

MY LIFE IN TWO WORLDS

BY
GLADYS OSBORNE LEONARD

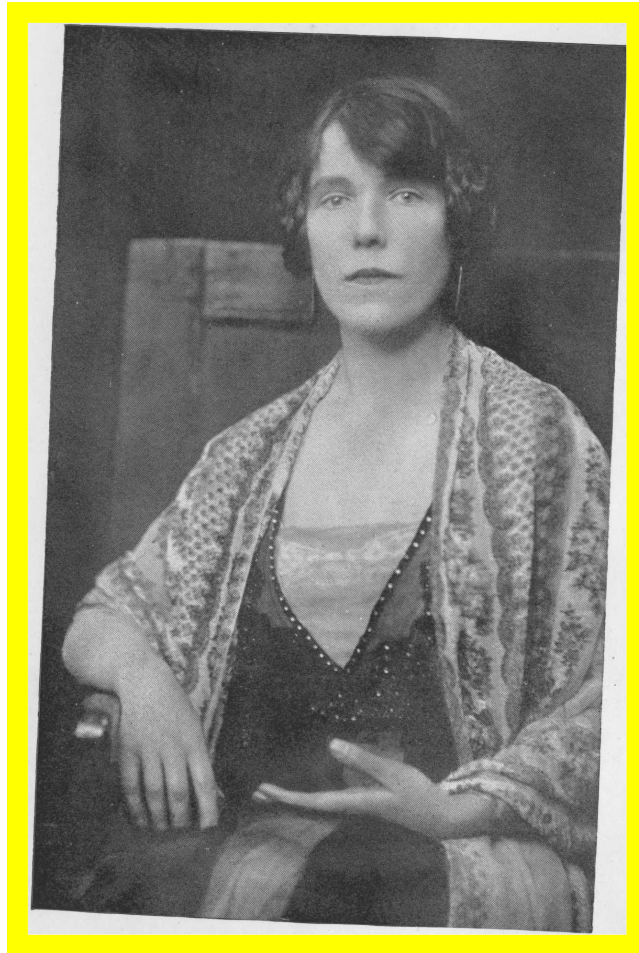


Table of Contents

FOREWORD	3
CHAPTER I —	YESTERDAY'S SUNBEAM 5
CHAPTER II —	A FRIEND "DISAPPEARS" 8
CHAPTER III —	THE HAPPY VALLEY 12
CHAPTER IV —	A REVELATION 14
CHAPTER V —	TROUBLE BREWING 18
CHAPTER VI —	I PICK UP IMPORTANT THREADS 20
CHAPTER VII —	MY FIRST MEETING WITH FEDA 23
CHAPTER VIII —	"WHERE ANGELS FEAR TO TREAD" 25
CHAPTER IX —	THE THREADS ARE DRAWN MORE TIGHTLY 29
CHAPTER X —	FEDA ACHIEVES HER OBJECT 32
CHAPTER XI —	CONCERNING AN UNPLEASANT EXPERIENCE 35
CHAPTER XII —	I BEGIN WORK IN EARNEST 39
CHAPTER XIII —	I MEET A GREAT MAN 43
CHAPTER XIV —	SOME EVIDENCE OF SURVIVAL 45
CHAPTER XV —	SOME MORE EVIDENCE — AND A REBUFF 47
CHAPTER XVI —	IN WHICH I FIND MY FATHER; LOSE HIM AND FIND HIM AGAIN 50
CHAPTER XVII —	I FACE AN UNPLEASANT ORDEAL AGAIN 54
CHAPTER XVIII —	I HEAR A STRANGE WORD 60
CHAPTER XIX —	THE OTHER SIDE OF THE WALL 63
CHAPTER XX —	I HAVE AN EXTRAORDINARY ADVENTURE 65
CHAPTER XXI —	I LEAVE MY PHYSICAL BODY AGAIN 70
CHAPTER XXII —	OVER THE WALL AND WHAT IT LOOKS LIKE 74
CHAPTER XXIII —	AN AWKWARD QUESTION IS ASKED — AND ANSWERED 76
CHAPTER XXIV —	MY BROWN SELF 82
CHAPTER XXV —	PHYSICAL PHENOMENA 85
CHAPTER XXVI —	SEE MORE THAN WE BARGAINED FOR 88
CHAPTER XXVII —	A SPIRIT WAKES US UP A BIT 92
CHAPTER XXVIII —	CONCERNING FAIRIES AND AIR-RAIDS 95
CHAPTER XXIX —	STRANGE THINGS BEGIN TO HAPPEN IN OUR HOME 98
CHAPTER XXX —	THE FIRST BREATH, AND WHAT FOLLOWED IT 103
CHAPTER XXXI —	A MIDNIGHT VISITOR 105
CHAPTER XXXII —	SOME DIFFICULTIES CROP UP 107
CHAPTER XXXIII —	A JOKE AGAINST MYSELF 109
CHAPTER XXXIV —	HOW "THEY" HELP US IN TIMES OF TROUBLE 113
CHAPTER XXXV —	SOME WONDERFUL PHENOMENA 116
CHAPTER XXXVI —	HOW TO DEVELOP YOUR PSYCHIC FACULTIES 119
CHAPTER XXXVII —	SOME NECESSARY SPADE-WORK 125
CHAPTER XXXVIII —	DEVELOPING PHYSICAL MEDIUMSHIP 130
CHAPTER XXXIX —	TABLE SITTINGS — AND HOW TO CONDUCT THEM 136
CHAPTER XL —	DEVELOPING TRANCE MEDIUMSHIP 140
CHAPTER XLI —	CLAIRVOYANCE 154
CHAPTER XLII —	CLAIRAUDIENCE 162
CHAPTER XLIII —	SENSING 167
CHAPTER XLIV —	AUTOMATIC WRITING 173
CHAPTER XLV —	HEALING AND DIAGNOSIS 179
CHAPTER XLVI —	PROPHECY 183
CHAPTER XLVII —	FROM DARKNESS INTO LIGHT 189

FOREWORD

By SIR OLIVER LODGE

THIS seems to me to be a useful and much needed book full of information not easily accessible. It represents fairly and truly the feelings and interpretations of a sensitive's experiences, and contains material for psychological study. It also represents the difficulties encountered by a would-be medium at this stage of the world's knowledge of the subject, when she is constantly in danger of prosecution for breaking what the courts consider to be the law. Taking it at its face value, her narrative proceeds on the conviction of the reality of a spiritual world with which it is possible under certain conditions to get into contact. She is inclined to think (and I am too) that the denizens of that world are all round about us, but that their presence is inaccessible to us unless we have an instrument of reception: just as we are unaware of the etheric waves sent out from Daventry and other stations, though they only require a properly attuned instrument for their interpretation into speech and music. To communicate with the spiritual world most of us require the services of a human being with an organism trained to allow itself to be used by other intelligences, who are thus able to demonstrate their existence and to send messages of affection or comfort.

Mrs. Leonard is such a medium, and has proved herself in the past to be the best or one of the best that I have known.

Thoughtless people often object to the use of a medium, and wonder why they cannot get into touch themselves; they forget that for many mundane purposes a medium is necessary. Most people are quite incompetent either to receive or send a telegram without the help of an operator, who acts like a medium. We are all provided with suitable apparatus for both sending and receiving messages of a customary kind, as by writing or speech; it is only when we attempt to communicate with people whose existence is uncertain, and who can only be got at in an unfamiliar way, that doubts and difficulties arise. Our sense organs are so adapted that we can easily get into touch with intelligences inhabiting the material world, although their term of vitality is comparatively evanescent: My belief is that the etheric world is inhabited by a multitude of beings just as various as those we have grown accustomed to on this mundane sphere, but since they make no impression on our senses they for the most part elude our ken. The full magnitude of intelligent existence therefore escapes us, and we concentrate on the small portion of the universe readily available. To go beyond that involves dangers, just as does any exploration, but we are warned against them, and it is possible for any sane and wholesome and well-intentioned person to select, under beneficent guidance. Mrs. Leonard has been prompted to write this book in order to inform us how the whole subject appears to a person endowed with the requisite faculty, and her narrative cannot fail to be instructive even to those who are inclined to interpret the experiences differently. For myself I am content with the straightforward interpretation that things are,

on the whole, like what they appear to be, and I have tried to show that this is not out of accord with the doctrines of modern physics. Be that as it may, everyone will surely be grateful to a person endowed with exceptional faculties for recording her sensations, and what she thinks to be her experiences, in a simple and interesting manner. With a great deal of her trance utterances, which have proved of help and comfort to thousands, she is perforce ignorant, since she herself is entranced during their reception, but she has accumulated plenty of other information, and sets it forth for what it may be worth. I think that thereby she has performed a very considerable service to psychical research, and I thank her cordially for the effort.

17th June 1931.

CHAPTER I

YESTERDAY'S SUNBEAM

“— and we too live and pass, reflecting *for one moment* and in the measure of our capacity the light and wonder of the Eternal. And is that not enough?”

I read these words in the *Sunday Express* of January 1st, 1928. They were the concluding words in an article on Immortality by Mr. H. G. Wells.

In a preceding paragraph entitled “Yesterday's Sunbeam,” Mr. Wells stated that “The men of Dr have lived and passed like the light upon the specks in yesterday's sunbeam, and all that is left today of Dr, the ancient, are mounds of rubbish and disused and worn-out things — and *all its individual lives are but a fading memory.*”

The italics are mine. Those words seemed to me to be dreadfully sad. They are not in accordance with the mass of irrefutable evidence that has been collected during recent years by many careful and intelligent investigators regarding Human Survival after Death.

The individual lives of Dr still persist, just as the individual lives of all the men who “lived and passed” In the Great War of a few years ago — the mother who passed last year, the father or husband, or son or daughter, of anyone of us who passed last month? — or last week, or yesterday — persist. Not one of these individual lives will exist only as a “fading memory.”

The facts and evidences that have been collected have proved to us that each of these individual lives persists (still as individuals) after the Soul has left the physical body; but Mr. Wells, and many thousands like him, have not developed the perfectly normal faculty of clairvoyance — or clairaudience — and cannot see or hear the loved one who has passed to his new condition of Body and Being, and therefore, because they cannot perceive him with their physical sight, they simply deny his existence.

Supposing these sceptical folk had been born deaf, would they have denied the existence of music because they themselves had not the faculty with which to hear it? Would they not accept the word of all the countless people who *have* heard, or would they judge their statements as merely evidence of hallucination or delusion in otherwise well-balanced and reasonable human beings whose opinion would be accepted on any and every other subject?

“And we too live and pass, reflecting for one moment and in the measure of our capacity the light and wonder of the Eternal. And is that not enough?” asks Mr. Wells. No — no, it is not enough. It is not enough for those who have loved, and who miss the daily companionship, the affection and understanding and sympathy of the loved one, who seems to have been snatched away from us by the process called Physical Death.

Are they — our loved ones — to be thought of only as “Yesterday’s Sunbeams”?

Now, as this book is a record of personal experiences, I am forced to speak of myself all through. Every page will be dotted with a great many *i*'s, and probably bristle with split infinitives and other grammatical and literary errors, but one can speak of one's own experiences more easily than one can of other people's.

In one part of this volume I propose to give some of the evidence that led me to believe in Spiritualism, and in another part to give — to the best of my ability — some instructions with regard to the development of the psychical faculties. I think the time has come when there should be a “medium” in every home; perhaps every member of the family could develop not to the exclusion of other interests and duties, but as an additional gift — a faculty which can, and should, augment and help every action, word and thought in our daily lives.

I myself have not found that the development of psychic awareness detracts in any way from other so-called normal studies. I am a more successful gardener than I used to be, I am a much better cook; in many quite ordinary, but extremely useful directions, I know I have improved; my health and nerves are under better control, therefore they are more to be relied upon than they ever were before I developed what many people think of as an abnormal or extraordinary power.

(A lady remarked, on meeting me for the first time, but knowing that I was a medium, “Good gracious, Mrs. Leonard, you look quite sensible. “I feel sure she had expected to see me with straws in my hair, and a distraught and Ophelia-ish expression.)

It is the knowledge of what Spiritualism has done for me spiritually, mentally, and even physically, that Impels me to try, in this simple book, to show others how to grasp the truth of personal survival, and to benefited by the added hope and courage that it gives one with which to tackle the difficulties and trials of everyday life, and to face calmly — even hopefully the apparent tragedy called Death, which the majority a poor human beings banish from their minds as much and as long as possible. It is not so much one's own death — though that seems to present terrors of the unknown to quite a large number of people — as the fear of losing a near and dear relative or friend, and the dreadful sense of loss that comes with the silence — that terrible silence that follows the passing of the loved one — for those who are left, and who wait.

*When some beloved voice that was to you
Both sound and sweetness, faileth suddenly,
And silence against which you dare not cry,
Aches round you like a strong disease and new
What hope? What help? What music will undo
That silence to your sense? Not friendship's sigh,
Not reason's subtle count, not melody
Of viols, nor of pipes that Faunus blew;
Not song of poets — nor of nightingales,*

*Whose hearts leap upward through the cypress trees
To the clear moon; nor yet the spheric laws
Self-chanted, nor the angels' sweet All-Hails,
Melt in the smile of God; nay, none of these.
Speak Thou, availing Christ! and fill this pause.*

E. B. BROWNING.

Spiritualism has helped to “fill the pause” for thousands of people, giving them back their lost faith, their hope of Eternity, and reunion with those they love.

CHAPTER II

A FRIEND "DISAPPEARS"

PEOPLE frequently ask me, "What caused you to think of becoming a medium? In the first place, what was it that brought the subject of Communication and Survival to your mind?"

The cause dates back to when I was a child, probably eight years old. I had always been carefully guarded by my parents against hearing anything about death, accidents, or anything "unpleasant." Newspapers were carefully kept out of the children's way. As it happened, we had not had a death in our family, or even among our intimate friends. Now, on Sunday mornings, after we had been to church, my father and I carried out a regular program week after week, over quite a long period. We walked across the fields and through the country lanes to visit a friend of my father's, whose name, I think, was Underwood; at any rate, I will call him by that name. Mr. Underwood was a man of about 40, of the hale and hearty type, very fond of gardening and outdoor life. He used to take us round his garden on each visit and exhibit his plants, roses, etc., with great pride. Mr. Underwood, with his love of detail, tidiness, and enthusiasm for all living things, had become a kind of institution in my small life. He belonged to — was an essential part of — my world of everyday tangible things. He ranged with the morning bath, breakfast, prayer, lessons, and everything that one expected would go on tomorrow as it is today, and was yesterday.

