying the term we use today to describe the gauze-, rubber- or jelly-like exudations from spirit mediums, right?

Nope. Richet used the term to explain **what it was** that Eusapia Palladino could produce (a phantasmal arm), not **what it was** that Mina Crandon exuded from her orifices.

I think we owe the broadening of the term *ectoplasm* to F. W. H. Myers, who used *ectoplasm* in his *Human Personality and its Survival of Bodily Death* (1903) in that way:

> Another and apparently more developed form of prolongation has been observed with Mr. Moses. These are phantom arms and hands, reproducing the arms of the medium, coat-sleeves, shirt-cuffs and all; and extended generally from the shoulder, straight out, and above the true arms. These supplementary or "counterpartal" arms (suspicious objects enough, until observed under good conditions) seem never to have been actually touched, but are swiftly retracted into the medium, or simply vanish, if an attempt is made to grasp them. Nevertheless, the hands in which they terminate do appear to move objects.
>
> Odd and unexpected as these phantasmal arms are, they are instructive in more than one respect. In the first place they supply in a certain way a missing link between mere phantasms and ectoplastic phenomena. We know that as a rule phantasmal appearances exert no objective effect upon the material world; -- and we know also that to this rule there seem to be some few exceptions. It is through these shadowy, yet materially active, prolongations, -- collective hallucinations which yet can affect the solid world, -- that the line of continuity, if such there be, between purely subjective phantasm and firmly materialized hand or body may have to be drawn.
>
> In the second place, these reproduced coat-sleeves stand apparently midway between two phenomena not obviously allied; -- viz., the appearance of dying persons as though draped in their habitual clothing, -- and the greater facility (attested by Mr. Moses' guides) of manufacturing a duplicate of some object already existing on earth, rather than a new and original object of their own devising.

> Perhaps we may link the two by saying that everything which is not a purely earthly phenomenon must be for us mortals to some extent symbolical; and that the simplest form of symbolism depends on mere reminiscence; that this the line of least resistance for the **psychic force or telergic impulse** [MD: emphasis added] leads to the upbuilding of the ectoplastic fabric upon the basis of thoughts and images which are already fashioned and stored in the human spirit…..
>
> In the classes of ectoplasms already enumerated, there has been at least an apparent continuous connection with the body of the sensitive; -- although, in the last mentioned case especially, that connection is of a very shadowy kind.
>
> We now come to ectoplasms without apparent connection with the organism from which we still must suppose them in some way derived. Two incomplete forms of such isolated ectoplasm first present themselves; the one manifesting, so to say, definition without visibility; the other, visibility without definition.
>
> As examples of a certain amount of definition without visibility, I take touches and imprints....
>
> A commoner way in which the detached ectoplasm begins its development is with an appearance of cloud, or light, or luminous mist, surrounding some object which is presently moved, -- the stem of a flower broken, or a bell carried about the room. Such appearances, already mentioned under the heading of vital photogeny, are frequently recorded both with D. D. Home and with Mr. Moses....In describing these imperfectly aggregated ectoplasms we have already touched on the next class, that of quasi-organic detached ectoplasms. These are especially hands, sometimes with wrists or arms attached, but no with no mere shadowy or duplicated drapery, but a drapery which is their own, and for the time being is as tangible as themselves....These ectoplasms, moreover, when developed, may be recognisable; they may serve as indications of identity....Amongst these detached ectoplasms must be reckoned the phenomenon of "the direct voice." Utterances may be referable to an ectoplastic throat as distinctly as grip to ectoplastic fingers; and may form of course an even higher manifestations, -- capable of manifesting more intelligence and giving more convincing indications of identity....Nor is it desirable here to dwell at length upon the most advanced type of ectoplasy; -- when an apparently complete form seems to live for the time an independent life. This never occurred through Mr. Moses. Something like it occurred through D. D. Home several times; though the solidity of the form was not tested. No more, therefore, need here be said than that this complete development of the isolated and independent ectoplasm differs in no fundamental way from the types which we have already discussed.

It was Myers, I think, who takes Richet's idea -- labelled *ectoplasm* -- and develops an entire model and vocabulary of ectoplasticity, making variants of the term (noun, verb, adjective, to describe origin, manifestation and mechanism) stand both for the motive energy and the physical manifestations (and for a complete range of physical manifestations, as is obvious).

Myers, not Richet, made it possible for the term "ectoplasm" to be applied to the stuff that poured from mediums' orifices, as it was just another of the phenomena in Myers' typology (though whether "higher" than full-form manifestations, or not, I don't know).

But Myers -- straddling -- also roots ectoplasm in both an energy, and in a collective hallucinatory experience shared by medium and sitters.

Now, for the other terms: *psychoplasm*, *teleplasm* and *ideoplasm*.

Psychoplasm is the oldest of the four terms we are looking at, I think, and its origin (according to W. T. Stead, anyway) is attributable to James Burns.

In *Borderland* for October of 1895, Stead writes a short piece called "Psychoplasm," quoting Burns at length (though from what, he doesn't say [see below] -- I am sure it's somewhere in *The Medium & Daybreak*):

"PSYCHOPLASM"

ONE of my correspondents in the United States sends me a copy of the *New York Sun* for August 18th, which contains an article on spirit pictures. After describing cases in which spirit photographs have been taken, the writer says:—

The connection between magnetic and spiritualistic phenomena has long been claimed. The photographer, the mediums say, has a guide, philosopher, and friend, a spirit-artist whose part it is to gather from the atmosphere certain rare and fine semi-luminous particles, of which he shapes a mask of the spirit sitter, much as a sculptor models in moist clay. This mask is then held up in such a fashion that the rays of it, invisible to everything but the sensitive plate, can imprint its image upon that surface. At least that is the explanation given to a New York Statesman by certain friends, who inform him that they have spent their mortal years upon the lost continent of Atlantis.

This bears a tolerable close resemblance to what "Julia" said as to making a mould by which these psychic pictures are procured. It is only in the adoption of the old doctrine of psychoplasm which is employed to explain the phenomena of spirit photography. Psychoplasm was explained by the late Mr. Burns in the Medium [& Daybreak?] as follows:—

Nature around us is a condensation into palpable forms of previously aerial and inscrutable forces. Man as an organic being is composed of these things. He holds them in suspension in his nervous system. We are all materialised spirits. The solid food we eat is condensed air. The life within us decomposes it again into gaseous form, rearranges its component elements, and uses the product to maintain the structure of the body, supply it with force, and the mind with means of feeling, thought, and expression. This fluid within man's body is called *psychoplasm,* because it is so highly vitalized that the soul can mould it into organic form.

Burns didn't originate the term; if he was the first traducer, and I can't find a better candidate, Burns borrowed the term from (and this is a surprise) the dedicated anti-Spiritualist and theory of mind pioneer George Henry Lewes, who brought the term into currency in his 1874 work *Problems of Life and Mind*:

PSYCHOSTATICS

6. Let us now pass from Life to Mind. The vital organism we have seen to be evolved from the Bioplasm, and we may now see how the psychical organism is evolved from what may be analogically called the Psychoplasm. The Bioplasm is characterised by a continuous and simultaneous movement of molecular composition and decomposition; and out of these arises the whole mechanism, which is also sustained and differentiated by them. If, instead of considering the whole vital organism, we consider solely its sensitive aspects, and confine ourselves to the Nervous System, we may represent the molecular movements of the Bioplasm by the neural tremors of the Psychoplasm: these tremors are what I term *neural units:* the raw material of Consciousness; the several *neural groups* formed by these units represent the organised elements of tissues, the tissues, and the combination of tissues into organs, and of organs into apparatus. The movements of the Bioplasm constitute Sensibility. The forces of the cosmical medium which are transformed in the physiological medium build up the organic structure, which in the various stages of its evolution reacts according to its statical conditions, themselves the results of preceding reactions. It is the same with what may be called the mental organism. …

A couple of things worth noting about Stead's note: he is **apparently unaware** of Richet's use of the term *ectoplasm* (and Stead is very well read) -- what is current in the scientific literature on psychic phenomena is not, necessarily, current in the popular literature on psychic phenomena, because one of the effects of the professionalization of investigation by the SPR and later organizations is: a separation of what had theretofore been a unitary discourse, into two discourses, one more accessible than the other.

Also, we need to be clear that Burns is using *psychoplasm* to clothe the old-as-the-movement magnetic fluid theory of manifestations.

Teleplasm appears to belong, if to anyone, to von Schrenck Notzing (although he also appears to have traduced his term, this time from pathology) and Morelli uses "teleplasmic" in passing in *The Annals of Psychical Science* in 1908). In his *Phenomena of Materialization* (1914, in Fournier d'Albe's English translation, 1920) VSN uses the term as follows:

> ...we may suppose that soft substances, such as the flowing dress of the medium, curtains hanging near, etc., can be of some advantage, and **may form conductors** [MD: emphasis mine] and reservoirs of power, from which the effects may take their origin, besides giving points of support for the materialized structures. Both for the materials of the furnishings of the cabinet, as well as for the dress of the medium (for which knitted fabrics are preferable), a black colour is to be recommended. For with a black background even the finest, hardly visible materialized fabrics can be seen. Besides, this colour increases the darkness of the cabinet, and thus contributes indirectly to the development of the phenomena. If care is taken that the medium has nothing white about her, the materialization structures, appearing grey or white on a black background, are very convincing. Thus darkness behind these structures appears to be a necessity for the development of the teleplasm. Yet these thoughts, which are the product of uniform observation of various mediums, are not to be a rigid rule, but only a hint. All observations made by the author concerning mediums agree in this, that a white light has a hindering and disturbing effect on the phenomena, and an unfavorable action on the development of the teleplasm.

Elsewhere, von Schrenck Notzing is a little more specific about what he means by *teleplasm*, calling it "the fundamental substance of materialization" and that's consistent with his working model of the origin and energy involved in the production of phenomena, which is the old magnetic fluid/conductive model, like that of Burns and the classical pre-SPR Spiritualist hypothesis more generally.

(It's worth noting that von Schrenck Notzing describes sittings with Eva C. in which sitters convince Eva C. to produce what we might call ectoplasm from the orifices of her naked body; "At the beginning of the sitting Mme. Bisson persuaded the hypnotised medium to open the dressing-gown, and thus had, for the first time, an occasion to observe the emanation of the teleplasm from the bare body of the medium. It seemed to emerge primarily from the bodily orifices, mouth, teats, and genitals, and also from the hands and under the arm-pits. The emanation had a smoke-like or gaseous character, and formed clouds, from which structures, like veils and fabrics, and eventually all kinds of forms, resembling human limbs, developed.")

Von Schrenck Notzing does not use either *ectoplasm* or *psychoplasm* but does use *ideoplasm* to refer to produced objects "closely connected with the psychic life of the medium, with her storage of memories, and with the intensity of dominant ideas."

Ideoplasm seems to have been used, first, by Ochorowicz, in an article entitled "A New Mediumistic Phenomenon", in *The Annals of Psychical Science* for 1909. He writes:

> It is possible to create, between the medium's hands, a sort of thread, possessing for some minutes a certain consistency, which diminishes and disappears with the putting

> apart of the hands. The formation of the mediumistic thread is accompanied by a sensation of chill. This thread, created by the unconscious imagination of the medium, seems to present a case of objective material ideoplasm: the strong desire to raise a small object at a distance, brings by association the idea of a thread which would do this.

Doyle, who preferred the term *psychoplasm* I think, credited Geley with the coinage of *ideoplasm*, and Geley does use and define the term ("Ideoplastic=moulded by an idea") in his *From the Unconscious to the Conscious* (1918, 1920), wherein he also distinguishes it from *teleplasm*: "That word is 'ideoplasticity,' to which has been added 'teleplasticity' to describe the same phenomenon when occurring at a distance from the decentralized or dematerialised organism". And Geley makes ideoplasticity a force that arises "from the depths of a mysterious and impenetrable unconciousness," as well as the basis not only for psychic phenomena like materialization, but related phenomena like mental healing, and even mimetic phenomena in nature (chameleons unconsciously want to be green, or red, or mottled, and so they are). When Geley uses the word "ectoplasm" which he rarely does, he means only "a thing formed: the exteriorised substance" **which may in fact be the origin of our contemporary use of the term**.

The term "ideoplasm" doesn't show up very often in the literature; but the term "ideoplastic" occurs about an order of magnitude more often in my databases than does "ideoplasm" "Ideoplastic" means just about what Myers meant by "ectoplastic," as this snippet from Hamlin Garland's *The Shadow World* (1908) demonstrates:

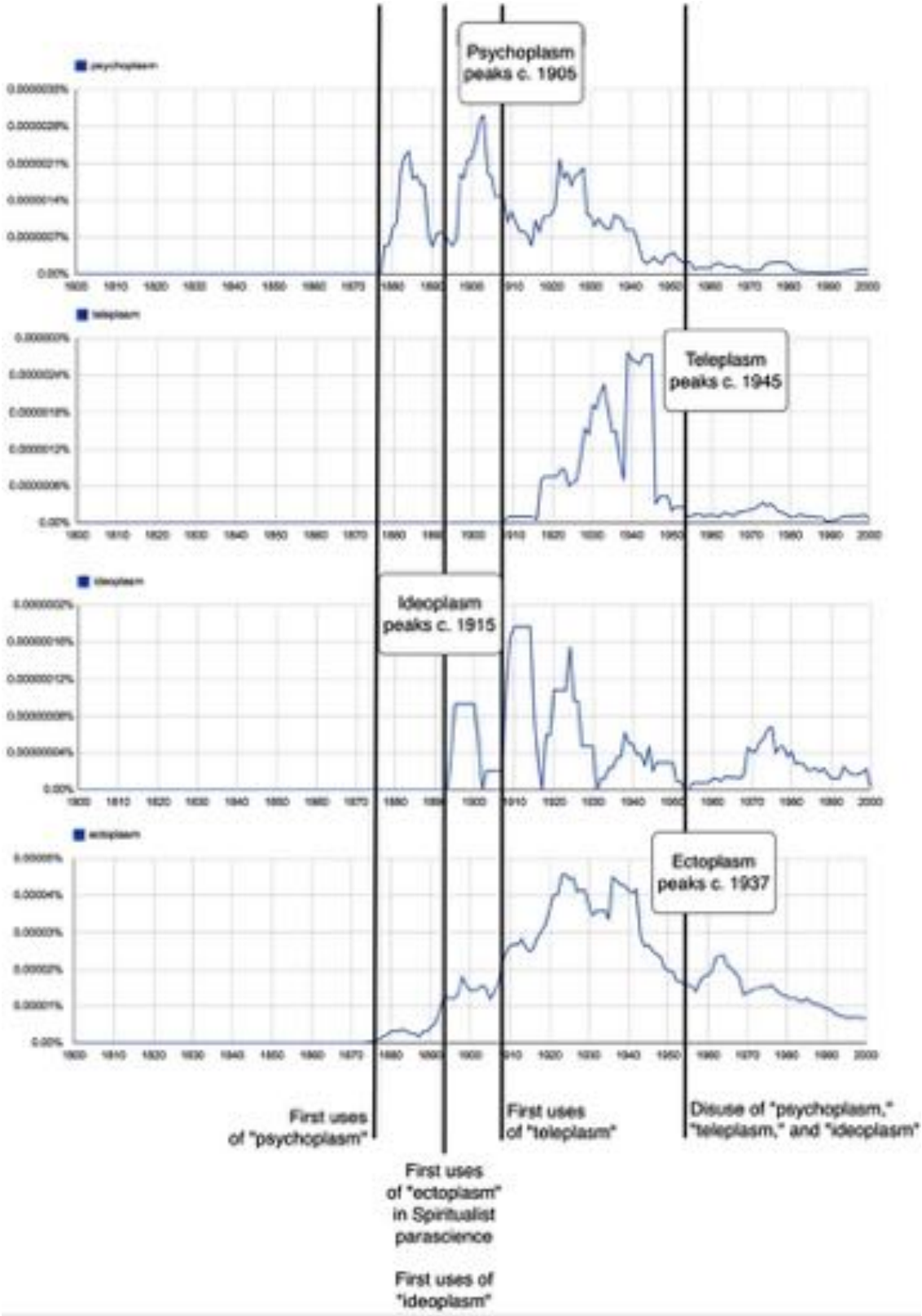
> "The question with me is not, Do these forms exist? but, What produces them? I am describing this sitting to explain what I mean by the ideoplastic or teleplastic theory. If, for example, this psychic had known me well enough to have had a very definite picture of "E. A.," he might have been able to model from the mind-stuff that he or the circle had thrown off, a luminous image of my friend, and aided by my subconscious self, might have united the presence and the musical thought of Ernest Alexander."
>
> "It won't do!" exclaimed Miller. "It's all too destructive, too preposterous!"
>
> "I insist that the spirit hypothesis is simpler," repeated Fowler.
>
> "It isn't a question of simplicity," I retorted. "It's a question of fact. If the observations of scientific experimentalists are of any value, the teleplastic theory is on the point of winning acceptance."

Which brings us full circle, I think. Holms saw the four terms as interchangeable, from his amateur's seat, and focused on a description of the "mysterious substance" that was related to mediumistic power.

Although Richet may have first used the term *ectoplasm* to refer to some aspect (energy source, mechanisms or products) of psychic manifestation, it was a term he borrowed from cell biology and microscopy; his borrowing was known and documented early on, and at least some scientific researchers in the field eschewed the term because of the borrowing, in favor of von Schrenck Notzing' *teleplasm*, which described **objective physical phenomena**, and not source of energy or mechanism of production. F. W. H. Myers is really to be credited, either for elaborating the term *ectoplasm* or obscuring it, depending on your perspective, in *Human Personality*, but despite Myer's elaborate superstructure, and comingling of source, mechanism and effects, the term *ectoplasm* competed for years with *teleplasm* and to a lesser extent *ideoplasm*, none of which were used very precisely by anyone, including the best scientific minds working on the problem at any given time.

But none of this really matters, because in late 1919, the term **ectoplasm**, regardless of its history as a term of art in scientific investigations of Spiritualism, becomes (thanks largely to Conan Doyle's proselytizing) a part of the vocabulary of the secular culture, identifying the

materiel coming out of mediums' orifices, forming physical objects, and moving things in the séance room.

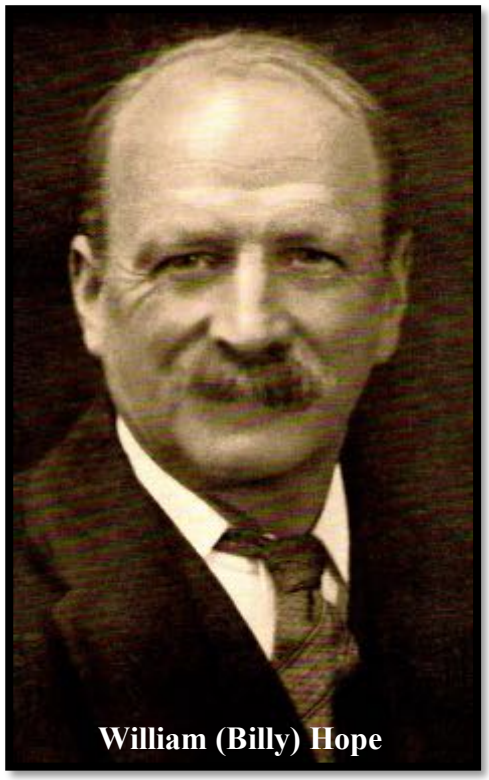


PSYCHIC PHOTOGRAPHY

WILLIAM HOPE, FRAUD OR GENUINE!

Psychic photography, throughout its history within the Spiritualist movement, has been the most controversial of phenomena since the early days of its inception in 1862 with William Mumler in America and, ten years later, with Frederick Hudson with its introduction in England. It has been strongly debated from its beginnings within the Spiritualist movement, with early court cases, splitting the Spiritualist community for and against it being genuine, and supporters continually changing their testimonies with much contradiction.

There have been many allegations of fraud of double exposures (double rebate), screen markings (small dots which appear on pictures printed in newspapers), substitution of photographic plates, spirit extras showing a texture of a woven fabric, and images which bore evidence of having been cut out from paper and tucked into the veiling. The subject of this article is the claims of fraud against William (Billy) Hope, which included all the above deceptions and more, for example his psychographs (handwriting—copperplate scripts—on plates exposed in the camera) were in the handwriting of Billy Hope, which contain many mistakes in grammar and spelling, and some handwritten letters of Hope where the same errors could be found.


William (Billy) Hope

The very nature of these earlier physical phenomena like psychography, e.g., slate writing, direct writing, art, etc., involved mediums 'magnetising' the tools of their trade: slates, cards, photographic plates, etc. This meant, of course, being in contact with the items, in Hope's case with the *sealed, unopened photographic plates* to generate the necessary required fluids as the basis of the phenomena. Part of the allegations against Hope was whether or not he touched or had contact with the plates before and during the proceedings and mainly in the developing process.

We have read many times with the testing of mediums comments such as fraud obtained under conditions rendering trickery *impossible*, only to find at a later time that some were in fact exposed as fraudulent mediums. I believe the evidence in some cases needs to be researched within the results of the séance, for example in psychic photography. The required proof is a recognisable *spirit extra*, where there is no known photograph or painting of the spirit extra—but fully recognised by the sitter.

Mrs Buxton

William (Billy) Hope (1863-1933) was a Lancashire man, a carpenter by trade and a member of the Salvation Army. Hope, it is said, discovered his psychic potential by chance at the age of 42 when he and his friend photographed each other one Saturday afternoon: the

plate that Hope exposed showed an extra figure, a transparent woman, where one could see the brick was visible behind her—the sister of Hope's friend.

This resulted in Billy Hope becoming a psychic photographer in around 1905 with the help of Mr Buxton, the organist at the Spiritualist hall at Crewe. A circle was formed; this group would become known as the "Crewe Circle", with William Hope as its leader, although later he would move to London. When Archdeacon Thomas Colley joined the circle, their work became public. It is said that Hope took more than 2,500 photographs; he charged 4/6d for a dozen prints, which was calculated on what he would have earned as a carpenter.

Hope was aided by Mrs Buxton; though his earlier efforts were obtained independently, he found that his work greatly improved in her presence and thus Buxton became an integral part of the "Crewe Circle" and Hope's later work.

It was the Venerable Archdeacon who helped develop the upcoming spirit photographer William Hope. Colley reorganised the Crewe circle, named after the Cheshire town where the medium lived, as did Mrs Buxton. Colley gave Hope his first stand camera; however, we note in "Gale Encyclopedia of Occultism & Parapsychology: William Hope":

> "The first controversy about Hope and his psychic photographs arose in 1908 in connection with Colley's first sitting. He recognized his mother in the psychic "extra." Hope thought it was more like a picture he had copied two years earlier. A Mrs. Spencer, of Nantwich, recognized her grandmother in the image. Hope informed Colley of his mistake. Colley said it was madness to think that a man did not know his own mother and advertised in the Leamington paper asking all who remembered his mother to meet him at the rectory. Eighteen persons selected the photograph from a group of several others and testified in writing that the picture was a portrait of the late Mrs. Colley, who has never been photographed." [1]

Hope further came into the spotlight when it was claimed he was found to be a fraud by a committee appointed to examine the images by the Daily Mail in 1909; this was followed in May 1922 by the Society for Psychical Research publishing Harry Price's accusation of plate substitution by William Hope in "A Case of Fraud with the Crewe Circle". As a result, on December 14th, 1922, Hutchinson & Co published "The Case for Spirit Photography", by Arthur Conan Doyle, M.D.; the book was chiefly written to defend Hope from accusations of fraud by Harry Price. [2]

In 1918, the "Society for the Study of Supernormal Pictures" (SSSP) was formed, with Dr Abraham Wallace as its president and Fred Barlow as its secretary; it continued its work of examination and testing until it was dissolved in 1923. The Society consisted largely of professional photographers. It reported at its May meeting in 1920:

> "The members here present desire to place on record the fact that after many tests and the examination of thousands of pictures, they are unanimously of opinion that results have been obtained supernormally on sensitive photographic plates under reliable test conditions. At present the members do not undertake to explain how the results have been obtained, but they assert that they have undoubtedly been secured under conditions excluding the possibility of fraud."

The SSSP secretary, Fred Barlow, wrote the preface to Doyle's "The Case for Spirit Photography" in full support of psychic photography and the mediums of the Crewe Circle. However, Barlow's support and conviction was about to drastically change in a scathing report,

---

[1] This was more fully explained in the Two Worlds, July 17th, 1914, and published in Psypioneer, Vol. 8, No.12: "The Open Court".

[2] See Pioneer, Vol. 4, No. 5: " "The Case for Spirit Photography" – Arthur Conan Doyle" and "The Case for Spirit Photography" now republished".

"Report of an Investigation into Spirit Photography", published in the Proceedings of the Society for Psychical Research, Vol. XLI, 1932-1933: he states, "To-day the position is altered. Instead of defending spirit-photography I have cause to criticise it very adversely…" The long, illustrated 26-page report is authored by Barlow and Major W. Rampling-Rose; this is available for a free download and makes interesting reading. This directly brings the reader to the articles published below by "Light" on Friday, May 19th, 1933 in response to the claims of fraud against William Hope made by Fred Barlow and Major W. Rampling-Rose; the reports are extremely absorbing and give much information on this phase of mediumship:

PSYCHIC PHOTOGRAPHY DEBATED

MAJOR W. R. ROSE AND MR. FRED BARLOW STATE THEIR CASE AGAINST WILLIAM HOPE'S WORK

A DISCUSSION on Psychic Photography, with special reference to the mediumship of the late William Hope, of Crewe, attracted a large audience to the Queen's Gate Hall, South Kensington, on Thursday evening last week (May 11).

The discussion was arranged by the London Spiritualist Alliance, and the chair was occupied by Dr. Fielding-Ould, President of the Alliance. The speakers were: Major W. Rampling Rose and Mr. Fred Barlow, who presented the case against Mr. Hope's mediumship; and Mrs. Hewat McKenzie, Mr. Stanley De Brath, Major C. H. Mowbray, Commander J. R. Grisman, R.N., Mr. Graham Moffat and Mr. J. B. M'Indoe (President of the Spiritualists' National Union). A large number of lantern slides were shown—some to demonstrate the alleged "fake" methods of production and some to demonstrate the evidential nature of the "extras."

The discussion was characterised by good humour on both sides. Only on two occasions was there any indication of strong feeling, and these were at the end, when Mr. Barlow was replying to questions. The first was when Mr. Barlow asked why Hope always insisted on going into the dark room, and answered by saying: "Because his presence there was necessary to carry through the trick." To this there were loud cries of "No, no." The other occasion was when Mr. H. J. Osborn, in putting a question, said the only alternative to accepting certain evidence of genuineness was to say that those giving the evidence were "liars." To this Mr. Barlow objected warmly. "We differ in opinion," he said, "but we do not call each other liars."

Dr. Fielding-Ould, opening the proceedings, said they had met to discuss one of the most controversial questions in Psychical Research. It was very difficult, he said, for many of them to come to any definite conclusion on the subject of Psychic Photography, because witnesses gave such contradictory evidence, and sometimes a witness turned round and contradicted himself. In that discussion, they would try to clear the air a little and on some future occasion the L.S.A, might arrange another meeting at which they might get closer to the facts.

MAJOR W. R. ROSE'S CRITICISMS

Major W. RAMPLING ROSE, who opened the discussion, said he had ten minutes in which to explain his reasons for believing that all the results he obtained during the dozen or more sittings he had at Crewe, with the late William Hope, were fraudulent. His reasons were based chiefly on the appearance of the veiled-figure photographs, some of which were shown on the screen. In regard to the first—which was produced on one of Hope's own plates—he pointed out that (1) the face of the "extra" showed screen markings (small dots which appear on pictures printed in newspapers); (2) the veil showed the texture of a woven fabric; 3) the plate had a double rebate; and (4) the bottom left-hand corner was uneven. The face in the "extra" he said, bore evidence of having been cut out from paper and tucked into the veiling. Other photographs were analysed.

"My case," he said, "rests upon the evidence contained in the pictures themselves. You may not agree with my interpretation of that evidence, but I venture to think you will have some difficulty in finding a reasonable supernormal explanation that will cover even the few facts I have placed before you." It had been said that certain of Hope's results were obtained under strict test conditions—that is, conditions which leave no loop-hole whatever for fraud. But could any of them devise such conditions. He very much doubted if he (Major Rose) could. It had been stated that 200 ways of providing "extras" in a normal way were known; he believed he could add to that number and they did not know them all by any means.

"Remember, please," he said in conclusion, "that I am not attacking your conclusions regarding your own results. I am defending myself against attacks on mine, and give what I consider overwhelming proof for my conclusions. I am not unsympathetic to your cause in general. I know that there is so much that happens quite contrary to ordinary science, and your hypotheses explain those events to me better than any others. You have so much that is true that I venture most respectfully to suggest that you can afford to throw overboard that which is false or doubtful."

MR. FRED BARLOW'S CHALLENGE

Mr. Fred Barlow said: First of all, please understand that we are not out to take away Hope's reputation or that of any Medium. The subject of our discussion is Spirit Photography and the personality of the Medium is a secondary feature.

Let me very briefly recapitulate the events that led to my changed views. In the middle of 1925 I proved that the spirit photographer Moss was a fraud. About this time, a friend in whom I had every confidence, told me that he had discovered in Hope's possession, material for faking spirit photographs. That was the starting point.

I knew a lot about Hope, so did not immediately make up my mind in regard to his guilt or otherwise. I thought the best course was to continue experiments until I was able to say quite definitely that he was either genuine or that he was a fraud—or perhaps a bit of both. I am *now* absolutely convinced that I never secured with Hope a single genuine result. Major Rose has given similar definite views on the matter from the point of view of an experienced technical photographer.

With most people the case for the genuineness of spirit photography would appear to rest on the question of recognised extras—they are not concerned so much about the conditions as about the results. I maintain that such cases have not one scrap of *scientific* value and cannot be accepted as evidence.