Then came one Sunday morning. My father and I set out as usual. It was a bright sunny morning, and I quite looked forward to seeing our friend's pretty garden again. When we reached the house, we noticed the blinds were all drawn. That seemed strange, for the family liked sun and air. My father knocked at the door, which was opened by the usually cheerful parlor-maid, with tear — stained face. She said at once, "Oh, sir, Mr. Underwood, he's gone!"

My father, taken aback, repeated, "Gone?"

"Yes — *gone* — *died* in the night; his bad cold, that he didn't take much care of, turned to pneumonia and he's *gone*."

My father went into the house, leaving me in the garden, saying he would only be a few moments. I walked round the paths. I saw the same plants, the same trees, the same grass that I had seen the previous Sunday. The same dog that walked round with us — he was there. Everything was there, just the same, but the central figure, the bulwark of the whole scene, was not there. It seemed unbelievable. I looked round corners, behind trees, in the greenhouse, half expected him to appear suddenly, bearing a familiar flower — pot and showing us his latest treasure, but nothing happened.

My father came from the house. In silence he took my hand, and we trudged quietly on our homeward way. I felt as if I were choking with an extraordinary fear, and a kind of dreadful curiosity that must be satisfied, or something in me would burst.

“Dada, where is Mr. Underwood?” “He's gone, dear.”

“Gone where?”

“Don't ask questions, dear. You will understand better later on. He has gone to Heaven.”

“But why has he gone to Heaven? Did Mrs. Underwood *want* him to go?” “No, dear.”

“If she didn't want him to go, isn't she dreadfully frightened and miserable?”

“Yes, I'm afraid she is very upset about it.”

“But *why* did he go, if she didn't want him to go ““I don't know, dear. Don't keep asking questions.” The rest of the walk was taken in silence — a terrible walk, full of new, vague and strange dreads.

Two days later I noticed that my father did not leave home to go to his office at the usual time. Instead he dressed himself in unusually somber garb, and left the house at a much later hour. I watched him go from the nursery window, and immediately my morning lessons were over I hurried down to the kitchen, where I was not, as a rule, allowed to be. I got hold of a housemaid, one who had only been with us a short time, and asked her where my father had gone. She said, “To Mr. Underwood's funeral.”

“What's that?” I asked.

“Well, they're burying him today.” “Burying — burying ... burying Mr. Underwood?” Oh, dreadful thought!

“Yes, of course, same as they bury everybody who dies — silly.”

“Where do they bury him?”

“In a grave — under the earth.”

“Under the earth — deep down — where he can't get out if he wants to?”

“Of course he can't get out. Not he! Come on now. Stop asking questions. I want to get on with my work.”

“Wait a minute, Ellen, I must know. Does everybody have to be buried? Does everybody *go, go*, so that they must be buried, and never come up again, never?”

“You’re a naughty girl, Miss Gladys. Don't you remember anything about the Resurrection? They come up, then, when the last trump sounds, of course.” “Oh. they do come up?” A ray of hope. “When — for how long must they be buried before the

Trump?”

“Till the end of the world, as it tells you in the Prayer Book, if you'd got the sense to remember.”

“The end — the very end? The end of the world?” Oh, endless arrays of birthdays, Christmas Days, and other long waited for events and times, that between each one seemed to stretch eternity, and *now* I'm told that it's all my birthdays and all other dates, and thousands and thousands more — countless thousands.

No, it's impossible to grasp. I must find out for myself. How — where — I don't know, but I must find out. A still more terrible thought arises, one that will not be suppressed. It is more devastating than any, to my childish mind.

“Ellen, only one more question — some day — some day — will my mother go — and have to be buried?”

“Of course she will, and your father, and me, and you, and everybody. It's the way of the Flesh, as you ought to have learned — going to church regular — and everything, like you do. You don't seem to have learned anything. You are a backward girl — —”and so on.

Beyond this I didn't listen. Life itself had become a nightmare. Where was there any possible joy in anything? The garden, the swing, the familiar games after tea that hitherto we had all been blindly enjoying unconscious of this horrible fate overhanging us. How could I ever again see beauty or happiness in anything? When playing the previously enjoyed game of “ball” on the lawn, with my mother as active and full of life as anyone of us children, I used suddenly to stop dead, look at her, and remember that *at any time* she might mysteriously “go,” like Mr. Underwood, and then she would be buried — my beloved, alive, and vital mother!

So I carefully read the Order for the Burial of the Dead but I could not understand it. “ Though worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God,” was incomprehensible to my child mind. “Ashes to ashes — dust to dust.” It all seemed so involved, so contradictory, and hopeless.

About this time my mother had an illness lasting for some months, and during this period I was allowed to go to church on Sunday mornings by myself. As our own rather “High” Church of England service had failed to give me any definite spiritual consolation regarding the fears and dreads that I experienced, I tried every other church, of every

denomination, for miles around. Most ingenious were the fibs I had to tell to account for my late return from our own church, to which I was naturally supposed to have been, and which was only a short distance from home. As most children do, I kept my imaginings to myself for fear that people would laugh at me. In later years I have talked to men and women of all ages, and many have told me that in their childhood they were beset and harassed with fears very similar to my own.

Childhood to me was a time of pain and torture rather than the care — free, merry time it is usually supposed to be, and I know that many sensitive children have gone through the same experience.

In the Spiritualist Movement there is one part of the organization devoted to children. Services are held that are specially thought out as being helpful, explaining the process of transition from the physical to the spiritual state, in a perfectly natural and simple manner. These services are part of the Lyceum Movement, as it is called, and I often think of the misery I should have been saved if I had known of this organization while I was young.

It was a wonder that I did not become a very nervous and morbid child, but I was a voracious reader. Some time between the years of seven and ten, I read Shakespeare, Byron, Dickens, Zola, and everything I could lay hands and eyes on.

I must mention here rather a curious thing. My father had strong ideas regarding education. He thought it wrong to make a child learn anything in a scholastic way before the age of eight. At six years old I surreptitiously taught myself to read. How I managed it I cannot now realize, but by cutting out large print from magazine covers, and making secret and hurried visits to the kitchen where I pestered the maids with questions as to what letter of the alphabet it was, and for what word it would stand, I did so. Even the postman was called upon to help; in fact, anybody whom I could rely upon not to give me away to my parents. Well, somehow or other I taught myself to read, and before I was eight years of age, I must have devoured an extraordinary collection of literature at any times when I could be alone. Books of my father's used to be hidden in a fork in the branches of a large apple tree, and even in the gutter-ways running under the eaves of the house, where I had to get a high ladder and climb quite a terrifying way in order to secrete and recover my book when I needed it. Two or three books were ruined by being saturated with water, but I was never found out as being the delinquent. One would think that much of the strange material which I read must have been incomprehensible to me, but it is extraordinary, looking back, to realize how much I *did* understand. Byron's *Manfred*, Dickens' *Dombey and Son*, Zola's *Nana*, and many other works that small children usually know nothing about were, in some curious way, digested and assimilated by my mind to an extraordinary degree.

CHAPTER III

THE HAPPY VALLEY

SOMETHING else of an entirely spiritual and psychic nature was being given to me at this time.

Every morning, soon after waking, even while dressing or having my nursery breakfast, I saw visions of most beautiful places. In whatever direction I happened to be looking, the physical view of wall, door, ceiling, or whatever it was, would disappear, and in its place would gradually come valleys, gentle slopes, lovely trees and banks covered with flowers of every shape and hue. The scene seemed to extend for many miles, and I was conscious that I could see much farther than was possible with the ordinary physical scenery around me. The most entrancing part to me was the restful, velvety green of the grass that covered the ground of the valley and the hills. Walking about, in couples usually and sometimes in groups, were people who looked radiantly happy. They were dressed in graceful flowing draperies, for the greater part, but every movement, gesture and expression suggested in an undefinable and yet positive way: a condition of deep happiness, a state of quiet ecstasy. I remember thinking to myself, "How different they are, how different from the 'Down here' people, how full of love and light and peace they are. No fear, or doubt, or dreadful mystery is there." It all looked too expressive of Life and Joy to be in any way connected with the unsatisfactory state in which I mentally lived.

"That place," I answered, pointing to the dining room wall, which was bare except for a couple of guns hanging on it.

"What are you talking about?" my father asked.

I tried to explain, which brought the whole family and household around me in a great state of anxiety and annoyance.

At first they thought I was "making it up," but as I was so persistent, and described many of the visions so minutely, they were forced to the conclusion that there was something in it — something which was not in line with their conventional way of looking at things. I was sternly forbidden to see or look for the Happy Valley again!

You must understand that my family were very orthodox in their beliefs. They believed in a heaven of harps and crowns, kept specially for those who refrained from "probing" into things they were never meant to understand."

I do not know whether it was the collective suggestion of every single mind around me, parents, doctors, and friends, but certainly, little by little, my visions disappeared. This was a great deprivation. I was conscious of a definite spiritual vacuum. I cannot

describe it in any other words. In many ways I had a practical sensible brain (I've still got it after eighteen years of strenuous psychic work I), and a sense of self-preservation impelled me to put the feeling of loss on one side. I tried to feel as Wordsworth wrote:

*What though the radiance which was once so bright
Be now for ever taken from my sight,
Though nothing can bring back the hour
Of splendour in the grass, of glory in the flower;
We will grieve not, rather find
Strength in what remains behind.*

But I know I did not get the best out of, or put *my* best into, “what remains behind.” It was simply “getting through things” as well as I could, becoming harder and more selfish, more determined to get my own way in a material sense, having lost, through obedience to others' dictates, the spiritual and mental comfort I once possessed.

A period of great trouble came upon my family at this time. My grandfather passed over, and on his will being read, it was revealed that he had not nearly so much money as his successors thought, having spent a great deal in his lifetime, not always wisely, I am afraid, and that he had cut his two sons, my father and uncle, entirely out of his will. This was a blow, as though both sons were clever in many ways, they had pursued their different vocations more in an amateur status than a professional, or even serious, sense, and had been “living up to the hilt” with the promise of “money to come” on their father's death. The position of the two brothers was hopeless, that is, to men of their upbringing and temperaments. My uncle promptly committed suicide by throwing himself, from the fourth-story window of the flat in which he lived; his wife took prussic acid within a few months, and my father seemed to become, for a time, mentally unbalanced and without any sense of responsibility whatever. Our yacht, home, and furniture were sold up, even to the children's toys, and we left the neighbourhood and tried to lose ourselves in what seemed to us the absolute squalor of a new condition of things. My father's erratic behavior made it impossible for us to remain with him. We left him, and then began a struggle for existence for my mother and her four children, who had now to live upon the very small allowance made to us by long-suffering relatives of Mother's, whose patience must have been sorely tried at times by the inability of anyone of us to do anything practical in order to help ourselves. Not our fault entirely, but the fault of upbringing and environment, and the absence of anything in the way of preparation for such a catastrophe as had befallen us.

CHAPTER IV A REVELATION

WHILE I was in my early teens my Guides made several attempts at various times to draw my attention to Spiritualism, in the hope that I should be able to understand and use the psychic power that they knew I possessed.

One day I went on a shopping expedition for my mother, and was walking through a congested, busy street, in a north-country town, a few miles distant from our home. On my way to the place where I intended to take an omnibus, I happened to glance down a narrow side street, and saw a board displayed outside a rather shabby building, on which were the words, "Spiritualism-Meetings held at 7 p.m. every Thursday."

The actual words conveyed nothing to me, but as I paused and read them, a conviction came that I must attend one of the meetings. That very day was a Thursday, so I went home as quickly as possible, but some instinct told me to say nothing about my project. I am afraid I was very deceitful, as I pretended I was tired, and would go to bed after tea. Mother was going out for the evening till very late, and one thing and another conspired to make everything easy for me, and as soon as I possibly could, I dressed and again went forth to the place where I had seen the notice.

I had a curious feeling that I was embarking on a particularly thrilling adventure, an adventure that would prove to be of some importance to me. When I arrived at the building, I found myself going up a badly lit passage, up some uncarpeted stairs, and into a large room where already, though it wanted twenty minutes to the starting time, sixty or seventy people had gathered. Most of them seemed to be of the superior working-class, though there was a smattering of men — and women — who might have been anything, judging by their keen, intellectual faces. After a short service, which reminded me a little of some of the Methodist churches into which I had strayed in my quest for spiritual comfort a few years before, a young man stood up on the platform. Absolute silence pervaded the audience.

The young man (I never forget him) had a pale, solemn face, with large, earnest, protuberant blue eyes. He was rather fat, yet anemic-looking. I didn't like him at all, but I watched, fascinated, while he stood quietly on the platform. He closed his eyes, passed his hand over his forehead two or three times, and then, to my amazement, a child's shrill treble voice came from his lips. His whole demeanor changed. The fat ponderous young man became a vivacious, pert little girl of apparently seven or eight years old, with a strong foreign accent. I thought it was some new and attractive entertainment. Of what had really happened, i.e. that he had become controlled by a discarnate spirit, I had not the faintest idea.

He then proceeded to pick out various people in the audience and gave minute

descriptions of other people, their faces, forms, characters, etc. Whatever he said, the person addressed seemed to answer only in one way, with only one word, "Yes," or "That is correct." This went on for about an hour — detailed description by the young man with the little girl's voice, and an affirmative, "Yes" always from the listener.

Towards the end it began to pall on me.

The amusement I had felt at hearing the child's piping voice through the man's lips, died away, and I was left with a sense of disappointment. A hymn or two, a prayer and the meeting closed.

I went home wondering why I had taken so much trouble to go and visit a place about which I knew nothing, and had found to be rather dull and boring. These feelings persisted till about the following Tuesday, when I began to feel a recurring interest in the Thursday meetings. I had a curious feeling, as if my thoughts were being drawn by, or directed to, the place. I forgot my previous boredom, and secretly made arrangements to attend the service.

Thursday evening came, and on my way to the place I felt again the exhilaration and interest that I had experienced the previous week, before and at the commencement of the meeting.

Down the same dreary passage, up the same drab stairs. The same rather uninteresting, obviously respectable people, the prayers and hymns — but instead of the plump young man, a slim, delicate-looking middle-aged woman, with a mild expression, stood up on the platform. She, too, closed her eyes, rubbed her forehead, but she lurched violently several times. Then to my delight, she gave a tremendous howl — quite a blood-curdling howl — and after violently swinging her arms in a wild circle round her, narrowly missing the chairman and other officials on the platform, a strong, deep, man's voice broke through her lips, speaking at first in some unknown language, then relapsing into broken English. From the books dealing with adventures in the Wild West — Buffalo Bill and others — I gathered that the woman was acting (most perfectly, I thought) the part of a North American Indian.

I hoped she would do something really exciting and desperate, but to my disappointment she calmed down and adopted the same rather boring procedure of the previous Thursday's performance, namely, one description after another, one detail after another, of quite ordinary, but *imaginary* — — — *as* I thought in my ignorance — people. Everybody said, "Yes," "Yes," and "That's correct," just as on the previous occasion, until the speaker addressed an elderly bearded man. She gave him the description of a young woman. To my surprise, instead of answering "Yes," he promptly said, "No, I don't recognize her." The speaker went on with more details, to all of which — the man still said "No."

I thought to myself, "Old idiot, he doesn't know the rules of the game. Perhaps it would be kind to lean over and whisper to him, "You must say 'Yes.'" Just as I was

contemplating doing this, the woman suddenly broke away from the description she was giving and said, still addressing the elderly man, "Oh, now I see another form — the form of an older woman." Here followed a description, with many details of personality, which the elderly man at once responded to, saying, "That is my dear wife; she died last year, and now I remember who the first spirit is. It is my wife's younger sister who died several years previously." Then he received some messages and words of love, to which he replied, "Give her my love, and tell her I am only waiting, quite happily and patiently, till my time comes' and I can join her."

Remember, readers, that this was the first time during the services that anybody in the audience had answered, or made any comment upon the descriptions and messages; so far it had all been very one-sided, but *now* the truth burst upon me! It was as if a great light suddenly broke all over me. "Why," I said to myself, "they are speaking of *dead* people. They are asserting that these dead people are living, and are happy, and clean, and healthy, not rotting in a horrible grave, as I have believed. Oh, joy! Now I know the reason that I was drawn to this place!"

Sitting in the cheap wooden chair in that poor shabby room, I felt reassurance and peace steal over me such as I had never felt before — and perhaps have never exceeded since, maybe because my need was then so great.

Then the medium, as I can now call her, turned in my direction, though not looking directly at me. Her whole appearance underwent a change. She shrank and trembled. Waving her hand backwards and forwards in front of her, she said, "There is someone here who was drowned — a young boy. He was so frightened, poor lad, and could not understand why no one attempted to save him. So many people were near him at the time, but no one tried to save him. Oh, he is moving near to the person to whom he wishes to speak — it is to *you*, the young girl there — *you* — he wants *you* — his name is Charley, and he is related to you, though you did not know him intimately." She pointed straight at me. I at once recognized the description as being that of my cousin, Charley," who was drowned bathing, being seized with cramp in his legs, and in full sight of his friends who didn't know anything was wrong with him, as he was a powerful *swimmer* for his age. All these details were given correctly, and many other matters mentioned in connection with my family.

The medium went on to say that I had "guides" who were looking after me, and that I was being prepared for a special work, similar to that which she, the speaker, was doing, but that I should have great difficulty in doing it, and would have much trial and trouble before I should be ready for the work. This part of the message did not impress me at the time, as I had not the faintest idea how it would ever be possible for me to develop such powers, even if I possessed the nucleus of them, but the general effect of the message was remarkably comforting — the realization that those who "died" never were in the grave at all, only their castoff — no longer needed — outer coverings were put below ground, and their real selves, in new healthy bodies, *escaped*, and soared away to a better land.

I travelled home on air. Everything seemed different. Hope was in the very breath I drew. I reached home, and immediately made a fatal mistake. Instead of going quietly upstairs to my room (our vestibule door was hardly ever locked) without anybody knowing I had been out, I went straight into the dining-room, and waited impatiently for my mother's return.

I felt I must share my glorious knowledge with everybody.

What a help it would be to Mother, who had had so much trouble and anxiety, such a struggle for existence during these last miserable years, when I told her that our trials were *known* to loving and sympathetic people who had passed over, and who were only waiting for us to open ourselves to them — hold out our hands that they might take them with pity and understanding, ready to help us in whatever way was the best and right one.

Mother came in. I began telling her; it all poured out in a torrent. Perhaps I was too impetuous, eager. I dare say I was flustered and excited. Her expression — from being annoyed and startled — settled to one of repressed, but deep, anger, heightened by (I could see it so plainly) *fear*.

“Stop!” she said, in a quiet but terrifying voice.

“All you are telling me is vile and wicked, and I forbid you ever to go to that place again, or do anything further in the matter. It is dreadful. You will have some terrible thing happen to you if you follow such evil practices. They are evil, I tell you, evil.”

More to the same effect, over and over again. All next day, and the next, until my powers of resistance were worn out.

The worst of it was that we had no friends who could in any way help me, or who would have cared to try to alter Mother's views. In those days the prejudice against Spiritualism was very great. So just as I was forced years before to put away the memory of the Happy Valley visions, so was I now forced to give up the meetings, and any plan or idea of following up the subject which had seemed to offer such interest and peace to me. Yet something of it persisted in me, like a still small voice, reminding me that some day I might be a free agent and able to follow it all up again.

CHAPTER V

TROUBLE BREWING

As I grew up, we discovered I had a good singing voice, and for several years I trained with the object of becoming a professional singer.

I was just about to enter into an engagement for operatic work, when I was taken ill with diphtheria and conveyed to a fever hospital.

One of the nurses there was a Spiritualist. After I left the hospital she invited me to her home, where I took part in my first table séance.

In case some of you do not know how a table sitting is conducted, I must explain that a code is arranged by which the Communicator in the Spirit World can spell out messages by tilting the table or rapping on it to each letter of the alphabet.

At this sitting I was told that I would one day be a medium, and that I was contributing quite a great amount of power for the sitting that evening.

Some very evidential messages were given to me referring to people and matters known to me but not known to the others at the table, and I went away wondering whether there was a possibility of my recovering the faculty of seeing the beautiful scenes I saw when a child.

On my return I mustered up my courage and told my mother all that had happened at the nurse's home. She was horrified, and again began telling me of the awful fate that would befall me if I "dabbled in such things." I would, so she informed me, be driven either to drugs, drink, or madness, or perhaps *all* these things combined. My sense of humor made me think, and remark, that as we were always in a state of hard-up-ness, I was unlikely to afford either opium, or morphia, or drink, and that up to the present I had shown no signs of insanity, and didn't see why a subject that helped me to be happy should make me mad.! I am afraid I was rather impertinent, but I was grown up now, no longer a child, and I determined to follow up the subject of Spiritualism as well as I could.

About this time I discovered I was losing my voice owing to the diphtheria and throat complication's following it.

I began to attend several public meetings for clairvoyance, and sometimes received messages telling me I should develop psychic power.

My mother's health became bad, but as she was an active woman I had no idea that it was really serious.

One day — December 18, 1906 — I went to stay the night at a town thirty miles from our home. In the night I awoke suddenly with a feeling that something unusual was happening.

I looked up and saw in front of me, but about five feet above the level of my body, a large, circular patch of light about four feet in diameter. In this light I saw my mother quite distinctly. Her face looked several years younger than I had seen it a few hours before. A pink flush of health was on her cheeks, her eyes were clear and shining, and a smile of utter happiness was on her lips.

She gazed down on me for a moment, seeming to convey to me an intense feeling of relief and a sense of safety and well-being.

The vision faded. I was wide awake all the time, quite conscious of my surroundings.

I jumped out of bed, struck a match and looked at the clock. It was just a few minutes past 2 a.m. I returned to bed and fell into a deep and dreamless sleep, awakening late the next morning to find a telegram from my brother, saying, "Mother passed away two o'clock this morning."

I was deeply impressed, and felt convinced that my mother had come to me immediately after leaving her physical body to let me know that she still lived, and that all I had heard from the Spiritualists was true; that she was now in a new body — a very real and healthy body-like the one she had twenty years before, and that all her sufferings and worries were left behind with her discarded physical envelope.



CHAPTER VI

I PICK UP IMPORTANT THREADS

As time went on my voice did not improve; in fact, it deteriorated. I found it was more and more difficult to control the tongue and pharynx; I could not go from a lower to a higher note without difficulty; some days it was better; others worse; I could not depend on it, so I took parts in plays in which I was not called upon to sing.

Fortunately soon after Mother's passing, I met my husband (in a strange way, which I will tell you about in a later chapter) and found that at last there was someone who was sympathetic towards Spiritualism. He knew nothing about it, but when I told him some of my experiences and ideas in the matter, it appealed to him as being a reasonable belief, and he was almost as glad as I had been to have something definite — in a spiritual sense — to which he could hold. He had been brought up, like myself, in a strictly orthodox household, but on reaching maturity, like too many others, he drifted away from the old beliefs without having anything to put in their place.

Now I always believe that we must use our own will power and perception to the best of our ability in order to deal properly with the daily round of life on earth. I would not admit that we are in any sense puppets, or tools, either of the higher Guides, or of that mysterious something called Fate or Destiny. But, looking back on those days about which I am telling you, I can plainly see that somebody or something was certainly directing me, and shaping my way. In later years, my spirit friends have often told me that they were gently guiding me in certain directions, but as they are never allowed to force or coerce anybody, but only help them to *choose* the best path, I very often consciously delayed events by doing something that was at variance with their plans. Though at that time I knew nothing definite about my Guides, I began to feel strongly impressed that I must find ways and means to investigate Spiritualism further, but how to do it I did not know, as about this time my husband's health began to give us some anxiety, and it particularly affected his throat which, for an actor, was most unfortunate. I knew that there would be no possibility of carrying out my desire to know more of the Other Side if we went on tour and moved about from one place to another each week, and I felt that the only chance for me to study the subject was for us to stay in or near London in the hope of meeting people who were also interested in it.

It was extremely difficult to do this. We experienced great privations and hardships, none of which I regret now, as we learnt so much about the terrible struggle that thousands have who *would* work, and *can't*, because there seem to be too many people for whatever work is available. One winter we accepted a very poor engagement with a theatrical company that was visiting the suburban theatres. My husband was averse to taking the engagement, it was so badly paid; we could scarcely exist on it, but I felt strongly impressed that it was a good thing to do.

During rehearsals my attention was drawn to two young ladies who, I afterwards learned, were sisters, and though I found no opportunity of speaking to them for several days, I found myself continually wishing that I might do so. They, too, looked at me, as if they were just as interested in me as I was in them. No opportunity came until the first performance, which was a matinee.

I found that a dressing room had been allocated to the three of us — the two sisters and myself I went down to the theatre very early, and found the sisters were already there, arranging their dresses and makeup. As soon as I entered the room, which was ugly and bare, a huge place, in a large old-fashioned theatre, I became aware of a most friendly and congenial atmosphere. It was as if that dusty uninviting room were filled with light and warmth.

I said, “Good afternoon,” the first words I had spoken to them.

“Good afternoon,” said the elder sister, turning from her unpacking and taking a few steps deliberately towards me. “Are you interested in Spiritualism?” I gasped, pulled myself together, and said simply, “Yes, are you?”

“Yes, shall we try and experiment together? You, and my sister and I?”

“Yes,” I replied, feeling as if I were in a dream, speaking and moving automatically, half realizing that something of great importance to my future was taking place, but having no idea how important it was!

“Right! We'll try this evening, during the long wait in Act III.”

“Right!” I said.

It was this conversation, just as terse and few-worded as I have recorded here, that was the commencement of everything that happened after, and if, through my late mediumship any bereaved soul was helped, and I think I can say, quite humbly, that *many* have been, It all dates back to this extraordinary meeting, and those few bald words that we literally fired at each other that momentous afternoon.

Between the matinee and evening performance we had tea together, and talked like people who have known each other all their lives, though I afterwards found out that the sisters were usually very reticent and reserved. They told me they had been interested in this subject through a friend, from whom they had been parted for some time. Their mother had died about the same time as mine, and they had a great desire to communicate with her, and try to find out what truth lay behind Spiritualism. They had been waiting to meet somebody with whom they could investigate, just as I had. They — I will call them Florence and Nellie — suggested that we should begin by sitting round a small table, as their psychic friend had told them how to do this, and I also had had that one experience at the nurse's house, after I left the fever hospital. My

husband procured a small table for us, and during the evening, when the hour's interval came, we solemnly and expectantly drew our chairs round it, and placing our hands on the table awaited events.

Nothing happened.

The next evening we sat again.



CHAPTER VII

MY FIRST MEETING WITH FEDA

STILL nothing happened. The table behaved like any ordinary table usually does — remaining stationary and lifeless. Undaunted, we sat twenty-six times, always in the evening, but with no result.

On the twenty-seventh evening Nellie became discouraged and refused to “sit.” She said: “There's nothing in it. It's evident that tables don't move unless somebody moves them.”

She took a book and sat down at the other end of the room by herself Florence and I still stuck to it, and within two minutes the table began to tilt up and down! Overjoyed, I explained how the alphabet was used, and soon Florence's mother and mine were spelling out evidential messages.

Nellie begged to be allowed to come back. Permission was given and her return made no difference; the table went on moving. We subsequently learned that there had been too much psychic force at first with three of us. The mysterious power was too strong to begin with. Afterwards it did not seem to matter.

After our respective mothers had given several messages, a Communicator came who gave her name as Fedra, and explained that she was an ancestress of Mine. She had married my great-great-grandfather.

My mother had often told me about an Indian girl who married this ancestor, but you know how bored children are by frequently-repeated family history? I had not taken much notice at the time.

After marrying this native girl, my great-great grandfather, William Hamilton, was not popular in India, and he made arrangements to bring Fedra home to England. On the eve of starting home she gave birth to a son, and died. She was then only thirteen. This was about the year 1800.

Fedra told me (by spelling out the words with the aid of the table) that she had been watching over me since I was born, waiting for me to develop my psychic power so that she could put me into a trance and give messages through me.

I must confess that the idea of going into a trance did not appeal to me. I had hoped I might develop normal clairvoyance, and see or hear the spirits on the Other Side, as I had seen my mother in that brief vision, and the places that I had called the Happy Valleys. The idea of being “controlled” while in the trance condition by another personality was repugnant; so I refused, begging Fedra to try and work with me in some

other way that would not necessitate either my losing consciousness or “giving myself up” either to her or any other person's control. Even though I knew who Feda was, I did not know what her character, temperament and personality were at that time.

Florence, Nellie and I went on sitting at the table night after night, always receiving messages of great help and comfort in our daily lives. Sometimes they were from our mothers, but more often from Feda, who seemed to be a kind of spiritual Mistress of the Ceremonies.

Occasionally we were asked by Feda to provide a heavier table, so that she could “show her strength.” We tried all kinds, even a heavy oak table with legs like a piano. It took three men to carry it into the room, but when we placed our hands upon it, it moved up and down like a feather-weight!