If there is no scientific value in the results, where shall we look for proof ? The answer is, in the conditions under which those results were secured. If these were such that the extra could *not* be faked, either accidently or intentionally, then obviously it must be genuine. If, under similar conditions one *could* produce a similar result by normal means (however impossible this might appear to the untrained observer), it is equally obvious there must be *some doubt* about it. Time and time again we have been told that results have been obtained under conditions rendering trickery *impossible*. No one could have been more dogmatic than myself about this, in my earlier days. And yet, I have to confess that every extra I have ever got *could* be produced by normal means under identical conditions (and there are hundreds of them).

In most of these experiments Hope stipulated that he should carry the loaded slide in his left hand trouser pocket. At some time or other during the proceedings he had contact with the plate. This, he assured me, was essential and he could not get results without it,

as “the power worked through his hands”—these are his own words. When contact with the plate was prevented, no extra was forthcoming.

My experience in this respect is no different from that of other investigators who have made full detailed reports of what exactly has transpired. Included in the details of a report I have here, on what Major Spencer considered a very stringent test, are the same significant features. In the official tests conducted by the British Photographic Research Association which convinced them that Hope was a fraud, similar incidents took place. In a test after something suspicious had occurred, Hope was challenged to allow himself to be searched. The request was reasonably made and was backed up by Miss Stead but Hope refused. Why?

I have said elsewhere that Hope’s psychographs in themselves provide evidence more than sufficient to obtain a verdict against him in a court of law. The copperplate scripts are in the handwriting of Billy Hope. They contain many mistakes in grammar and spelling and I have numerous letters from Hope in which the same errors are to be found.

Similar remarks apply to the psychographs in foreign languages. Listen to this description. “The French is absolutely terrible, irrelevant and often incoherent. Why do the operators on the ‘other side’ allow ignorant and pretentious spirits to send such idiotic messages through ?” ‘These remarks are by Mr. C. H. Hans Hamilton, who has resided for many years in France, and who recently sent a long article to LIGHT in defence of Hope.

Exactly the same can be said of the Latin. Dictionary phrases are used with no idea whatever of their sense and they are often quite unintelligible. Where any departure is made from stock phrases, the result is a fearful mess.

There is another type of so-called psychograph produced in facsimile handwriting. These have deceived the very elect, and yet a microscopical examination definitely shows that they could *all* have been produced by the scissors and paste method.

I have some fresh evidence to submit to you. On one or two occasions Hope asked me to obtain for him a chemical known as calcium sulphide. A month or so ago, on going through some of his old correspondence, I was surprised to discover a letter from his private address at Oakley Street, Crewe. Almost without exception Hope’s letters were addressed from 144, Market Street, Crewe, the home of Mrs. Buxton, This particular letter among other things contained the following request:—

“Will you paint me a card with that luminous paint. Give it a coat or two and let me have it this week if you can, or tell me where I can get it for I cannot get it in Crewe. We are due at the College next week. Let me have the card early and I will do as much for you some day. Write me to my own address which is 50, Oakley Street, Crewe.” (I have this letter with me here).

In my enlightened frame of mind, I immediately realised that he wanted this sent to Oakley Street so that Mrs. Buxton would know nothing of it and that he probably wanted it to prepare a stock of extras for his visit to London I immediately tried this luminous paint and was amazed at the results. I do not for a moment suggest that Hope used it for *all* his fakes—he had doubtless many methods—but an examination shows that he *could* have used it for numerous effects. All one has to do is to paint a little of this on a small positive—or place the positive in front of a card that has been painted—press it in contact with the surface of the plate for two or three seconds and it gives a perfect image. It is economical, simple and safe and the irony of it all is that I provided Hope myself with sufficient of this stuff to fake thousands of extras. Let me show you the results this material produces. (*Here several lantern slides were shown.*)

Concerning a test of his own with Hope with a sealed packet Sir Oliver Lodge said in LIGHT: "I have not the slightest doubt that the envelope including the plates had been opened." On another occasion he wrote: "I do not see how your proof of Hope's duplicity could be more complete." Surely statements like this concerning Hope from a Spiritualist [3] and scientist of the standing of Sir Oliver Lodge should carry *some* weight.

Mrs. McKenzie had a great deal of experience with the Crewe Circle. May I ask her now:—Do you sincerely believe Hope *never* tricked ?

BARLOW AMONGST WITNESSES CITED BY MR. S. DE BRATH

THE case in favour of the genuineness of Psychic Photography and of the Mediumship of William Hope, at the L.S.A. discussion, was opened by Mr. STANLEY DE BRATH who said:—

An old fable recounts how the fox told the cat of the hundred tricks he could use for escaping the hounds. The cat modestly replied: "I have but one trick—to run up a tree—but it always succeeds." Well, every Psychical Researcher who has touched supernormal Photography similarly has the one trick which always succeeds: he does not allow the Medium to touch the plates. I shall adduce evidence to show that this test has been applied. If Mr. Barlow can show that a Medium has the power of influencing the plate which he cannot touch, I for one shall follow his scepticism, though I shall still consider the result supernormal. I will now adduce my testimony.

My first witness will be Mr. Barlow himself.

In Budget 67 (Society for the Study of Supernormal Pictures) of May 17th, 1921, there is a very fully detailed account of a test experiment (pp. 9 and 10) by fifteen members of the Society, signed by them all, which certifies (underlined) that "*Mr. Hope did not touch the plate till fixation was complete*." The account shows that the observation of Hope was very close. It is signed by Dr. Abraham Wallace, Colonel Baddeley, R.E., Mrs. McKenzie, Major R. E. E. Spencer and Mr. Barlow himself, with ten other reputable witnesses. It is testimony to the fact, which no change of opinion can alter. The S.S.S.P. was a Society for the *critical* examination of supernormal photographs.

My next witness is Mr. Colledge, an experienced and sceptical professional photographer whose services were engaged by Lady Glenconner to test the Crewe circle. He brought his own stereoscopic camera, plates, and apparatus to Lady Glenconner's house at Glen, conducted the experiments himself, developing the plates himself, and certifies, in a very long and fully detailed report, that Mr. Hope and Mrs. Buxton merely raised the cloth before the lens of the camera to make the exposure. Lady Glenconner desired a portrait of her son who was killed during the war. You will see [*said Mr. De Brath, refereeing to lantern slides shown to the audience*] that the first photograph is of quite another person, and that it is different on either side of the stereoscopic plate. The later photographs are of Lieut. Tennant, fully recognised by his mother.

My next witness is Dr. Geley. He came with me to test Mr Hope at Crewe in November, 1919. We bought two packets of plates in London—one panchromatic and one ordinary rapid. Once the packets were opened, every precaution was used that the Medium should not touch the plates. The panchromatic plates were first used. We

[3] Sir Oliver Lodge was quite clear in numerous interviews that he was *not* a Spiritualist, for example see Pioneer, Vol. 4, No. 1: "I can't answer for Spiritualism," Sir Oliver replied. "I don't much like the word myself, except as a term in Philosophy. In so far as Spiritualists constitute a sect, and hold religious services, I don't belong to it and have no sort of connection with it; though doubtless it attracts many good people."

examined the camera and lens closely. Two exposures were made. The first gave a cloud covering the whole plate; the next gave a smaller cloud covering both our faces. The third, with ordinary plates, gave (1) a message "*Bonjour vous étes le bienvenu*," across the sitters; and (2) the portrait of a lady who in a previous automatic writing had promised me her photograph "if possible." I am quite certain that Mr. Hope had never seen this lady nor any portrait of her.

In July, 1924 (after Dr. Geley's lamented death in an aeroplane crash) all arrangements made in view of his projected visit to England were cancelled. But an automatic message was received by me at Exmouth through Miss Harvey at Hulham House, to carry out the experiment as if Dr. Geley were present. I did so, with Hope and with Mrs. McKenzie and Miss Scatcherd, on plates double-sealed by the Imperial Dry Plate Company. We kept the slide in sight till it was put into the camera and kept our eyes upon it there. I loaded the slide and developed the plates. On one of them was an attempt at a portrait and on the other a good portrait of Dr. Geley. Both my witnesses certify that the Medium did not touch the plates.

In September, 1924, Mr. Hope took for me another portrait on 5 in. by 4 in., in my own camera which I had brought to the College and deposited in a corner of the room. Mr. Hope asked me what it was. I said: "It is my own camera but I knew you would not use it." He replied, "Oh yes, I will." I loaded the slide alone in the dark room, placed the slide in the camera, took it out and developed the plates myself. Mr. Hope never even approached the slide, and merely raised the cloth from the lens.

In the same month, I prevailed on Sir William Barrett, F.R.S., to meet Hope at the College, and he kept Hope in conversation while I loaded the slides and developed the plates. Hope did not enter the dark room at all. The result was a portrait of Letty Hyde, who died November 1st, 1921. She was a parlour-maid in my house, and her portrait was recognised by her father, mother and three brothers and sisters who were not Spiritualists and were told nothing of the supernormal origin of the photograph. Sir William Barrett has told the S.P.R. (see Proc. xxxiv., for December, 1924) that this experiment convinced him of the fact. He says: "With regard to the so-called 'spirit photographs,' I have been extremely sceptical of their genuineness until quite lately. Recently, however, experiments conducted by my friend Mr. De Brath—in one of which he kindly allowed me to take part—appear to afford *indubitable* evidence of supernormal photography. This conclusion confirms the opinion held by some expert and critical experimenters who have discussed their results with me." Sir William added: "We shall never arrive at any knowledge of the conditions requisite for these and other marvellous psychic phenomena until hostile incredulity becomes no longer possible."

I have now adduced six simple cases of photographs on untouched plates. I invite Mr. Barlow to explain these, and to show why *his own testimony* to the *fact* should be set aside in favour of his later *inferences*. If Mr. Barlow can show any normal means by which the results could have been produced, I shall be very heartily grateful, but no merely inferential evidence will affect my agreement with Sir William Barrett that they are "indubitable."

COMMANDER GRISMAN'S PSYCHOGRAPH

Commander GRISMAN said that he would not claim to be an expert, but he had had test sittings with Mr. Hope and so far as he was concerned the facts brought forward by Major Rampling Rose and Mr. Barlow would not explain the evidence he had acquired. He took a friend to Mr. Hope, a man who had travelled in many distant parts of the globe who had lost his wife. "Extras" were obtained which were recognised by his relations and were not like any existing photograph. At another time this friend was told at a sitting with a Medium to have a photograph taken by Mr. Hope on the anniversary of his wedding

and his wife would give him a wreath of flowers. The "extra" showed a wreath of roses round him. He (Commander Grisman) had tried psychographs himself and had obtained writing on a plate—not very good nor very clear, but still definite enough to enable him to read a certain amount of it. This plate was not exposed in a camera but just carried about and developed. The fact that he was able to obtain these markings himself helped to convince him that Mr. Hope's work was genuine.

MRS. MCKENZIE ON Wm. HOPE'S MEDIUMSHIP

CONFIRMATORY EVIDENCE OUTSIDE THE ACTUAL RESULTS

Mrs. HEWAT McKENZIE took an important part in the L.S.A. Discussion on Psychic Photography. She began by referring to the work done by Mr. Barlow as honorary secretary of the Society for the Study of Supernormal Pictures and his close association with Sir Arthur Conan Doyle in the production of the brochure, *The Case for Spirit Photography*. The occasion of that publication, she recalled, was the attack on Mr. Hope in the Price-Hope case, in which it was clearly proved that Mr. Hope was not the deceiver. On this point also, Mr. Barlow had reversed his judgment and withheld important evidence adduced at the time.

Answering a statement by Mr. Barlow that, in every single instance of recognised likenesses he had investigated, the "extra" was "an exact copy of some existing photograph or painting," Mrs. McKenzie quoted a number of authenticated cases in which recognisable likenesses had been obtained, when no photograph or painting existed from which they could have been copied.

Continuing, Mrs. McKENZIE said: Mrs. Sturrock, of Hale, Cheshire (who with her husband made many experiments with the crew Circle, both at Crew and in her own home), sends me particulars of psychographs (that is, writing on plates exposed in the camera) and skotographs (Miss Scatcherd's name for results obtained on plates without camera exposure), The account indicates that Mr. and Mrs. Sturrock were very keen on satisfying themselves that there was no human interference with these results. The procedure was as follows:

An unopened and marked packet of plates was held against Mrs. Buxton's forehead. A request was made that one particular plate in the packet should be affected. The packet was taken by Mrs. Sturrock to the dark room, opened by her, the particular plate selected, numbered, initialled and developed by her, while Hope stood by without touching it, and on several occasions a message was secured on the selected plate. One such was an answer to a mental request, made at the moment of holding the packet to Mrs. Buxton's forehead, and was an appropriate answer, confirmed by events a month later. Mrs. Sturrock says that these messages were in her father's handwriting, which I have compared with the "extras" and found very good. He was not a Spiritualist and had never communicated in any way with Mr. Hope. There was no question here of packets being left in Hope's possession and of being plunged in a bucket of water to destroy markings, as Mr. Barlow has suggested to account for similar results.

Before a plate in a sealed packet could receive an image, as in these "skotographs," some kind of light or ray must have reached that particular one. That certain Mediums can project luminous emanations is held by Professor Fukurai, of Japan, in his study of experiments with Japanese Mediums, in his book on *Clairvoyance and Thoughtography*. He speaks of several who, by holding sealed and elaborately marked packets of plates and being asked to concentrate on producing a Japanese character on the middle one of three plates, successfully accomplished this. That particular plate, when developed, was invariably nearly black, while the other two showed no such effect. This occurred so often under the most careful conditions that Fukurai considered that psychic emanations from

the Medium were clearly proved. Sometimes the Mediums only concentrated in thought on the plate and did not even hold the package.

Major Rampling Rose, in his contribution to Mr. Barlow's S.P.R. lecture, suggests that all plates which showed "extras" come up much darker on development than they ought to have been, suggesting "double" exposure or fake. Professor Fukurai's results are a reply to this. Fukurai found, also, that more than the letter asked for appeared on the plate. Once a background of grained wood appeared—it was traced to something the Medium had been interested in on the previous day, and had nothing to do with the particular concentration of the moment. This result might meet Mr. Barlow's claim that familiar articles often appeared in the background with "extras" which indicated double exposure and fake. We have many instances of such in Mr. Hope's mediumship.

So, neither the darker appearances of the plates with "extras" when developed, nor extraneous appearances on the background, can be held in *themselves* to prove fraud or substitution. If luminous psychic emanations can produce an image on a particular plate in a sealed packet, they may also be part of the process in affecting plates exposed in the camera—either before, or during exposure, and may even be power enough to make a slight material adjustment of the plate in the slide, sufficient to cause the double margin effect so often noticed, with great suspicion, on plates on which "extras" appear. Photographic Mediums are also physical Mediums and there would be nothing unusual in such an occurrence. The Rev. Charles Tweeddale in *The Vindication of William Hope*, takes up this point vigorously.

A College member, Miss Eissner, who has had many experiments with the Crewe circle at Crewe and in her own home, has had very remarkable experiences. In some cases a series of plates were exposed one after another at the same sitting. The "extra" on each varies. Mr. Hope must have been very busy with his flashlight or substitution to produce these results !

"In the examples I have given," said Mrs McKenzie in concluding, "my object has been to produce confirmatory evidence outside the actual result itself to support the claim as to the reality of supernormal images, and that these are in many instances what they claim to be; the result of intelligent operators on the spirit side.

"EXTRAS" ON A FILM

Mr. GRAHAM MOFFAT, who was a professional photographer for sixteen years, told how he obtained an "extra" of Sarah Bernhardt on his first visit to Crewe. In order to satisfy some sceptical friends in Glasgow, the Moffat family went back to Crewe taking their own cameras, their own back cloth, dishes and developer. Mr. Hope agreed to try with Mr. Moffat's film camera. Two films, making twelve exposures in all, were taken without any "extras" being obtained. Although the light was fading Mr. Hope was eager to try again. Mr. Moffat went, for the second time, and bought another film. He suggested to Mr. Hope that the wrappings of black and red paper round the film had something to do with the want of success. After taking the pictures, Mrs. Moffat, at Mr. Hope's request, went into the dark room with Mrs. Buxton and himself. She stripped the film of its wrappings and passed it across Mrs. Buxton's brow. Mrs. Buxton came out of the dark room as Mr. Moffat went in, and the film was handed to him by Mrs. Moffat. She then left the dark room. Mr. Hope prepared the developer and Mr. Moffat developed the film in his own large dish. The Medium never handled the film except that he gripped one end of it during the course of development. There were extra faces on three pictures, and ectoplasmic clouds on several—only two were completely blank.

Mr. Moffat showed one of the film pictures on the screen, the only one with a definitely recognised "extra"—this being the face of a young girl named Agnes who passed over

many years ago. The identity was confirmed through the mediumship of Mrs. Mason. Mr. Moffat drew attention to the wonderful way in which the shadows in his knickerbockers were utilized to make the shadows in the hair of the extra.

"It might be possible," said Mr. Moffat, "to obtain extras on a plate by using a transparency and a palmed flashlight —though I would like to see it done before I would be convinced—but I doubt if any conjure could manipulate three transparencies and expose them in quick succession on a wobbling film without being detected in the act. I am convinced that psychic photography is a genuine reality."

MAJOR C. H. MOWBRAY'S "EXTRAS"

Major C. H. Mowbray said that he understood Mr. Barlow had said at the S.P.R. that if we had one clear case absolutely proved, it proved our case. This kind of case, he claimed, he had in abundance. He gave some striking personal experiences, one of Penanne, a little girl of about twelve, who used to stay at his home. She died and came through to Major Mowbray at one of his sittings, asking him to send a message to her mother. When she had given sufficient evidence to satisfy Major Mowbray and her mother, he made arrangements for a photographic sitting with Mr. Hope, taking every precaution against the possibility of fraud, Mr. Hope also having no knowledge of the lady sitter. The result was an unmistakable likeness of the child Penanne, and this was shown on the screen.

Another startling "extra" obtained was a photograph of his wife's grandfather which, at first, he could not place. At a further sitting details were given, which neither he nor his wife knew at the time, of a miniature of this grandfather. This Major Mowbray produced. He had shown this and the photograph to an anthropologist in Cambridge who examined both the miniature and the "extra'' critically, coming to the conclusion that it was one and the same person. There were some strikingly evidential features about this case in the form of confirmatory messages, as for instance the statement that there was a portrait of the grandfather wearing a scarlet coat (he was a soldier) of which Major Mowbray was unaware, but which he afterwards verified. These instances, Major Mowbray submitted, provided the "clear case" required by Mr. Barlow.

"SOMETHING TO THINK ABOUT"

Mr. J. B. M'INDOE dealt with the problem of "screen-markings" raised by Major Rampling Rose. A lantern slide was shown of an "extra" which had been obtained in Glasgow with a Glasgow Medium. This, it was claimed, showed a recognisable picture of the late Peter Galloway, for many years President of the Glasgow Association of Spiritualists, and it bore clear "screen-markings" When it was obtained, Mr. McCully, of the Glasgow Association, remarked on the markings and said someone would be accused of "faking," although he knew there had been no "faking." Later, at a sitting, Mr. Galloway "came through" and said it was his picture and he "had given McCully something to think about." The explanation, Mr. M'Indoe went on, was that, when the Crewe Circle first came to Glasgow, Mr. McCully was one of a Committee of experts who had test sittings with them, making their own conditions and obtaining a number of "extras." Amongst these "extras" was one on which there were "screen-markings," and Mr. McCully drew attention to it with the result that the Committee refused to certify that they were satisfied that supernormal results had been obtained. Mr. Galloway never forgot that and, from the "other side," recalled it to Mr. McCully by means of the portrait of himself. Mr. M'Indoe's point was that the presence of "screen-markings" did not necessarily imply fraud, as Major Rose seemed to assert.

Dr. D. DINGWALL asked if a full statement could be made in regard to the occasion, mentioned by Mr. Barlow, when material for "faking" had been found in Hope's possession.

Mr. BARLOW said he was not at liberty to make a complete statement but said that Mrs. McKenzie might be able to.

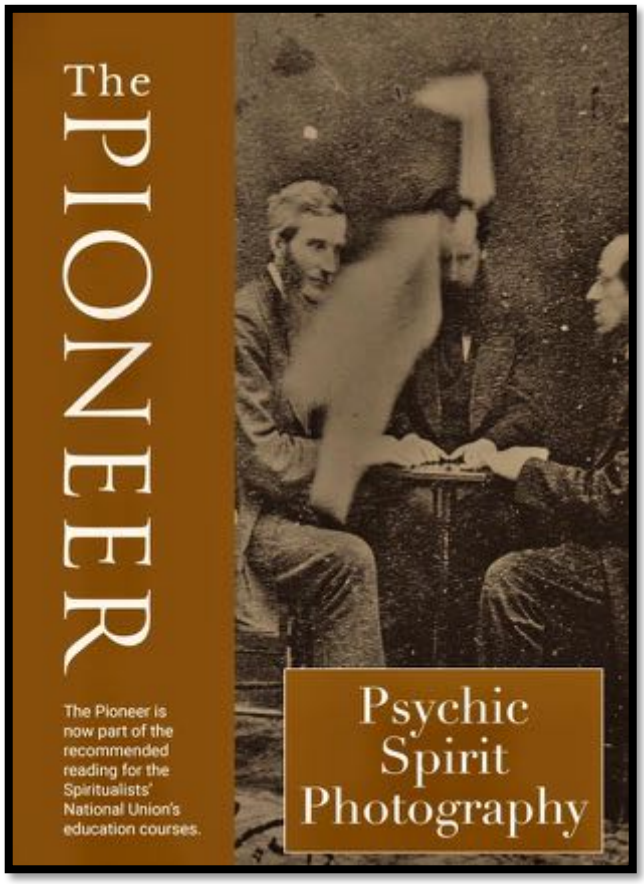
Mrs. McKENZIE, however, said the statement was Mr. BARLOW'S, and she had nothing to say regarding it.

—~—☼—~—

Editor's Note:

Regarding the request by Dr. Dingwall "…the occasion, mentioned by Mr. Barlow, when material for "faking" had been found in Hope's possession," this is briefly addressed by Mrs McKenzie in the following concluding article.

The above discussion gives the reader much food for thought on the curious phase of psychic or spirit extras soon after the death of Billy Hope on March 8th 1933, after undergoing an operation for cancer at Salford Royal Hospital; his final illness was mercifully brief, lasting just over a week. This *style* of Spiritualistic phenomena faded away, with John Myers being the last of a long line of spirit photographers of any note to appear in Britain. In 1932 charges were made against Myers in the "Sunday Dispatch" by Lord Donegall and, later, in 1935 by the SNU President, John B. McIndoe, who published his findings with Roy Brandon in "Light", claiming that John Myers was fraudulent. However, John Myers was defended by the editor of Psychic News, Maurice Barbanell... A story for another issue.



For further information Pioneer's previous articles on this subject can be freely downloaded or read online on the SNU website.

Details are on the last page of this issue.

None of Hope's images were published in the above discussions, so I was reluctant to publish similar images by Hope to demonstrate some of the negative claims, counter-claims and the comments. As noted in the introduction, Fred Barlow and Major W. Rampling-Rose's joint SPR report is freely available online and relevant reference is made in the report, as well as in the above discussions: both mention the suspicion of fraud regarding a *double rebate on the photographic plate, and the scissors and paste method*.

The two William Hope images shown here were used by Barlow/Rose in the SPR report and it should be read in conjunction in order to put it into full context with the images:

FIG.1.—The veiled figure photograph taken at Crewe by W. Hope as described in text. This was a previously prepared plate, and the evidence is to be found in the double rebate of the lightly printed photograph which plainly shows the double exposure.

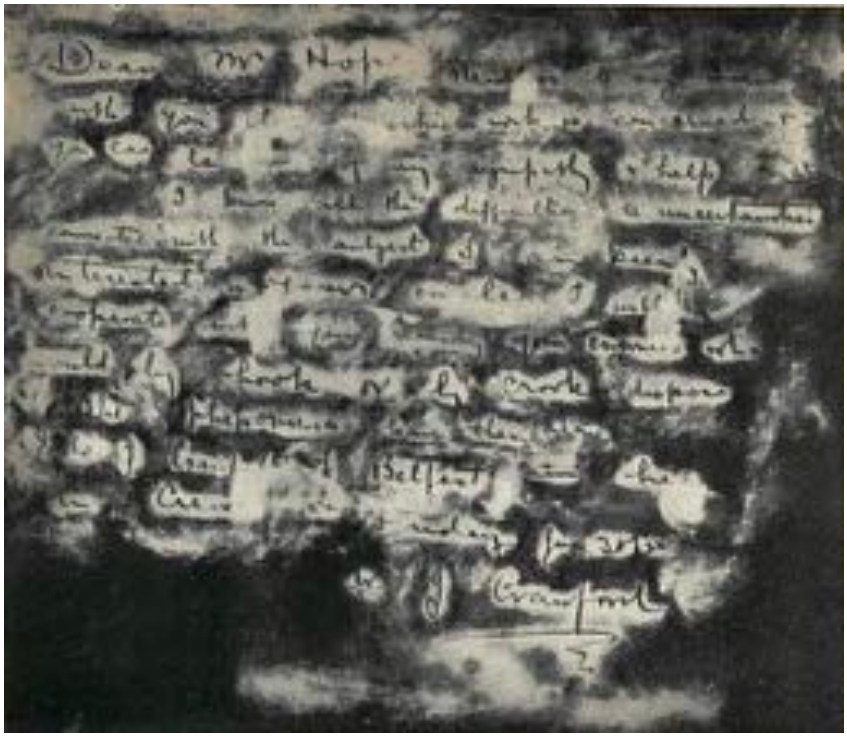


FIG. 2.—The picture is the Crawford photograph obtained by several sitters from Belfast during a visit to the Crewe circle. There is no doubt that the handwriting is that of the late Dr. Crawford, but it will be seen that the result has every appearance of having been produced by cutting out letters and forming them up to make sense.

In 1935 Mr C.P. MacCarthy gave a lecture to the British College of Psychic Science entitled "Deception in Psychic Photography"; a précis of the lecture was published in its Quarterly Transactions and the editor noted:

> This lecture on this subject was so good and exhaustive that I feel some difficulty in making a précis of it. To be complete it should contain all the plates he showed. I must be content with ten of the leading phenomena.[4]

To conclude, published below is an article taken from "Light", June 2nd 1933:

AFTERTHOUGHTS ON "HOPE" DEBATE

FACTS OF THE FLASH-LAMP - DISCOVERY " AT THE BRITISH COLLEGE

By MRS. HEWAT McKENZIE

SUSPICION grows by what it feeds upon, and the photographic discussion reported in LIGHT of May 19th seems to leave the opposing parties "as they were." Mr. Barlow probably still regards as deluded those who supported Hope's genuineness with a dozen reasons as cogent as his own against it. Major Rampling Rose definitely doubts whether even he could devise conditions for experiment, which would leave no loophole for fraud. I did call attention to a series of experiments by Mr. Price with Mrs. Irving—do these go by the board ? But if the Major is right, then we have been wise to call extra and confirmative support for the genuineness of certain results, the line taken in the discussion by Hope's supporters on the 11th May.

Mr. Barlow has made unwarranted capital, I think, out of an innocent letter from Hope; only years after does he find it reek with suggestion of fraud. It was written from Hope's own home-address instead of from Mrs. Buxton's, where all sittings were given and letters for appointments dealt with. But I also have had personal letters from Hope, and so has Miss Scatcherd and other friends, from his own address and saw nothing suspicious in this. He asked Mr. Barlow to supply him with some luminous cards "as he was going to the College." I remember making some psycho-physical experiments with Hope in which luminous cards, probably provided by him, were used. But how naive, if he were "up to some game" as Mr. Barlow suspects ! Why should he take Mr. Barlow into his confidence ? Did he regard him as a willing accomplice ? To such lengths can suspicion go—and it spreads. Mr. J. Arthur Hill seizes on this point in LIGHT of May 26th and says: "It is also significant that Hope knew the use of luminous paint which he obtained from Mr. Barlow." Mr. Barlow has not proved from this incident that Hope made any use of luminous paint for photographic deception.

Mr. Hewat McKenzie, when Principal of the British College, supported the Crewe Circle in the determined attack made on their mediumship in the Price-Hope case in 1922. He and his Committee spent months in an endeavour to elucidate the truth, which culminated in a discovery that the wrappings of the packet used (and which Hope had not handled) had been illicitly opened and re-sealed, as verified by the Imperial Plate Co. This convinced Mr. McKenzie that in this case *others had attempted to deceive Hope, and he never receded from this conclusion*. [5] Mr. Barlow now assumes Hope's guilt in this instance, but is there nothing yet to ask of Messrs. Dingwall and Price or their associate who boasted of ability to open sealed packets undetected ?

---

[4] See Pioneer, Vol. 4, No. 2: "Deception in Psychic Photography – Mr. C.P. MacCarthy".

[5] The British College of Psychic Science, founded by James Hewat McKenzie in 1920, undertook a lot of important research into various aspects of phenomena, especially in psychic photography; for further details of the BCPS please see Psypioneer, for example Vol. 3, No. 8, August 2007: "A Knight Errant of Psychic Science: James Hewat McKenzie".

Following this case, which caused very serious disturbance to the Mediums and to the investigating public, all experiments at the College were carried out with specially marked and sealed packets of plates. Mr. Hope agreed to use these; they were instituted for his protection as well as for that of the public. The more cold-blooded and "scientific" we make psychic experiments, the more we seem to defeat our own ends. I do not think Hope ever liked these sealed packets. They lacked the magnetisation of the sitter who, before this, had usually carried his packet about with him for days, and they had stamped all over them: "We suspect you." A prejudicial emotion might be set up, which I have known, in the case of other Mediums, to ruin results.

Be this as it may, it was noticed during several visits that all the "extras" secured were of the "moving face" variety—all "draped" or "cloud" effects were absent. Before the advent of the sealed packets, the "extras" were varied and we heard that experimenters at Crewe still obtained these varieties. There was nothing in itself wrong with the "moving face extra" and we may recall Major Mowbray's excellent testimony to one of these at the Queen's Gate Hall discussion—but it gave us anxious thought that there should only be this one kind of result, for the theory of the use of a flash lamp had been freely mooted during many discussions.