The walls of one room we sat in were distempered white. We always sat in a good but slightly subdued light, and on the white walls we often saw the forms of Feda and our other spirit friends silhouetted quite distinctly, like clearly-cut shadows, which showed up perfectly against the light background. This was an interesting form of phenomena which I have never witnessed since.

For several months we lived in happy communication with those we loved on the Other Side. All our daily difficulties and trials (and at that period we three had our full share of them) were lightened by the knowledge that those whom we had thought were lost to us were really near and could see, hear, and help us. The very evidential nature of the many messages proved this to us.

I cannot tell you what it meant to me. The proofs given us were so overwhelming, though they might be placed in the category of “trivial” by some carping folk. I think that Feda and the other friends purposely chose simple tests so that we could easily verify them, and we were invariably able to do so.



CHAPTER VIII

“WHERE ANGELS FEAR TO TREAD”

IN the early stages of investigation I would advise everybody to “go slowly,” not to try for involved or difficult “tests” until the Guides themselves are ready to give, and we are ready to receive, them.

From time to time Feda would gently remind me of her desire to control me, but I always refused and eventually she ceased to mention the subject.

After some weeks of this simple, happy communication with our friends Over There, who, we now felt, were very, very near, indeed, one of us happened to read somewhere that it was possible for a spirit to materialize a form that could be seen, heard, and actually felt — that one might feel the solid touch of a spirit's materialized hand. We asked Feda if she would materialize and show herself, not as a silhouette, but so that we could feel her touching us.

Feda continually answered: “No, I will not do that. It is possible, it has been done often, but it is not for me or for you, at present.”

For a week or two this message deterred us from pressing the question further. Would that we had forgotten it altogether, for then we should have saved ourselves from a terrifying experience about which I will tell you, to illustrate one of the dangers to those who try to probe too deeply into matters in which their spirit friends may not be ready — or qualified — to help them.

One day, in the winter of 1909, as we had a matinee, we were sitting in the afternoon for our usual table séance. We had read an account of a spirit who had materialized his hand so completely that he could shake hands with all the sitters. He had walked about; he had spoken! But what appealed to us most of all was the fact that he was solid enough to touch and to be touched.

We again requested our spirit friends to give us such a wonderful experience. Again we were told: “It is not desirable.”

“Let us risk it,” we said. There was a long pause, a strange pause, and then the table began to tilt in quite a different manner from Feda's.

A Communicator who was strange to us spelt out the following: “Your wish shall be granted.”

We asked when, where, and how?

He gave the following instructions: "Come back at dusk. Use the plain wooden chair to place your hands upon instead of the table. Kneel on the floor instead of sitting on chairs. Turn out all lights. Lock the door."

After the matinee, we went out and had some tea; full of enthusiasm, we returned at the appointed time. We locked the door, placed a plain bentwood chair in the centre of the room, pulled down the blinds, and turned out the electric light.

We found it impossible to make the room quite dark, as we had been told to do, because the lights from the street outside shone through the blinds, faintly illuminating the room. The light was not strong enough to enable us to distinguish objects clearly in the room, but as we knelt round the chair we could dimly see each other.

I was kneeling between Florence and Nellie, the back of the chair being between them and opposite me. Nellie was on my left, Florence on my right. Nellie was wearing a white blouse, and was in direct line with the window, so that I could see her more distinctly than anything else in the room.

As we knelt and waited, we all three remarked that it was an entirely different atmosphere from that usually felt at our sittings.

After kneeling for about a quarter of an hour, I noticed a peculiar reddish glow in the corner of the room, behind Florence. I asked her to turn round and see if she could distinguish anything. She did so, and at once remarked: "There's a kind of fire in the corner behind me, a little to my right. I wonder what it is?"

Nellie saw the glow at the same time. Then, quite distinctly, we saw a letter D formed in the centre of it. Puzzled, we inquired what it meant. The chair began to tilt, and spell out: "Death in this room."

"Does the capital D stand for Death, then?" we asked.

"No —: — man's name — soon," was the answer. We were not very interested in this at the time, but it is a fact that on the following Monday a man whose name began with the letter D *did* die suddenly in that room. He was an utter stranger to us, so that the message had no personal significance for us. Probably he was ill at the time of the sitting, and the spirit people knew it was bound to end fatally and wanted to show us that they knew things that were unknown to us, even though very often they are not permitted to tell us about them.

Well, the glow faded. Nothing else happened and we became rather impatient.

"Is that all?" we asked. "Can't we feel something, as you promised we should?"

“Very well,” came the answer, “remain still.” Our knees ached with the hard floor. We fidgeted.

I began to feel it a rather uninteresting séance.

Then, suddenly, I became aware of something standing between Nellie and myself. I did not see or hear anything at this point, but the air near me seemed filled by something unpleasant — Something that pressed against me! I looked for a cause, but could see nothing; only feel the invisible but tangible Something.

“Don't become imaginative,” I said to myself.

I then happened to glance in Nellie's direction again.

On her right shoulder, the one nearest to me, I saw a small black patch. As I looked, it lengthened gradually. It grew longer and then took on a curved shape which extended from her right shoulder across the upper part of her chest.

Just then the light through the blind became a little stronger, and the line across Nellie grew plainer. I then saw that it was not a shadow or mark — but an arm! Not an arm like yours or mine, but a much longer, thinner arm, of a darkish color, and it was covered with hairs!

I wondered if I should tell Nellie what I could see. As I hesitated, I saw the arm moving upwards towards her neck. Becoming excited myself, I was yet anxious not to startle Nellie, so made an effort to speak quietly and naturally to her.

I got no further than: “Nellie, there's an — —”when she jumped up with a piercing shriek, knocked over the chair, pushed us both to one side, and rushed blindly for the door, which she shook violently, forgetting in her terror that it was locked.

Florence had the presence of mind to find the switch and turn on the electric light. Nellie was in a pitiable condition, white as a sheet, and trembling from head to foot. After she had calmed down a little we asked her what had frightened her. She told us she had been aware of the same pressure that I had felt, and knew that something was laid on her shoulder and chest, but had waited to see what would happen.

Then, suddenly, she felt the weight transferred to her throat, and it gave her such a feeling of intense fear that she could bear it no longer. Her nerves gave way and she rushed to the door, her only coherent thought being to escape from whatever it was that touched her.

We talked things over calmly and sensibly, and came to the conclusion that we had been taught a well-deserved lesson, for we had been warned.

In a very humbled frame of mind we returned to the table the following Monday, very

chastened in spirit, and wondering if we should be forgiven for our dangerous curiosity which had brought about such a frightening experience, and we were very glad to think that we were going to get into touch again with the spirit people we knew and trusted.

When we sat round the table in our usual way, Feda came and told us that she knew we had learnt our lesson and would profit by it, also that she had an important announcement to make. It was to the effect that I ought to start developing immediately as a trance medium, and that she — Feda — was going to control me so that she could give through me messages from those who had passed over.

By this time I felt that I really knew Feda so well, and loved and trusted her as I had been able to trust very few people on earth, that it seemed absurd and ungrateful to persist in denying her the opportunity of carrying out the work she wished to do, simply because of a personal prejudice, which was probably without any real foundation.

So I agreed to let her entrance me, and asked her what I was to do to help it on. She told me just to go on sitting with two or three friends round a table, and that I should later on go into trance quite easily and naturally.

We sat in this way for several months, but nothing happened. I did not feel anything of the extraordinary symptoms I half expected to feel. I became rather hopeless about it, but Feda encouraged me and said it would surely come in time, but that my former objections to trance were acting as a subconscious inhibition to her control of my mind. She also told me that I should have to work professionally, because if I worked only with a narrow circle of friends a great number of people would never hear of me, or be able to come and receive help through me.

I told Feda I should not like to be paid for helping people in this way. She reminded me that clergymen and doctors were paid for helping people, and that I must give up my *whole* time to her work, not just the odd hours I could spare from other duties, when I might be tired and practically useless to her.

There came a period when my friends, Florence and Nellie, were unable to sit with me. Circumstances compelled them to take parts in another company as the one we were in broke up, and my husband also had to go on tour again, leaving me alone.



CHAPTER IX

THE THREADS ARE DRAWN MORE TIGHTLY

I FELT I must not waste time, and thought of a sign I had seen over a doorway while shopping one morning. This sign indicated that meetings, lectures, and Spiritualistic circles were held within on certain evenings, so I went inside and saw a man who was in charge of the little building, and asked him if he knew of a developing circle. He told me there was one held every Tuesday evening at eight o'clock, and after I had told him of my desire to develop, he suggested that I might attend the next meeting.

So, at a few minutes to eight, the following Tuesday,

I found myself in a small room furnished only with a round mahogany table which had about seven or eight chairs drawn up close to it. In the room there were about half a dozen people — the man I had met previously, who I now discovered to be a kind of president of the circle; a serious young man, looking as if he might be a bank clerk or something of the kind; a short, spectacled man of uncertain age, and three women. I only remember one of the women; she was stout, about forty-five or fifty, with a kind, motherly face. I never heard their names, and cannot remember if I gave them mine, but they welcomed me into their circle in a most friendly way. There was an atmosphere of simple, kindly good-fellowship, and I felt at my ease at once.

We sat round the table. The lights were turned down, but not out. A very fine prayer was given by the president, in which he asked that all those present should be helped to develop their psychic gifts in the best possible way, so that they might be used for the benefit and upliftment of all with whom they came into contact. After this invocation, we sat quietly for a little while.

Suddenly I felt a tingling in my hands, which were resting lightly upon the table. The tingling spread through my wrists, up my arms, then began in my feet and legs, till my whole being felt as if filled by a gentle electric current. Then came a strange feeling in my head — a pressure on my temples as of a band tied round them, and also on top of the head.

The pressure ceased, and I felt a curious force pulling me up from my chair impelling me to stand. What I was to do in the event of my standing up I seemed incapable of imagining. It was like a dream in which I was neither conscious nor unconscious, but yet aware that somebody outside myself urged me to do one thing at a time, telling me not to try to think what the sequence of events might be.

I was drawn up on to my feet by this strange magnetic power which seemed to operate from just above my head. My mouth opened; a sound issued from my lips. What it was I do not know, for at that moment the president touched me on the hand, saying, "All

right, friend, don't worry, you'll be able to speak in a moment or two." He was addressing the spirit who he knew was trying to control me, but I stupidly thought he was speaking to me. That, and the touch on my hand, broke the spell.

All sense of magnetic control left me. I became my normal self again, and hurriedly sat down in my chair, feeling that I had made myself ridiculous to no purpose.

Suddenly the serious young man who was sitting on my right-hand side began to tremble violently. He shook as with an ague. I could see he was beginning to feel the same impulse to stand up that I had had. After a few moments he rose to his feet. His whole bearing was changed. An extraordinary beauty and dignity crept over his rather commonplace features. Literally, one would not have recognized him as being the same individual who had sat at that table five minutes before.

A loud, sonorous, but very melodious voice — quite unlike his own thin, colorless tones — came from his mouth, speaking in a strange language, which one of the other sitters recognized as Hindustani. The entranced man turned to me. A flow of words, which, of course, I could not understand, was directed to me. He made many wonderful and graceful gestures with his body, hands and arms, quite unlike any movements he was ever likely to make in his ordinary life, I feel sure.

After he had finished speaking, the sitter who had apparently understood much of what had been said, told me that the controlling spirit had explained that he was an Indian priest who had died many years ago, and had been trying vainly, for a long time, to control the young man. He said that I and my would-be control had a lot of power, and that when the attempt to control me was interrupted the great amount of psychic force around me was diverted and directed by the Guides in his direction.

Then the stout, middle-aged woman sank back in her chair. Her body seemed to shrink to half its size. Her face lost its lines and took on the shape and curves of that of a young child. Presently, from the lips of this sensible-looking, motherly body came the tiny piping of a little girl's voice. She addressed several of the sitters, describing various spirits who were present, and then she turned to me. "You have power. You have a work to do, but you are not prepared to do this work in the way your Guides wish you to do it." (I thought guiltily of my objections to being a professional medium.) "You must do this work. Tomorrow you will have a letter. Great trouble comes in it. A very troubled, difficult time follows it, but when you are prepared to do what is required of you, all will be well. The letter comes from a place a long distance away."

I could not think of any immediate trouble that was likely to befall me, so the message did not impress me very much at the time.

Directly I awoke next morning I opened my few letters. The first I read was from my husband, telling me he had lost his position through no fault of his own, but by a combination of unfortunate circumstances which had arisen very unexpectedly, and that he was coming back to London immediately.

All our plans were upset. We removed to a place far away from Florence and Nellie. Everything went wrong. My husband's health became worse; his voice too. It was a period of the greatest privation, during which we did any kind of hard manual labour which could be obtained.

Though it was extremely difficult to do so, I felt that at all costs I must remain in London in the hope that Florence, Nellie and I might meet again, so when my husband got the offer of a special fortnight's engagement in the provinces, I remained in town because I had a very strong premonition that something of importance was going to happen while my husband was absent.

The day following his departure, I met a woman whom I knew very slightly, and she asked me if I happened to know anybody who would "walk-on" in a huge spectacular show that was just going to be put on in a large West End theatre. I had a curious feeling that I must suggest myself. She said, "Well, I didn't think you would accept the engagement, but I felt I *must* mention it to you." She gave me all particulars, time of rehearsals for the next day, etc.

When I reached home, to my surprise there was a letter from Nellie, from whom I had not heard for a long time. She spoke of this very production, saying she had been engaged for it herself, and had already suggested my name to the producer, and asking me to call at the theatre at the same time as I had already arranged to be there.

I was overjoyed at the idea of working with Nellie again, though sorry that Florence would not be there.

I arrived at the theatre next morning, met Nellie, and was "engaged by the producer. While waiting to see him, I was listening casually to the dozens of waiting actors and actresses chattering, when my ear singled out one voice from all the others. It seemed strangely familiar. When I looked at the speaker, I saw she was a complete stranger to me, yet I felt very much attracted to her.

The show needed a great deal more rehearsing than the management had expected. In fact, the rehearsals went on for some weeks, instead of the original fortnight that was arranged. During the rehearsals Nellie and I made friends with the lady whose voice had attracted me. To our astonishment we found that she had some experience in psychical research, and was extremely interested in the whole subject. This drew the three of us very close.

We told her (I will call her Agnes) about our table sittings, and how Feda had said she was going to control me, and that I had eventually agreed to let her do so, but she had not yet been able to do it. Agnes suggested that we should try again (though it seemed impossible in such conditions) and see if Feda could entrance me.

CHAPTER X

FEDA ACHIEVES HER OBJECT

WHERE *could* we sit, in that vast, noisy building? There was no suitable place in the overcrowded dressing room, or any part of the building as far as I could see.

I must tell you that in our early sittings, Florence, Nellie and myself were always fortunate enough to have a dressing-room to ourselves, and we used to make the "conditions" as harmonious as we possibly could, by not discussing unpleasant or worldly matters just before our sitting, and by singing softly the hymns that seemed to be suitable for our purpose. Feda always chose "Abide with me." We often sang it several times in the evening, and at the words, "Where is Death's sting — where grave thy victory," some sign would always be given us of her presence, even if there had been a temporary blank in the sitting previously.

Dressing among this crowd of chattering girls was therefore a new experience to us, and we all three agreed that it was impossible to attempt sitting there.

We used to wander about the theatre, looking for a quiet spot. It seemed hopeless, till one night we discovered a very steep, narrow staircase leading down from the stage. We climbed down it, though actually we had no right to do so, and found ourselves in a large deserted place, among all the different engines and machinery that were used for the heating, lighting and other purposes of the theatre. Not a soul was in sight, and the walls and ceiling were so thick that we could hear very little except the muffled thud-thud of the engines. We found a clean corner, which seemed a veritable haven of peace after all the noise and chatter up above. My husband, who had returned from the provinces and luckily been engaged for the production just before it opened, obtained a table and three windsor chairs for us. We took them down the stairs with all secrecy, desperately hoping we should not be discovered. Between nine and ten o'clock we had a "wait," so we determined to sit every evening at this time.

We did so, and were delighted when Feda spelt messages out through the table in her old familiar style. She reminded me that she was going to control me as soon as possible, and also said that Agnes, Nellie and I had been guided to this theatre so that we might sit and investigate together.

I told her that I was now only too eager for her to entrance me, and she said she would do so as soon as she could, but night after night passed and though she assured me that she was trying her best to accomplish it, she seemed to make no headway at all. Agnes and Nellie were sporting. They never became tired or impatient. Frankly, I was both. I began to lose my earlier enthusiasm, and felt that perhaps Feda and the Guides had overrated my psychic powers, and I was dreadfully disappointed.

Now, this theatre was a comparatively 'new one, and had recently been built by Sir Walter Gibbons, who was managing director. I knew nothing at all about him, neither did Agnes nor Nellie. We had never seen him until we came to his theatre for this special production.

One evening, just after we sat down for our usual sitting (Feda had given up spelling out messages, as she said she wanted to concentrate entirely on controlling me, which made the whole thing very dull indeed), we noticed that Sir Walter, whom we had just begun to know by sight, had come down into the engine-room, and was pacing about, backwards and forwards, backwards and forwards, with his hands clasped behind his back. We had come down a little earlier than usual, so we simply sat, quiet as mice, in the hope that he would not notice us in the gloom. He glanced in our direction in a casual sort of way, but did not peremptorily order us to clear out, as we certainly expected him to do. Instead he kept on pacing up and down, about fifty or sixty feet from where we sat. We thought, "Will he *never* go?" and while waiting I relapsed into an unusually sleepy state. I felt more pessimistic than ever about my psychic possibilities. The drowsy, tired feeling increased. I lazily thought, "It's darker than usual tonight. I'm sleepy. They won't notice if I sleep for a little while."

I slept. I awoke.

It seemed to me as if I might have been asleep for a few months or for as many hours. Agnes and Nellie were leaning across the table holding my hands. I noticed they were agitated. Nellie turned the light on and I saw that tears were glistening on their cheeks. "What on earth's the matter?" I asked.

"Matter!" said Agnes. "Feda has been controlling you and giving us messages from our relatives. Nellie's mother has sent her some messages, too. We have had a wonderful time."

They told me of many evidential things that had been given about matters of which I knew nothing, yet I could scarcely believe it was true. I felt too dazed and tired to enter into the spirit of joy and Wonder that Agnes felt.

The tired feeling soon wore off, however, and I began to feel very glad indeed that at last Feda had succeeded in speaking through my lips.

Why had it happened on this particular night, I Wondered, and Agnes and Nellie told me that Feda had pointed to where Sir Walter Gibbons was standing, and said, "That man's power helped Feda to come through."

Several years after, when I was carrying out my mediumship professionally, Sir Walter Gibbons was sent to me in a very indirect, roundabout manner, anonymously. It was during the war and he was in military uniform, and looked so different from the man in evening dress who had wandered in the semidarkness of the engine room, that I never suspected his identity for one moment, but on coming into my sitting room to greet him,

I experienced an extraordinary sense of power. Indeed, it was so strong, I could hardly speak to him, and felt as if I had come into contact with some enormous force. I mechanically walked over to the window to adjust the curtains, wondering how I was to pull myself together in order to sit with a man who possessed such overwhelming power. However I did so, and as soon as Feda came through me, she told him what had happened in his theatre, how she had influenced him to come down the stairs in order that she could draw some power from him so as to be able to entrance me. At first he could remember nothing of the episode, but afterwards he recalled the whole thing, how strangely he had been impressed to go down the stairs, and *stay there*, though it was scarcely an inviting or enlivening place, and how he had seen “three girls sitting by a little table, very quietly, and vaguely wondered what they were doing, but without the slightest inclination to interfere with them, or tell them that they had no business down there.”

This strange meeting with Sir Walter led to many extraordinary experiences, but I must leave them for a later chapter.

CHAPTER — XI

CONCERNING AN UNPLEASANT EXPERIENCE

FEDA controlled me whenever I could find an understanding or sympathetic sitter, but I knew so few people that it was very difficult to gain the experience and practice that I ought to have had, and a great deal of time was undoubtedly wasted.

Nowadays there are several excellent places in London where classes are held for the purpose of encouraging the psychic powers that are latent in everybody, but are so difficult in many cases to develop through lack of money, knowledge and instruction. I think it must be easier now for anyone who feels that mediumship is their vocation. Fortunately for my work, Agnes introduced me to some friends, among them being an old lady — a Mrs. Watkins, who, later on, absolutely “pushed” me into beginning my professional work.

I went on sitting with one person and another, not getting forward very much as far as I could see, or doing much good. Feda controlled me, gave quite interesting and often evidential messages to the few people with whom I sat. So in the latter end of the summer of 1913, I thought I would try and enlarge my circle of sitters. Unfortunately, I suffered slightly from neuralgia and made up my mind that I ought to have a few teeth extracted, and I went to a dentist who was highly recommended to me. I was given gas, and had several teeth extracted. I left the dentist, went home, feeling (or trying to make myself feel!) as cheerful as possible in the circumstances.

That night I felt dreadfully tired and went to bed, almost immediately falling asleep. The very second I lost consciousness, I had a most horrid and vivid experience. I thought I was in the dentist's operating-room, sitting in the dental chair, and that the gas had just been given me. I latched the doctor and dentist doing one or two little things, moving away a stand, selecting an instrument, and so on, and then the dentist began to extract my teeth.

I felt the actual pain of each extraction. I heard the “scrunching” noise made as several of the teeth broke in the gums instead of coming out. (Remember, I had not, apparently, been conscious of any of these details at the time of the extractions, nor of any pain while under gas, or after recovering.) The pain now was agonizing. I saw the doctor bending down in front of me, watching my face, and heard him say to the dentist, “Go on a little longer,” but the dentist answered, “No, I think I'd better stop now. I've got a good handful.”

I awoke, bathed in perspiration, and shaking with pain. Summoning all my self-control, I assured myself that it was all overstrained imagination — I had only had a kind of nightmare. I composed myself, and after a little while sleep came over me, but almost

immediately I began to go through a repetition, in detail, of the same dreadful experience. Again I endured all the agony of the extractions, and again I awoke after the whole wretched operation was over.

To cut a long and unpleasant story short — this happened night after night (or quite two weeks. I was afraid to sleep, and got into the habit of trying to doze with “one eye open,” terrified of letting myself go even a little way over the border for fear of undergoing the ordeal again.

One afternoon I tried to go under control, hoping Feda would come through to speak to Mrs. Watkins, the old lady with whom I had become friendly through Agnes's introduction, but as soon as I prepared myself to enter the trance condition, I felt the pain of the extractions commencing again, though not the remembrance of the dentist, or the operating-room, but simply the exquisite pain. For a few moments I tried to bear it, but it became worse, and I gave up the attempt.

This happened every time I tried to go into trance, so I asked Mrs. Watkins to try a table sitting with me. She consented and we sat, but the power was very weak and Feda only spelt out a few sentences slowly, and with great difficulty. She said that the shock to my nerves of the extractions, and the lack of any care (I was living alone at the time in very bad lodgings, my husband being away), no one to speak to, or do anything for me, added to the fact that I had previously been very run down, had brought about such a weak nervous condition that I must put off any idea of beginning my work in a professional way for some months, or until she — Feda — gave me unmistakable instructions to do so.

This was a great disappointment, but I felt instinctively that Feda was right. She told me that a North American Indian, called North Star, would give me some healing, and that I was to take things very quietly, only sitting occasionally for Mrs. Watkins and her sister, Mrs. Massey, or an intimate friend.

I gradually grew stronger while following this advice, but was still rather afraid of going to sleep. One night, feeling very tired, I had prayed more fervently than ever that I should be spared the dental ordeal, and allowed to sleep, and to my great relief, I fell into a perfectly natural sleep for about three hours, waking between three and four in the morning. As I awoke, I heard a glorious baritone voice singing the beginning of the hymn, “Nearer my God to Thee.”

I sat up in bed quickly. The voice appeared to be in the room.

Fully conscious, I listened to this voice singing the whole of the first verse. (It was the kind of voice that one would expect to hear in first-class opera or oratorio.) Then I became aware that the sound seemed not only to be *in* the room, *but everywhere*. I jumped out of bed and opened the window. It was a bright moonlight night, the street a quiet little turning, not a soul in sight. The singer went on. Enraptured, I repeated the words of the hymn, under my breath, as the voice sang them, right on to the last line. I

felt calmer than I had done for months, got quietly into bed again, conscious that I had been given a wonderfully helpful and soothing manifestation. I slept, and never again did I have that awful nightmare, or whatever it was, about the dental extractions.

North Star continued to help me, or so I was told.

I cannot say that I was conscious of him doing anything to me, but I certainly grew stronger very quickly. Occasionally Feda allowed North Star to control me, though she was usually averse to anybody doing so except herself.

North Star was never able to speak through me.

He only made a kind of guttural sound, but he used my hands and arms in an extraordinary way, making passes over the patient, and certainly he cured several people of different maladies.

Sometimes patients were brought to my notice in a very strange manner. For instance, one afternoon Mrs. Watkins had invited me to her house to tea and to meet her sister, Mrs. Massey. When I arrived Mrs. Massey was already there. She seemed very quiet and subdued.

We sat drinking tea and chatting in a desultory way. Several times I had a curious feeling that there was something I ought to say — or do — to Mrs. Massey, but had no idea what it could be. The feeling puzzled me very much. I tried to remember if I had been told anything about her or been given a message for her by anyone, but could recall nothing of the kind.

Now, Mrs. Watkins, Mrs. Massey and I were sitting in three chairs about six or eight feet from each other. Mrs. Massey's chair was a wooden rocking one. Suddenly her chair began to rock backwards and forwards, gently at first, then gathering speed, till it rocked at a tremendous rate. Mrs. Massey's face was a study in expression, because, as she afterwards told us, she had not started the rocking herself. She was perfectly still when it began.

Then, to our horror, the chair turned a complete somersault. So did Mrs. Massey. She fell right on her head, and lay where she fell. I rushed to her, and before I realized what was happening, North Star had taken control of me!

A lump, the size of an egg, had come up on Mrs. Massey's head. North Star placed my hands upon it: in a few moments it had gone. North Star then left her head alone and proceeded to make passes over her body, particularly over the heart. He gave loud grunts of satisfaction, and seemed extremely well pleased with something.

After about half an hour's hard work he stopped controlling me, and Mrs. Massey then disclosed the fact that she had felt very ill for some days past, and all the earlier part of this particular day, and had been worried about her heart. All the bad symptoms had

disappeared during North Star's treatment, and she felt better now than she had done for months.

Rather a drastic method employed by North Star to Cure her, you'll think! But, apparently, he had to create the bump on her head to open the way to treating her for the more serious complaint.



CHAPTER XII

I BEGIN WORK IN EARNEST

IN March, 1914, Fedra gave Mrs. Watkins a direct message to say that I was to take some rooms where I could begin work as a professional medium as soon as possible. Fedra repeated this message through friends who were psychic, through planchette, table, automatic writing, or any way she could manage.

In the spring of 1914, I was deluged with these requests that I must begin at once, and every message ended with the words: "Something big and terrible is going to happen to the world. Fedra must help many people through you," meaning me.

I myself was impressed as never before, and with Mrs. Watkins's help I took three rooms in Maida Vale and put an advertisement in a Spiritualist paper to say that I gave private sittings daily, and small public circles on certain evenings.

On the first evening three people turned up for the circle, all strangers to me, and to each other, I think.

I did not like my work at all at first. Honestly I would rather have scrubbed doorsteps for a living. The sense of responsibility was overwhelming.

So many people, when once they had got into communication with a spirit friend on the Other Side, seemed to imagine that every difficulty, every problem of their daily lives, could be shelved, and all burdens placed on the shoulders of the spirit people. This is an attitude taken up by many, and I am sure it is a wrong one. Our friends in spirit life are undoubtedly allowed to help us when we cannot help ourselves, but we *must* shoulder our own responsibilities in order to strengthen and develop our characters. This is the purpose for which we are living on earth, I feel sure.

One day, in the middle of June, 1914, a stranger came to me for a sitting. Afterwards she invited me to her house for a musical evening.

I went the following Saturday. It was an interesting old house near Regent's Park. The room in which we gathered to listen to the music was a long one, which had once been two rooms, but the dividing wall had been taken away. I went and sat down in the back part, with my hostess and a strange lady whom I will call Mrs. Norton.

The atmosphere was very psychic and peaceful.

We three sat listening to the music, when suddenly I became aware that the centre of our part of the room seemed filled with a grey mist. I blinked my eyes, closed and opened them, but the mist was still there, and it grew thicker. Mrs. Norton was also

looking fixedly in the direction of the mist.

Then in the centre of it, there gradually built up the form of a man, young and dark. He was in uniform. His face was pale and distraught. He held something in his hands, a round object which I could not see clearly.