Mr. McKenzie raised the matter with Hope and Mrs. Buxton, but no light was thrown upon it. To satisfy his doubts, the Hon. Principal took it upon himself on one occasion to examine Hope's luggage. I was not present, but he reported to me that he found in a suitcase a flash lamp with a bulb attachment, some cut-out photographic heads, and some hairs. He apparently reported this to Mr. Barlow, with whom he was collaborating at the time on photographic matters, but Mr. McKenzie was not a man to condemn another on suspicion and he made no public statement about it, hoping in time to satisfy himself regarding the matter.

That time never came, for shortly afterwards the Crewe Circle ceased their visits to the College, owing to family illness and a subsequent operation on Mrs. Buxton.

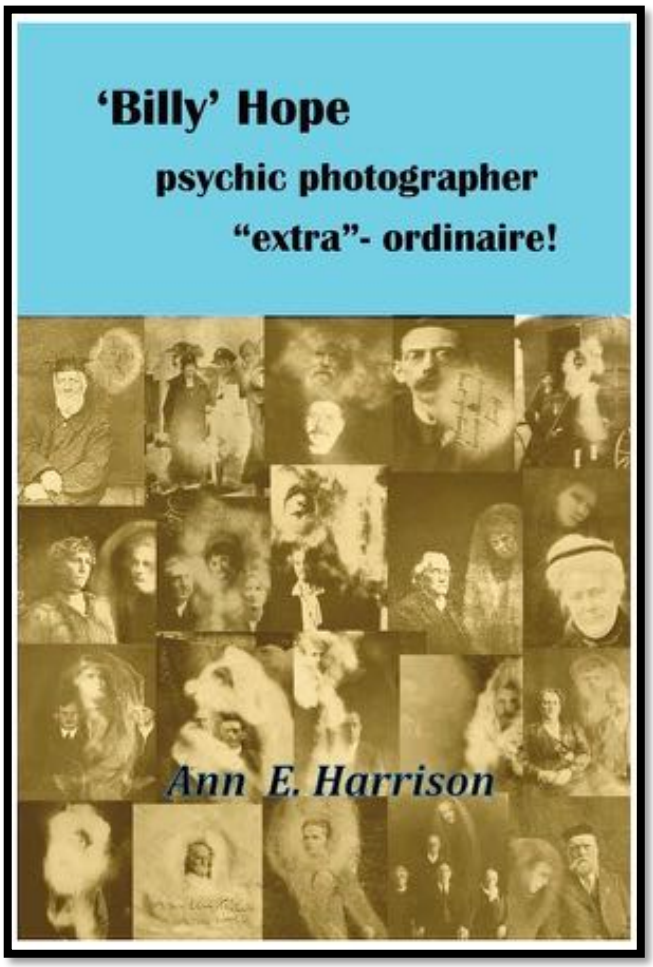
Mr. Barlow mentioned this matter without using names in his S.P.R. lecture, and subsequently asked me to confirm it publicly. I saw no necessity for this, as it was again a question of mere suspicion, and Mr. McKenzie had not taken any action in his lifetime; but I have since heard that exaggerated statements of the affair are being circulated, and have therefore felt it wise to give the facts as I know them. No record was ever made of the matter.

I have seen Hope work under many conditions, at his best and at his lesser best; I have *felt* the psychic force on many occasions flow from his hands; on other occasions I felt nothing. I have *seen* the emanations flow about his own and Mrs. Buxton's hands, as they stood near the camera; on other occasions nothing. I have been conscious, as a sitter, of cobwebby, tangible impacts upon me as I waited for the exposure of the plates, at other times everything was "dead as mutton."

We may surmise and discuss and suspect the why and wherefore of strange results and actions in this as in all psychical manifestations, but I shall continue to hold, from personal experience and from testimony adduced by reputable witnesses, that William Hope was a genuine Medium with the usual variable psychic force, and that he did a remarkable work in his day on behalf of the reality of psychic photography.

Ann Harrison has recently published a book on William Hope:

‘Billy’ Hope psychic photographer “extra”-ordinaire



‘Billy’ Hope is probably the best-known Psychic (Spirit) Photographer ever. People travelled from across the world to sit with him and Mrs Buxton, otherwise known as the ‘Crewe Circle’. Yet there has never been a book about him.

There are snippets in several books on his work but never a book analysing the accusations of fraud matched by the investigations into those claims, and proofs of genuine work from those who had tested him, under strict ‘fool-proof’ protocols, over the 25+ years of capturing images of those in “spirit”. So - Here it is!

Although accused of fraud several times, no case against him was proved. In 1922 Harry Price attempted to prove Hope was fraudulently placing images on the photographic plates, and the mud has stuck, so that many today still believe it to be so. Now, 100 years later, is the time to set it straight.

Working from journals and books of the time, important verbatim reports have been brought together in this book, together with many photographs and images from those reports.

Scientists, professional photographers, journalists, churchmen, lawyers and sceptical researchers all made an effort to test him for themselves. Highly esteemed by many people of standing, they worked frequently at the British College for Psychic Science, in London over a period of 10 years, and travelled throughout the British Isles, from Glasgow to Eastbourne, from Belfast to Norwich, never charging a fee for their work in almost 20 years

Available at the Arthur Findlay College Shop

HELEN DUNCAN

REGURGITATION

—~—☼—~—

by Paul J. Gaunt

Some researchers and critics claim that Helen Duncan used a cheesecloth-like material which she used to fake her materialisation séances. When we read the many *negative* websites, unresearched posts, articles and suchlike, the claim made is that she could produce the material by means of regurgitation. When these claims are challenged and more details are asked for, the general answer is simply quotes like this: "She was famous for producing ectoplasm which was proven to be made from cheesecloth." When asked who *proved* it or where the *evidence* is and for further referenced details, most of the claims naturally more or less dry up: some may throw in the name of Harry Price for safe measure.

These sweeping statements are immature and hold little or no value for the earnest enquirer. If one cannot back up claims with reliable referenced materials and some basic knowledge of the foundation for the claims, it becomes pointless, misleading and scandalous.

Firstly, where did these claims of regurgitation originate from? The simple answer is jointly between:

The London Psychical Laboratory, which was the Research Department of the London Spiritualist Alliance Ltd, [31] and the National Laboratory of Psychical Research.

Naturally, to suggest that Helen Duncan regurgitated her *ectoplasm* in the form of a cheesecloth-like material requires conclusive proof to make a public statement to this effect; it requires that evidence is shown fully supporting this claim which will need to stand up to show that this was *actually* the case—that the researchers have proved it beyond reasonable doubt. Pioneer will publish the two reports from the two investigating parties which *publicly* brought forward the claim:

Helen Duncan used regurgitation

It will make this into a long article, but it will be seen how these two well-known professional research faculties arrived at their conclusions. The story starts with a series of séances which commenced late October 1930, later resulting in Helen, her husband Henry and their family temporarily moving to London from Scotland to undertake extensive, contractually controlled séances with the London Psychical Laboratory (LPL) (the Research Department of the London Spiritualist Alliance Ltd (LSA)), starting on March 13th, 1931 and abruptly ending on June 12th, 1931.

To my knowledge the London Spiritualist Alliance's Research Department, the London Psychical Laboratory, never made its full report public, only what is reported in its in-house journal, *Light*. The LSA's publication, *Light*, for July 17th, 1931 published its Research Department's conclusion on the mediumship of Mrs Duncan:

[31] Today it still holds the same premises under the name of the "College of Psychic Studies" (CPS).

MRS. DUNCAN'S MEDIUMSHIP

ADVERSE REPORT AFTER EXAMINATION BY LONDON PSYCHICAL LABORATORY

INVESTIGATIONS into the mediumistic claims of Mrs. Duncan, of Dundee, have been completed by the London Psychical Laboratory (the Research Department of the London Spiritualist Alliance) and the report states that on nearly all points the conclusions are disappointing to those interested in psychical research.

In consequence of representations received from Scotland, the London Psychical Laboratory invited Mrs. Duncan to come to London and to submit her mediumship for investigation. Mr. and Mrs. Duncan accordingly agreed and entered into a binding contract to sit exclusively for the London Psychical Laboratory for a period of eighteen months. This contract the Duncans had no scruple in breaking.

The most striking phenomenon which Mrs. Duncan claimed to produce was the exhibition of "ectoplasm" and the Committee—which included Dr. Robert Fielding-Ould, M.A., M.R.C.P., Lord Charles Hope, and Sir Ernest Bennett, M.P., —concentrated attention on the nature of this substance and the means of its production. Careful analyses were from time to time made, chemical and microscopical, by three competent authorities, and at last the Committee were obliged to believe that the so-called "ectoplasm" was an artificial substance produced by the ingenuity of Mrs. Duncan herself.

"It was proved," says the report, "that the material was swallowed by Mrs. Duncan at some time previous to the sitting and subsequently regurgitated by her for the purpose of exhibition."

In all, five fragments of so-called "ectoplasm" were obtained—the fifth being cut off while it depended from the mouth of the Medium and received into a dish.

RESULTS OF ANALYSIS

Two of these earlier specimens were submitted for analysis. One authority described the substance as resembling tissue paper with traces of bacteria. The second report (February 9, 1931) was as follows:

"We have made a very careful examination of the material which was submitted to us and we are of the opinion that it consists of paper, cloth, and such everyday materials mixed with an organic substance which is in every respect similar to coagulated white of egg."

The report on the fourth fragment (received in a prepared sterile container) was as follows:

"The specimen consisted of a piece of surgical gauze soaked in resinous fluid. The gauze consisted of typical cotton fibres. The resinous fluid had the odour of Canada Balsam or one of the pine resins." (April 10, 1931)

The report on the fifth fragment (April 15, 1931) was in similar terms.

The dried gauze, it is added, is in the possession of the Laboratory and can be seen by those interested, and a portion of the third fragment is still preserved hermetically sealed in pure spirit.

The report adds that on May 29, 1931, Mrs. Duncan left behind her in the dressing room a towel which was noticed to be made of a fabric resembling the third specimen of "ectoplasm." A piece was cut off and on comparison with the bottled specimen it was found to be identical in texture and pattern.

On May 29th the alleged control, "Albert," was asked if he would bring the Medium out of the cabinet under the red light and show the emergence and re-absorption of the "ectoplasm." The Medium came out to within about twelve inches of the red light while both her hands were held. She opened her mouth and "ectoplasm" was extruded by obvious movements of the mouth and throat muscles. It was about two inches wide and hung down about eight inches. After a few seconds the Medium, by movements of the lips and throat, sucked it back again. The material when extruded showed signs of having been folded by compression.

On June 12, the last of the sittings, Mrs. Duncan was asked to swallow a pill of sugar-coated methylene blue. She did so and had any so-called "ectoplasm" emerged which came from the stomach, it would have been coloured blue, but at this seance none appeared the single occasion during the whole series when there was a total absence of "ectoplasm."

"The Medium put out her tongue during the sitting," says the report, "and this was claimed by 'Albert' to be 'ectoplasm.' It was, however, only the Medium's tongue which was quite clearly seen."

Being aware that the Committee were anxious to discover the nature of "ectoplasm" and the means of its production, Mrs. Duncan stated that her urine was abnormally full of albumen, and suggested that that condition was a peculiar physiological condition related to her "ectoplasm." Several specimens were obtained for analysis and these, on being tested by acidifying and boiling, always coagulated and the total specimen solidified.

A medical report stated that Mrs. Duncan did at one time suffer from nephritis which was accompanied by the usual symptoms, namely, presence of albumen in the urine and high blood pressure. In London, during the sittings, her blood pressure was tested several times and found to be subnormal.

An opportunity was awaited for the verification of this abnormal physical state, and this opportunity presented itself when Mrs. Duncan was in St. Thomas's Hospital with a sceptic boil on the wrist. Her urine was tested and found to be normal. A signed medical report to this effect is in the possession of the Laboratory.

These facts and the appearance of the specimens supplied to the Committee suggest that these specimens were "faked" by the addition of white of egg.

PRECAUTIONS TAKEN

The report explains the precautions taken by the Committee in the way of examination of the Medium before the sitting. Stress is laid on the fact that from the beginning of the experiment, every care was taken to respect the feelings of Mrs. Duncan, and not to hasten too rigid test conditions which might be interpreted by her as a doubt of her genuineness. It was observed that as closer vigilance was exercised and the test conditions tightened, including hand and foot control, phenomena rapidly lessened and finally came to a complete cessation.

For the seances Mrs. Duncan wore a one-piece suit which clothed the whole body, including the feet. It had only one opening at the back from neck to waist, which was sewn before the sitting. Buckram fingerless gloves were introduced and sewn to the

wrist-bands. More than once, and apparently in trance, Mrs. Duncan got out of the dress, which was found apparently as it had been stitched on her before the sitting. Later, "code sewing" was used, and it was then found after the sitting that the original stitching had completely disappeared and that the opening had been re-stitched in a different manner.

"When so-called full forms appeared," says the report, "they were indistinct in outline, resembling masses of 'ectoplasm' draped over a structure of some kind, which suggested the human form."

On one occasion three hands were seen, two of which were identified as those of the Medium, and a third, of a dark and apparently solid character. "The only possible explanation," says the report, "is that Mrs. Duncan had previously secreted about her person a rubber glove which was used for the exhibition of the third hand."

The Committee record that Mr. Duncan, husband of the Medium, was always present at the sittings, but that he never approached the cabinet, and remained at the back of the sitters and manipulated the gramophone at least nine feet from the Medium's chair. On the morning of the last sitting, Friday, June 12, Mr. Duncan asked if he could interview the Research Committee, and, after the sitting, he made a statement to the effect that he had come to the conclusion that the "ectoplasm" was the result of regurgitation. He added that Mrs. Duncan was in the habit of "losing her will" for a time about three hours before a sitting, and said he believed that in a state of unconsciousness, resembling that of hypnosis, Mrs. Duncan secreted things in or about her person and that she could retain these things in her stomach and eat and digest food.

"At this interview," says the report, "Mr. Duncan anticipated the discoveries of the Committee . . . and to sum up, Mr. Duncan at all times tried to save his own face at the expense of his wife's reputation."

When the sittings were terminated, the Committee went beyond their legal obligations and at a cost exceeding £40 returned the Duncan family and their furniture to Edinburgh.

It should be observed that at the time of the publication of the first abridged report no phenomena were recorded which there was any justification at that time for assuming to be other than supernormal, having regard to the possibilities in such states as hypnosis and somnambulism.

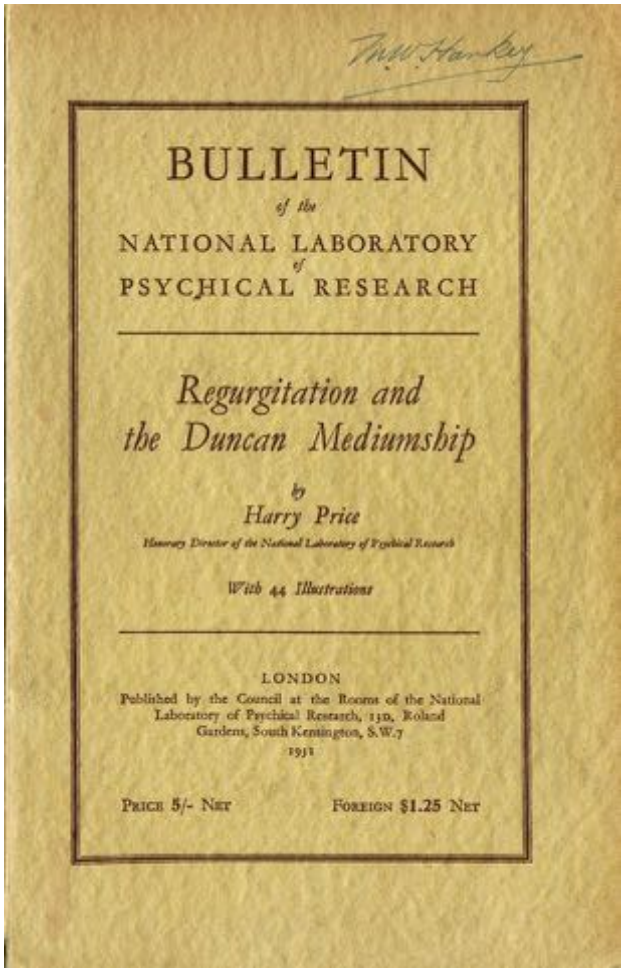
At the time of the publication of the second abridged report (May 16th) the Committee were less united in their assent to the possibility of the *whole* of the manifestations being capable of supernormal interpretation, although nothing had occurred *upon which a definite accusation of deception* (conscious or unconscious) could be based.

No paid sittings were held after the Committee agreed upon the final report.

The above article notes:

> "Mr. and Mrs. Duncan accordingly agreed and entered into a binding contract to sit exclusively for the London Psychical Laboratory for a period of eighteen months. This contract the Duncans had no scruple in breaking."

Indeed, the Duncans did break their signed contract, tempted by a financial reward from the National Laboratory of Psychical Research (NLPR), namely by its Honorary Director, Harry Price. As with the London Psychical Laboratory, their researchers were eminent men of the day such as Professor Dr William McDougal, Dr William Brown and Professor J.C. Flügel, to name but a few. Five experimental séances were conducted under the NLPR's chosen conditions. Once the London Spiritualist Alliance became aware of the Duncans breaking their contract giving them exclusive working for the LPL, it all came to an end. Hence their report quoted above.


BULLETIN
of the
NATIONAL LABORATORY
of
PSYCHICAL RESEARCH

Regurgitation and
the Duncan Mediumship

by
Harry Price
Honorary Director of the National Laboratory of Psychical Research

With 44 Illustrations

LONDON
Published by the Council at the Rooms of the National Laboratory of Psychical Research, 15D, Roland Gardens, South Kensington, S.W.7
1931

PRICE 5/- NET FOREIGN $1.25 NET

The Council of the National Laboratory of Psychical Research published its full report, I believe, in July 1931, as shown in the photograph, which contains 116 pages plus illustrations. The first suggestion of regurgitation was mooted by Professor McDougall within the Council; this was after its first séance on May 4th, 1931. The quote below is found in the Notes, Comments and Impressions of the first séance, dated Saturday May 9th, 1931:

"Professor McDougall expressed the opinion, which was endorsed by members of the Research Council, that one of two hypotheses might account for the extraordinary manifestations which we had witnessed. These theories were (1) that the 'teleplasm' was really some fine fabric such as cheese cloth, capable of being compressed into a small compass and then secreted in the genital passages; and (2) that the medium possesses a false or secondary stomach (an *æsophageal diverticulum*) like the *rumen* or first stomach of a ruminant, and that she is able to swallow sheets of some material and regurgitate it at leisure—like a cow with her cud."

The National Laboratory of Psychical Research first published its claim of regurgitation in the "Morning Post" on July 14th, 1931. I do not have access to this article, so below is published Appendix B, pages 96-104, from its published report in the NLPR Bulletin, as previously indicated. It contains the full (complete) interview with Helen Duncan's husband, Henry, and gives a rather in-depth insight into the investigation, its conclusions, the problems faced, etc.; I have also included some of the illustrations used in Henry's interview:

APPENDIX B

VERBATIM REPORT OF MEETING BETWEEN MR. HENRY DUNCAN AND THE COUNCIL OF THE NATIONAL LABORATORY, HELD ON THURSDAY, JUNE 11TH, 1931, AT 3.30 P.M.

Present: Mr. H. E. Dennis, Professor Dr. D. F. Fraser-Harris, Mr. Harry Price, Mr. I. C. Gröndahl, Mr. H. G. Bois, Mrs. J. G. Robertson, Mrs. Clarice Richards, Captain H. W. Seton- Karr, Mr. Henry Duncan. Miss Beenham recording in shorthand.

Mr. BOIS opened the proceedings by telling Mr. Duncan of our suspicions. He said: 'We are rather suspicious as to the genuineness of the phenomena, and we have had photographs taken, and in the photographs it appears that the material which was apparently extruded by the medium is of an exactly similar nature to butter muslin. Now there are two or three points shown in the photographs which I should like you to explain: The threads of the weft and warp show very clearly—there are interlaced threads. Secondly, there are apparently holes. Thirdly, in one of the photographs it will appear that there is a dirty dust mark made, probably, through trailing on the floor, and last and by no means least, the substance appears to have a selvedge mark.[32] Can you question these facts?'

Mr. DUNCAN: 'I cannot. This material which I have here' (taking hold of our piece of paper 'teleplasm') 'is, I would say, the first stage; the second stage is of pretty much the same nature, but there appear to be threads running through it, it is much the same in texture. The third stage is of muslin-like texture. I believe they have a piece at the L.S.A. Sometimes it is thick in places and at other times very thin, and it has the appearance, under the light, of being like muslin. On some occasions, I have witnessed what you refer to as a selvedge, and it appeared to be, when felt, like a curtain—rough.'

Mr. BOIS: 'Assuming this substance which is extruded is genuine, is it possible that it can take the form of butter-muslin and also appear like muslin to the sight and touch? At the last sitting there was no production of this butter-muslin, but a certain substance was extruded from the mouth of the medium. This substance was torn off by one of the medical men there, and on being shown to the expert analysts, they say it is paper and it is composed of vegetable fibre, and that it is 60% chemical and 40% mechanical wood pulp, and not only does it look like paper, *it is paper*. How do you explain that?'

Mr. DUNCAN: 'God only knows. Now, Mr. Price, what was it that you had analysed?'

[32] Taken from the fourth séance on May 28th, 1931: the second image (Stereogram 12) is an enlarged portion (a little darker to show the details) to indicate what Mr Bois is referring to—showing rents in the cloth, warp and weft, etc., and selvedge indicated.

Mr. PRICE: ‘That, of course, was white of egg, and we have made up a similar substance which gives the same reaction to tests and reacts the same way. This “teleplasm” is wood-pulp.’

Mr. DUNCAN: ‘Do you think for one moment that I would get Mrs. Duncan to come here and by some means or other (say Mrs. Macleod passed it to her) produce fraud? That I would allow her to come here and get you to test her? The whole idea is preposterous!’

Mr. PRICE: ‘Yes, that is what is in your favour. But we cannot get away from the fact that this is a piece of paper folded over and glued—it is folded in the form of a concertina—or cracker.’

Mr. DUNCAN: ‘Where do you think it could be secreted? I believe in automatism of the will. Previous to *séances*, two or three mediums seem to have gone into that hypnotic state, and it is quite possible that they would pick up something (I have seen it done with Mrs. Duncan). She might have done it.’

Mr. PRICE: “But she was searched thoroughly and led into the cabinet. If she picked anything up, she must have secreted it.’

Mr. DUNCAN: ‘Yes, and these photographs. Well, in the first place in examining these photographs, it does look like threads; but the point is this, how in the name of anything, and after you have examined her, could she secrete this substance?’

Mr. PRICE: ‘That is exactly what we want to know.’

Mr. DUNCAN: ‘I do not know.’

Mr. PRICE: ‘Also, there is an identical tear in the substance, seen in the photographs, which appeared at different *séances*.’

Mr. DUNCAN: ‘I do not know. It is a complete puzzle to me. I know nothing about it. If you accept the evidence of your witnesses, I cannot say where she could possibly secrete it. There is about seven or eight feet of substance. That means bulk.’

Mr. PRICE: ‘We have some of the identical stuff here, and it can be rolled up very small.’

Mr. BOIS: ‘I confess that is the puzzle—where she has been able to secrete that stuff after the very thorough examination she has had.’

(Mr. Duncan looking at photographs.)

Mr. PRICE: ‘That is frayed at the edge’ (pointing to one of the photographs). [33]

Mr. DUNCAN: ‘To me, this hand looks like a glove’ (he examines one of the photographs).

Mr. BOIS: ‘To me, they look exactly like a surgeon’s (very thin) rubber glove which has been blown out. It would have the same appearance.’

Mr. DUNCAN: ‘To me, these look different’ (looking at some pictures of trailing cheese cloth).

[33] Fourth séance, May 28th, 1931, showing a frayed edge bottom of the right.

Mr. PRICE: ‘That is merely the same roll of muslin twisted into a trail, but you do not get the criss-cross warp and weft as when spread out. It is very difficult to photograph, as the white stuff requires one-tenth the exposure the *séance* garment does.’

Mr. DUNCAN: ‘Yes, you do see the rents and tears. The curious fact is that you say that that was a rubber glove, then how is it held up straight like that?’

Mr. PRICE: ‘Of course, that is what we want to know.’

Mr. BOIS: ‘These gloves do stand up, in any case.’

Mr. DUNCAN: ‘You forget this, gentlemen. You would need to have a tube in it—to hold the glove out like that.’

CAPT. S.-K.: ‘You would not need anything to support it. It would stand out when blown up.’

Mr. DUNCAN: ‘But there must be something in it to support it.’

Mr. PRICE: ‘In two of these photographs there are distinctly safety-pins. These are in the “glove” pictures. They are in the stuff that is wrapped round the glove. Curiously enough, it has lost something by being enlarged, but in the stereoscope the pin is very distinct. In the other picture the pin is, of course, viewed from a different angle.’

Mr. DUNCAN: ‘Did you say there was a pin in this one?’ (picking up a ‘glove’ photo).

(Mr. Price points out the positions of the pins to Mr. Duncan.)

CAPT. S.-K.: ‘The whole thing is quite easy. I have done these sort of things for years. You would only have to blow the glove out and it would be identical with the one in the photograph. The only question is where the stuff is hidden.’ [34]

Mr. PRICE: ‘At the first *séance* we heard the stuff being jerked off the curtains. I won’t say anything about the other pin that was found in the tuck of the *séance* garment.’

Mr. DUNCAN: ‘That is the substance here, is it not?’ (pointing to a cheese cloth photo).

Mr. PRICE: ‘I think it might possibly be thinner just there, as it is worn and torn and would show the black garment through more clearly; and perhaps it was not then dirty.’

[34] Two of the photographs showing the glove from the third séance, May 21st, 1931; the safety-pin on the top photo (hand hanging down) is the little dent on the left side just below the loose piece of the alleged teleplasm hanging down.

Mr. DUNCAN: 'You mean that mark down at the bottom?'

Mr. PRICE: 'Yes.'

Mr. BOIS: 'The real point is this: What is the explanation of all this?'

Mr. DUNCAN: 'God knows. I do not. You are asking me a puzzle. In the first place, you say she was examined, and on two occasions I have examined her before she came up here. I have taken her into the bathroom and made her take all her clothes off, and I have on two occasions given her a vaginal examination. I have got the maid to look through her clothes and hand them to her one by one.'

Mr. PRICE: 'Is that necessary? Has she secreted things on other occasions?'

Mr. DUNCAN: 'I have told you. I call it "automatism". If that is butter muslin, how did she secrete it?'

Mr. BOIS: 'That is exactly why we have met here this afternoon.'

Mr. DUNCAN: 'The same thing happened in the Eva C. *séances*.'

Mr. PRICE: 'There has been a great deal of controversy over those pictures. Not one person in a hundred accepted Eva C. as genuine. When Eva C. was at the London S.P.R., the "teleplasm" was proved to be chewed paper. By a strange coincidence the same analyst who analysed the Eva C. "teleplasm", analysed the piece of "teleplasm" I received from the piece cut from Mrs. Duncan soon after she arrived in London.'

Mr. BOIS: 'That is the whole trouble. I might say that teleplasm may take the form of paper or butter muslin; I might admit there may be holes in it; I might admit there may be dirt on it; but when it comes to having a selvedge, it is more than I can swallow. All these things are puzzling.'

Mr. DUNCAN: 'I understand.' [35]

Mr. PRICE: 'Professor Fraser-Harris has made some slides of our piece of teleplasm, and I can even show you the machine marks on the wood pulp as it was passed through the machine. When the wood is cut up, it is treated (*a*) mechanically, or (*b*) chemically. Actually, as the analyst has told us, there is 60% chemical and 40% mechanical wood pulp. What are we to make of it?'

Mr. BOIS: 'Obviously this is paper' (pointing to our specimen). [36]

Mr. DUNCAN: 'The point is this, gentlemen. It seems silly that anyone would come here and deliberately produce fraud.'

Mr. PRICE: 'Unless that person thought that he, or she, would run the risk.'

[35] Showing various rents/tears, warp and weft, fold or crease marks, and selvedge. The photo was taken at the second séance, May 14th, 1931.

[36] This is shown further in the article.

Mr. DUNCAN: ‘But we allowed these photographs to be taken. You know I am not a spiritualist. Here is my explanation: I believe in an animistic theory that the idea has, through the ages, become impressed upon our minds that there is a god, and naturally then that there is a life after death. To support that theory—man has got into a groove with the result that some persons can easily go into an hypnotic trance, are open to suggestion, and the idea of immortality is so much impressed within that mind that the subconscious will do anything to prove it.’

PROF. F.-H.: ‘But what has the production of the paper teleplasm to do with an afterlife?’

Mr. DUNCAN: ‘That is my idea. These ideas which are impressed within the mind of that subject will become an obsession, and that person will do anything towards gaining that end.’

Mr. BOIS: ‘So the medium is quite prone to take any steps to back up her belief?’

Mr. DUNCAN: ‘Not consciously.’

Mr. PRICE: “Then it is very difficult to say when the medium is acting subconsciously or consciously.’

Mr. DUNCAN: ‘This should be for further research work. It should be studied by every research worker.’

Mr. PRICE: ‘The Hon. Everard Feilding wrote to me only the other day and quoted a case of a man swallowing frogs and goldfish and “God knows how much water”.’

PROF. F.-H.: “What has this substance’ (pointing to our ‘teleplasm’) ‘to do with psychic powers?’

Mr. BOIS: ‘It is to prove the existence of beings outside ourselves, and therefore the medium tries to back up her theory by producing something which she has already arranged normally.’

Mr. DUNCAN: ‘All mediums whom I have come in contact with have struck me as being of a very childish disposition. I would then say that under trance conditions the child mind comes to the surface. That is why we get so many childish pranks during a *séance*. And therefore that childish mind produces these things.’

Mrs. ROBERTSON: ‘Where does she produce them from?’

Mr. DUNCAN: ‘God knows!’

Mr. PRICE: ‘That X-rays incident the other night was very suspicious, and when it came to the X-rays, she broke down all our controls by rushing out of the house, and that afterwards she insisted upon the X-rays *after* she had been in the street with you. Also, you would not be searched. It is very suspicious.’

Mr. DUNCAN: ‘Yes, I admit that. But I told you about the diapers.’

Mrs. ROBERTSON: ‘It is suspicious that Mrs. Goldney says that Mrs. Duncan was not unwell that night.’

Mr. DUNCAN: ‘Yes, but it was due for that night.’

Mrs. ROBERTSON: ‘Were they soiled diapers you had on you?’

Mr. DUNCAN: ‘No, clean ones.’

Mr. BOIS: ‘Well, what is the next step?’

Mr. DUNCAN: ‘I think the best thing would be to hold another three *séances*.’

Mr. BOIS: ‘But are we not wasting our time?’

Mr. DENNIS: ‘Do you swear that you do not know where that stuff is concealed?’

Mr. DUNCAN: ‘Of course, I do swear.’

Mr. PRICE: ‘Of course, it is not an anatomical impossibility for her to conceal it in her body. I have seen a man swallow a watch and chain and regurgitate it two or three times. I mean that if regurgitation can be done several times a day for a living, there is no reason why it is impossible in this case. Especially if she has an œsophageal pouch.’

PROF. F.-H.: ‘It could go into the real stomach.’

Mr. PRICE: ‘That is where we think all these things are secreted.’

Mr. DUNCAN: ‘But you cannot get anything from the X-rays?’

Mr. PRICE: “That is absolutely useless because she is so thick, and in any case, muslin or rubber gloves would not register.’

Mr. DUNCAN: ‘But if you gave her a bismuth meal or something like that?’

Mr. PRICE: ‘Yes, but I do not think that it would do. It is possible that it would reveal a secondary stomach, but it is only a small chance.’

Mrs. RICHARDS: ‘Has Mrs. Duncan ever had an operation where she was cut open?’

Mr. DUNCAN: ‘Yes, she has, but it is too far down. It would not show anything in the X-rays.’

Mrs. ROBERTSON: ‘Do you believe that she is genuine?’

Mr. DUNCAN: ‘Oh, yes. But I also believe in automatism of the will.’

Mr. BOIS: ‘He thinks it is genuine sometimes, but that she is quite capable of humbugging. So far, to me, we have seen the humbugging.’ (Pointing to the photographs and ‘teleplasm’.) ‘We cannot get away from these things. Is it worth our while to continue?’

Mr. DUNCAN: ‘Yes. I should have two or three more *séances* under a physical control, the sitters going in the cabinet.’

Mr. PRICE: ‘You very kindly offered us that first séance. I was very impressed by what I had been told by other sitters, and you did not come here with any idea of our showing you up. On the contrary, I had received such good reports from various people that I wanted to have you for a long period. But we simply *cannot* believe it now. We have been forced into this attitude owing to the evidence we have accumulated.’

Mr. BOIS: ‘We will assume these things are secreted somewhere we do not know. Supposing she was immobilized so that she could not move hand or foot?’

Mr. DUNCAN: ‘Just a minute. I asked you, Mr. Price, to immobilize her at the last sitting.’

Mr. PRICE: ‘In any case, that would have been useless the other night, as the paper “teleplasm” could have been produced with a dozen people holding her. A funny thing,

but we all thought we were going to get that piece of "teleplasm", because at previous *séances* we were promised it and you were always urging Albert to give us a piece. As this one was a test *séance*, I was sure that we should get it. Everybody had scissors, and it was a curious sight to see the glint of light shining on the steel. It reminded me of a sewing bee. Everybody was prepared to cut off the stuff in case Albert picked upon him or her.'

Mr. DUNCAN: 'As far as I know, the doctor tore it off.'

Mr. PRICE: 'Yes, the scissors slipped.'

Mr. DUNCAN: 'What about the bleeding?'

Mr. PRICE: 'She could easily have knocked her nose.'

PROF. F.-H.: 'The bleeding had nothing to do with the stuff being torn from her mouth.'

(Mr. Price explains how the piece of 'teleplasm' was torn.)

Mr. BOIS: 'Assuming that the medium is tied hand and foot, is there any way of checking her from bringing up the substance normally?'

Mr. PRICE: 'Not the slightest. If you put a net over her head, it would only fall into the net. I think perhaps you might check part of it.'

Mrs. ROBERTSON: 'Has she never produced it anywhere but from the mouth?'

Mr. DUNCAN: 'Yes, the ear and the vagina.'

Mrs. RICHARDS: 'But if we get a bit from the floor?

Mr. PRICE: 'Yes, but that is not much use to prove that the medium has secreted it somewhere. You admit she does secrete it?'

Mr. DUNCAN: 'Yes, unknown to me.'

Mrs. RICHARDS: 'How is it she got out of that suit?' [At another society.]

Mr. DUNCAN: 'God knows. Assuming that she could get out of it normally, how could she sew it up the back again?'

Mr. PRICE: 'If she could secrete things, as obviously she can, such as rubber gloves, butter muslin, etc., she could easily secrete a needleful of cotton. It is admitted that the stitches are not the same at the end of a sitting as at the beginning.'

Mr. DUNCAN: 'Not every time. But on two occasions.'

Mr. PRICE: 'Well, it is quite easy for her to get out of the thing.'

Mr. DUNCAN: 'I do not mean that. Supposing she is tied up and the curtains are open and you see her tied up? 'You can hear the tying up going on at the same time as the voice.'

Mr. PRICE: 'But the talking is nothing. We have never heard Albert at the same time as we have seen the medium.'

Mr. DUNCAN: 'Yes, but the talking and the tying going on at the same time. How could she tie herself up? It is impossible.'

Mr. PRICE: 'It is not. Tying up a medium is the worst possible form of control. But in any case we are talking about what we have seen.'

Mr. DUNCAN: 'Yes, but the entities purport to tie her up. How a person tied at the back and sewn up from the waist and the tapes over the buckram gloves tied tightly, and the feet also tied and the chair screwed down to the floor, how is she able to tie herself up in such a manner?'

Mr. PRICE: 'You are asking me about something I have not seen. There are a number of mediums whom you can tie up as hard as you like and yet they can get out and back again into the ties. The tying up of a medium is the worst form of control.'

Mr. BOIS: 'You do not think it is possible to get out of surgical tapes?'

Mr. PRICE: 'No. The time we tied Mrs. Duncan up with surgical tapes, Albert said they were too tight and they had to be loosened. That is how they get away with it.'

Mr. BOIS: 'Supposing we get her tied up so as to immobilize her absolutely. Is that going to stop her regurgitating? We want something that will prevent her from doing it normally. Has teleplasm ever gone through a net?' [37]

Mr. DUNCAN: 'Yes. The point is, has it gone through or has it gone underneath the net? I think that it has gone underneath.'

Mr. PRICE: 'Mrs. Duncan has such a thick neck that it is impossible to tie the tapes tight enough to stop her putting her hand through the neck opening of the garment.'

Mr. BOIS: 'Supposing we hold her hands and feet, she can only get these substances from her inside by some power of regurgitating. If she could not use her hands, would that stop it at all?'

Mr. DUNCAN: 'Can you explain this to me? We have had an extrusion about six or seven feet long, which holds a trumpet up in the air and from which voices issue forth. The medium has been searched. How is it done?'

Mr. PRICE: 'We do not know. I have never seen such a thing done. We are not concerned with what we have not seen.'

Mr. BOIS: 'Are you referring to this having been done with Mrs. Duncan?'

Mr. DUNCAN: 'Yes, we have seen it done with Mrs. Duncan.'

Mrs. RICHARDS: 'Has that been done at the L.S.A.?'

Mr. DUNCAN: 'No, never.'

Mr. PRICE: 'Have the L.S.A. ever questioned the phenomena?'

Mr. DUNCAN: 'No. But you are surely not suggesting that a person can swallow a rubber glove?'

PROF. F.-H.: 'Yes, it is quite possible.'

Mrs. ROBERTSON: 'Is it possible to regurgitate very silently?'

PROF. F.-H.: 'Yes. But it would need very long practice. Swallowing rubber gloves, paper, and muslin would not make a noise. It is the air that makes the noise.'

[37] See Pioneer, Vol. 10, No.1: "The "Substance" ".

Mr BOIS: ‘I certainly have never heard any noise. What are we going to do? Shall we sit again with this net test, or shall we just leave it?

Mr. PRICE: ‘Mr. Duncan has suggested that if Mrs. Duncan produces the stuff normally, he is not aware of the fact.’

Mr. DUNCAN: ‘No.’

Mr. PRICE: ‘And the fact that on two occasions Mr. Duncan has searched Mrs. Duncan.’

Mr. DUNCAN: ‘Yes. I would not go by one sitting. I would like to impress upon you that for Heaven’s sake do not want this and that at a sitting. I quite believe that she is in a trance. I think that the collective minds of the sitters impress the subconscious with the thought that she is doing it normally; and she might not do it at that one sitting, but might try it the next time.’

Mr. BOIS: ‘I am prepared to admit that this is a hypothesis, but what are we going to do? We do not want to go on in the same way.’

CAPT. S.-K.: ‘We would not get any further evidence of its being normal if we had any more sittings.’

Mr. PRICE: ‘Of course, the stuff is produced from a portion of her anatomy which is exceedingly difficult to control.’

Mr. BOIS: ‘These things we are all agreed about. Would it be any use our having another sitting? If we get nothing, it would simply confirm our opinion that these things are secreted?’

Mr. DUNCAN: ‘Now you have put these bad ideas into my mind, and she is likely to get them from my subconsciousness. I think I know as much about mediumship as anybody. I would say that that would not prove anything either for or against. After the first *séance*, you could see whether the control was all right or not. She is genuine sometimes. She has produced psychic phenomena under the best of controls. If this is butter muslin and has been all the time, how are we going to explain, unless on the supposition of my first hypothesis that the production of the so-called butter muslin is due to automatism of the mind? We get mental phenomena which is absolutely startling at times.’

Mr. PRICE: ‘It is not a bit of good talking like that. In that case she might be a good mental medium, but not a physical one.’

Mr. BOIS: ‘At the moment we are only talking about physical phenomena.’

Mr. PRICE: ‘The whole thing is very interesting. But there is nobody who will accept these things as abnormal.’

Mr. DUNCAN: ‘I am quite agreeable to any test. I want to know the truth. I am not a spiritualist.’

Mr. BOIS: ‘Now, the thing is whether we are going to drop the whole thing or not.’

Mr. DUNCAN: ‘I say if you can prove that these things are produced either by regurgitating or other fraudulent means, it proves that B. [mentioning a certain person] is right.’

Mr. PRICE: ‘What has B. to do with it?’

Mr. DUNCAN: ‘He says that Margery, Eva C., and Rudi Schneider are frauds.’

Mr. PRICE: 'No, that is wrong. Mrs. Duncan and Rudi Schneider are not in the same street. Rudi produced phenomena under electric control at a distance of several feet from him. I have never heard that he considers him to be a fraud, or that he knows anything at all about it.'

(It was decided to have another sitting on July 2nd, with the medium held by two persons, a net over her head, and taped to the chair.)

(Signed) ETHEL BEENHAM.

N.B.—Without informing the National Laboratory, the Duncans left for Leith on Tuesday, June 23rd, 1931.

On the surface, the reports with their conclusions of regurgitation appear to show rather damaging evidence; permission to take the samples of teleplasm/ectoplasm provided to both research laboratories was granted by Helen Duncan's control, Albert Stewart, but were all found to be basic household materials. Even more damaging still is the photographic evidence of the National Laboratory of Psychical Research, for which the Duncans gave their full permission. In my opinion there is no doubt as to the authenticity of the testing which agencies used to break down the compounds of the said teleplasm, being found in general to be paper, etc., and in the photographic evidence published.

Helen MacFarlane and Henry Duncan married on May 27th, 1916. Henry was interested in psychical research but, as he stated in his interview with the National Laboratory, he was not a Spiritualist. He appears to have accepted the many questions presented to him in the interview by the NLPR Council philosophically. Mr Duncan did not particularly question what was shown to him in *their* evidence, for example the paper-made teleplasm, the photographic evidence showing the cheesecloth-like material with clear indication of the rents, the cloth's warp, weft, frayed edge, the selvedge, the rubber gloves, etc. The following day after the interview (June 12th) the NLPR Council told Henry Duncan that they had concluded that the effects they had witnessed over their investigations were caused by regurgitation; on the same day, possibly in anticipation that the London Psychical Laboratory had also reached similar conclusions, Mr. Duncan asked if he could interview the Research Committee, where he made a statement to the effect that he had come to the conclusion that the "ectoplasm" was the result of regurgitation.

However, does the above body of *proof* from the two laboratories conclusively prove regurgitation as the means and the method employed by Helen Duncan to provide her with her required séance materials, as is concluded by the two investigating authorities? From this point onwards the stigma of regurgitation will follow her for the ensuing decades of her mediumship:

"She was famous for producing ectoplasm which was proven to be made from cheesecloth."

So, is regurgitation proved as claimed in these two reports?

Starting with the first report in this article by the London Psychical Laboratory, the Research Department of the London Spiritualist Alliance Ltd, in the first place, it can hardly be taken as a report covering its investigations of the fifty or so controlled séances in the periods given elsewhere in this article by the same committee. The article quotes from an unpublished report by the London Psychical Laboratory, giving very little or no information and no mention of the earlier *positive* results it had previously had, stating:

> "… on nearly all points the conclusions are disappointing to those interested in psychical research."

Leading researchers Dr. Robert Fielding-Ould, Lord Charles Hope and Sir Ernest Bennett, M.P. concentrated their attention on the nature of this substance and the means of its production, resulting in the LPL's conclusion:

> "… the Committee were obliged to believe that the so-called "ectoplasm" was an artificial substance produced by the ingenuity of Mrs. Duncan herself."

The report further stated:

> "It was proved that the material was swallowed by Mrs. Duncan at some time previous to the sitting and subsequently regurgitated by her for the purpose of exhibition."

Their claimed proof is all the five samples of ectoplasm taken from different séances over the time of their investigations that were made up from general household materials and put together by the medium, Mrs Duncan. This was then swallowed by the medium at some earlier time to be regurgitated at the séance when required. Her husband Henry Duncan's statement was no doubt damaging by stating that his wife:

> "… was in the habit of "losing her will" for a time about three hours before a sitting, and said he believed that in a state of unconsciousness, resembling that of hypnosis, Mrs. Duncan secreted things in or about her person and that she could retain these things in her stomach and eat and digest food."

It further stated:

> "… that he had come to the conclusion that the "ectoplasm" was the result of regurgitation."

To my knowledge no photographs exist of any of their experiments, unlike those of the National Laboratory. One may consider, given the severity of their conclusion, why there was no hint or doubts of the possibility of fraud in all their published reports leading up to their conclusions, given that the first controlled séances started in October 1930, resulting in the London Psychical Laboratory (London Spiritualist Alliance) continuing their interest in the mediumship of Helen Duncan to the extent of eventually paying substantial costs in moving the Duncan family from Scotland to London, renting a house, employment of a maid and financial support for living costs, etc.!

In their conclusion, it is stated:

> Two of these earlier specimens were submitted for analysis. One authority described the substance as resembling tissue paper with traces of bacteria. The second report (February 9, 1931) was as follows:
>
> "We have made a very careful examination of the material which was submitted to us and we are of the opinion that it consists of paper, cloth, and such everyday

materials mixed with an organic substance which is in every respect similar to coagulated white of egg."

It is clear that at the time these samples of the alleged ectoplasm were collected there was no or, at best, little doubt as to their authenticity, as this was prior to the removal of the Duncans to London, the contract not being signed until March 9th, 1931; surely any doubts at this time would be considered, as the contract was for potentially eighteen months! [38]

It was further stated in their conclusion as evidence:

> "On May 29th the alleged control, "Albert," was asked if he would bring the Medium out of the cabinet under the red light and show the emergence and re-absorption of the "ectoplasm." The Medium came out to within about twelve inches of the red light while both her hands were held. She opened her mouth and "ectoplasm" was extruded by obvious movements of the mouth and throat muscles. It was about two inches wide and hung down about eight inches. After a few seconds the Medium, by movements of the lips and throat, sucked it back again. The material when extruded showed signs of having been folded by compression."

Let the reader now compare this report with the above account, [39] with an account published just thirteen days earlier in their journal, *Light*, May 16th, 1931:

"Sittings with Mrs. Duncan"

> "The Medium came out of the cabinet with no "ectoplasm" showing and stood under the red light at a distance of about eighteen inches; the mouth opened and the substance was seen gradually forming on the tip of the tongue until it resembled a cherry. It afterwards swelled up in the mouth unfolded and hung down about eight inches from the mouth. The substance moved slightly and remained for about one minute; then it began to retreat into the mouth, and gradually disappeared until the mouth, wide open, was seen perfectly empty. The Medium, still in trance, then backed into the cabinet.
>
> "It was clearly observed that, during the emergence and disappearance of the substance, no movement of the Medium's throat, neck or body was apparent. No muscular contractions suggesting swallowing or vomiting occurred.
>
> "It should also be realised that when the substance retreated into the mouth, it diminished at the tip of the tongue into the likeness of a cherry as it at first appeared.
>
> "The cherry-like mass disappeared into a small point and finally vanished altogether. None of the substance appeared at any time in the pharynx.
>
> "Sometimes, when large masses of the substance begin to lessen in bulk, it appears to melt away first at the edges."

—~—☼—~—

[38] The contract between the L.P.L. and Mrs. Duncan was from March 9th, 1931, for six months certain with the option on the part of the L.P.L. of renewal for a further year, eighteen months in all.

[39] However, it is stated: "At the time of the publication of the second abridged report (May 16th) the Committee were less united in their assent to the possibility of the *whole* of the manifestations being capable of supernormal interpretation, although nothing had occurred *upon which a definite accusation of deception* (conscious or unconscious) could be based.

If we look at the first abridged report published in *Light*, February 28th, 1931 by the Executive Committee of the London Psychical Laboratory, we note they:

> "… have pleasure in submitting to the readers of LIGHT their first abridged Report on a series of sittings held under test conditions with Mrs. Duncan of Dundee."

Pioneer publishes here the unedited account below:

> The following were the conditions under which Mrs. Duncan sat:
>
> All her clothing was removed in the presence of two witnesses. Her hair, ears, mouth and surface of body were examined. For the first three sittings a vest, pair of knickers and sateen overall were provided and reserved exclusively for seance work. Thus attired she was placed in a sack.
>
> In preparation for the last four sittings, Mrs. Duncan was examined as before, and wore only one garment. This garment was made of fine black wool material in one piece; it formed a pyjama suit with coat and trousers all in one piece, the ends of the legs being fashioned as boots and with long sleeves fitting closely at wrists. The whole body except face, head and hands, was entirely covered. The only opening in the garment was in the centre of the back from the neck to the waist.
>
> After Mrs. Duncan had stepped into this one-piece suit the back opening was strongly sewn up from neck to waist.
>
> Attached to this garment were strong tapes at the neck, the wrists and the ankles.
>
> Before leaving the dressing room for the seance room Mrs. Duncan's hands were controlled by those who stripped her. She was led to the seance room and had no opportunity of handling anything after she had been examined and dressed as described. She was then placed in the chair in the cabinet; the neck and wrist tapes attached to the garment were always tied to the chair and sealed. When time permitted, before the Medium fell into trance the feet were also tied and sealed. The hands and feet thus controlled retained a range of movement of three or four inches. At the end of each sitting the seals were examined and on every occasion were found intact.
>
> At every sitting a good red light was maintained, of sufficient intensity to enable members of the circle to see each other plainly, and even to read the time by small wrist watches.
>
> The sitters were arranged in a semi-circle in front of the cabinet. The Medium sat in the cabinet behind closed curtains. The curtains stretched from within a few inches of the ceiling down to the floor, being attached to curtain rings on a brass rod opening in the centre of the cabinet and at the sides adjoining the walls.
>
> The "Cabinet" merely consists of a corner of the room enclosed by the curtains. There is no mechanical device for the control of the curtains. Gramophone records were played intermittently throughout the sitting; no singing was required except for an opening hymn as specially desired by the Medium.
>
> It should be noted that ectoplasmic formations appeared, sometimes in the centre and sometimes at the sides of the curtains. It was therefore impossible for all sitters to witness every manifestation simultaneously. Each type of manifestation was however corroborated by two or more witnesses, and occasionally by all.

Among the various manifestations the following are the chief items briefly described. Complete detailed records and shorthand notes are filed. Two observers only attended all seven sittings. The average attendance was seven.

1) Invisible control and movements of heavy velvet cabinet curtains.

2) Quality of the "control's" voice answering to the name of "Albert Stuart"; [40] intelligence displayed by original observations and answers to questions.

3) Extrusion of "ectoplasm" in various masses, shapes, movements and texture.

4) Rapid and complete disappearance of ectoplasm after the Medium was hidden by the curtain; this was proved by her quick re-appearance either without ectoplasm or with a different formation of the material.

5) The appearance roughly resembling a human form, on one occasion over six feet high, on another not more than two feet high with a childish voice, swaying rhythmically with the music.

6) The detaching and depositing of ectoplasm for analysis subsequent to a promise by "Albert" that this would be done. At two later sittings further specimens were provided.

These specimens of ectoplasm were at first placed in distilled water at the request of "Albert" to prevent disintegration. At the time of writing they are still to be seen at 16, Queensberry Place, hermetically sealed and preserved in alcohol.

One of the most dramatic occurrences took place at the first of the sittings.

The Medium was dressed as described above and placed in a sack of strong material. A strong tape in slot opening at neck was attached, and a strong strand at each side at the line of the waist; the head only of the Medium protruded.

These tapes were tied to the chair and sealed. The tape at the neck was drawn as tightly as the Medium could conveniently bear, and carefully sealed.

During the sitting the Medium walked out of the cabinet in deep trance dressed in her special seance clothes but *without* the sack. She walked across the room trailing behind her a band of ectoplasm approximately four inches broad and three yards long. Walking close up to the light she paused for examination to be made within eight inches of the light in full view of everybody, and the substance was clearly seen to emanate from her nostrils.

The Medium did not return to the sack.

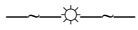
On examination the sack was found attached to the chair, each of the three seals unbroken, including the one at the neck.

At the end of two sittings the Medium was found securely bound by a rope, some four yards long, which had been provided. On one occasion it was found wound round the Medium's neck with a running noose—twice round the waist with several knots—round the ankles and finally taken up the back and tied very tightly round the wrists, binding the back of one hand into the palm of the other. The manner of binding was so tight that rapid cutting was necessary in order to release the Medium from discomfort and pain.

[40] The correct spelling is Stewart.

Similar binding of the Medium on the other occasion occurred while the Medium was bodily enclosed in the sack with head only protruding. It had been lashed and knotted round the Medium's body inside the sack.

On examination the seals were found to be unbroken on each occasion.



The first, and the quotes from the second abridged reports above, compared to their conclusion on July 17th, 1931, a few months later, of fraud and regurgitation, without doubt raises many questions, as of course it did at the time, given the quote from the second report of May 16th, where it is clearly noted:

> "It was clearly observed that, during the emergence and disappearance of the substance, no movement of the Medium's throat, neck or body was apparent. No muscular contractions suggesting swallowing or vomiting occurred."

However, one of the charges against the medium is made on May 29th, less than two weeks later—a complete reversal:

> "She opened her mouth and "ectoplasm" was extruded by obvious movements of the mouth and throat muscles", "After a few seconds the Medium, by movements of the lips and throat, sucked it back again."

Apart from Henry Duncan's claim of regurgitation one can understand the researcher's assumption and speculation as to how the results could be achieved by fraud, but nothing is mentioned. For example, the rather stringent restraints the research committee put into operation would not in themselves prevent regurgitation; however, the restrictions, for example, of the stiff buckram fingerless gauntlets [41] would make it difficult for the medium if regurgitation was the case, as the large amount of substance (as the alleged control, Albert, sometimes called it), long lengths and up to a metre wide, would be needed to be made usable after being regurgitated, whereas various accounts record the quick production of ectoplasm of the commencement of the experimental séances, though no explanation is given.

Further still:

The February 28th report as published in this article states:

> "She walked across the room trailing behind her a band of ectoplasm approximately four inches broad and three yards long. Walking close up to the light she paused for examination to be made within eight inches of the light in full view of everybody, and the substance was clearly seen to emanate from her nostrils."

Regurgitation from the nostrils?

The numerous reports mention that ectoplasm is seen in reasonably good light; there is no indication mentioned of any rents, warp and weft, dirty marks and selvedge as recorded and indicated on the photographs by the National Laboratory of Psychical Research. However, the concluding report of the LPL on July 17th mentions at one séance on May 29th, 1931: "The material when extruded showed signs of having been folded by compression"; the NLPR mentions and photographed a fold/crease in the material. The London Psychical Laboratory's report in *Light*, May 16th, 1931 mentions the ectoplasm:

[41] "Sittings with Mrs. Duncan", a further abridged report by LPL in Light May 16th 1931: "A further restriction has, however, been added lately at both kinds of sittings, by the Medium's hands being encased in stiff buckram fingerless gauntlets which are sewn to the sleeves of her suit. These make it impossible for the Medium's fingers (even if the hands move) to grasp anything through them.

"The production of "ectoplasm" has taken place at all sittings but varies in quantity from time to time. The ectoplasmic emanations usually issue from the mouth of the Medium.

"The substance is as a rule white, but may be sometimes described as grey or slate colour, and a few times has appeared a dark brown. It is mobile and seems to possess a sort of vitality. It bunches, folds and unfolds, divides into portions and joins up again.

"The "ectoplasm" has been produced in such quantities that the Medium when standing up has been covered over the head, round the shoulders, and over the whole of the body down to the feet. On two occasions it was produced while the Medium stood under the light."

Given the *claimed* composition of the alleged ectoplasm and the conclusion of the London Psychical Laboratory (LPL) that it was presented by means of regurgitation by Helen Duncan, it leaves a lot to be explained in their apparent contradictory reports, albeit one would hope that it was explained more fully in their own report. For example, the committee's earlier report on the alleged ectoplasm:

"It is mobile and seems to possess a sort of vitality. It bunches, folds and unfolds, divides into portions and joins up again."

Psypioneer published three of the First Series verbatim reports in Vol. 11, Nos. 10/11, and Vol. 12, Nos. 2 & 3. The second materialisation sitting was on October 30th, 1930 and one of the sitters was Sir Oliver Lodge; this is republished in Pioneer, Vol. 12, No. 2: "Notes of Second Materialization Sitting with Mrs Duncan on 30th October 1930 – LSA".

Sir Oliver Lodge was permitted by the alleged control, Albert, to hold the substance:

Sir Oliver Lodge went up to the medium and held the substance in his hand, and he and the sitters saw it gradually with a slightly wriggling motion withdraw, sliding slowly over his hands towards the position of the medium [and] disappear while he was holding it.

Later he was asked to go inside the cabinet with the medium.

Sir Oliver goes to the cabinet and feels the head of the medium.

SIR O.L. She is just asleep, she is rather in a perspiration. I don't see anything else about her. She was still completely enveloped in the sack.

Sir Oliver said that he saw no ectoplasm when he went to examine the medium.

ALBERT Ask Sir Oliver if he would like to come while the ectoplasm is here?

SIR O.L. Yes, I should.

ALBERT Well, I will prepare her.

Very heavy breathing is heard from the cabinet.

ALBERT (after a pause) You can come in now.

SIR O.L. (opening the curtain) I can see it coming from her mouth, it is like a bundle of strings. (Both times I felt it, it lay on my hand. The first time the visible part was about a foot long, the second time only a few inches. It was heavy, cold and clammy, its texture was like a number of the parallel threads forming the bundle two inches thick. It might have been separated out into strands. It was not like woven material but was stringy. A curiously unpleasant slight odour remained either on my hand or in my nostrils as an

occasional whiff for 12 hours afterwards. O.L.)

DR R. Warm? Clammy?

SIR O.L. No, it was drier than I expected.

DR R. Do you notice any smell?

SIR O.L. Yes, a kind of smell, but I don't know how to describe it, it is just like a lot of threads, there is no formation in it at all. Now it is beginning to go back into the mouth, I think.

Dr. Rust closes the curtains again and the medium is heard to be breathing heavily and groaning. Gramophone is playing.

SIR O.L. It does not leave anything on the fingers, it is fairly dry.

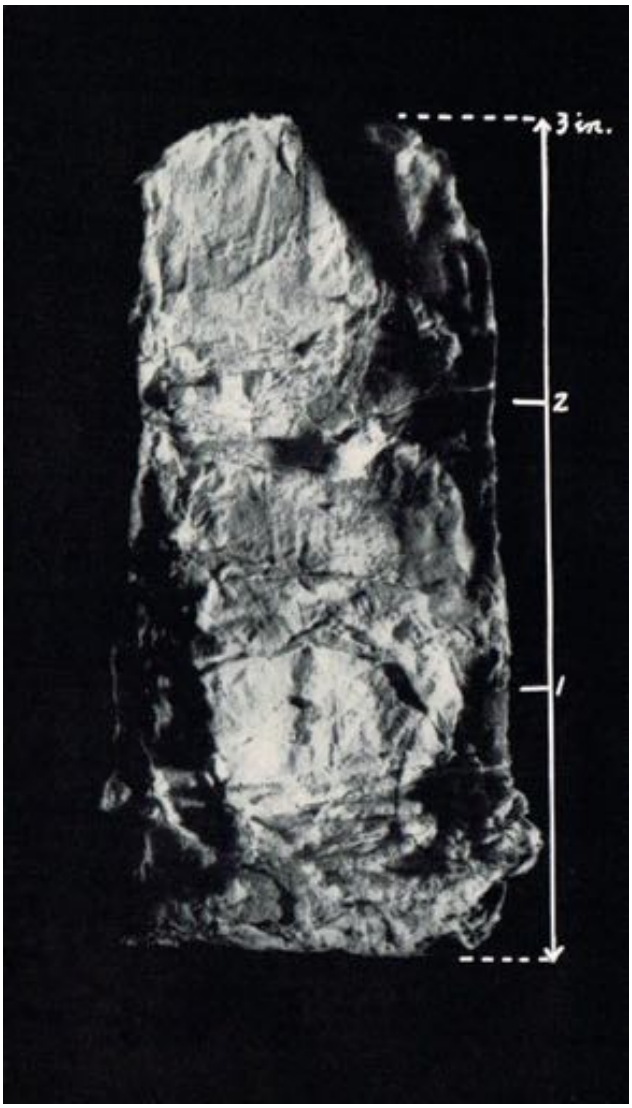
Gramophone still playing and medium's groans and uneasy breathing still heard.