I whispered to Mrs. Norton, "Can you see anything?"

She replied at once: "Of course I can. I see the form of a young man in the Serbian uniform. At least, I think it is like the pictures of the Serbian uniforms I have seen."

All at once I realized that he was the young King Alexander of Serbia, who had been murdered a few years previously. He seemed to sense my unspoken recognition of him, for he looked fixedly and sadly in my direction, and extended his hands, so that I could clearly distinguish the object he held. It was a small cannon-ball covered with blood. He murmured something, but I could not hear the words. He repeated them several times, but the only one I could catch was "country."

The vision faded. Mrs. Norton and my hostess had seen all I had seen, and every detail was verified by all three of us. Mrs. Norton said the first words the spirit uttered were in a foreign language, but that he seemed to realize that we could not understand, and he afterwards repeated several times over in English the words, "My poor country!" Six weeks later the Great War started. I understood then the purpose for which I was needed. I was to be used to prove to those whose dear ones had been killed that they were not lost to them and that the dead had never died.

During those first few dreadful months of war many bereaved mothers and widows turned to Spiritualism for consolation, and found it. Many who were in danger of losing their reason through grief, became sane and led useful lives again, secure in the knowledge that their husbands or sons lived and were waiting for them.

I wonder sometimes if many people realized the extraordinary psychic conditions "that prevailed during the war; so many thousands of young active men being suddenly shot from their accustomed earth conditions to entirely new ones, which must have been a great shock and surprise to many of them. One could feel the tremendous urge from all these thousands of enthusiastic and loving souls, who probably (I think, *certainly*) longed to come back to see the loved ones whom they had left behind on earth. I do, indeed, feel sure, in my own mind, that all of them really wanted the opportunity of returning, if only for an hour, to comfort those who mourned for them, and to tell them something of their new conditions and surroundings.

I remember one occasion on which a direct voice medium visited my home in 1915, and gave a very successful séance to a circle composed of about a dozen of our friends, my husband and myself. The medium's chief Guide, a wise and kindly Scotsman, named David, was heard whispering first in one part of the room and then in another. One could hear, scraps of conversation such as:

David: "Now, then, my laddie, what's your name?"

Unknown Voice, anxiously and urgently: "Alec Clark" (or some other name — so many were given, I have forgotten them all).

David: "Well, Alec, are ye sure ye know one of the folks here, because, if not, ye must not interrupt. Ye must stand aside and let the laddies belonging to the folks here come through."

Unknown Voice: "But perhaps one of these people will know *my* people. Oh, I do want to send a message."

David: "Well, laddie, I'll ask them if they've ever heard your name."

Then he would turn round, apparently, to the circle and ask, in a clear and loud voice: "Do any of you know Alec Clark or his relatives?" Perhaps we did, very often we did not.

David explained that there were hundreds of "laddies" present, all longing to give messages in the hope that some of the sitters might one day meet their parents or other relatives. It seemed terribly sad. I wished that I could divide myself *into* a thousand pieces if only each piece could be used as a channel through which these eager young souls could communicate.

All over the country there must have been psychics who were doing their utmost to record the messages given them from those who had passed on, but even so, the number of psychics must have been so pitifully small compared with the extraordinary number of Spirits who wanted to communicate. Since then I have been told that the comparatively few who could, and did, succeed in establishing communication with their relatives on our side, told all the others who could not, and it made the gulf between the two worlds seem less to them, though they were deprived of the personal satisfaction of knowing they had given some message containing definite proof of their existence.

Fortunately, many bereaved mothers and wives, after experiencing a few successful sittings with a reliable medium, were inspired to try some means of developing their own latent powers, and a good number were able to do this, through table tilting, automatic writing, etc., and then they were able to help other people, too, many of whom might have had, in those days, a prejudice against visiting a professional medium.

Of course, in addition to the truly bereaved people for whom I felt it was my special mission to "sit," there were certainly a few cranks and eccentric people who were attracted to anything of a psychic nature, simply because it seemed to offer the chance of a thrill, or some excitement. I came into contact with several persons whose egotistical ideas concerning themselves, their own powers, etc., were utterly absurd (yet tragic in one sense, because one felt that they were a discredit to the movement, or might bring ridicule upon it).

I felt rather desperate after one or two of these people had called upon me, and informed me that they were controlled by Queen Elizabeth, or Socrates, or Shakespeare, all of whom talked the most blatant nonsense, and I wished I could avoid these encounters, as it seemed such a waste of time, and had so undesirable an element in it.

During the winter of 1914, Mr. Hewat McKenzie, the founder of the British College of Psychic Research, called upon me, anonymously. I had never seen or heard of him before, but Feda gave him what he considered was a satisfactory sitting, and from that time onwards he was of the greatest help to me, sending me just the right kind of sitter, bereaved, but well-balanced, even sceptical, people, to whom the sittings were of benefit and service.



CHAPTER XIII

I MEET A GREAT MAN

ONE day Mr. McKenzie personally brought to me a lady in deep mourning, who was obviously in great grief. Her sittings with me brought her some comfort. She knew Sir Oliver Lodge, though I did not know him at this time, and when his son Raymond was killed in the war, in the autumn of 1915, this lady arranged a sitting for an “unknown gentleman.”

It may sound absurd, almost unbelievable, but as it happened I had never before seen Sir Oliver Lodge in person, nor had I ever seen a *portrait of him*. I had read, or seen, very little scientific or psychical literature, and I had never read anything that he had written. Anyhow, I had not the faintest idea of his identity, but Raymond in this — his first-sitting with me, communicated with his father through Feda, and from that time onwards it has been my great privilege to have had many sittings with him, and also with many of the bereaved people who wrote to Sir Oliver, asking him to send them to someone who could give them a message from those who had passed over.

Sir Oliver and his secretary, Miss Nea Walker, the authoress and compiler of that wonderful work, “The Bridge,” took infinite pains in sorting out the genuinely bereaved people, and arranging all details regarding their appointments with me, so that all anonymity could be strictly preserved. Miss Walker used simply to write to me and say: “On Monday, December 12th, expect a lady at 11 a.m. On Wednesday, 14th, expect a gentleman same time,” and so on. This was a most satisfactory arrangement, both for the sitter and for me. Looking back, I realize now, more than ever, how much I owe to Sir Oliver and his wisdom, patience and kindness. I could never find words that would adequately express my appreciation of all he meant to, and did for, my work. Indeed, where would my work have been without Sir Oliver Lodge's help? I cannot imagine. I took sitters through other sources, too. The Society for Psychical Research, the officials and members of which always showed me the greatest sympathy and consideration, were all delightful sitters with whom it was a pleasure and satisfaction to work.

How greatly the sitter can help one's mediumship to develop! The wise, cautious, even sceptical sitter, if he has an *open* mind, gets the best results, and is a great factor in definitely building up, little by little, the psychical and mental forces of the medium, and even of the control. The credulous, “I'm willing to believe anything, my dear. I don't want tests,” kind of sitter does not improve the quality of one's mediumship, nor get the best results. Scepticism of a reasonable kind is often a good condition in the early stages of investigation. Such a one I have in mind, and he is Mr. Robert Blatchford, who was certainly very sceptical, as everybody knows, at first, but when he obtained what he considered to be evidence, he acknowledged it, and since then he must have helped many thousands by his courageous statements of his beliefs and opinions.

In spite of all the encouragement and friendly help that I received, I found that the constant strain of “sitting” for all kinds and types of people was very great. You see, they were nearly all bereaved, terribly bereaved, plunged into the depths of grief and loneliness so suddenly. Had I dared to let myself dwell upon it, I should have been overwhelmed by the sadness of it all. Only by saying to myself, “You *know* it's terrible, awful, but don't be a sentimental, selfish fool. Don't waste time and power in contemplating the obvious, but pull yourself together, so as to give the right peaceful conditions, so that those who have left this dreadful chaotic state on earth may draw near to you, and communicate *through* you.”

I knew instinctively that I must mentally provide a calm, harmonious condition, so as to make things as easy as possible for the Spirit Communicators. This was impressed on me again and again by Feda, who herself is such a joyous, optimistic little person, that I feel sure she must have influenced me enormously during those trying years. Also the knowledge that, because of the sittings, people were being lifted out of despair and hopelessness, into leading normal and useful lives again, helped me to struggle against the difficulties and trials of that period.

You see, I had become so *sure* of my facts. I no longer, as in my early youth, hoped and despaired alternately. Little by little, the Guides and Communicators on the Other Side made me *know*. Sometimes sitters would tell me about the proof that had been given them through Feda, which was very helpful to me. I think I will relate a little of this evidence as it will help you to know the kind of material – simple yet definite — that helped the bereaved sitter, and also impressed me.

CHAPTER XIV

SOME EVIDENCE OF SURVIVAL

IN 1916 a lady, Mrs. Kelway-Bamber, came to see me, whose son, Claude, an airman, had been killed in France. She obtained a great deal of personal evidence from him which convinced her that it was undoubtedly her son who was communicating.

One day, when she came to have a sitting with me, he said to her, "Mummy, I know that you often wish I could give you a test that would be absolutely watertight, something that no one on earth knows anything about."

His mother said, "Yes, I wish you could do that: it would help so many people to believe in the after life if I could tell them something that excluded the theory of telepathy."

"Well, Mummy," he replied, "do you remember a boy who was a particular friend of mine at school? We always called him 'Little Willie.'" (Here he gave her several particulars which clearly established the other boy's identity.)

The mother said at once, "Of course, I remember him, but we — haven't heard of him for some time."

Her son proceeded: "Willie has just passed over. He has been killed in France, shot down in an' aeroplane. His body is in a spot where it is not likely to be found for some time. I have been helping his soul to get away from the body and the conditions of war, because it will be a great shock to him when he awakes and finds out what has happened.

"No one knows that he is killed — not a living soul on earth at the moment, because they are not expecting him back at the base yet. He has only just been killed, and I am so glad to have this sitting with you, so that I can tell you about it before anyone else knows."

Mrs. Kelway-Bamber went immediately to the War Office and made inquiries, but was told that, as far as they knew, the officer in question was safe and sound.

A few days later he was reported "missing," but it was not till a year later that it was proved he had been killed. It was then found that he had been shot down that very day just before the sitting. This, I consider, was a test that cannot be explained away by telepathy.

About this time a young widow came to me, soon after her husband had been killed, also in the war. After a few successful sittings (with Feda controlling me) she thought she would like to try a table sitting. Her husband proved himself to be quite an expert indeed, he mastered the "technique" of the sittings from his side remarkably quickly.

His control over the table was so perfect that I only needed to keep one hand — my left

— very lightly on it, and was able to use my right hand to write down the letters as he spelt them out to us. It was necessary that I should do so, as he moved the table so quickly that we should otherwise have forgotten the order of the letters.

While he was giving a message about some ordinary but quite interesting matter, he broke off, changing the subject by saying, “Nora, have you forgotten what today is?” “No,” his wife replied, “but I thought *you* had.”

Can't you tell me what today means to you, because it is a very special day?” Without the least hesitation the following letters were rapped out quickly on the table:

ATTRINITYCHURCHIMETMYDOOM

We looked at the letters, but could make nothing of such a jumble as it seemed. In a disappointed tone, the wife said, “Well, darling, I did think you would remember what today is.”

“I do,” he insisted, “I've told you. Read over carefully what I have spelt out.”

On reading over again the letters he had given, we found they spelt: “At Trinity Church I met my doom.” The wife was delighted, as that day was the anniversary of their wedding-day. It was just the kind of thing he would have said, she explained; he wanted to give the test in his own words, in his own way — not hers.



CHAPTER XV

SOME MORE EVIDENCE — AND A REBUFF

THE idea that all evidence can be explained by the theory that the medium simply reads the mind of the sitter and finds certain information there, and makes use of it by mentally and verbally converting it into a supposed communication from a discarnate spirit, is now being worn so threadbare that serious and experienced students of the subject are finding out that that kind of telepathy enters very little, if at all, into a séance with a fully developed medium.

If you read such books as the Rev. C. Drayton Thomas' *Life Beyond Death, with Evidence*, and *Some New Evidence for Human Survival*, you will find an immense number of cases recited in which the evidence is of such a nature that it cannot be explained away by the thought-reading hypothesis. It would be a waste of time for me to repeat any of these cases here, as you can all read them for yourselves in full, along with so much other interesting and instructive material.

Feda often explains to us that in the Spirit World there are what one can only describe as Inquiry Bureaux, where those who are anxious to send messages to their friends on earth, make contact with some of the experienced Communicators, such as Mr. Drayton Thomas's father, and ask them to help, either by taking them to a sitting or carrying a message for them.

Of course I hear very little about the evidence that most of my sitters obtain. A great deal of it would be of too intimate and private a nature for the sitter to retail to me, or to publish it in a book or paper, and often it is undesirable that I should hear anything about it, as the Communicator may wish to continue with his evidence, and it is always best that my mind should be as clear as possible about any subject on which a sitter requires further evidence.

Personally, I think that the idea of a medium "coloring" the messages is very much exaggerated, but we have to consider that we are sometimes trying to provide evidence that will convince the skeptic. We are not trying to convert the converted.

From time to time I have had remarkable personal evidence given me. I should like to tell you about one very striking example, but as it concerns some relatives who do not like the subject of *Psychical Research*, and who strongly disapprove of my work in it, I must disguise the names, as I do not wish consciously to annoy or hurt them.

One evening in the autumn of 1914, I visited a friend's flat in Bayswater with the object of meeting two or three other friends and having a table sitting. We had all known each other very well, with the exception of one lady, whom I will call Mrs. C. Through the table several Communicators spelt out short messages, none of a very interesting kind,

and a short interval came during which the table seemed to become quite “dead” and still. We waited, wondering if the séance were finished, when suddenly the table began to move again, first in a halting, rather uncertain manner, and then gradually becoming firmer and stronger. A name — Christian and surname — was spelt out. None of the other sitters recognized it. I did, but did not acknowledge it, as I did not for one moment think it was meant for me, as the only person I knew of that name was still, so far as I knew, on earth, and I felt sure I should have heard if he had passed over.

So I said nothing.

Again the name was spelt out, this time very strongly indeed. The sitter, whom I have called Mrs. C., then said to me, “Mrs. Leonard, I am occasionally clairvoyant, or I ‘sense’ things, and I am strongly impressed that this Communicator knows you, and wishes to speak to you.”

“Well,” I said, “I do know someone of that name.

It is the name of an uncle, but he is, I am quite sure, alive and well, or I should have heard. I am certain it cannot be he.”

As I finished saying this, the table lifted high, and literally banged out, “Yes — I am he — I am your uncle — and I passed out suddenly,” again repeating both Christian and surname.

I still could not believe it, and asked him the name of his house, which was in a place two or three hundred miles away and quite unknown to any of the other sitters. This was given correctly. Mrs. C. spoke again: “I can see this Communicator so distinctly. He is standing just behind you, Mrs. Leonard. I will describe him to you.”

She did so minutely, and it was an excellent description, which would have fitted very few people except my uncle, who had a very unusual personality. I felt, then, that it must be he, and told him I was glad he had come to me, as my mother and I had been very fond of him; he was an exceptionally good and kind man, if ever there was one.

He then proceeded to give me some information about his youngest son, information that again it seemed impossible to credit. He said that this son had been detained as a prisoner in Germany. This did not fit in at all with what I had known of the family's recent plans and movements. I was more puzzled than ever. He then asked me to write and tell his wife, my aunt, that he had communicated, and said she would verify all his statements. I promised to do so.

I, and the other sitters, were extremely interested in the whole communication. We immediately wrote out all he had said, while it was fresh in our minds, and we all signed and dated it.

On reaching home I read out the statement to my husband, who said that he could not imagine my uncle had passed over, or I should have heard about it from one of my

relatives, most certainly from my aunt. I then thought of my promise to write and tell my aunt that Uncle had spoken to me. How could I word the letter, I wondered? As my husband said, I could not write and say, "Please, Aunt, is Uncle dead?" No matter how tactfully I might put the matter, it would really amount to that, so I simply wrote and said that I hadn't heard from her for a few weeks and that I particularly wanted to know "if things were all right at home." My aunt wrote in reply saying she was sorry she had not written, but my uncle had passed over very suddenly three weeks before, and there had been a great deal of business suddenly forced on her. She also said my uncle had been worried by the fact that his youngest son happened to be passing through Germany on the outbreak of war, and had been detained there! This confirmation of all my uncle had told us through the table was most striking, and I immediately sent to my aunt the signed statement of what had happened at the sitting.

"How glad she will be to know that he has already taken steps to communicate in order to show his love and interest in us all," I thought, but I was mistaken.

My aunt wrote back that she hoped I would never refer to the matter again, and that I would not disturb my uncle, but allow him to rest in peace. I could see it would be hopeless to explain to her that I had not "disturbed" him. He had "disturbed" me, in a most determined manner, and I was very glad that he had done so.

At the first opportunity I told him quietly what Auntie had said (he probably knew it), and told him I could not send on any further messages from .him. He said he understood, and that he was quite content; it was only what he had half-expected, but that he would keep in touch with me from time to time. I did not hear much about him, but I hope he still feels interested in me and thinks of me, even if his life and work (I am sure he is busy and active in his present life) do not bring him into close contact with earth life.



CHAPTER XVI

IN WHICH I FIND MY FATHER; LOSE HIM AND FIND HIM AGAIN

A VERY strong chain of evidential matter was woven round my father, my reunion with him, and his subsequent "passing over."

In an early chapter I told you that financial losses had unsettled my father's mind to such an extent that he seemed to lose all sense of his material responsibilities as a husband and father. Here, I must remark, that I am quite sure I was his favourite child. I was very fond of him indeed, and being the eldest, I was old enough to understand him better than my brothers or sister could be expected to do. After we left him, he made several attempts to persuade me to go and live with him. He had a great mastery of many different languages, understanding and speaking fluently French, Italian, German and other less-known tongues, and had from time to time done correspondence and other work during different Continental and "Near East" wars. He could act as interpreter under difficult and complicated conditions, and, of course, also teach languages, but had not the patience to do it.

If I had left my mother and gone to him, I should undoubtedly have had an easier and more interesting, though Bohemian, life, travelling abroad with him. He was a fascinating companion at times, though at others he was dreadfully sarcastic and cynical in an amusing, but extremely cruel way. One would never be dull with him. He was certainly what is known as a dual personality, because behind all his charm, cleverness and love of the unusual, was a curious orthodox and conventional streak, which was undoubtedly responsible for his refusal to allow me to ask any questions about, or see anything of, what he called "the supernatural."

I longed to join him. It was a great temptation, but we children all felt that our right place was with our mother, so I stayed. Perhaps I was impressed to do so. On the other hand, had I been alone with my father, I *might* have brought him round to my way of thinking regarding Spiritualism. Subsequent events made me think this would have been possible, though I should not have thought so at the time. Now, after I reached the age of seventeen or eighteen, till I was thirty-two, I had neither seen nor heard from my father, and did not know if he was on this plane or not. When the war broke out in August, 1914, it brought him very much to my mind again, as he had taken part in the Franco-Prussian war of 1870, on the French side.

I had a great friend, Beatrice Chester, who knew all about him, and one evening when I was at her house in Regent's Park, she suggested that we might have a little table sitting, and see if any of my father's relatives who had passed over would come and give me information about him. I gladly agreed, and we sat in the usual way. To my surprise someone came through, who said his name was William Edward and that he

was my father's brother.

I would not believe this, because I had understood that my father had no other brother than one named Harry.

—“Hullo” I said, “Do you mean that you are Harry?”

He said, “No, I am your father's eldest brother.” I said, “You are wrong, then, because my father had no eldest brother; he was the eldest.”

He said, “I am his brother, but I died before your father was born.”

I said, “How can you be William, because there are no two sons in the same family called by the same Christian name, and my father was William.” He said, notwithstanding that, he was right. I replied, “Very well, have you seen your alleged brother at all lately?”

“Yes.”

“Where? Is he on the Continent?” “No, he is in England.”

“Can you tell me anything about where he may be?” “Yes, in Leeds.”

I said, “No, that cannot be.” I thought, why should he be in Leeds? That is one of the very towns he would not be in. However, I made inquiries, and through my brother I found out that my father had been seen in Leeds. My brother, at the same time as he wrote about this, sent me on an old bag containing some papers, as he was moving from the place where he was living to another. In this bag I found a torn envelope with the Leeds postmark, which gave the last three letters of the name of a road —“I AN.” I thought from this it was evident he had been in Leeds, so I said I would try and find out from the spirit, who called himself my father's brother, whether he could tell me anything more about it. Accordingly, at the earliest opportunity I asked him whether he could possibly find out any address my father ever had in Leeds, or was likely to be found at. After a lot of trouble and mistaken spellings, he spelt out the words, “Caledonian Road, Leeds.” I could not get the number of the road, but I thought I would write to my father at that address and see what came of it. To my great astonishment, a fortnight afterwards, I got an answer from my father, but from quite a different address. He said he had moved from the Caledonian Road, which was a long thoroughfare, and without any number it was most *f* unlikely that any letter would have found him, but some people in the road, of whom the postman made inquiries, took the trouble to tell him where my father had probably gone, and the postal authorities sent on my letter to that address. In his reply my father said he was very pleased and astonished to hear from me. He said he would like to know what I was doing, and asked if it would be possible to see me. I answered I should be delighted to meet him; would he come to see me? I tried to explain to him what I was doing, for by this time I was working professionally as a medium. It was in the winter of 1914. I saw that in his next letter he rather ignored what I

had said about my work, though he was as tactful as he could be. He told me he could not come to see me as he was not very well, and could not get about easily. Incidentally, he told me he had married again. My mother had passed on some years before. He did not propose that I should go to him, but I found that in the Christmas week my husband had a little business in Wakefield, which is not far from Leeds. I wired to my father asking if he could come to a certain address at Wakefield, which is only a tram-ride from Leeds. He replied, "Yes." My husband and I went to Wakefield, and my father came to see us. We met at the tram terminus; he did not know me, but I recognized him immediately. We took him to the place we were staying at and had lunch; then I asked my husband to leave us together for a confidential talk, and I broached the subject of my work to my father.

He said to me, "Well, I have always doubted mediums and thought they were frauds — that there might be a certain element of thought-reading and telepathy about it, and a suggestion of hypnotism; but I believe you are fairly level-headed, and fairly conscientious, and I don't believe you would set out seriously in such a thing as this without believing it to be true."

I replied, "I thought you would know that, and that I would not take it up in this way unless I had proved it to be true."

"Do you think anybody can return?" he asked.

I said, "Yes, anybody who wishes to do so can, provided there is someone on the earth plane who also wishes to communicate."

To which he answered: "Well, when I pass over, as you call it, I will come back to you." He asked me to explain one or two things about communicating, and I told him how he could give a message through a table, or show himself to a medium so that she could describe him, or try to think of something to convince me that it was he. He said, "All right, I will do that when I pass on, but I feel pretty well at present."

I told him as much as I could about the subject, and he became more and more interested, and asked endless questions. Then he said suddenly, "Do you know I have heard a voice, an *objective* voice, several times during the last few weeks."

"Oh," I exclaimed, "how interesting! What does the voice say?"

"Die, on the 15th of January," he replied. "The voice never says anything else, but always that, 'Die on the 15th of January.' I don't know whose death is meant. Perhaps it's the damned old Kaiser," he added, with a laugh.

I never saw my father again in the flesh. He died on the morning of the 15th of January, only two weeks after he had told me about the message. I do not understand why the voice told him about the date, or how "it" knew. I only record it as an interesting incident. About three days after my father passed over, I was resting on my bed in the afternoon,

reading, when my attention was drawn by a movement of some kind near the side of the bed. I looked up and was astonished to see my father standing in front of me. I saw him just as distinctly as one can see any ordinary earthly person. He stood between my bed and the fireplace, facing the bright winter sunshine that streamed in upon him from the window. I noticed that his body was solid, and it completely blocked out part of the mantelpiece and fireplace. I looked at him; he looked at me, with a rather, "I'm a clever boy — told you I'd do it" sort of expression. He appeared to be several years younger than on my last meeting with him — bright, alert and upright, his face wreathed in smiles. I could see he was delighted to be able to show himself to me. I could have touched him by stretching out my hand.

For a moment I forgot he was "dead" and thought he was there, in his physical body. In the next, I remembered and, overjoyed and overawed, I managed to whisper, "Oh, Dad."

He smiled even more, nodded his head and vanished. I was glad to think that he had found it possible to make me see him, but, oh, the many things I thought of afterwards that I wished I had said to him while he stood there, just in front of me. It was only a matter of three or four minutes, but I might have said so much that I had never said before; but I expect he got my thoughts and knew I was too surprised at the time to say all that was in my heart.

About a week later I got the impression that Dada would like me to go to a medium so that he could speak to me, so I attended a circle held by the well-known trance medium, Mr. J. J. Vango. Mr. Vango did not know me, but soon after going into trance he described my father exactly as he was in his earth life, giving his name, the way he passed over, and many other details, which made me quite sure it was my father whom he described. Mr. Vango then told me about my father's visit to me, and how pleased he was that I had seen him, and that he would keep in touch with me from "Over There." Other messages followed. It was a remarkably evidential and comforting sitting.

Since then my father has given me proof after proof of his continued interest in me and in my life; in fact, as I was writing the preceding paragraph, just a few minutes ago, I became conscious that he was sitting on the couch in front of me, evidently very interested in what I was telling you about him.

CHAPTER XVII

I FACE AN UNPLEASANT ORDEAL AGAIN

I HEAR so many people say, “Do the spirits ever tell you anything useful?”

It is rather difficult to define everybody's idea of what the word “useful” means. Personally, I think they are being useful in the best and highest sense of all when they take so much trouble to come and give us evidence that they exist, and remember us, as my uncle and father did, because by doing so they are giving us the happiness of realizing that there is no death, and we can therefore look forward to another life where they will welcome us.

Somewhere, someone, I am not sure who, wrote:

“Who takes away death's sting deprives life of its bitterness.”^{*}

Yes, and *adds* exceedingly to its sweetness.

^{*}
“The Psychic Faculties and Their Development,” published by the L.S.A. Publications, Ltd., 16 Queensberry Place, London, S.W.7.

But I think I know what inquirers of this type really want to know. It is, “Can, and do, the spirits ever tell anything that helps in a strictly material or earthly sense? “Yes, I can truthfully say that from time to time I have had proof that they *can* help us when it is *desirable* that they should do so, but they always remind us that we must shoulder our own responsibilities, develop our will-power, wisdom, and discretion, as much as possible, as they are not allowed to interfere with our individual development by “helping on” any and every occasion. The people who expect them to do so (and I fear that there are a great many) are often very disappointed.

There are several different times in my life, in recent years, when I have indeed been “materially” helped by the Guides and friends who have passed over in a way that deeply impressed me at the time and ever since. In the summer of 1925 I began to feel less strong and well than usual. I suffered from extreme weakness and fatigue. It had nothing to do with my psychic work, as it began just after I had had an unusually long holiday.

I began to suffer with what appeared to be acute neuralgia in my face and head. It grew worse. The pain was dreadful. I developed a temperature and was very feverish, breaking out into baths of perspiration during the night. Never having had such symptoms before, I was nonplussed to account for them in any way, or to know what to do.

I must tell you that I have a very dear friend, Miss Helen Macgregor, whom many of you may know, not only on account of her fine psychic powers, but as co-author of one of the best books on psychical development that I have ever read!

Perhaps only a few people know that Miss Macgregor possesses healing power to an extraordinary degree. Her gift for diagnosis is well known, but her Guides only allow her to use her actual healing power in exceptional cases and circumstances. She had several times healed me on previous occasions of a bad internal chill, and on one occasion after a motor accident, when I had some very nasty injuries indeed.

So, as I grew alarmingly worse, and the pain was so acute I could not eat or sleep, but only pace up and down my bedroom till I was too exhausted to walk any longer, and then fall on the bed till the pain forced me to get up and pace the room again, my husband telegraphed to Miss Macgregor, begging her to come and see me. For several days my face had been gradually swelling and discoloring. When Miss Macgregor entered my bedroom, I must have looked a pretty sight. By then the left side of my face had swollen to the size of a football, and was green, red, purple, and most of the other colors of the rainbow. One eye was completely closed, and I could hardly open my mouth.

She looked at me, and in spite of her habitual self-control, she gasped! I shall never forget her expression of astonishment and dismay. I could have laughed had I not been in such pain.

She made me sit in a chair, though I doubted my ability to keep still for two minutes together. Then she began making passes over me, and to my intense astonishment the dreadful pain subsided, so that I could sit still in comparative comfort. For nearly half an hour she “worked” on me, scarcely touching me with her hands, but only doing the “passes.” The relief and relaxation of my tired nerves was so great at the cessation of the agony I had been enduring, that I could hardly realize it when Miss Macgregor said to me, “Now, look at yourself in the glass,” and on doing so I saw that the swelling had almost gone, and the discoloration had faded so that there were only a few faint purple streaks left. I was speechless with gratitude; it seemed like a miracle. Miss Macgregor then said, “Gladys, I am impressed strongly that it is something inside your mouth that is causing the trouble; there are some old roots there, buried in the gums, and they are now septic, and are poisoning you badly. You must have them out, as quickly as possible.”