What can be concluded?

What can be concluded? The article has shown how the two independent research organisations viewed some of their evidence, and both concluded *independently* that all the phenomena they witnessed under their own full conditions were produced by *normal* means. They both concluded that the teleplasm/ectoplasm was made up by man-made materials and that this was produced from the medium, Helen Duncan, by means of regurgitation. However, it cannot be stated categorically despite their claims that it was proven conclusively by any means. The medium was not *actually* caught in the act of fraud; this was pure speculation due to the results of the various teleplasm/ectoplasm samples given to both parties and no doubt the frustration of both parties at the infringement by the medium; after the most stringent precautions were put in place by both laboratories *against* the possibility of fraud, even so the medium still produced the teleplasm/ectoplasm or the cheesecloth-type material which they could not *explain* the production of.

The London Spiritualist Alliance Ltd.'s Research Department, the London Psychical Laboratory, had given good, positive abridged reports, the last one published in their journal, *Light*, on May 16th, 1931, as quoted in this article. Their last sitting with Helen Duncan was on June 12th, 1931; it was on this day either before or after the final controlled séance with the medium that her husband, Henry Duncan, asked to interview the Research Committee. He had been informed that day by the National Laboratory of Psychical Research Council's conclusion: "…that the effects we had witnessed were caused by regurgitation…" I suspect that it was at this point that the London Psychical Laboratory became aware that their contract of the *exclusive* séances with Helen Duncan had been broken by the Duncans, given Henry's statement to them to the effect that he had come to the conclusion that the "ectoplasm" was the result of his wife's regurgitation (as previously quoted).

One can imagine the frustration at the breaking of the contract in this way and the fact that the National Laboratory's Honorary Director Harry Price was earlier denied to have sat with Helen Duncan by the London Psychical Laboratory. This must have caused understandable distaste and anger within the LPL, given this situation. The reader may consider that this in part, and along with Mr Duncan's statement, may have reflected on their damning report and its conclusion of regurgitation without any mention to their (at least on the surface) reported positive results—with no hint of fraud!



Both the London Psychical Laboratory and the National Laboratory of Psychical Research show similar results from the samples of teleplasm/ectoplasm taken at the various stages of their experimental controlled seances: their submitted specimens for analysis showed basic everyday materials mixed with organic substances, e.g. coagulated white of egg. The following is one of the reports published in the NLPR Bulletin referred to earlier in this article. The sample was obtained on June 4th, 1931 at the fifth and last séance, as shown in the image [42]. In short, the teleplasm was cut off. Albert asked surgeon Dr X to perform the task but when Dr X made the cut the medium moved and the scissors slipped. Still firmly holding the teleplasm, Duncan moved her head again and the piece in his hand came away; it tore across and Duncan gave one or two little screams. The remainder went back into her mouth. Dr X explained: "It was exactly like tearing a wad of damp paper." He immediately dropped it into a jar of absolute alcohol – a tiny portion placed in water.

The official analysis was undertaken by Messrs Sindall and Bacon, Consulting Chemists, London. It was collected on June 9th from the National Laboratory by Mr William Brown; his preliminary remarks on collection were that it was folded layers of paper. On June 17th, 1931 it is noted on page 78 of the NLPR Bulletin:

ANALYST'S REPORT ON THE PAPER 'TELEPLASM'

June 17th, 1931

I have now received the official report from Messrs. Sindall and Bacon as to the analysis of the piece of 'teleplasm' which Mr. Bacon removed from the Laboratory.

Mr. Bacon confirms his preliminary opinion that the stuff is merely a cheap kind of paper containing 40 per cent. mechanical wood pulp, and 60 per cent. chemical wood pulp. As Mr. Bacon points out, the medullary rays can be seen in the microscopic slide he prepared of our specimen, and in the slide of a special paper he made up as a control slide to the original. Both of these slides are in the possession of the Laboratory. The medullary rays, I should add, are the vertical bands or plates of cellular (parenchymatous) tissue proceeding from the pith to the surface.

Mr. Bacon kindly prepared photomicrographs (x 120) from the slides of both our specimen and that of the wood pulp mixture which he produced as a 'control'. These photomicrographs are reproduced in Plate XXVII. To all intents and purposes, these photomicrographs are identical. The bonding used to stick the folds of paper together was egg albumen, *i.e.*, white of egg. Here is Messrs. Sindall and Bacon's report:

[42] "Length 75 mm (3 inches), Width at Base, 34 mm, Width at Top End, 30 mm, Thickness 1.5 mm., Average Weight, 36 Grains".

27, Walbrook,
London, E.C.4.
June 16th, 1931

HARRY Price, Esq.,

The National Laboratory of Psychical Research,

13d, Roland Gardens, S.W.7.

Dear Sir,

Confirming the report that I made at your Laboratory on the 9th inst., the analysis of the sample of paper handed to me is as follows : —

Mechanical ground wood pulp 40%

Chemical wood pulp consisting of sulphite and soda wood 60%

I have had a sample made up approximating to the above composition for the purpose of having photomicrographs for comparison. The prints show the papers to be practically identical in character and medullary rays can be seen quite plainly in both specimens.

The sample of paper handed to me appeared to be of a class known as M.G. Cap Printing and the binding medium used to prevent the paper disintegrating when swallowed I find to be Egg Albumen.

Yours faithfully,

(Signed) WILLIAM BACON.

—~—☼—~—

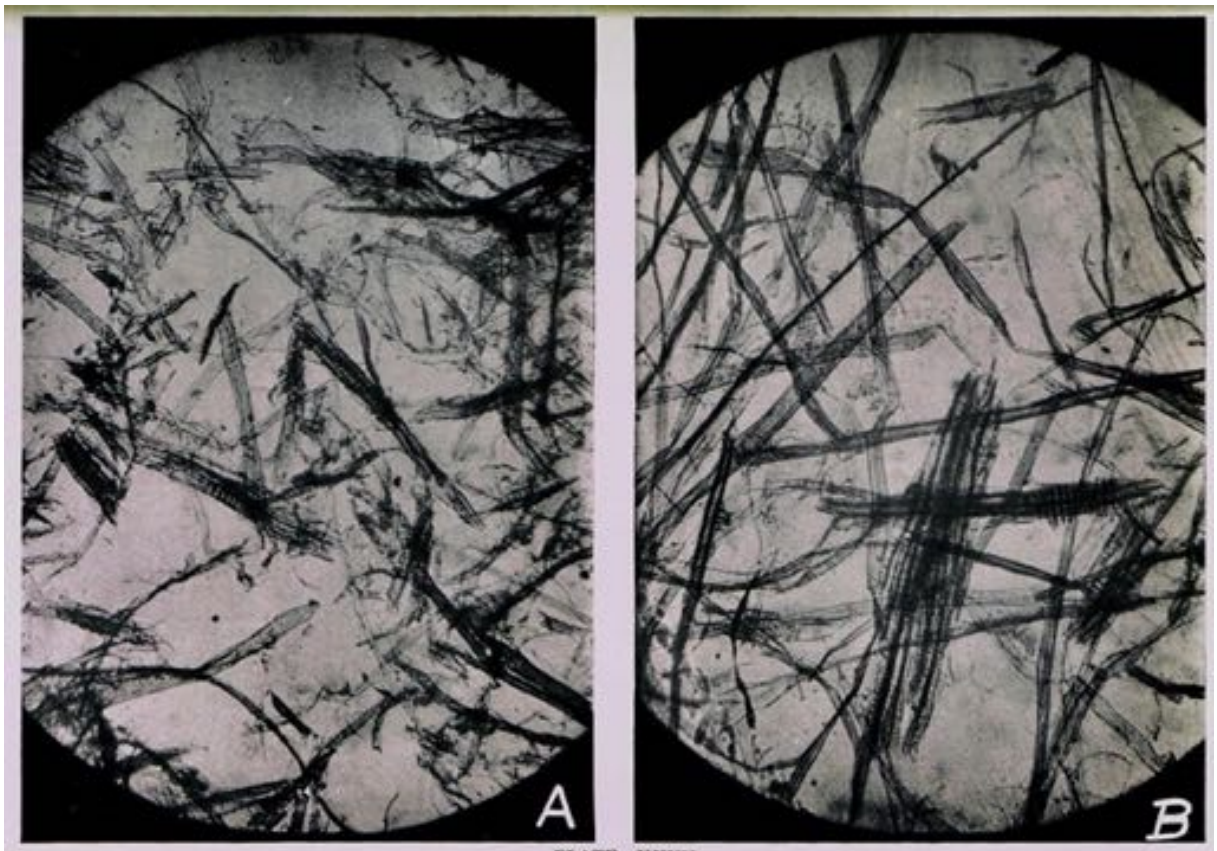


PLATE XXVII

Photomicrographs (x 120) of *A*, the paper 'teleplasm' secured from Mrs. Duncan on June 4th, 1931, and *B*, control mixture of 60% chemical and 40% mechanical wood pulp. The fibres, medullary rays, etc., are identical in both photographs

We can note in Mr Duncan's interview his possible explanations of the three types, or stages, of the ectoplasmic substance which exuded from his wife. The first is the *paper—wood pulp* type, as analysed by Sindall and Bacon, Consulting Chemists, London. The second was categorised by the National Laboratory as the *white-of-egg—albuminoid* type. The laboratory somehow obtained a sample from the London Psychical Laboratory at the conclusion of a séance. Mr Duncan stated that a damp object was between the medium's chest and the garment into which she had been sewn; this was verified by all who were present and this was removed with a pair of forceps. The portion of alleged teleplasm was in the form of a strip around five inches long, its appearance like some sort of tissue; it was placed in distilled water and afterwards cut into pieces.

The National Laboratory received the specimen on January 7th, 1931 in a two-ounce bottle and noted that it was a pity it had not been immediately immersed in absolute alcohol or a formalin solution. Harry Price, its Honorary Director, described the sample:

> "In appearance the substance was amorphous, greyish-white tissue, apparently of a gelatinous nature, with many small fragments which had become detached from the mass. It appeared slightly fibrous. In size, it was roughly 20 mm. square and 3 mm. thick. It weighed, with the surface water adhering to it, 3.5 grams. To the touch it felt spongy and rather slimy, like hard-boiled white of egg."

This was to be analysed by the National Laboratory, with Messrs. C. Baker, of Holborn, a well-known optical instrument manufacturer, and microscopists prepared slides of the substance. A portion was given to Dr X, a distinguished London consulting and analytical chemist, for analysis (not the same Dr X who cut off the teleplasm). The National Laboratory was not at liberty to reveal his name without permission, given the nature of the claimed teleplasm, and the chemist wanted no association with its connection. The bottom line of the report was:

> "You will notice that I have found some facts, namely, the conjunction of protein, iron chloride, and sulphate, and I have given you some additional information as the properties of such mixtures. I do not say positively, however, that the protein in the specimen brought to me was white of egg." [43]

The National Laboratory, namely Mr Price, on page 95 of its Bulletin report gives details of how the Laboratory produced a strip of 'synthetic teleplasm' of *white-of-egg—albuminoid* type similar in appearance and makeup to the portion they had received from the Duncan séance. This was made up of the following substances in varying proportions: white of a new-laid egg, ferric chloride, phosphoric acid, stale urine thickened with Nelson's gelatin, and hot acid from olive oil. Any interested reader who wishes the full reports should contact me, as owing to space I cannot publish them in full here.

Very few specimens of any ectoplasmic substance have been obtained by researchers but, in the case of those whom I am aware of, the reports of its makeup are of similar composition, i.e. paper-based. There have been numerous decades of warnings by Spiritualists that it is dangerous for a medium to have ectoplasmic substance taken, and the said substance would disappear in white light as a general rule. The medium is said to be at high risk of serious injury and even death if the substance is grabbed or touched without permission from the spirit control, and the National Laboratory had a commendable general policy not to seize teleplasm without the medium's permission. The warning of death and/or serious injury to the medium dates back to a statement made by the alleged spirit Katie King circa 1873/4, whose

[43] I have noted in the article that the LPL had another specimen examined; the analyst report dated February 9th, 1931 states: "We have made a very careful examination of the material which was submitted to us and we are of the opinion that it consists of paper, cloth, and such everyday materials mixed with an organic substance which is in every respect similar to coagulated white of egg."

materialisation through her medium, Florence Cook, was dramatically seized twice, as were other numerous famous mediums of the period, without any serious injury, etc. [44]

The third stage of the teleplasm is the *cheesecloth* type or, as it was suggested by Mr Duncan:

> "The third stage is of muslin-like texture. … Sometimes it is thick in places and at other times very thin, and it has the appearance, under the light, of being like muslin. On some occasions, I have witnessed what you refer to as a selvedge, and it appeared to be, when felt, like a curtain—rough."

It can be clearly noted that the first two so-called stages of the teleplasm (*paper—wood pulp*, then the spongy *white-of-egg—albuminoid*) were nothing like the appearance of the third stage (*cheese-cloth*—muslin-like texture). So we may ask how one accounts for Sir Oliver Lodge's clear comments when he attended the séance at the LSA on 30th October, 1930; he noted:

> SIR O.L. (opening the curtain) I can see it coming from her mouth, it is like a bundle of strings. (Both times I felt it, it lay on my hand. The first time the visible part was about a foot long, the second time only a few inches. It was heavy, cold and clammy, its texture was like a number of the parallel threads forming the bundle two inches thick. It might have been separated out into strands. It was not like woven material but was stringy. A curiously unpleasant slight odour remained either on my hand or in my nostrils as an occasional whiff for 12 hours afterwards.
>
> DR R. Warm? Clammy?
>
> SIR O.L. No, it was drier than I expected.
>
> DR R. Do you notice any smell?
>
> SIR O.L. Yes, a kind of smell, but I don't know how to describe it, it is just like a lot of threads, there is no formation in it at all. Now it is beginning to go back into the mouth, I think.

As previously noted, Sir Oliver had nothing to do with Spiritualism, but he was an experienced psychical researcher along with the many eminent persons named in this article. It may be suggested, on the *positive* side, that the above quote is the start of the transformation from stage two to stage three in the structure of the plasm! Its formation in Lodge's brief but detailed first-hand recorded description is in itself impressive and is not recorded in any positive light by either of the two laboratories' conclusions.

After the first Duncan sitting at the National Laboratory on May 4th, 1931 its Notes, Comments and Impressions of the séance, dated May 9th, 1931, notes on pages 20-26:

> The reader will see from the protocol that 'teleplasm' (this is a convenient name to call it—at present we do not know what it is) appeared after we had tied up the medium a second time. It likewise disappeared. A long stream of it was produced, like a bride's veil twisted into a rope.
>
> "The teleplasm appeared many times and in many shapes. It fell in a long festoon from the medium's mouth and nostrils; it coiled itself and squirmed upon the floor; it entangled itself round the chair; it came out of the cabinet to my feet; it appeared like a large veil completely covering the bulky form of the medium except for a slit in front of the mouth; it shortened itself and lengthened itself; it twisted itself up into a short, thick rope, slightly damp and with an odour. Of course, all these transformations were caused

[44] See the Pioneer pdf booklet: "A Question of Fraud" (details on the last page of this issue).

by the medium who was manipulating it. Sometimes it appeared semi-transparent and with a sheen; sometimes it appeared opaque."

"But the production of teleplasm was so frequent, and the stuff was in view for such long periods, that the exact timing of the various appearances was no longer a necessity. On and off, the substance was in view for one and a half hours." [45]

As with much of the reports there is little explanation as to *how this was done*. "Of course, all these transformations were caused by the medium who was manipulating it." Was the medium *actually* caught doing this, seen by one or more of the researchers? It would be very doubtful, as it would have been no doubt in the conclusion's report. But in the following paragraph the above quote is *further* downgraded:

"In the protocol it is stated that the teleplasm was 'issuing from her mouth', 'coming from her nostrils', etc. This is a little misleading, and is of course what was dictated. Actually, we did *not* see it coming in a stream from the medium's facial orifices as the protocol suggests. It was exactly as if it had been placed in the mouth and ends tucked into the nostrils."

The photographs, some shown within this article, of the *cheesecloth*-type teleplasm or, as Mr Duncan put it, muslin-like texture, speak for themselves. The photographs were taken at the second, third and fourth sittings and it seems apparent that the same *cheesecloth*-type material was used in two, if not all three, photographed séances, together with the rubber glove, some form of tubing and safety-pins, which were all photographed. The problems of explanation were confronted with some amazement by the NLPR Council; it can be noted in their report:

> Although we have concluded the investigation of the Duncan mediumship to our entire satisfaction, several things are still puzzling us. One is why these people ever came to the Laboratory at all, entirely of their own volition. Secondly, why did they allow us to photograph the series of cheese cloth *tableaux?* Thirdly, why did Albert hand us out a piece of egg bag or toilet paper and tell us it was teleplasm? Why were we permitted to photograph a safety-pin? And a rubber glove, complete with glint? And why did the medium *dare* to pirouette among us, in a bright light, with a teleplasmic tail trailing round our feet? We have been accused of being 'too proud to pinch'—but even then, the medium ran a great risk of the stuff accidentally catching in something and finding herself back in the cabinet minus a yard or two of cheese cloth. It is all very puzzling.
>
> A distinguished psychist who read the MS. of this Report said that it will put psychical research back fifty years. But I am sure he is mistaken—at least, I sincerely hope so. Every case must be judged on its merits, and certainly there has been no other mediumship quite like the Duncans', which is destined to become classic.

—~—☼—~—

[45] In the same report: "An amazing feature of Mrs. Duncan's mediumship is the fact that, in the bright light I have described, the psychic comes out into the circle, with several feet of teleplasm trailing behind her, and the stuff never gets caught up in the sitters' feet, and the medium never treads upon it. Even young *débutantes* have to be taught or coached how to carry their train; one would imagine that it would be no less difficult to manage a 'train' of teleplasm under all sorts of changing conditions."

I have tried to put as much information into this article as possible, which has inevitably led to some of the points being repeated. But the surface, I believe, has been scratched well enough for the reader to gain some factual insight into, and knowledge of, the nine decades of the accusations that Helen Duncan used the artificial homemade teleplasm-ectoplasm which she would later regurgitate when required to materialise spirits. The so-called third stage process in the production of the *cheesecloth*-type teleplasm was not offered to the researchers of the NLPR as a sample for analysis by the alleged control, Albert Stewart.[46]

However, the *physical* evidence of analysts and photographic material cannot be denied in itself—circumstantial evidence resulting in a roller-coaster of contradictions, speculation and assumptions made by some researchers, albeit we should be mindful of the extreme difficulties the investigators faced in the case of the Duncans. But is the claim of fraud justified? One may well presume their claim is unjust and is *not* proven, given that *no* items she is said to have *concealed* and used as props, e.g. yards of some cheesecloth-like material, rubber glove, etc. were recovered—nor could they satisfactorily explain how these were produced by *normal* means after all the controls imposed by the NLPR and the LPL, with Duncan stripped naked, full body searches, and the medium severely restricted in her movements. Is it not the researcher's duty presumably to prove beyond reasonable doubt the means of fraud rather than conjecture?

However, of course, in a court of law one can be found guilty with circumstantial evidence if it is overwhelming—I leave it to the reader to decide whether the evidence would be enough to prove regurgitation. One of the National Laboratory researchers was Professor William McDougall, an eminent British psychologist, who in a court of law would be regarded as a *sceptical* researcher; it was McDougall who suggested to the NLPR Council after the first séance the possibility of regurgitation by the medium. He attended two of the five séances and his impressions are without doubt: **a charge of fraud!**

The following was published in the NLPR Bulletin (Appendix F):

> Having been present at two sittings with the medium, Mrs. Duncan, at the National Laboratory of Psychical Research, on the invitation of Mr. Harry Price, I record that my impression during and after the sittings was that the whole performance was fraudulent. The manner of secreting and producing, for exposure in red light, the material claimed as teleplasm was not clear to me.
>
> On the first occasion I suspected an *æsophageal diverticulum*; on the second, Dr. William Brown's observations [47] led me to suppose the material might have been packed in the nostrils and nasal cavities.
>
> My general comment is, that here is another case which justifies the general principle that, when the general procedure and circumstances demanded by the medium are such as

[46] The LPL reported some cotton fibres in their analysed report: "The report on the fourth fragment (received in a prepared sterile container) was as follows: "The specimen consisted of a piece of surgical gauze soaked in resinous fluid. The gauze consisted of typical cotton fibers. The resinous fluid had the odour of Canada Balsam or one of the pine resins." (April 10, 1931) - The report on the fifth fragment (April 15, 1931) was in similar terms."

[47] Dr. William Brown attended three of the Duncan séances and noted (Appendix G):

"I was able to take part in May and June last, I never for one moment felt that the phenomena she produced were supernormal.

The so-called 'ectoplasm' or 'teleplasm' which she seemed to produce (behind closed curtains) in the first two sittings was apparently a long strip of light fabric, which she may have previously swallowed and then regurgitated, or—more probably—have concealed during the previous search by clever prestidigitation. On the third and last occasion the preliminary search of the medium was exceptionally thorough, and on this occasion, as I anticipated, she produced nothing more than a very short piece of stuff which was probably regurgitated paper."

suggest fraud and favour fraud, the observer is justified in regarding the phenomena as fraudulent—even if he is not able to suggest any plausible explanation of the phenomena; and, still less, to demonstrate the truth of any hypothesis he may entertain as to the manner of their fraudulent production.

July 12th, 1931 (Signed) WILLIAM McDOUGALL.

There is little here, I would suggest, to pronounce such a positive conclusion of fraud which could be responsibly made from these eminent men of science. It can be further noted at the first séance on May 4th, 1931 that Professor McDougall himself carefully examined the medium for any secreted items Mrs Duncan could use:

"The medium and her husband arrived punctually at 7.30 p.m., and were introduced to a number of our Research Council who were present, including Professor Dr. William McDougall, F.R.S., the distinguished psychologist, who was spending a long vacation in England after his strenuous work at Duke University, U.S.A.

"*Fore control.* —At her own suggestion, Mrs. Duncan offered to strip entirely nude and subject herself to any examination. This she did in my office in the presence of Mrs. A. Peel Goldney, a member of the National Laboratory Research Council (who has worked in a large midwifery hospital), Professor McDougall, and the present writer [Harry Price]. Mr. Duncan was not in the room during the examination.

Mrs. Duncan was thoroughly examined externally, and Professor McDougall (who holds a medical degree) very carefully examined her throat, mouth, and teeth. Everything appeared normal. Mrs. Goldney combed her (bobbed) hair in order to see that nothing was concealed there. No vaginal inspection was made, though I understood that the medium would have permitted this, had we expressed the desire."

"Having thoroughly examined the medium's body externally, we dressed her in a pair of black sateen knickers, a coat (like a man's) made of the same material, and a pair of black stockings. These garments belonged to the medium, and were brought in case we had no similar clothes large enough. All these articles were minutely examined, turned inside out, and held up to the light. They were exactly what they purported to be. The medium donned them in our presence, consumed a glass of water, and was led into the *séance*-room by Professor McDougall and myself. The sitters (including Mr. Duncan) had already taken their places. We led her to the 'cabinet', placed her in an arm-chair in the recess, closed the curtains, and in fifteen seconds the medium was apparently asleep and quietly snoring."

The sole purpose of this article is not to show whether or not Helen Duncan was genuine or a fraud but to give the reader an informed opinion of the long-standing allegations of regurgitation. We can see the long-standing Spiritualists' claim that it was *all* down to Harry Price, but it *was* actually the opinion of two separate organisations, as well as the medium's husband to some extent, which brought about the, albeit unproved, claim of regurgitation against the medium. It is true, however, that in the following years Harry Price would stick to this explanation and become the medium's nemesis.

Of course, what is not taken into *any* consideration in these reports is the Spiritualists' side of the story or hypothesising other possibilities of explanation. Given that we do not know the full makeup of what is generally referred to as ectoplasm, it has over many decades been referred to as semi-physical. Ectoplasm, for want of a generally accepted term, is taken *mostly* from the medium, an extension of their life-force—called psychic force in the days of William Crookes—in the process of materialisation, which demands possibly more fluids than other physical mediumship, and is, in part, said to be taken and added to from elsewhere.

The first full-form materialisation medium in Britain was Florence Cook. The spirit which is said to have materialised was Annie Morgan, better known as Katie King (Jr). At this early stage of this new phase of phenomena questions were put to the spirit on November 28th, 1873: [48]

> "Katie says she makes this draper out of mater obtained from the dresses of all the sitters in the circle. She says that when she is forming herself she materialises the drapery fist, and her own body afterwards: …"
>
> "When you dissolve, which part disappears the first, the body or the dress?" "The body, of course; it's material power goes back to her and then the dress goes into the elements"

It is well established that materialisation mediums have, in the past, struggled to produce enough drapery; for example, Duncan's materialisations generally had no feet, the bottom parts of the legs being missing. Another medium was the Polish physical medium, Franek Kluski, sometimes referred to as the "King of Mediums". Born in Warsaw in 1873, he was unique. From around 1918 to 1925, he gave psychic science some of the most puzzling evidence on record with his wide spectrum of physical mediumship. He did not give public séances and never charged for private seances, and only sat for around 350 people, generally psychical researchers such as Professor Charles Richet, Dr Gustave Geley and Colonel Norbert Okolowicz, so there are records of his seances. His final period, 1921/1925, was his most powerful phase of physical mediumship—producing better materialisations of human spirits. [49]

He was one of the first mediums to show ectoplasm coming from his body, unlike earlier mediums such as Florence Cook, Annie Mellon, Kate Woods, etc. It was reported that a "fluid" emanated from Kluski frequently like a stream, a metre wide, of human height; some of the materialisations looked like cardboard or made with rags and were preceded by sounds of rubbing cardboard or fabric, tearing of paper—but never a trace of paper, etc. was found after the séance. The forms would often have problems dressing themselves, rubbing various objects prior to full materialisation—transforming the "raw material" into what was required, e.g. an officer's materialisation had a clearly detailed military cap but the uniform would be a blur, vaguely resembling the medium's clothes. However, when attention was paid to the uniform the materialisation would grow one.

Officers in Russian uniforms appeared; the Officers present at the séance felt their epaulettes and buttons being rubbed and after the materialised forms buttons and epaulettes would shine. The materialised forms rubbed against the sitters, and Kluski in particular. After the séance, their clothes showed signs of wear; sometimes the figures approached the sitters and vigorously rubbed their shoulders and back, causing intense physical and mental exhaustion to the persons involved; the result of this, however, was the materialised form being very clear and fully visible. The materialised form would target the young, healthy sitters—avoiding the elderly and those who had consumed alcohol prior to the séance.

This is only a candid overview in my own words but it gives some idea of how Kluski's drapery was formed, like Florence Cook, who would get her materials from this world to make the clothing! The researchers investigating Helen Duncan claimed her as a fraud on the grounds of the man-made ectoplasm/teleplasm, assuming that she secreted it on her body either externally or internally and then regurgitated it when required. However, apart from what the two research laboratories were given by Albert, naturally knowing that the

---

[48] Published in "The Spiritualist Newspaper", dated December 12th, 1873; for the full account please see the Pioneer pdf booklet, "A Question of Fraud" (details are on the back page of this issue).

[49] See Pioneer, Vol. 6, No.3: "Franek Kluski".

researchers would rigorously test the specimens, *not* a trace of the three categories of ectoplasm/teleplasm were found by the researchers!

Some readers may wonder why no full materialisations appeared in the investigations, given the report published in Pioneer, Vol. 2, No. 3: "Helen Duncan & John McIndoe – A Scots Materialising Medium"; the report was around a year prior to going to the London Spiritualists Alliance (LSA):

> "Soon another voice is heard calling "Mother" and a young girl emerged from the curtains, came over and spoke to one of the new lady sitters, who recognised her as her daughter. She conversed with her in a low tone, apparently giving a comforting message, and handed her mother a rose, taken from a bunch placed in the cabinet.
>
> "Then another girl form of different build took her place, coming from the other side of the cabinet, and was claimed as her sister by one of the ladies. She also brought a rose with her."

It is not often realised that the alleged Albert Stewart was *not* then Duncan's control (perhaps in the background but not named); there were around three before Albert, who appears to have taken over circa 1930. At the time of the 1930/31 investigations it appears that he was using the medium's vocal cords, whereas later reports show that he was an independent materialisation with his own voice-box. Later, full materialisations would appear with Albert in full control; perhaps, on a *positive* note, the change of controls affected the intensive controlled séances.

Victoria Helen McCrae Duncan
(née MacFarlane)

November 25th, 1897 – December 6th, 1956

Mrs Rose Champion de Crespigny

Mrs de Crespigny was without doubt a central figure in Spiritualism during the 1930s, a time when the various London societies were flourishing, a time when Spiritualism was in high demand with large public demonstrations. Two of these Spiritualist societies remain today; the oldest is the Marylebone Spiritualist Association (MSA), when on February 7th, 1872 about a dozen friends met at 16, David Street, Marylebone (on the site of which now stands Portman Mansions) and discussed the question of forming a Spiritualistic Society. On February 24th, 1960 its name was changed to the Spiritualist Association of Great Britain (SAGB). [5] The second oldest surviving Spiritualist organisation was the London Spiritualist Alliance (LSA). The name was changed to the College of Psychic Science on 31st January, 1955 and then to the College of Psychic Studies (CPS) in 1970, and remains so today. [6]

The editor of *Light*, the LSA's in-house, then a weekly, journal, George Lethem, announced on February 14th, 1935: "Mrs. De Crespigny: Transition of a Leader of Spiritualism"; below is a short quote from the full article published in Psypioneer, Vol. 1, No. 20: "Mrs De Crespigny and the British College Of Psychic Science":

> "SPIRITUALISM has suffered a great loss – on the earth side of its activities – by the transition of Mrs. Philip Champion de Crespigny, Hon. Principal of the British College of Psychic Science, which took place on Sunday afternoon (February 10th), after a short illness. The funeral takes place tomorrow (Friday, February 15th), at 11.30 a.m., at Golders Green Crematorium.
>
> "Sunday evening next (February 17th), the Marylebone Spiritualist Association meeting at Queen's Hall, London, will be conducted, in co-operation with the British College, as a memorial service for Mrs. De Crespigny, who was a vice-president of the M.S.A., and a frequent speaker at the Queen's Hall and other meetings. Mr. George Craze, president, will be in the chair, and, with Mr. Ernest Hunt, will speak for the Association; and Mrs. Hewat McKenzie, joint founder (with Mr. Hewat McKenzie) of the British College of Psychic Science, will speak for the College. The meeting begins at 7 o'clock.
>
> "Mrs. de Crespigny was an authoress of repute; and, in addition to her Spiritualist activities (which took her all over the country at frequent intervals), she took a very keen interest in literary societies and gatherings. She wrote a number of novels and detective stories, which had considerable success. [7] Her latest book was autobiographical and was entitled This World and Beyond.

---

[5] See Pioneer, Vol. 6, No. 1: "Visit to the Spiritualist Association of Great Britain".

[6] Further information can be found in the lead article of this issue: "The early years to establish a national organisation". Further, in Pioneer, Vol. 3, No. 3: "Visit to the College of Psychic Studies".

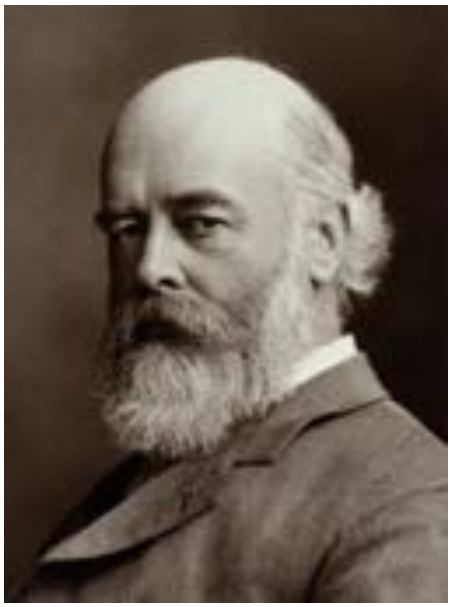
[7] She was also an accomplished artist of some repute; some of her work can be seen online.

"Mrs. de Crespigny was a daughter of Admiral the Rt. Hon. Sir Astley Cooper Key, G.C.B., who was for a period First Sea Lord. She was married whilst still in her teens to Lt. Philip de Crespigny, R.N., second son of Sir Claud de Crespigny, the third baronet, but had long been a widow. She was chairman of the Psychic Research Circle founded by her at the Lyceum Club, and was on the Council of the Authors' Society."

In April 1920 James Hewat McKenzie founded the British College of Psychic Science (not to be confused with the post-war College of Psychic Science). McKenzie died on August 29th, 1929 but the BCPS continued with great success, largely due to his wife, Barbara McKenzie, and many of its active workers. On January 1st, 1939 the College combined with the International Institute for Psychical Research, changing their name to the International Institute for Psychical Investigation. [8] In 1947 the College closed; it appears that with the outbreak of war the organisation had a difficult time and its library and records are said to have been lost or destroyed by bombing and the IIPI collapsed. [9]

Noted above in Mrs. de Crespigny's obituary is a reference to: "Her latest book was autobiographical and was entitled This World and Beyond." It was published by Cassell & Co. Ltd in the year of her death, 1934, and Sir Oliver Lodge wrote the Foreword, dated May 8th of the same year. I will quote some of her recorded experiences below; firstly, this is what Sir Oliver Lodge said:

FOREWORD
by
Sir Oliver Lodge



MY friend Mrs. de Crespigny has asked me to write an introduction to her book on the Beyond. She is so well-known that it seems to me quite unnecessary, but assuming it is any help, I agree. The book is practically an autobiography, and relates her struggles with scepticism at the beginning, until an interview with Mrs. Etta Wriedt of Detroit opened her eyes to the truth. Mrs. De Crespigny had what may be called a scientific bringing up, which rendered her rather specially sceptical; but she had a mind that was open, and the evidence was too strong. Mrs. Wriedt is a good medium, with whom I have had sittings myself, her special phenomenon being what is called "the direct voice," which sometimes was so loud that, when sitting with the windows open, as Mr. Appleyard of Sheffield testifies, people walking in the road stopped outside the railings sometimes to listen to what was going on.

Mrs. de Crespigny's father was President of the Royal Naval College at Greenwich, and First Sea-Lord of the Admiralty, and was made an F.R.S. She received ultimately very convincing messages both from her father and her husband, of which she tells. The

[8] See Psypioneer, Vol. 7, No. 2: "Amalgamation of the British College of Psychic Science and the International Institute for Psychical Research Under the Name of the International Institute for Psychic Investigation".

[9] For further information on the British College of Psychic Science, please see Psypioneer, Vol. 3, No. 8: "A Knight Errant of Psychic Science: James Hewat McKenzie".

result is that she has devoted her life to the work, has accepted the Honorary Principalship of the Psychic College, at 15, Queen's Gate, where she continues to do good work.

One episode in the book bears on a much controverted subject. She went through the Fire Test, and relates her experience,—it is a thing for which Crookes' testimony is very good, though the extraordinary nature of the phenomenon makes it difficult to believe without confirmatory evidence, which is here forthcoming. But the whole book represents the passage from incredulity to conviction, not only about survival, but about many other more unlikely things; and I commend it to anyone interested or willing to allow their mind to become interested in a subject which in spite of a growing tendency towards open-mindedness is still too much taboo.

But Mrs. de Crespigny has many ideas, some of which sound extraordinary but have a bearing on deep questions of Theology. She has expressed some of these to lofty spirits on the other side and has received from them approbation to a surprising extent. The most striking of these she narrates at the end of this book, and those who know the reverence usually felt for a personality as high as "Imperator" [10] may well be astonished at her recorded replies, yet they will feel it is a genuine record. Perhaps there may be truth in other modes of expression arrived at by the intuition to which she lays some claim.

8th May, 1934.

Oliver Lodge.

Mrs de Crespigny's initial turning point to the acceptance of *survival after death* was her investigation in 1914, where we find her attending her first séance for the direct/independent voice with Mrs Etta Wriedt, of Detroit, then on a visit to London. She was introduced anonymously by a Theosophist acquaintance who was also a Spiritualist, Col. Johnson. Mrs de Crespigny exhibits all the hallmarks of the comment made by Sir Oliver Lodge regarding her *scientific bringing up, which rendered her rather specially sceptical*. The report below shows her cautious and critical approach to all the possibilities, which may account for her sittings with the medium, taken from pages 84/98:

Then, not long before the machines of war ripped their way through the peace of nations, and turned life into temporary chaos, I met Mrs. Etta Wriedt.

It was in May 1914 !

Everyone with any knowledge of this subject of psychic research knows Mrs. Wriedt as a celebrated medium for the direct voice. Her home is in Detroit, but at one time she spent a great deal of time in London and was well-known to all the prominent pioneers of the moment at that time. To her I owe one of the greatest privileges of my life—my first introduction to Sir Oliver Lodge, who has many a time extended a helping hand

[10] Please see Psypioneer, Vol. 8, Nos. 3/4: "The "Controls" of Stainton Moses ("M.A. Oxon.") – A.W. Trethewy".

when I have been floundering in doubt or difficulty.

I was introduced to Mrs. Wriedt by a man who at the time was a mere acquaintance, afterwards developing into an intimate friend—the late Colonel E. R. Johnson, who knew nothing of my life in the past, had never met my husband and who first mentioned Mrs. Wriedt's name to me in casual conversation.

I may as well confess at once that I was full of prejudice; no objections on principle, nor disbelief in the possibility of communication; but I was "up against" mediums in any form, connecting them with fraud, hoaxes and audiences of credulous people ready to swallow anything that came along, which latter is an attitude often adopted by persons toward others who happen to believe something they themselves do not!

All I can say in extenuation is that I took the means at hand to correct these erroneous conclusions, and quickly realized that I was faced with a marvellous truth that every sense I possessed of logic, understanding and reason told me was fundamental and had been there waiting for man to open the door to it ever since the world began.

I had disliked the very word *medium*, although now I know no other term so aptly describes the living organism that appears to be the link between physical, etheric and astral conditions—the intermediary wave-length that can contact both worlds. Every known force in nature requires a medium through which it can make itself manifest; without it our senses are unaware of its existence. Electricity, magnetism, gravitation must have a means of manifestation. Séances, sittings, circles were all terms which in my ignorance were the expression of the entire gamut of trickery and imposition; but in spite of that I was ever conscious of the inborn conviction that somewhere lay the clue to communication between ourselves and those who had passed on to another world—a common-sense world of some kind, unconnected with harps and wings, and that if we could only put our hand on the key we could open the door. It was something impossible to put into words—an echo perhaps that clung to me and had come with me into this life from somewhere else?

So, as I was always ready for adventure, I felt the experiment could do no harm even if it led to nowhere; through the kind offices of Colonel Johnson a sitting was arranged, my name being kept in the background, and on a fine bright day in May I found myself at a house in Wimbledon which I learnt later had once belonged to Mr. W. T. Stead.

The knowledge of technical procedure in psychical research has so advanced during the last twenty years, and experiences in the séance-room become so widespread that it seems superfluous to go into a detailed description of the conditions under which my first séance was held; but as I hope to interest readers who perhaps have not been able to gain first-hand experience for themselves, I will give a brief description of the technical differences between a "direct voice" séance and that of the variety known as "trance."

Etta Wriedt never went into trance, so far as I know. She remained throughout the sitting her fully conscious self, entering into the conversations in her ordinary voice, remembering afterwards all that had taken place, and on many occasions overlapping with her own conversation the voices of communicators trying to "come through."

On this first occasion we were alone, in a large room empty of furniture beyond the chairs we sat on—I think there was a sofa in one corner of the room—with a distance of five or six feet between us, and the aluminium trumpet—used to assist those operating on the other side in concentrating the vibrations, as a megaphone is used here—at my feet between myself and Mrs. Wriedt.

The room was darkened, an essential with this medium in obtaining the best results; for the same reason that a wireless message will travel considerably farther at night than

in the daytime. The action of light has a destructive effect on ectoplasm and all phenomena dependent upon the use of it, and as the movements of the trumpet and no doubt the "larynx" formed by the unseen operators and instrumental in the transmission of the voices involve the use of this tenuous substance thrown out by the physical body, darkness is the greatest assistance in this form of demonstration.

At the same time the phenomenon has been produced in my own room when conditions made it impossible to exclude the light completely, and I have seen the levitation and movement of the trumpet take place without human contact of any kind.

Mrs. Murphy Lydy, a direct voice medium also well-known in America, produced the voice success fully in full daylight.

It was rather a weird experience, sitting in the pitch dark with a total stranger waiting for—I hardly knew what !

But once the communications began the commonplaceness of the situation and the voices robbed the phenomenon of any feeling of ghostliness or uncanniness. I did not recognize the voices, but the explanation of that is simple enough. The difference in tone of *physical* voices is due to the formation of the organs through which they are produced, and as these organs disintegrate with the physical body, the physical voice as we knew it can never be counted on in the different conditions. Some people, I believe, do recognize some of the voices that come through, but I say frankly I have never done so. Mannerisms, tricks in expression and so on continue and can be identified; I once recognized an uncle by his laugh before he gave me his name.

Very shortly after the light was turned out I was touched on the knee, Mrs. Wriedt still talking from the same spot five or six feet away, and immediately afterwards I heard a voice speaking through the trumpet. It was a physical voice and would have been audible to any number of persons had they been in the room. There was no question of imagination or telepathy; it was an objective voice, and as Mrs. Wriedt continued to talk, I was obliged to ask her to desist as someone was trying to speak.

Mrs. Wriedt described a figure she saw come into the room, a good description of my husband "in dark blue uniform with gold lace and shiny things on the shoulders." (Epaulettes.) [11] She said he was dancing—we had both been very fond of dancing—and before he spoke *a bar from our favourite waltz "Daheim" was whistled through the trumpet !*

A voice then that claimed to be that of my husband spoke. He called me by my Christian name and seemed to be greatly agitated, but as it was not like my husband's voice, and moreover spoke with a pronounced American accent, it was not surprising that I doubted the identity of the speaker ! Elucidation has to come gradually. But although in the first flush of a novel experience, and ignorance of the laws governing the situation, I doubted the claims of the speaker, I knew myself to be face to face with a marvel greater than the birth of steam engines, aeroplanes or anything yet discovered by the ingenuity and perseverance of mankind.

I was "up against" the most marvellous incident in my life !

The voice spoke for some time asking and answering questions; the answers seemed to me a little illusive, unsatisfying. I wanted *proof*—indubitable—complete. We all do—incontrovertible proof, that will save us the trouble of further doubt and inquiry—proof, that we shall never get without patience and persistent seeking.

[11] Rose married Philip Augustus Champion de Crespigny in 1878, a Royal Navy officer who died in September 1912.

I wanted to set my own tests, a line of action and a frame of mind that always seems to inhibit the best results. Patience and a certain attitude of tolerance when things do not go exactly as we expect, hardly ever fail to bring proof in the end. That, at least, is my experience, but the evidence must be furnished by the operators on the other side in their own way. To attempt to impose our way on them while we are so ignorant of their limitations generally ends in disaster.

After this, another voice claimed recognition, giving a Christian and surname which at first were unintelligible. Finally the speaker explained who he was by reference to my husband by a name that only a few members of his family had used, and I recognized him as a brother-in-law who had passed over as the result of an accident at polo fifteen years previously.

I was much surprised. I considered him one of the most unlikely people to speak to me, but I asked what he was doing and if he was happy.

"Quite happy," he replied. "I am studying the subject of evolution and am much interested in all such subjects now."

"I have always been interested in natural science," I replied.

"Yes, I know, but I never expected to find you here."

"Why not?" I asked. "Communication with another world has always seemed to me one of the solvable problems of the future."

"Well, you are the only member of the family who has tried to speak to us."

That was true, but might have been a guess. He then went on to remind me of a dance we had been to when we were both young and of some flowers I had worn. Which was correct.

He added, my husband had asked him to come through and assure me it was he who had spoken first.

I had other visitors, including one who, although a stranger to me on this plane, has since become a valued link with the other.

She said she was Florence Nightingale and showed me her lamp as an "identification mark"—the Lady of the Lamp. It was a luminous disk about the size of a bicycle lamp and as sharply defined. She waved it several times close to my face and I put out my hand and passed it right through the light. A case of fools stepping in where angels fear to tread ! I certainly would not do such a thing now !

I left Mrs. Wriedt's not satisfied. There is no need to deal with the usual objections urged by the novice, and which any ordinarily intelligent investigator is of course keeping in mind, such as—Ventriloquism?

On one or two occasions Mrs. Wriedt was speaking at the same time as the voice through the trumpet. I had to ask her to stop. Also, I am told ventriloquism is not possible in the dark. [12]

Telepathy?

At this first sitting this might have accounted for the *matter* of the communications, but not for the *manner* of conveying them. No one of any intelligence who has ever

[12] Please see Pioneer, Vol. 5, No. 6: "Direct - Independent Voice Phenomena – *Could this be simulated by ventriloquism?*" – "Ventriloquism, Considered as A Possible Explanation of 'Independent Voice' Phenomena".

heard the direct voice in favourable circumstances will try to account for it through telepathy. It has no bearing on the problem.

The subconscious mind?

Even this overworked beast of burden may plead not guilty. The subconscious mind cannot—it is to be presumed—create an objective voice and, with telepathy, may be dismissed as of no assistance.

The identity of the sitters remained the knotty point. Mrs. Wriedt might have been suspected of looking up family names, if by any chance she had managed to learn my own, and refer to members of my family correctly. There had been nothing absolutely convincing in anything that had taken place.

In fact there had been a big error in a statement made.

The voice alleged to be that of my husband had said, among other things: "Thank you for the flowers !" I, wishing to make my own tests, replied:

"Do you mean flowers I put on your grave?" and I thought the answer had been "Yes"—which was quite wrong !

YET, there were points that required a good deal of explaining away.

I went over the evidence carefully bit by bit, weighing the pros and cons with as little prejudice as possible; convinced only upon one point. Whoever their owners might be, the circumstances of my surroundings and my own commonsense indicated that the voices came from that country from which Shakespeare in direct contradiction of the Bible, has told us there is no return.

There seemed to be no other explanation—if my ordinary senses were of any use to me at all ! And in the main they had spoken of affairs that could not possibly have been known to the medium.

My first argument took a more or less negative form. If *any* person could communicate from the other side, my husband should be equally able to do so; and if he could, he *would*—a point those who have lost anyone for whom they greatly care would do well to consider.

But—and it was a big *but* in those first days of uncertainty—the voice was not *his* voice, and he had made little mistakes in diction and phrases it was difficult to account for. I had not learnt then, as I have already explained, that the timbre, the actual ring of the old voice had presumably gone for ever.

But my brother-in-law, who had given his name and referred to trivial incidents that could not have been known to the medium, nor found in any reference book—how was he to be explained?—and how about the bar of "Daheim" that had been whistled as an introduction?

Thought-reading? But that was merely suggesting a fresh miracle to account for the first; and anyway it did not explain the *voices*—nor the whistling.

With so much uncertainty in my mind it might have been a long time before I visited Mrs. Wriedt again. I should have done so eventually, because I was puzzled—and when you have an inquiring mind you are not content to remain so; but the following day Colonel Johnson, whom I have already mentioned, spoke to me after a Theosophical lecture we had both attended; he said he had a message to give me.

He had visited Mrs. Wriedt that morning, had taken notes of the message on the spot,

being an expert at doing so in the dark, and written them out afterwards.

"I don't know what it means," he explained, "but was told you would understand, and I give it to you verbatim."

A voice, it seemed, had spoken to him from the trumpet in a state of great agitation, giving my husband's Christian and surnames, saying his wife had been there the previous day and had gone away doubting his identity; that she had misunderstood him, and he was most anxious Colonel Johnson should put it right. He said her father, Sir Cooper Key, was there, very happy and they had spent many hours together.

He then said most earnestly: "She misunderstood me—she thought I said she put flowers on my grave. But it was her mistake. I have no grave. My body was cremated."

He then added: "It is very difficult to do this—as difficult as she found her painting when she first began. Ask her," he went on, ''if she remembers the Galaton—on the Australian Station. This will be understood.

"I am sorry I mismanaged it. (The séance.) We often do the first time."

It is quite impossible to describe the overwhelming flood of conviction this message brought ! It was as a crowning point of evidence after a lifetime of inquiry and honest speculation. I had been knocking all my life, and the door had at last opened.

No one but my husband would have sent me that message. Those who have read the previous pages may understand the full force of it. The name of course should have been *Galatea*, showing how little Colonel Johnson understood the point of it.

None of it was known to the medium, nor to Colonel Johnson. Even if she had had the means of finding out so many details in my husband's life, she would only have had two days in which to do it. He had left the Navy thirty-four years previously, and to have suspected her of consulting ancient Navy lists, which are not at all easy to get at, would have been childish. Nor, if she had had the opportunity of doing so, would she have had any reason for selecting the *Galatea* among all the ships he had served in as of special interest. In its very triviality lay the weight of the evidence.

At the séance my husband had been followed, so Colonel Johnson said, by his own wife who had died some years before I made his acquaintance, and we had been unknown to one another during her earth life. She, too, sent me a message, to the effect that "Mrs. de Crespigny's father was present with her, and wished to say something about Malta, where she had been when she was a little girl."

These messages, may it be noted, were brought to me by a *third* person, who knew nothing of my past life nor of the names given to him and passed on to me. They were not drawn from his subconscious mind as the information had never been known to him, and it was all sufficiently arresting to send me again to Mrs. Wriedt—this time to have all doubt removed, and to be convinced of a truth that is indeed the Pearl of great price.

At the next sitting with Mrs. Wriedt my husband was preceded by his brother, who said the message about the Galatea had been sent to me as a proof of his identity, as he knew all it would convey to me, and he had been so distressed at having been previously misunderstood. My husband followed, called me by the old names and again mentioned the *Galatea*, and did I remember how often he had told me of the good times they had?

Trivial? Of course, most of life is made up of trivialities. If he had told me the names of our children, the date of my marriage, or of his own death, the medium might have looked it up in a book; if he had given me a dissertation on philosophy, it would have been so unlike him I should not have believed in him at all; if he had described his life in

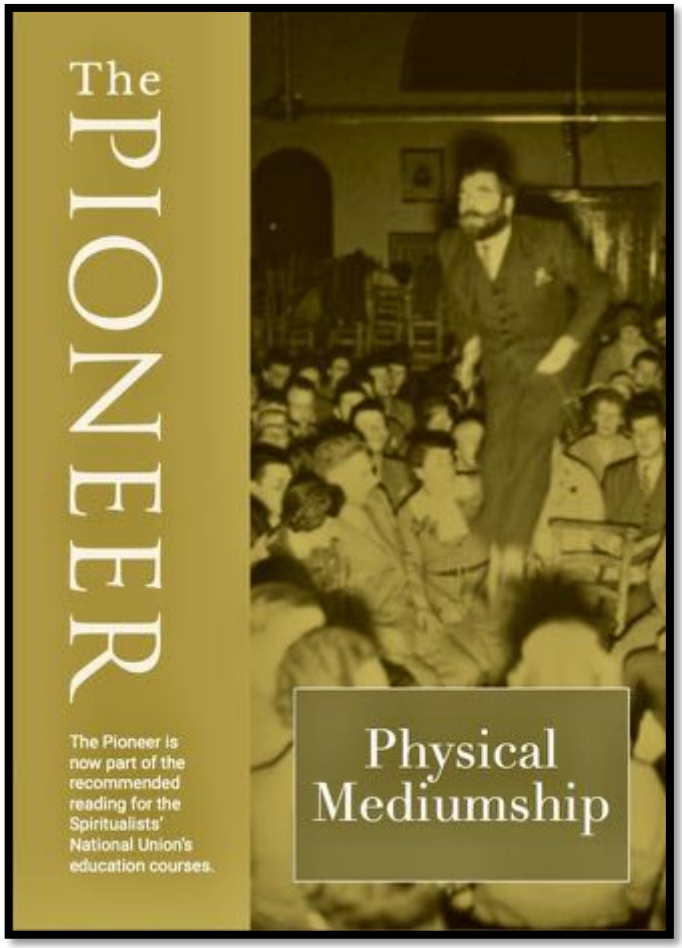
that other world, I had first to be sure there was another world to describe. It was the reference to the little insignificant things in life—things known perhaps to him and me alone, that drove the truth home as could nothing else in the world. How would you prove your identity to someone who doubted it on the telephone?

I remember a case in point. At the time the search for the poor little Lindbergh baby was going on, the Captain of the liner which had a short time before conveyed Colonel Lindbergh from England wished to speak to him on the telephone. Colonel Lindbergh, distracted, poor man, as he was, insisted upon the establishment of the communicator's identity before he would answer the call, and it was only after a trivial incident that had happened on board, known to them both, had been mentioned that he consented to go to the telephone.

My husband and I at that sitting had some really intimate talk, and when he said he must go my eyes filled with tears.

Although it was pitch-dark and my voice was under perfect control, he exclaimed at once: "Don't cry !"

For Direct/Independent voice phenomena see the Pioneer PDF booklet as detailed on the last page of this issue, which includes:



Mrs Everitt was probably the first direct-voice medium in this country

Susanna Harris

Leslie Flint

Estelle Roberts

Jack Webber

John Sloan

Einer Nielsen

A Means of Spirit Communication

Designed from the Spirit World!

In Pioneer issue Vol. 7, No. 6 appeared the article: "A Means of Spirit Communication – *Designed from the Spirit World!*"; in the following issue, Vol. 8, No. 1, Marc Demarest [19] added a supplement: "Some Notes on the Reflectograph and Communigraph". The articles are focused on a pact made between George Jobson in the mid-1920s, who at the time was on his death-bed, and a man called Basil Kirkby, who had brought a medium to the sick man's bedside, where Jobson was able to speak to his mother through the entranced medium.

Jobson responded to his new-found friend:

> "I must repay you for this most marvellous happening of my life," he said. "I feel I can do this best by making a promise to you that when I return after so-called death I will endeavour to instruct you how to build an instrument to enable spirits to communicate with mortals. But I shall take over a call-sign for you to be certain it is I communicating."

At the time of putting the above articles together information from the Spiritualist press of the day was somewhat sparse. However, I noted in Mrs Rose Champion de Crespigny's book, "This World and Beyond", which is featured elsewhere in this issue, that she had first-hand experience in the early days of the development of the Reflectograph. The reader is urged to read the articles referred to above to get a fuller perspective of their history and the second instrument which would follow the Communigraph:

Taken from Chapter Fifteen:

IN the world of physical phenomena the "Reflectograph" has been to me a most fruitful field for study, with Mr. B. K. Kirkby as director and Mrs. Singleton as medium.

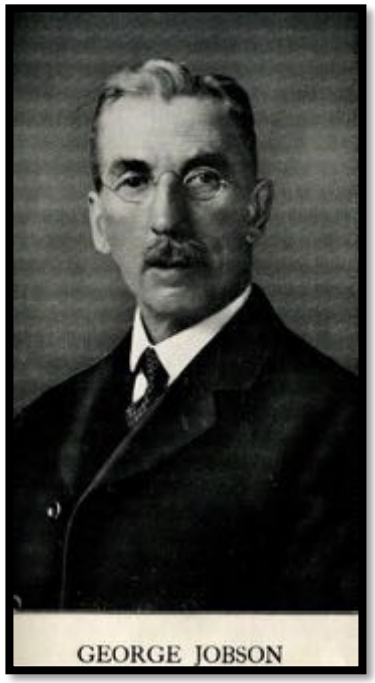
I had the privilege of working with them to a certain extent in the earlier stages of development, and had opportunities for the study of ectoplasm and its ways that has stood me in good stead ever since.

The story of how this particular form of demonstration came into being is a romance in itself, and shows us how plans and resolutions made on this plane may sometimes be carried out subsequently on the next as the result of deliberate intention and preparation.

Mr. B. K. Kirkby tells the story. At a chance trance sitting at which his mother took control, he had his first introduction to spiritualism; as the result of an injunction from her to pass on the knowledge wherever he went and not "to keep it to himself as the rest of the world are doing," he took up the subject in good earnest, and has devoted his life to it ever since.

[19] "The International Association for the Preservation of Spiritualist and Occult Periodicals" (IAPSOP). See http://iapsop.com

Shortly after this sitting, he met a man called George Jobson, at that time paralysed and bedridden, but with a brain still alive and working along old lines. George Jobson had brought one of the first telephones into this country; he had travelled the world over in search of knowledge and was one of the early pioneers of photography and wireless.


GEORGE JOBSON

To cut a long story short, they made a pact that they would try and establish some means of communication after George Jobson had passed into the next life; not only made a pact, which many seemed to have done and then found it impossible to carry out, but set to work to go through a definite preparatory training in the hope of laying some foundation for success in the experiment hereafter.

"I will call you up," he said, "with letters as they do on the wireless. Choose the letters !"

After some deliberation they chose Mr. Kirkby's initials, B.K.K., as the sign between them.

The paralysed man then had these letters written in large size upon a piece of paper and pinned up on the foot of his bed. Morning, noon and night he repeated them, memorized them, impressed them on his brain. Up to the last two or three days of his life those letters stared him in the face; whenever his eyes were open they confronted him for months, his lips continually repeating them, in the hope that they might form the link between the brain of his physical body and that of his astral, proving the continuity of memory which is the corner-stone of personality.

Three months after Jobson's death, Mr. Kirkby, at a seaside place, met a psychometrist who was a stranger to him, but who had been highly recommended as a "seer." Not having the time at the moment to sit with the psychometrist, he gave him an article that had belonged to George Jobson with a request that if he should obtain from it anything of an interesting nature he would let him know. As the medium would be in trance, his sister promised to make a faithful record of anything that transpired.

ETHEL

A few days later Mr. Kirkby re-visited the psychometrist and his sister, and asked if any message had been obtained.

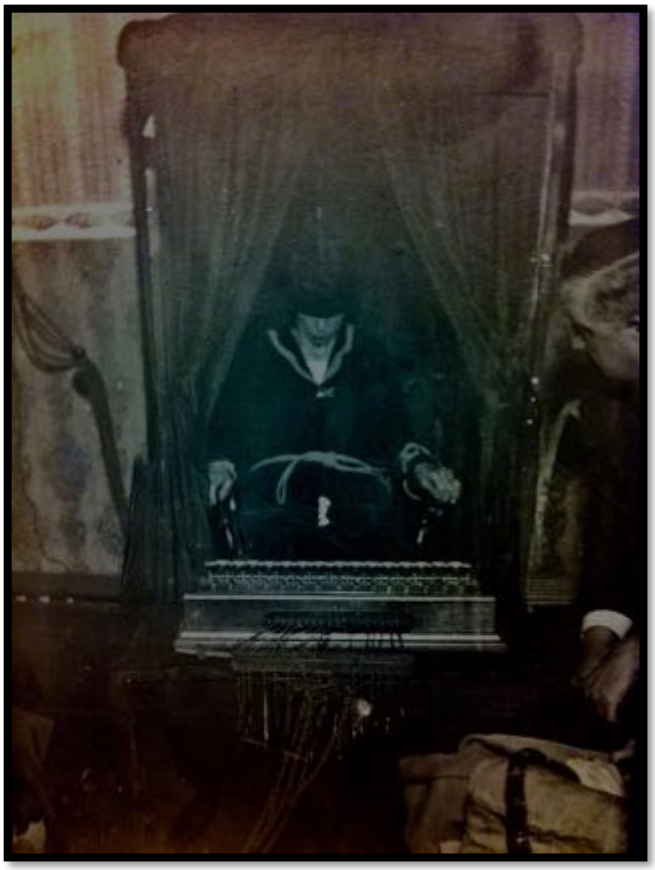
"This is all we have got—and we can't understand it," was the answer. "For nearly a quarter of an hour these letters were impressed: 'B.K.K.—B.K.K.' " then followed: "Remember the signal. Now we see through a glass darkly, but later we are going to see one another face to face. It is George—George—George !' "

From that incident sprang the co-operation between the two planes—Mr. Kirkby and Mrs. Singleton working together on this, George Jobson and his "control," a young girl who passed early from earth life, called ''Ethel," on the other. [20]

In giving my experience with this group I am merely transcribing to the best of my ability exactly what occurred. I

[20] This is an error or a misprint: Ethel was a control of the medium Mrs Louise Eliza Singleton, *not* George Jobson as stated.

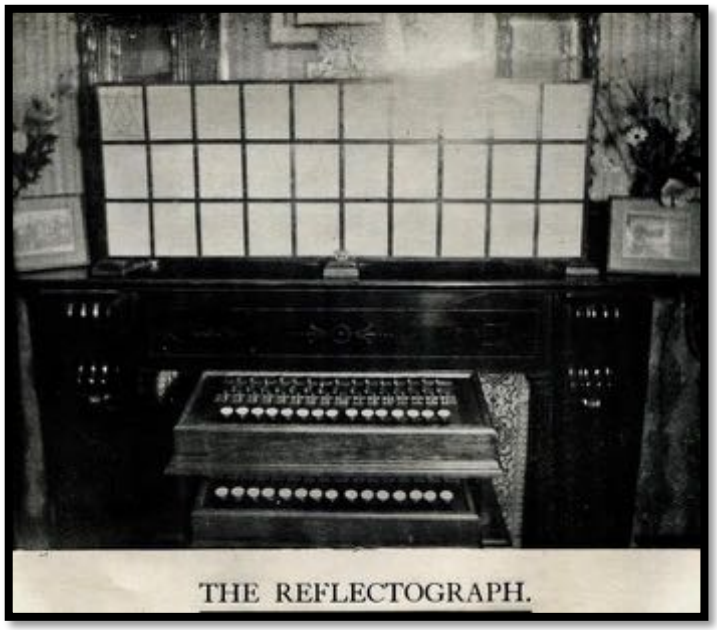
do not say the conditions so far as "test" were concerned, might not have been tightened up in accordance with the best traditions; but to have watched the gradual development of the ectoplasmic rod, and be allowed to take part in the experiment, gave me opportunities which were sufficient to convince me through my physical senses, plus common sense, of the genuineness of the phenomena. In this belief, Sir Oliver Lodge, later on, was willing to support me.



When I first sat with the Reflectograph group the display of ectoplasm was crude and immature. The medium, Mrs. Singleton, sat in a semi-dark cabinet, the room illuminated by a good red light, and at that early period the medium herself being partially visible from certain angles to the sitters. She was tied to the chair, the back, arms and legs of it, by cords which with Mr. Kirkby's consent I often manipulated myself. The keyboard upon which ''Ethel" was to operate was placed at some distance in front of her, well outside the cabinet.

This keyboard consisted of the letters of the alphabet, each painted on a disk so delicately poised that the slightest touch, or even a breath, was sufficient to depress them. Against the wall was placed an indicator also displaying the letters of the alphabet, each of which became luminous as its duplicate on the keyboard was touched, presumably by the ectoplasmic rod manipulated by "Ethel." In this way messages were spelt out, sometimes pertinent and recognizable, sometimes not; but it was on the phenomenal side rather than the content of the messages, that the interest of the sitters focused, especially if their mentality was of the scientific order. I shall always be grateful for the opportunity of watching developments of a super-physical order in circumstances where experiments were so frankly and openly carried on.

At my first sittings with the Reflectograph, a rod of ectoplasm only was visible, starting from the direction of the medium and extending to the disks on the keyboard; a faint line of luminosity, but evidently directed by some intelligence, as its movements with regard to the letters on the keyboard testified. As each letter was depressed the contact was reflected on the indicator against the wall, haltingly at first but gaining in strength and confidence as time went on—passing from individual letters only to the spelling of intelligible words.



THE REFLECTOGRAPH.

With the idea of making assurance doubly sure, experiments were tried with a gauze curtain stretched across the front of the cabinet between the medium and the keyboard.

Although the ectoplasm passed through it, however, the impact appeared to break up the rod, dividing it into rays giving the appearance of a searchlight, no one of them having sufficient force to depress the disks independently. A coarse net was tried with the same result, and the experiment was given up.

It was not long before patient endeavour was rewarded, and a further development took place.

A hand was formed at the end of the rod, with fingers and thumb folded in what is termed the "snake's head" form; followed later by an opening out, the fingers and thumb becoming widespread and perfectly moulded. Faint and misty at first, a wisp of cloud taking the form of a hand, materializing and fading away, and materializing again—that ebb and flow of the power that I have already mentioned as accompanying all physical phenomena.

Finally the hand, so misty and undefined in its earlier stages, developed into something concrete, solid as flesh and bone, every finger perfectly formed, and I was allowed to touch and handle it, or rather to allow it to touch me.

I found it at that stage *very* cold, lifeless and heavy as one would imagine a dead hand might be; but later on the temperature of it became normal more like that of a human hand, of a different type and size from that of the medium, but to sight and touch a normal human hand, in every detail.

On the back of the photograph it is noted: "The top row of the keys have been removed to give a clear view of the hand." This shows the alleged materialised hand of "Ethel". [21]

[21] It is unfortunate that a front photograph of the cabinet was not taken to show the medium with both arms secured and the *additional* phantom arm and hand.

When this stage was reached, Sir Oliver Lodge was good enough to come and give an opinion of the phenomenon. He tied the medium in the chair and, visible at first as a filmy outline, the hand materialized as usual; he was able to examine it at close quarters, handling it, touching nails and knuckles which he pronounced to be perfectly formed in every respect, and finally expressed his conviction that the demonstration was genuine.

It is not easy for the inexperienced sitter to take in the true significance of such a phenomenon at first glance. It exacts a sudden re-orientation of previous conceptions that the understanding is apt to jib at, and it is almost impossible at first to get away from the suspicion of a conjuring trick. Therefore the utmost caution before "turning down" a physical phenomenon at a single sitting, or even more than one, is as essential as in accepting it. The new sitter may find it difficult to understand his—or her—own limitations through inexperience, not realizing how hard it is for the intelligence to swallow so large a dose at one gulp !

Many a time have I been "up against" this situation in connexion with the materialized hand of the Reflectograph. What sort of "miracle" the newcomer actually expects is difficult to imagine, but if the appearance and the feel of it differ from that of flesh and blood—which was sometimes the case in its earlier stages of development—it is immediately suggested by the sitter that it is a counterfeit made of wax or indiarubber or some other material which *must* have been smuggled into the cabinet by the medium. This suggestion is upheld, no matter how meticulous the preparatory search may have been, and which incidentally reduces all such search to futile waste of time.

But the more minutely the materialized hand resembles the genuine article—as was the case in its final development—the more convinced the tyro becomes that it obviously is a human hand—and therefore must be fraud and is the hand of the medium! A vicious circle !

From a single hand "Ethel" advanced to a demonstration of both hands, and from that arrived at the achievement of the full figure; draped forms standing in front of the cabinet with a faint red light illuminating the rest of the room, she herself being one of the first appearances. George Jobson also materialized, fulfilling his early promise that his friend and he should see one another "face to face." Many other forms recognized by sitters, most of them clad in clinging white drapery that seemed to have a luminosity of its own—something beyond the ordinary appearance of a white object such as a handkerchief, in semi-darkness, and justifying the age-old tradition of "ghosts" and heavenly visions, the "radiantly white" figures spoken of in the Bible.

I passed my hand on one occasion—with permission—through the gossamer-like drapery hanging from the arm of a materialized form; it passed through it as though it were mist not substance, and though I was conscious of a soft touch on my hand, there was no feeling of any sort of obstruction.

Among the various materializations I have seen there a little coloured girl sometimes appears. She is full of life and spirits, shows the whites of her eyes and a little bright red tongue in sharp contrast to her dark skin. Everyone present sees it and hears her childish chatter. If Mrs. Singleton, hands tied to chair, can blacken her face and get it clean again inside the cabinet in the time at her disposal she ought to go on the music-hall stage ! That there are no masks and faces hidden under her chair I can testify personally.

I have seen figures at these manifestations dematerialize by sinking through the floor, not merely vanishing by retiring into the cabinet.

With regard to messages received through this channel success has not, within the bounds of my own experience, been so marked. This of course may depend upon many factors, and be partly owing slight impatience on my part—quite unjustifiable—due to

what has sometimes seemed a rather tedious process, and not nearly so easy and rapid as the direct voice, or even the channels of trance mediumship. To spell out every word, be it ever so swiftly, is somewhat akin to table-rapping, which must always be a strain on the patience of most temperaments. When I have been present a large proportion of the messages being addressed to others has made it difficult to form a definite opinion, but very many of them have seemed to be unrecognized. My own private opinion has always been that the powers on the other side have been more definitely concerned with and interested in the physical side of the phenomena than in the conveyance of communications, and have dedicated the power, of which there is only a limited supply, to this end. Perhaps I have come to this conclusion because I myself was more interested in the materializations than in the messages and a natural bias was the result !

At the same time it is to be recorded that I have received two outstanding messages through this agency, of a nature sufficiently convincing to prove that whatever the proportion of failures the potentiality for the establishment of direct communication is there and the efforts made entirely genuine.

On the first occasion Sir Arthur Conan Doyle purported to be the communicator, and he reproached me in unmistakable terms for having neglected to act upon a letter he wrote to me some time before his death suggesting I should adopt a certain line of conduct with regard to a medium. I regret to say I had pushed it into a drawer and forgotten all about it ! No one knew of that letter except myself for I had mentioned it to no one. We discussed the contents through the Reflectograph, and finally I acted upon it.

The other incident was even more remarkable.

With the object of showing it to a member of the Council, I had carried a document belonging to the British College of Psychic Science away with me one Saturday afternoon, and on my return home to my flat in Westminster found to my dismay I had lost it. Whether it had been dropped in bus, taxi, in the street or in the car of a friend with whom I had driven some little distance I had no idea. I was distracted ! The document did not belong to me and should certain circumstances arise it might be of the greatest importance—and I, through some sort of carelessness, had dropped it !

I spent a nearly sleepless night and on the next day, Sunday, inquired in every direction I could think of in the hope of tracing it, with no result. On Monday I made equally vain inquiries at the Scotland Yard Lost Property Office, and then gave up all hope of ever seeing it again.

Late on the Tuesday evening I had an engagement to go to Wimbledon for a sitting with the Reflectograph group. Almost the first message that came through was for me, “Ethel” spelling it out on the keyboard.

For Mrs. de Crespigny. Don’t worry. It will be all right. The missing paper will return.”

I could hardly believe my ears, for, with the exception of Mrs. Hankey, the secretary of the College, who was not present, I had mentioned my loss to no one, in the hope my sin would not find me out !

I thanked my informant, and had a good night in the assurance through long experience that messages given spontaneously and not as the result of questions never “let me down”—and on Wednesday morning the document arrived by the first post, from a stranger who had picked it up on the pavement in Victoria Street the previous Saturday, had been in two minds as to whether it was worth while to return it at all, and finally decided to despatch it to the address that was on the opened envelope !

That was one of the best bits of evidence in the way of a message I ever received. It was given before witnesses, Mrs. Hankey could testify to the original loss of the paper, and as no one present at the séance knew anything of the circumstances—not even myself so far as the finding and return of it was concerned—the suspicion of interference on the part of the subconscious mind, or thought-reading could be put out of court. It is some considerable time now since I have had the opportunity to watch further developments with this group so I can offer no opinion on them. I can only speak of and vouch for what occurred within my own knowledge.

Louise Eliza Bolt (1895 - 1982)

(Mrs L.E. Singleton)

WHAT IS ECTOPLASM?

Pioneer has published numerous articles about the various named fluids—the required ingredient to produce all physical mediumship; this is more commonly known today as ectoplasm. The article published below I found in one of J. Arthur Findlay's scrapbooks in the Britten Museum & Library; naturally, Findlay had a keen interest in this phenomenon with his long association and researches with the direct/independent voice medium John Sloane. The article, "What is Ectoplasm?", is by an American research chemist, J. Gilbert E. Wright, published in the Two Worlds, December 31st, 1949, and continued over the next two issues.

It is an interesting overview of his observations into the production and uses of ectoplasm in physical mediumship. At times, he uses some medical terms, but it is unfortunately lacking in references to the material sources. However, Wright does make some excellent, interesting observations well worthy of discussion and follow-up for example.

Given that these observations are circa 75 years old, with the advances of physical science it would be no doubt interesting to know whether some of these observations still stand up to modern science today. The paper is lengthy with the 96 points Gilbert E. Wright makes; however, in my opinion this is a valuable paper insomuch as it gives some pointers to *possible* answers and understanding as to the process of ectoplasmic, or teleplasmic, substance, as it is sometimes referred to:

> FOLLOWING our purpose of including a full-length worth-while article every issue on some special aspect of psychic interest, we have chosen this time the splendid contribution made to the U.S. ''Chimes'' [8] by J. GILBERT E. WRIGHT, Research Chemist with the title, "Strangest Phenomenon Known" dealing with that elusive stuff "Ectoplasm." He has carefully recorded the facts he has gathered as follows, numbering them individually for easy reference:
>
> 1. No-one has seen ectoplasm, felt it, tasted it or smelled it. The visible manifestation is not itself.
>
> 2. It is invisible to ordinary sight.
>
> 3. It is not so much a "thing" as a "process."
>
> 4. Our language is inadequate to describe even the process, for the process is something "out of this world." Words stand for things *in* our world.
>
> 5. We are even embarrassed in using "it" in referring to ectoplasm, for by "it" we usually mean a "thing," i.e. "matter." Now, matter is that which has weight, occupies space, and offers resistance to force. If your so-called "ectoplasm" has these three properties, then it is "matter" by definition.
>
> 6. What exactly do we know ?
>
> 7. The medium's body decomposes into something immaterial or something semi-material. Doyle called it, in a moment of inspiration, "the half-way house of matter."
>
> 8. This semi-material stuff is not matter as we understand matter.

[8] In 1974 the Psychic Observer merged with the Spiritualist Chimes magazine.

9. It diffuses through the tissues of the medium's body like a gas, and emerges through the natural orifices.

10. Not because they *are* "orifices," but because at or near the orifice the ectoderm or "skin" stops and the mucous membrane begins. Apparently, it does not pass so freely through epidermis as through mucous membrane.

11. When it reaches the surface of the mucous membrane, it immediately ceases to be a gas. If it were a gas, it would diffuse into the room according to all the physical laws that govern the behaviour of gases. It then follows one of two courses.

12. It may immediately cease to be a gas and become a sort of viscous liquid, in that it occupies a confined space. It is amorphous (without definite shape). It may become visible by red light or dim daylight, and it may flow "upwards" or "downwards."

13. It has now some of the properties of matter. It occupies space. It can be seen. But does it gravitate ? At this stage we cannot say. My raised arm, if left to itself, will fall; but I can raise it. So that if this stuff be matter, it is "living" matter.

14. Since now, at this stage, it can be seen, what is its colour?

15. We cannot be certain, for colour depends upon the source of light.

16. When photographed it appears in different shades from dazzling white to nearly or completely black.

17. There is some evidence that the material which comes from the brain through the nostrils, mouth and ears is the whitest: that from the solar plexus, darker: and that from the hip area the most nearly black.

18. The "Walter" hand which was seen during the Margery mediumship was almost a dead black.

19. The colour may be contingent upon other conditions than the source of light and the source of the material, cerebral or otherwise. As the material is known to copy forms, it may also copy colour. We shall go into this more fully later.

20. It may be self-luminous.

21. Even the less obviously self-luminous forms, being of a living nature, may shorten the wavelength of the impinging light so that they appear lighter than they would be if there were no other contributing factor. The white robed spirit-forms which we see in the seance-rooms are always much lighter than the white shirts of the male sitters. Inorganic substances cannot do this, but some living creatures can, as witness the firefly, glow-worm, etc.

22. Before going further, let us say that the part of the medium's body which decomposes is most probably the water content. We surmise this from the fact that excess water is frequently thrown down during this kind of seance.

23. To resume. The "gaseous" material need not so condense when brought in contact with the air. It may not condense noticeably until it has traversed many feet from the medium's body. This may be the case when an object at a distance is moved or levitated by a so-called "ectoplasmic" arm or pseudopod.

24. In this case, the "material," if we may yet call it "material," is most condensed where closest to the object moved, and less condensed where closest to the medium's body.

25. Yet the space between is not filled with gas. It is not filled with anything material, whether solid, liquid or gas, but something is there, more attenuated than any gas we know of. It does not diffuse like a gas. It behaves more like a confined liquid without there being any confining walls.

26. This apparently empty space between the medium's body and the raised object is where alone we can study the nature of this so-called "ectoplasm." And it is *invisible* ! Everything we have discussed so far is not ectoplasm but "materialised" ectoplasm—in other words "matter."

27. If you have kissed the lips of a materialised spirit, you were kissing something material. If you have handled a spirit robe, you were feeling something "material." It is granted there may be degrees of "materiality." If a spirit form weighs 20lbs. instead of an expected 137, obviously the bones and flesh are somewhat different from ours.

28. What do we know of this apparently empty space in which the ectoplasmic forces are at work ? And now, at last, is the right phrase—"*Ectoplasmic Forces*."

29. It is a conductor of electricity.

30. It is opaque to 70% of infra-red rays.

31. It casts a shadow on a luminescent Barium Platinocyanide screen.

32. Metals are transparent to it.

33. Insulating materials are not.

34. That is about the limit of our physical knowledge, and all of that may not be accurate.

35. Biological concepts are more helpful in understanding the processes than physical and chemical.

36. In "materialisation" we are evidently witnessing a birth process.

37. The medium evidently "gives birth" to these forms in a biological sense.

38. All life starts in darkness. The seed must be planted in the dark soil. Parturition takes place in the remote, dark recesses of the mother's body, and physicists tell us that, had the atmosphere been more attenuated, life could not have started on this planet. The first attempts would have been destroyed by the cosmic rays. Light is destructive to life. Only the skin cells withstand it for any length of time, as any doctor will tell you, and which you can confirm by exposing your body for too long on the beach. The red end of the spectrum is less destructive than the violet.

39. In the early stages of the medium's "development," the phenomena is often presaged by a cold breeze, indicating an exchange of energy somewhere.

40. Partly-materialised forms are frequently quite cold—4° Centigrade, showing that in the process of organisation, energy is absorbed.

41. All forms are connected to the body of the medium by an umbilical cord, visible or invisible. If not visible, it can be made so.

42. The darkened seance-room corresponds to the womb.

43. A further "confinement" is usually desirable, and is effected by the foetal and embryonic stages taking place behind closed curtains. The use of infra-red viewing instruments may perhaps obviate this present necessity.

44. The materialising process recapitulates the history of the organism. The materialised form appears first as foetus, then as embryo.

45. All birth is accompanied by fear, as psycho-analysts know.

46. The first stages of "materialisation," i.e. "birth," is accompanied by fear. The borning thing takes tentative "peeps" as it were, at its new environment and will withdraw instantly if startled.

47. These materialised forms are *not* ideoplastic. Fanciful or imaginative structures are unknown. Mermaids, centaurs and unicorns do not appear. Materialisation is not creation. It is re-creation: the reproduction of something that *is* or once *was*. There is no invention.

48. We cannot visualise our thumb prints, but post-mortem thumb prints have been obtained which correspond with the ante-mortem thumb prints.

49. This indicated that these materialised forms are moulded in or around pre-existing structures.

50. Discarnate intelligences (spirits) must come back in the mould they left behind, so to speak, on the earth plane. Or, at least, it is easier for them to do so. Hence spirits who have died prematurely, say in childhood, however hundreds of years old they may be, come back as little boys or little girls.

51. An exception seems to be those who were still-born, miscarriages, or aborted. They grow "on the Other Side" to their optimum stature eventually and materialise at the stage of development they have reached.

52. No physical laws are violated in the seance room.

53. If the materialised form weighs 50 lbs., the medium has lost 50 lbs. In the case of a small medium, she, if seen beside the materialised form, may resemble a bundle of rags.

54. Anything levitated must be supported from below or hung from above.

55. Usually the weight is carried by the medium's body, so that if a table weighing 30 lbs. be levitated, the medium shall have gained 30 lbs.

56. If the materialised figure weighed more than the medium, the latter would entirely disappear, unless material was secured from a source other than supplied by the medium.

57. The material, while still in the amorphous state, has an urgent desire to organise itself, or is urgently being made to organise.

58. If the medium is naked, or if the material is formed at an exposed part of her body, it may take the form of cellophane, and extensive sheets may be formed.

59. If the medium is clothed, or if the material is formed beneath her clothing, it may take the form of cheese cloth and the pattern and texture of the clothing will be preserved, coarse or fine as the case may be.

60. If the condensation does not take place within the vicinity of her body, it may "pick up" the texture of the curtains or that of some other fabric within the room. Even darning and other repair marks may be reproduced. We have seen spirits clothed in garments which showed repair marks on the curtains.

61. This usually arouses suspicion of fraud among the inexperienced.

62. The "miracle" of the "loaves and fishes" is often observed here, i.e. the multiplication of forms. A materialised spirit may take a handkerchief from a sitter and quadruple its size. In other words, the original is copied by fresh material in the manner of the printing press.

    Virus reproduction is apropos here. This micro-organism does not reproduce by fission, by spore formation or budding, but by casting a shadow of itself on the ether, so to speak, from which many "carbon copies'' may be made.

    The miracle of the "loaves and fishes" is not apport phenomena. If the original loaves are wheaten the duplicates are wheaten, and not rye. If the original fishes are cod, the duplicates are cod and not herring. So when this phenomenon takes place, it may seem as though the medium's own dress were extended.

63. The production of this sheet-material, whether it be like cellophane or woven fabric, serves a double purpose. It can be used for garments in order that the conventions may be observed, and it can be used to form a "cowl" within which the materialising embryo may grow. All life enters our plane protected thus by a sac. Seance-birth is no different.

64. Whence comes the material for these materialisations ?

65. Mostly from the medium and the surroundings.

66. But it may be, and generally is, also withdrawn from some of the sitters. Experienced sitters well know the sense of depletion.

67. If you want a semblance of colour in the garments, you had better provide a large bowl of flowers, or see that the women sitters are gaily dressed. *That* pigment is needed.

68. If you insist that the male materialised forms be dressed other than in nightshirts of ectoplasmic fabric, you had better retain your coats.

69. If you insist that American Indians appear in full regalia, you had better throw a few fancy costumes in the corner. They will be needed as patterns. It will arouse suspicion, of course, but models must exist somewhere and at no great distance.

70. These injunctions need not apply to "etherealisation," which we shall discuss later.

71. Do not be surprised if you hear your own voice, or that of a neighbour, issuing from the lips of one of these "ghosts." Even your own voice may be copied. There is nothing material in the Spirit World, and nothing material comes out of it.

72. And do not be surprised if one of these "ghosts" has your thumb-print. It has happened.

73. Medium and materialised spirit form a closed system.

74. It is, in a sense, one organism.

75. It is as though the medium's body swells out and a part is appropriated by the invading spirit.

76. Mediumship is "mediumship," that is to say, it is the expression of an invisible personality by means of the body and the mind of the medium. The materialised form will resemble the medium in some way. That is inevitable. Perhaps the features are right but the handwriting resembles the medium's, or it may be a synthesis of both. If the medium should have alcohol, onions, peppermint or tobacco on her breath, the materialised form may carry those odours too. Even if the form seems completely to resemble 'the loved one,' the fingerprints may still be those of the medium, or one of the sitters.

    Conversely, if the materialised form should touch a blackened surface, the black pigment, if detachable, may appear on some part of the medium's body and most likely on a part corresponding to or near the part affected.

Touching the Form

77. Since in materialisation we have a closed system in a delicate state of equilibrium, you should not touch the materialised form without permission, lest you harm the medium: nor touch the medium lest you affect the materialised form.

78. When given permission to snip off a lock of hair from a materialised form or remove a fragment of the robe, be reverent. Remember you are removing a portion of the medium's body, and possibly from an essential organ. What you have removed is not 'ectoplasm.' On microscopical examination it will disclose itself to be living tissue, probably epidermis. Fabric will be found to be identical in weave and texture with some fabric within the seance room: most probably with the dress of the medium or of the curtains of the cabinet. It will be, however, of a nitrogenous nature and composed of single filaments. Anything that can be put in a bottle is no longer 'ectoplasm' but 'matter' since it has weight, occupies space, and offers resistance to force.

Weight of Forms

79. Sometimes the materialised form weighs more than the medium. Spirit forms up to nearly 300 lb. have been observed. In such cases, the additional matter was probably withdrawn from one or more of the numerous sitters. Always there are numerous sitters on such occasions.

80. The transformation of matter into energy is probably common in seance for materialisation. This is not at variance with modern physics. The lifting of heavy objects beyond the medium's normal power has frequently been observed.

81. The materialised form is sustained by forces from *without* itself, but probably from *within* the energy-complex of the closed system which is medium-materialised-form. It has been observed, for example, that an electric fan blowing a blast of air towards a materialised form did not disturb the drapery which seemed to present a solid front.

82. Nothing can appear in a materialised form that is not present in the near neighbourhood of the medium, as has already been said, but even if present, there may be reasons, even if they be psychological, why it cannot be 'extracted'.

83. Coloured people usually have their deceased relatives appear without Melanin pigment if the medium be white. Further comment is unnecessary.

84. Of course, apported objects may be introduced for dramatic effect or to aid identification, but these are never an integral part of the spirit-medium complex, and they are deported when they have served their purpose.

Mirror Images

85. A striking proof of the genuineness of these phenomena is the fact that sometimes the 'living' appear as they do in 'voice' sittings.

86. We have two bodies as St. Paul observed—the material and its ethereal counterpart. The ethereal *can* and *does* wander. This is the phenomenon of 'bilocation' or 'the double'. Doppelganger, the Germans call it.

87. There is evidence that the materialising spirit comes back in the form of the mirror-image of its former self: that when he 'wills' to raise a right arm, if he be right-handed, the left is elevated. If he formerly parted his hair at the left, in the materialised form the parting will appear at the right, and so on. Mirror-image fingerprints are common, and the reversal is frequently not in the 'plane' dimension only but in the 'hill and dale' dimension as well. Thus we get normal positive and normal negative: mirror-image positive and mirror-image negative, and mixtures of all. More evidence is needed to confirm these statements. Sitters should observe whether a deceased relative, who was known to be left-handed, in the materialised form naturally uses his right hand. A request for a sample of his handwriting is an easy way to accomplish this.

Miniatures

88. Miniatures are especially interesting, puzzling and 'evidential' as the psychic researchers say. A completely recognisable face may be formed within what appears to be a lump of dough stuck into an eye socket.

The Glen-Hamilton seance room furnished abundant examples of these miniatures. [9] It suggests that the form we leave behind when we depart this plane, exists as a seed which can be regrown but restrained or dwarfed in its development as the Japanese produce a stunted oak. It is phenomena such as these which offer the best clues as to the *modus operandi* of the materialisation process.

89. There are four kinds of materialisation:

[9] T. Glen Hamilton "Intention and Survival", published in 1942, page105.

90. Transfiguration. In this case, the semi-materialised stuff, not unlike dough, oozes from facial orifices. At first it looks as if the medium's face had been plastered with clay. The material is then transformed to the characteristics of the invading spirit. The medium with this 'false face' like a Hallowe'en mask, being in trance, may then walk out of the cabinet and 'impersonate' the revenant. There is ordinarily a sinister implication to the word 'impersonate.' No such implication is intended here. Everything expressed through a medium is, in a sense, impersonation.

Simulacra

91. Simulacra. The invading spirit usually shapes the semi materialised stuff from within, as an overcoat assumes shape when we slip it on. It is a 'biological' fitting, of course; but when the spirit cannot achieve this, occasionally the control will make additions and emendations from without. Forms thus produced look as though they had been sculpted from clay, and sometimes by a not too good craftsman. They are simulacra or 'representation,' and quite frequently in two dimensions only. Baron von Schrenck-Notzing's materialisations were, for the most part, two-dimensional. They are works of art, and sometimes very poor art. Many of these simulacra appeared in Glen-Hamilton's seance room. There were even representations of ships as though cut out of sheets of the doughy material with a cookie-cutter and things that looked like boxes. We must assume separate and invisible hands, other than the spirit's, to account for these creations.

92. The solid forms such as we have discussed throughout.

Etherealisations

93. Etherealisations. This is comparatively rare. The forms thus produced can be 'seen through' as can the conventional ghost. My impression is that they are subject to fewer limitations than the other three forms. Amerindians appear in full regalia, and there is no suggestion that the garments have been copied from available costumes within reach. Likewise Orientals may appear in their bejewelled turbans and flowing robes with a verisimilitude not found in the other kinds of materialisation. These forms rarely speak, or, if they do, their voices are almost inaudible. This is what we should expect from the absence of solid vocal membranes.

94. By observation, experiment, inference, the foregoing 93 facts or alleged facts have been assembled. We have gotten little help from the spirits themselves. Why is this?

95. In the first place, the picture we have drawn is a picture from our side. We see effects only, and can only assume causes. From their side—the causal, what they do may be inexplicable. Re-read Plato's Parable of the Cave.

96. Further, there is evidence that they do not know the 'inwardness' of what they are doing, any more than we do when we raise an arm. How explain that act to anyone? We do not even know how we digest our food, see or hear. The mind-matter relationship is probably as obscure to them, or as nearly obscure, as it is to us. They may realise what our scientists deny—that mind has an organising power over matter, and their knowledge may end there. At least they have gained something !

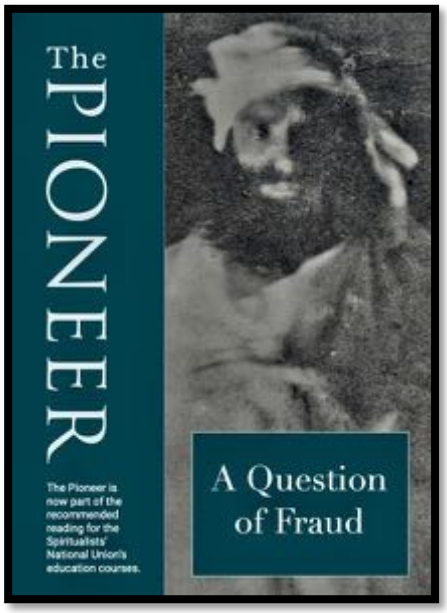
—~—☼—~—

What can be noted:

Some of these facts, or alleged facts as Gilbert E. Wright refers to them, can be considered in relationship to some of the problematic explanations in the withdrawal of the alleged teleplasmic/ectoplasmic phenomena. The advantages of research into our movement sometimes, at least in part, show that part of the jigsaw puzzle was started early in the phases, or possibly more correctly in the process, of the development of materialisation phenomena.

Florence (Florrie) Cook/Corner [10] was the first full-form materialisation medium in this country in 1873. Here we have the first indication as to where the drapery comes to be formed, albeit Corner's drapery was in the form of pure white dresses. The medium's claimed materialised *spirit* control was said to be Annie Morgan, better known as Katie King jnr:

> "Katie says she makes this drapery out of matter obtained from the dresses of all the sitters in the circle. She says that when she is forming herself she materialises the drapery first, and her own body afterwards; indeed, one or two persons have thought that they have seen Katie's head on the floor, in the middle of a heap of drapery, just inside the cabinet, although this has not been witnessed in a good light." [11]



For further information on the early development of materialisation please see the free Pioneer pdf booklet/s, "A Question of Fraud", details on the last page of this issue.

[10] She married Captain Edward Elgie Corner in April 1874.

[11] "The Spiritualist Newspaper", dated December 12th, 1873: "Spirit Forms".

Wright notes:

17. There is some evidence that the material which comes from the brain through the nostrils, mouth and ears is the whitest: that from the solar plexus, darker: and that from the hip area the most nearly black.

18. The "Walter" hand which was seen during the Margery mediumship was almost a dead black.

"Psychic Science" was the Quarterly Transactions of the British College of Psychic Science (BCPS) [12]; Vol. VII, No. 2, for July 1928, gives a good detailed overview of the "Margery Mediumship".[13] The medium's full name was Mina Marguerite (*née* Stinson) Crandon, who married Dr Le Roi Goddard Crandon, becoming her second husband. Her control was said to be her deceased brother Walter, who passed over around 16 years of age in 1912.

Her mediumship began in 1923 with direct independent voice; from here she was observed by leading psychical researchers, e.g. E.J. Dingwall (SPR) and J. Malcolm Bird (American SPR), along with many distinguished men of science. Wright notes the different colours in the teleplasm albeit it can be somewhat disguised with the lighting; this can be noted in the issue of Psychic Science as referenced above:

P.12/3: "Walter states that dark uterine ectoplasm produced for Dingwall is of different type. He repeats from last night that all genuine materialisations are of cortical rather than uterine ectoplasm. That's why we should not ever touch the white variety."

P.116: "Hill [14] calls attention to fact that to-night's ectoplasm is darker in shade than we have been in habit of seeing of late sittings. Muddy grey would perhaps describe it well (as against the brilliant white of the cortical ectoplasm of recent sittings.

[12] For further information on the British College of Psychic Science, please see Psypioneer, Vol. 3, No. 8: "A Knight Errant of Psychic Science: James Hewat McKenzie". The BCPS is referenced numerously in Pioneer; see the pdf searchable booklets on the last page of this issue.

[13] This is available for download at: "The International Association for the Preservation of Spiritualist and Occult Periodicals" (IAPSOP): http://iapsop.com/

[14] Mr J. Arthur Hill, an Honorary Member of the BCPS.

After sitting, all sitters were agreed that ectoplasm was quite white at start, getting greyer as we went along. … .)"

This image (Fig. 13) shows a "Crude Teleplasmic Hand, over that of Mr. E. J. Dingwall"; it appears to be "uterine ectoplasm", more robust to handle as other images show handshaking and the taking of Walter's fingerprints.

Further noted:

21. Even the less obviously self-luminous forms, being of a living nature, may shorten the wavelength of the impinging light so that they appear lighter than they would be if there were no other contributing factor.

Pioneer has published various material on luminous phenomena, for example:

> "A moment later, magnificent luminous phenomena; a hand moved slowly about before the sitters. It held in the palm, by a partial bending of the fingers, a body resembling a piece of luminous ice. The whole hand appeared luminous and transparent. One could see the flesh colour. It was admirable. The phenomenon was repeated three times. Then the luminous hand approached a face which it illuminated. It was a handsome male face, but I could not see its details with precision. During all this scene the medium, who was entranced and held by both hands, did not make a movement."

The medium here was the Polish physical medium, Franek Kluski, sometimes referred to as "The King of Mediums". From around 1918 to 1925 he gave psychic science some of the most puzzling and challenging evidence on record with his wide spectrum of physical mediumship. His final period, 1921/1925, was his most powerful phase of physical mediumship—producing better materialisations of human spirits. His mediumship hits several of the observations recorded by Gilbert Wright, which I briefly summarise here:

He was one of the first mediums to show ectoplasm coming from his body, unlike earlier mediums such as Florence Cook, Annie Mellon, Kate Woods, etc. It is reported that a "fluid" emanated from Kluski frequently like a stream, a metre wide, of human height; some of the materialisations looked like cardboard or made with rags and were preceded by sounds of rubbing cardboard or fabric, tearing of paper—but never a trace of paper, etc. was found after

the séance.

The forms would often have problems dressing themselves, rubbing various objects prior to full materialisation—transforming the "raw material" into what was required, e.g. an officer's materialisation had a clearly detailed military cap but the uniform would be a blur, vaguely resembling the medium's clothes. However, when attention was paid to the uniform the materialisation would grow one. The materialised forms rubbed against the sitters, Kluski in particular. After the séance, their clothes showed signs of wear; sometimes the figures approached the sitters and vigorously rubbed their shoulders and back, causing intense physical and mental exhaustion to the persons involved; the result of this, however, was the materialised form being very clear and fully visible.

The materialised forms would target the young, healthy sitters—avoiding the elderly and those who had consumed alcohol prior to the séance. All this material is available and referenced in the Pioneer pdf booklet, "Physical Mediumship", as detailed on the last page of this issue.

Finally, one further comment:

59. If the medium is clothed, or if the material is formed beneath her clothing, it may take the form of cheese cloth and the pattern and texture of the clothing will be preserved, coarse or fine as the case may be.

Recent issues of Pioneer have given some lengthy and detailed reports on the accusations of the regurgitation of a cheese-cloth-like material, notably by the medium Helen Duncan. It would be a fair comment, I believe, to say that with some of the published images of physical mediums, primarily with the withdrawal of ectoplasmic/teleplasmic substances leading to materialisation, a general opinion may be reached by Spiritualists, researchers and sceptics that it looks similar to cheese-cloth, muslin-type material, and other fabrics, as Wright notes:

61. This usually arouses suspicion of fraud among the inexperienced.

The few very brief examples I have given show some of the various forms recorded: from Katie's white dress, Kluski's rags, cardboard, etc., also noted in Wright's observation 53: "…may resemble a bundle of rags", Margery's muddy-grey uterine ectoplasm, as against the white of the cortical ectoplasm, and, finally, Duncan's cheese-cloth-like material.

Given the array of actions produced in physical mediumship some form of substance is required to produce the phenomena – to use an old term, 'psychic force', a name used prior to the terms 'teleplasm' and 'ectoplasm'. In numerous phenomena the substance is not generally seen, for example raps, levitations, slate writing, psychic photography, etc., because it is the action of the phenomena being witnessed which gives the possible desired evidence. It is clear in many reports throughout our history that the substance takes on *various* forms for different actions, some of which are visible to the observers. Dr William J. Crawford's experiments with the Goligher Circle circa 1914 till his death in 1920 published that much physical phenomena were produced by the extrusion of psychic rods (visible or invisible) from the body of the medium; he concluded that the raps, levitation of the table, etc. were accomplished by 'cantilevers' made of teleplasmic 'rods' or extrusions from the lower portion of the medium's body.

The observations of the American research chemist, J. Gilbert E. Wright, have, if nothing else, given the reader much food for thought, put mostly into simple English, which may well indeed go *some way* in our possible comprehension of this subject and some scope of the difficulties faced by psychical research.

1. No-one has seen ectoplasm; felt it, tasted it or smelled it. The visible manifestation is not itself.

2. It is invisible to ordinary sight.

3. It is not so much a "thing" as a "process."

4. Our language is inadequate to describe even the process, for the process is something "out of this world." Words stand for things *in* our world.

26. This apparently empty space between the medium's body and the raised object is where alone we can study the nature of this so-called "ectoplasm." And it is *invisible* ! Everything we have discussed so far is not ectoplasm but "materialised" ectoplasm—in other words "matter."

To conclude:

The comments above rather sum up Wright's observations, which could be hypothesised in *a positive* sense, leading to some researchers' *perhaps unjust* claim to fraud by the medium. Helen Duncan was claimed to be a fraudulent medium by London Psychical Laboratory (LPL) (the Research Department of the London Spiritualist Alliance Ltd (LSA)), and the National Laboratory of Psychical Research (NLPR), in 1931. The primary accusation of fraud was due to the seven samples of ectoplasm/teleplasm taken during the séances by the two laboratories showing that in all cases the samples when analysed by various chemists were in fact made up from general household materials and put together by the medium, Mrs Duncan. This was then swallowed by the medium at some earlier time, to be regurgitated at the séance when required.[15]

Similarly, Eva Carrière (known as Eva C) produced teleplasm when she was at the London Society for Psychical Research, which had the substance analysed and found similar to some of Duncan's teleplasm, i.e. chewed paper.

A worthy consideration for discussion:

76. "…Anything that can be put in a bottle is no longer 'ectoplasm' but 'matter' since it has weight, occupies space, and offers resistance to force.

[15] See Pioneer, Vol. 10, No. 3: "Helen Duncan –Regurgitation".

“Direct Phenomena”

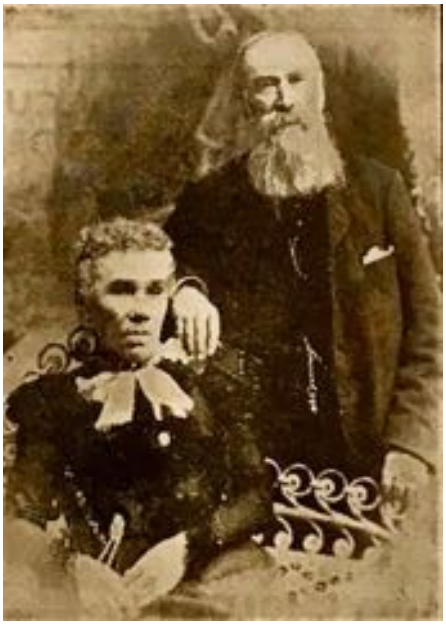
Going back to the early history of “Direct Phenomena”, the article shown here below gives the reader the atmosphere of the times in which our pioneers worked; in these early days Spiritualism was mainly practised in a religious aura. The article notes the pioneering work and influence of the mediums and investigators recorded in it, which are still visible today, and their legacy lives on, although their names are now mostly forgotten.

The phase of “Direct Phenomena” highlighted in this article is direct writing and the examples covered are during the early period of the 1870s. William Stainton Moses in 1876 [41] coined a name for direct–independent writing, so as to distinguish it from automatic or passive writing, which he categorised as “psychography”. [42]

The referenced séances in the article emphasise the value today of the Britten Museum and Library, for today’s researchers as to the original volumes referenced to in these reports; “Light” and “The Spiritualist” can be read and studied in full in our Research and Study Weeks, as shown elsewhere in this issue.

The Everitts were first acquainted with Spiritualism in 1857. In November 1867 an audible spirit voice was first obtained through the mediumship of Mrs Everitt, who was thrown into a trance sleep for the first time, and the spirit of John Watt first made himself known. Mrs Everitt was probably the first direct-voice medium in this country.

The article is taken from Edward T. Bennett’s book, “The Direct Phenomena of Spiritualism”, published in 1908, chapter IV, “Direct” Phenomena in the Presence of Mrs. Everitt, pages 36-42:



Mr. and Mrs. Everitt never gave public séances. What are ordinarily called test-conditions were not imposed. The phenomena were allowed to arise and proceed in their own way. Those present were as visitors to a host and hostess. As time went on, and as Mr. Everitt gradually retired from the active business life in which he had been engaged, Mr. and Mrs. Everitt used to take long tours principally in the North of England, a sort of missionary tours, visiting many of the local Societies and Congregations of Spiritualists, which are numerous in the towns of Lancashire, Yorkshire and Durham, many of them consisting mainly of persons connected with mining. Mr. Everitt was always much liked and appreciated, at Sunday and other meetings, on these tours. It was on a journey of this kind that his earthly life terminated with

[41] William Stainton Moses founded the College of Psychic Studies, originally called the London Spiritualist Alliance, on October 25th 1883, seven years prior to the SNU, which was then called the Spiritualists’ National Federation; Moses himself was a strong advocate of National Spiritualism.

[42] “Psychography: A Treatise on one of the Objective Forms of Psychic or Spiritual Phenomena,” published under the pseudonym “M.A. (OXON.)” in 1878 by W. H. Harrison (founder editor of “The Spiritualist”), London.

tragic suddenness, from heart failure, at the house of a friend, on the 5th of August, 1905, at the age of eighty-one.

But little is known of this phase of "Spiritualism" in the South of England. In some places its quiet influence is great. It is distinctly a religious movement. In the entire absence of any ecclesiastical organisation, in there being no separate class of ministers, in there being no recognised form of creed, to which adherence is asked, and in the equal position occupied by men and women, there is much that is in common with the Quakerism of the latter half of the 17th century. Indeed, it might be claimed that in some respects it is more nearly representative of original Quakerism than is the present Society of Friends. Few phenomena, however, appear to develop, except trance-speaking, but in connection with this there is a large unexplored field, which would certainly repay the study of an enquirer who would enter upon it with an open mind.

To return to Mrs. Everitt. As it was with Mr. Duguid, [43] so I believe it is with Mrs. Everitt, that no allusion to her work occurs in any of the publications of the Society for Psychical Research, nor in "Human Personality." Mr. Myers had, I believe, a few sittings with Mrs. Everitt, but her séances were not of a character to afford opportunity for his method of investigation.

The only purpose of these biographical paragraphs is to give the reader a general idea of Mr. and Mrs. Everitt, and what sort of persons they were.

On the 11th of April, 1870, a séance was held at Mr. Everitt's house, one feature of which he thus describes:—"We all heard the pencil moving rapidly. On lighting a candle we found a sheet of paper covered with writing. At the foot was written 'Do not touch the paper more than is necessary to read it. I will give you more if the influence is not disturbed.' We again put out the light, and soon we heard the pencil making the same noise. On re-lighting the candle we found the other side of the same paper also filled with writing." I do not mean to say that the evidence of such a case as this—standing alone—would be of value. It must be taken in conjunction with a large number of others. But presuming Mr. Everitt to be a man who observed ordinary common-sense conditions, and spoke the truth, the second side of the sheet of paper must have been covered with writing, written in the dark, and executed in a very short space of time. There was no necessity here for uninterrupted attention, lest some sleight-of-hand trick should have been performed. [44]

At a séance held at the house of the Everitt's, on December 7th, 1870, two instances of "direct" writing occurred. Mrs. Hardinge Britten was one of the sitters. The following is from Mr. Everitt's contemporary record of the séance, by kind permission of Mr. A. J. Sutton, his son-in-law.

"We had not been sitting long [in the dark] when Mrs. Britten exclaimed:—'Well, that is strange. A portion of the ceiling seems to have dissolved, and a spirit has passed through into the room above.' Almost before she had finished the sentence, a large book came flap, flap, flapping down from the ceiling, like the extended wings of a large bird, on to the table. This book had been locked in a drawer in my room over where we were sitting for some months previous. There it was, upon the table, when we lighted up. Again the light was put out. Instantly the book was taken up, and we could hear the leaves being rapidly turned. We could hear the tick of the pencil. Suddenly the book fell on the table. We lighted up instantly, and found writing on four pages.

[43] See Pioneer, Vol. 2, No. 4: "Trance & Direct Spirit Art – David Duguid".

[44] See the *Spiritualist* newspaper for 15th March, 1872.

The book was one which had been sent by Mr. F. Hockley as a present to Mrs. Everitt, and was entitled 'The Church of the Firstborn as uncovered by the Sun of Righteousness. The Seven Seals to St. John in the island of Patmos. Illustrated and Explained.' The writings were on the margins of the pages, immediately opposite the illustrations, and gave a description of the symbols. This had been wished for by Mr. F. Hockley."

The following three cases belong to a group of which the number seems to be small, where the "direct" writing is more or less identical with matter that had previously appeared in print, though given as if it were original. These cases may prove to be analogous to some we have considered of "direct" drawing, where what is drawn is found to be more or less of a facsimile of some existing drawing. [45] I am indebted for this case to Mr. E. Dawson Rogers, whose name will be familiar to many readers of these pages, and whose experiences of spiritualistic phenomena probably exceed in number and variety those of any one else now living. In sending me the particulars of this case in a recent letter, Mr. Dawson Rogers says:—"The most completely proven cases of direct writing of which I know are those of Mrs. Everitt. As to many of them I can personally testify to their genuineness beyond dispute. . . . My first séance with Mrs. Everitt was on May 3rd, 1870, at her home, 26, Penton Street [London]. The other sitters were Mr. Everitt, Mr. F. Hockley, Dr. Thompson, Mr. Keningale Cook, and Mr. Taylor, Editor of the *Journal of Photography*.

Before the séance I had a long talk with Mrs. Everitt, in which I endeavoured to form an estimate of her mental acquirements and capabilities. Accordingly when we began the séance, I thought I would ask a question, which Mrs. Everitt herself could not possibly answer. 'John Watt' [46] spoke, and promised to give us some direct writing, and I thereupon said: 'Please give us a definition of the distinction between the Will and the Understanding.' Paper and pencil had been placed on the table, and in eight seconds, or perhaps ten, on lighting up, we found a direct and intelligent answer to the question, containing over 150 words. Its phrasing was peculiar. I afterwards found it was an extract from one of Swedenborg's writings, with a few slight alterations, and an extract such as it would be extremely difficult for anyone to carry in his memory. Certainly Mrs. Everitt could never do it. One of Mrs. E.'s spirit attendants is said to be a gentleman who had been a distinguished Swedenborgian Minister."

The message in "direct" writing referred to above runs thus:—

"You all possess understanding and will. Your understanding is the receiver of truth, and is formed from that truth; and your will is the receiver of good, and is formed from that good. Hence, whatever a man understands and thinks, he calls true, and what you will and think, you call good. You are capable of thinking from your understanding, and perceiving what is true and good, but you do not think from your will unless you will and do what your understanding approves. When you thus will and do, truth is both in the understanding and the will, and therefore in the man, because the understanding does not constitute the man, nor the will alone, but both together. If it is in the understanding only, it is with you, but not in you, for that would be only a thing of the memory, or science in the memory. The power is going. Gd. Nt."

The last two words evidently mean "good night."

The passage in Swedenborg's writings, with which Mr. Dawson Rogers afterwards found the above was almost identical, runs thus:—

---

[45] A remarkable case is to be found with the mediumship of David Duguid; this will be recounted in the next issue of Pioneer.

[46] See Pioneer, Vol. 6, No. 2: "Spirits Speak on the Telephone".

"Something shall now be said concerning the conjunction of the understanding and the will. . . . Man possesses understanding and will; the understanding is the recipient of truths, and is formed from them, and the will is the recipient of goods, and is formed from them. Hence, therefore, whatever a man understands and thence thinks, he calls true; and whatever he wills and thence thinks, he calls good. Man is capable of thinking from the understanding, and thence of perceiving what is true and good; but he does not think from the will, unless he wills and does what the understanding approves. When he thus wills and acts, truth is both in the understanding and the will, and is consequently in the man; for the understanding alone does not constitute the man, nor the will alone, but the understanding and the will together; and therefore that which is in both the will and the understanding is in the man, and is appropriated to him. What is in the understanding only is indeed *with* man, but is not *in* him; for it is only a thing of memory, and of science in the memory, of which he can think when he is not *in* himself, but *out* of himself with others." [47]

Excepting for a want of uniformity of composition in the "direct" writing in regard to the use of the second and third person the two paragraphs are practically identical. The "direct" writing leaves off in the middle of a sentence, without however destroying all meaning, and the intelligence writing could only add, "The power is going, good night."

Several other messages given by "direct" writing besides the one already given, from Swedenborg, proved on investigation to be quotations from books, well or little known, some very ancient. In most cases they were such as the sitters said they had never seen or heard of. But this is a matter on which it is, of course, very difficult to be certain.

One of the most obscure quotations given in this manner was written at a séance held at Mr. Everitt's house, 26, Penton Street, London, on the 15th of November, 1870. There were present on this occasion Mr. (now Sir William) Crookes, F.R.S., Mr. S. Carter Hall, Serjeant Cox, [48] Rev. Dr. Burns, and others. Two messages were given by "direct" writing. The first had reference to Simonides and Dionysius. Mr. Alfred J. Sutton, son-in-law of Mr. and Mrs. Everitt, has kindly sent me the following quotations from Mr. Everitt's contemporary records. Mr. Everitt gives the second message thus:—"Another time we will give you what we have been taught in the Spirit World upon this great subject. 'Religentum esse oportet Religiosum nefas.' You will find the meaning in Incerti Autoris Aprice Aut. Gell." Mr. Everitt goes on to say:—"No one present could give me direct translation. Mr. Crookes, through a friend in the London University, found the passage in Aulus Gellius, Book 4th, Canto 9." Gellius was a poet who lived in the reign of Adrian in the second century.

On another occasion a piece of writing signed "R.B." was given purporting to come from Richard Baxter, the author of "The Saints Rest." A friend, on hearing of this, sent Mr. Everitt a copy of the book in which he found the identical passage.

The following is a description of a séance at which I was present on November 7th, 1871. A report was written immediately afterwards and appeared in the *Spiritualist* of Dec. 15th, 1871. That report is, substantially, reproduced here.

The circle met at the house of the Everitt's at 8 p.m., and consisted of Mr. and Mrs. Everitt, Mr. Frank Everitt, Miss Nisbet, Mr. Hockley, Mr. Cogman, [49] Mr. Haase, Mr.

---

[47] This passage will be found in a volume entitled:—"Concerning Heaven and its wonders, and concerning Hell." Translated from the Latin of Emanuel Swedenborg. (W. Newbery: London Edition of 1850, p. 224, par. 423).

[48] Editor's note: Serjeant Cox coined the name "Psychic Force", firstly used by William Crookes in his investigations with D. D. Home, Florence Cook, etc.

[49] Editor's note: Early in December 1870, "The College of Mediums" was founded at the James Burns Spiritual Institution (Pioneer, Vol. 7, No. 3), with Mr Cogman as its first President. During January 1871 a term/course of

Mawson, and myself. After a hymn had been sung, and after part of a Psalm, chosen by means of raps, had been read, we were instructed how to sit. Strong perfumed breezes were then felt. Prayer was offered by Mr. Everitt, and two more hymns were sung. The light was then extinguished in obedience to raps. A number of the so-called "spirit-lights" were then seen. Just before 9 o'clock I was conscious of a strange feeling as of the presence of some one standing over me, and turned my head round in the dark, almost expecting to see something. Suddenly, there was a sound as of paper rustling in the air a foot or two above the table, and a noise as of a pencil making detached strokes on it. This continued while Mr. Everitt counted six seconds, when there was a sound as of the pencil and paper falling on to the table. A light was now struck. Before me lay a sheet of paper which I had initialled, and which I had seen was blank just previous to the commencement of the séance.

The greater part of one side was covered with small fine writing, legible only in parts with some difficulty. The paragraph consisted of 210 words and was signed—"Fox, Penington, 1647." It should be remarked that none of the company except myself were in any way connected with the Quakers; nor, so far as I could learn, did anyone but myself know the name of Penington, who was a contemporary and intimate friend of Fox. Mr. Cogman said that while the writing was going on he saw a tall female figure in a flowing golden robe, as if standing on the table. But he was unable to give a more definite description. The light was then again extinguished. Almost immediately the voice known in the circle as that of "John Watt" was heard:—"Good evening, friends." Then as if addressing me:—"Well, Edward, have you got what you want?"

E.T.B.:—"Yes. We have a paragraph signed Fox and Penington."
J.W.—"Yes. George Fox and Isaac Penington."
This was said slowly and deliberately.
E.T.B.:—"Can you tell us, John, who actually did the writing ?"

In reply, the name of a well-known Quaker lady who had left this world some years previously, was given. I do not publish it, as it might not be agreeable to some of her friends.

Conversation then took place between "John Watt" and others of the circle, concluding with his peremptorily requesting Miss Nisbet to get some coffee, and the séance concluded by 10 o'clock. My report, published in the *Spiritualist* 36 years ago, concludes thus:—"Now, I am not prepared to assert my belief that the individual spirits of George Fox and Isaac Penington were engaged in transmitting this message. But strong evidence is here presented of the occurrence of extraordinary phenomena of a very interesting character."

Mr. E. Dawson Rogers is responsible for the following:—"We were holding our customary family sitting (with the Everitt's) in the dark, when our attention was caught by a sound like that of a succession of very rapid ticks with the point of a pencil on a piece of paper held in the air. When paper and pencil fell upon the table, a match was struck, and the following message found written in a small neat hand." The message is then given. It purports to be from "Annie Blower," who was once Mrs. Everitt's Sunday

---

six Wednesday evenings at the Spiritual Institution would cost 5s. Although this College was fairly short-lived, it is an interesting part of history; it was post-1876, following the publication of *Art Magic* (edited by Emma Hardinge Britten), that the concept of any college/school was popularised. Robert Cogman (1810-1876) was the first in London to establish a successful training school for mediumship. His *East End Spiritual Institution* was responsible for helping many mediums develop, such as James J. Morse, Frank Herne, Miss Eagar (later Mrs Wallis) and E.W. Wallis. Edward Walter Wallis (Pioneer, Vol. 5, No. 5) would later credit Cogman and his "School of the Prophets", as he called it. Some of Cogman's students became key figures in the foundations of the National Federation/SNU. See Pioneer, Vol. 5, No. 1, February 2018: – First Public Developing Circles – Robert Cogman & Mrs. Mary Main.

School Teacher. The subject was "Life in the Spirit World." Mr. Rogers adds—"This communication, consisting of 280 words, was written, as nearly as we could estimate, in the brief space of ten or twelve seconds, on a piece of my own headed note-paper."—See *Light* for Nov. 11th, 1882.

In *Light* for Jan. 13th, 1883, a statement is made that at one of Mr. and Mrs. Everitt's ordinary circles, at which six friends were present, a message of over 550 words was written, as nearly as could be estimated in about five seconds. The message commences with what professes to be a Latin quotation from Cicero. The subject of the message itself is "Worthy Thoughts."

Mr. J. Braund, of Chartreuse, Vineyard Road, Richmond, Surrey, who describes the following incident, is personally known to me as a serious investigator, He says:—

"An interesting experience of direct spirit-writing was obtained through the mediumship of Mrs. Everitt. I, and a friend, the Rev. J. C. G., sought permission from Mrs. Everitt, who kindly offered us every facility. I initialled and dated a sheet of clean notepaper, and placed it without a pencil in one of the compartments of an ordinary writing desk. We locked the desk and retained the key. We also tightly bound the desk with tape, the important knots being sealed and stamped with our signets. One of the seals covered the opening of the desk, rendering it impossible to be opened without fracturing the seal. After an interval of a few days intimation was received that a message had been written. It was arranged to open the desk in the presence of several friends. The seals were intact. The desk was in the same condition in which we left it. On opening it, we found, on my initialed paper, the following communication, written in a small and regular hand, apparently with a blacklead pencil, and without producing the slightest indentation in the paper:—"We cannot comply with any more writing in this way; it is only proof to those who witness it, none whatever, you will find to those minds who want proof for themselves." "J. Watt." On the envelope were these words:—"There is no power for any more." [50]—KATIE ROGERS.

These early 1870s reports on direct writing take us back to the very early foundation of the direct, independent days of physical mediumship. This, with other early forms of direct mediumship, e.g., slate writing, direct art as mentioned by David Duguid, would develop from the dark séances to what is generally called mental mediumship, e.g., trance, passive, automatic writing, etc.

Edward Trusted Bennett
July 1st 1831-November 16th 1908

"Light" is one of the oldest spiritualistic journals and is still in existence today. It was founded by Edmund Dawson Rogers, with the first issue appearing on January 8th 1881 and published by the Eclectic Publishing Company, Limited. Edward Bennett was the Secretary.

Bennett was also Secretary of the 'British National Association of Spiritualists' B.N.A.S., Council, Experimental Research Committee, Séance Committee, and General Purposes Committee, working closely with Stainton Moses, Edmund Dawson Rogers, etc. Later he became the first Secretary of the Society for Psychical Research.

[50] For a rather fuller account of this experiment see "Light", March 24th 1894.