I was dismayed, as I remembered the awful experience I had after the extractions of a few years previously — how ill I had been and the set-back it had been to my work. Of course I realized that only my teeth *had* been taken out on that occasion, and that the remainder had just broken off in the gums and were probably making trouble there, as my friend suggested.

The thought of risking another such horrid experience as befell me after that last dental operation was terrifying. Also I had important engagements to fulfill now, and I did not want to endanger my psychic work, on which so many people now depended. I told

Miss Macgregor all this, and she suggested that in a day or two, when I was rested, we should ask Fedra to control me, and say whether she thought I should have my teeth extracted or not.

Miss Macgregor came every day and gave me further healing. By the end of the week all traces of the poison had disappeared, and all pain had gone, too, so I was able to resume my sittings, but when we asked Fedra to come and speak to us, and advise us about the proposed extractions, she would not do so, and I was strongly impressed that I had to choose for myself, instead of trying to put the choice and responsibility on to the people on the Other Side. I felt sure that if I chose to have the teeth taken out, Fedra and the other spirit friends would help me, but they did not want me to lean on them for a decision in matters that affected my physical self.

Quite suddenly, one evening when sitting quietly by myself, I felt that I must decide to see a good dental surgeon at once, and have the offending teeth removed. I mentally asked a doctor friend, who had recently passed over, if he would help me, and I also asked Miss Macgregor's brother, who was a doctor killed in the war, if he would help. I had a very strong impression that, now I had decided, everything possible would be done from the Other Side to safeguard my health and work.

The next morning I received a letter from Mrs. Kelway-Bamber, the author of "Claude's Books," who is a sister of Miss Macgregor. In her letter she said she had heard from her sister about the possibility of my having the extractions, and that while she was paying a visit to a friend, she had been impressed to ask if this friend knew a really good surgeon-dentist, and she said she knew a very excellent one indeed, and gave Mrs. Kelway-Bamber both his professional and his home address. To Mrs. Kelway-Bamber surprise, his home was in my neighbourhood!

Directly I read her letter, I felt sure this was the right dentist, and that evening I asked my husband to call on him and tell him that I should like to see him professionally, and to be sure to apologize for calling at his home address. My husband went, and rather to his surprise the dentist said, "I'll call and see Mrs. Leonard in her own home tomorrow, Saturday evening."

Now I had invited an old friend, Mrs. Nora Passy, to spend the Saturday evening with us. She knew nothing about my teeth trouble, as I had not seen her for some time, and she was merely coming to dine with us and have a chat, so I had not wanted to bother her with details about my health. However, when she arrived I had to tell her that I was expecting somebody that evening and that I must leave her for a few minutes, and briefly explained the circumstances. She said, "I wish I had known you wanted a first-class dentist. I have only lately come across such a man, quite by accident, in a very unexpected way. I do wish you could have had him instead of this unknown man you've got hold of."

I said, "What is your wonderful dentist's name?" and to my astonishment she mentioned the name of the man who was coming to see me that night! Remember, Mrs. Passy and

I lived in entirely different places, several miles apart, and she had only known of the dentist's West End address. She had no idea that he neighbourhood. We both thought this was a strange coincidence, to say the least of it.

He arrived, and his personality immediately filled me with confidence. After examining my mouth, he said, "You have nineteen teeth that must come out as soon as possible. Some of them are broken off in the gums and will be difficult to dig out, but don't fear, I shall *get* them out, but you will have to have chloroform and ether, so you must either go into a nursing home, or I must bring a doctor whom I know down here and perform the operation in your own room."

I agreed to the latter suggestion, and we arranged to have it carried out on Sunday, November the 8th, at noon.

Nineteen teeth out all at once seemed a tall order. Several friends warned me that it was too many, and it would be a terrible shock to the system, and so on, but Miss Macgregor came down each day, and gave me a healing treatment so as to buck me up for the ordeal, and Mrs. Passy most kindly volunteered to come and stay with me, and see me through the whole thing, as she had had a great deal of experience in surgical work during and after the war. I felt overwhelmed with gratitude to her, as I knew what an unpleasant business such an operation must be to watch, but the dentist had said I must have a trained nurse with me, and when I told him of Mrs. Passy's generous offer he was very pleased.

He did not tell me who the doctor was that he proposed to bring, but we felt it was best to leave that matter entirely to him. On Sunday morning I awoke feeling quite happy and calm, had a bath, no food, of course, got back into bed, and watched Mrs. Passy getting a flat couch ready near the window for me to lie on.

While she was out of the room I glanced across towards the fireplace, and there, to my surprise and relief, I saw both the doctors who had passed over, and whom I had asked to help me, the one being Miss Macgregor's brother, and the other my friend who had passed over only that last summer.

They were sitting on chairs, one each side of the fireplace, quietly discussing something in rather low voices, so I could not hear what they said. Then one of them looked across at me, and said to the other, "Oh, she'll be all right," and I knew they meant me. The knowledge that they were there helped me very much. Even when I heard the ring at the bell which announced the arrival of the dentist and the doctor, I did not feel nervous in the least. Mrs. Passy had come back into my room, and when they entered it to her great astonishment the doctor was a friend of hers! He was as surprised to see her there as she was to see him! Another coincidence, and a very strange one, too, you must admit.

I lay down on the couch, and the doctor proceeded to give me the anesthetic. I did as he told me, breathed it in gently, but all the breathing in didn't seem to take effect. He kept saying, "Can you still hear me speaking to you?" And I kept on answering, "Yes — I

can — unfortunately — I wish I couldn't," until I really began to think I was never going to "go under." Then just as I felt like saying, "For goodness' sake, give up trying this — it's no good, I can't become unconscious," I *heard* a man's loud voice issuing from my own lips, and knew that I was being controlled by some strong discarnate influence. Afterwards I heard that this was Dr. Macgregor, who told them to give me some more of the anesthetic, as he knew I should require a great deal more than most people to put me "under."

I think it must have been a very peculiar and trying operation for the dentist and his friend, because during the operation they were being literally bullied into doing this or that, and at one period, when it were regaining consciousness before the extractions were finished, my spirit friends shouted, "Give her some more." The doctor looked inquiringly at Mrs. Passy, who knew what was happening and that I was being "controlled," and she felt impressed to say, "Doctor, do give her some more please — at *once*." "Well," said the doctor, "she's already had sufficient for three people, but here goes," so that I had some more; in fact, I had all the spare stuff they had brought with them, as well as what they expected I might require!

Directly he had finished the extractions, the dentist left the room with the doctor. He knew that he was leaving me in good hands. He could see how competent Mrs. Passy was, but he told her I should probably sleep for some time. As soon as the two men left the room, Mrs. Passy's husband, who was killed early in the war and who is often near her, controlled me, and spoke to his wife in a clear and evidential way for about ten minutes. She was astounded. As she remarked afterwards, she had certainly not expected a small "sitting" to be given her during a dental operation!

When Major Passy stopped speaking I immediately awoke, as fresh and "all there" as if I had just awakened from an ordinary night's refreshing sleep. I jumped off the couch and got into my own bed as if nothing had happened, and Mrs. Passy told me of some of the things that had been said through me to the doctor and dentist, part of which I had been conscious of, though I had felt no pain whatever. We shrieked with laughter over some of the remarks made, as we knew that neither of them would know what on earth it all meant, except that I was a very peculiar patient. Mrs. Passy told me that the operation, and the dentist's handling of it, struck her as astounding, because though the gums had grown right over some of the stumps, entirely concealing them, he had not lanced the gums, but seemed to find the teeth by instinct, gently and quietly drawing out each with apparently no effort whatever. *Her* opinion was that he was being *guided* by somebody who could see the hidden stumps, but my dentist friend, who prides himself on being a stout materialist, maintains that he was simply being a little more brilliant than usual! I don't argue with him; both Mrs. Passy and I have our own ideas on the subject, and at the back of his mind I believe he thinks as we do, but he won't admit it.

A curious feature was that there was not the slightest trace of chloroform or ether in the room immediately after, though the whole of the rest of the house reeked with it, and as it was cold weather, my bedroom window had to be kept tightly closed, yet within a moment all trace of the smell had disappeared. Mrs. Passy said she had never known such a thing happen in all her hospital experience.

Towards evening the poor gums began to rebel against the cutting they had had, and the pain grew worse and worse. Mrs. Passy told me it was bound to be so, and that if one had only a couple of stumps extracted, one must expect pain afterwards, but after the removal of nineteen, one would certainly have to "go through it." I did "go through it," and to such an extent that I almost wished I had never had the teeth out, as it was as bad as the most violent toothache.

Miss Macgregor had promised to come about eight o'clock that evening in order to give me a healing treatment, as she knew what I was likely to be feeling. She came, treated me, and within a quarter of an hour every scrap of pain had gone, and from that time on I never had the *slightest discomfort* in any portion of my mouth. I think that was really extraordinary, because the dentist showed Mrs. Passy the teeth as he extracted them, and there was an abscess on nearly every one. Miss Macgregor is certainly a marvellous channel for the healing power, as far as I am concerned. It may Guides on the Other Side, and mine, are in close touch together, and such team work in spiritual things is always very satisfactory and successful. I am inclined to think that this is the explanation of Miss Macgregor's remarkable healing effect on me.

CHAPTER XVIII

I HEAR A STRANGE WORD

HERE is another instance of what might be called premeditated help and team work on the part of several spirit friends, combined with an attempt (and a very successful one, too) to give me some evidence about things that were quite unknown to me at the time. Though, consciously, I felt no specially bad effects that I could definitely trace back to the illness and dental operation I have just told you about, I found that for some time after I became easily run down, and a couple of years later I had a bad attack of influenza, from which I seemed quickly to recover, but I found that a septic condition was showing itself in the thumb of my right hand. It swelled and became so unsightly and unpleasant that, for hygienic reasons, I had to wrap it up. After trying everything that everybody recommended to me, it still became worse, and I called in a local doctor, a surgeon, who pointed out that I had a swelling coming under my arm, the right one, and that it was due to the infection from the thumb, which should be operated on. I did not like the idea of an operation, so he said I could leave it for a few days but not longer, and try some ointment, etc., that he had made up for me, in the meantime. I did as he told me, but after two or three days the condition was worse. My husband was very much impressed that I should still try other means and not have an operation.

Now, I had met several times at a friend's house a West End doctor, who is an ultraviolet ray specialist.

I knew very little about his treatment, but I wrote to him asking if it was possible that it might help my trouble, which I explained to him in detail, and told him that the surgeon said that an operation was the only cure. This doctor wrote back saying he felt sure he could help me, and told me to come to him at once. Directly I showed him my hand, he said, "A couple of treatments with the ultra-violet rays will clear that trouble up entirely." Frankly, I did not believe him. I was so tired of trying first one thing, then another, but I took the treatment, which consisted of a few minutes' exposure of my thumb to the ultraviolet rays given off by a mercury-vapor lamp.

On my way home I thought the flesh looked a better color than it had looked since the septic condition began. I could hardly believe it; it seemed too good to be true. I had a second treatment two days later, and one would hardly have recognized the thumb. I had a couple more which entirely cleared up the trouble, and only wished I had thought of writing to the doctor when the symptoms first showed themselves; but in a very busy life, as mine is, one is inclined just to take whatever means that first come to hand. I forgot all about my thumb (only too glad to be able to) and went on with much better health for another year or two. One afternoon I had an appointment for a sitting, and, as is my custom on such occasions, I went to lie down in my bedroom, drawing the curtains half across the window.

As soon as I had lain myself down on the bed and closed my eyes (I don't always sleep at these times, but simply relax), I heard a voice on my left, quite close to me, a man's voice, say one word that sounded to me like "Ditanic" or "Titanic." The voice was so natural that I immediately said aloud, without moving or opening my eyes, "What did you say? Titanic? Are you someone who was drowned on the *Titanic*?"

"No," replied the voice, much more distinctly and slowly, "I said 'Diatinick.'" (I am spelling it as it sounded to me at the time.)

"Oh," I said, "do explain — what does it mean? I don't know the word. *Do* explain," but I heard no more.

I lay thinking it over, wondering what the strange word could possibly mean, and found myself drifting into a psychic condition. I saw, clairvoyantly, that there were several people around me. Their forms were not very clear, but I saw one more distinctly than the others, and recognized him as Sir — —, a distinguished scientist, who had recently passed over, and whom I had known. He had been interested in my psychic work. I heard him say something about "remembering my thumb," but it was very indistinct. I then became quite normal again, arose and went downstairs, trying hard to put two and two together. First, the new strange word, "Diatinick," then the people who seemed to be looking at me in rather a solicitous way, and the great scientist who only murmured "Remember your thumb." It all seemed so disconnected. My husband's niece, Rita Watkins, was staying with us at the time, so as my sitter had just arrived, I said hurriedly, "Rita, have you ever heard the word 'Diatinick,' and do you know what it means?"

"Never heard it in my life," she replied.

"Neither have I," I said, and I left her looking rather bewildered, as there was no time to explain. During tea, after my sitting, I told Rita about my puzzling experience. She got a dictionary, and we went through all the "Dy's" and "Di's" till we found the word "Diacinic," and the meaning given was " — aktis — aktinos — a ray — capable of transmitting the actinic or chemical rays of the sun."

Of course I immediately understood that this meant the ultra-violet ray treatment, and the reference about "remembering my thumb" fitted in, but I was more puzzled than ever, as my thumb had never been bad again, and I felt particularly well, so I put the whole thing out of my mind. A couple of days later, I developed a really bad attack of influenza, which I had most probably caught from a sitter who came to me about three days earlier, and who was suffering with 'flu when she visited me, though she did not know it at the time. I took care of myself, but on recovering from the influenza itself, I discovered to my dismay that the middle finger of my right hand was beginning to show symptoms of the same nature as my thumb had done two years previously. Then I understood at once the message about "diacinic" and what followed. I immediately arranged with my most kind and helpful doctor for some more treatment with the ultra-violet rays, feeling quite confident as to the outcome, but I was unable to understand

why the very famous scientist should be interested in the matter, when there were several people Over There who would know both my doctor here and myself more intimately, and who would be more likely to give me such a message than this gentleman. When I arrived at the doctor's, I told him about the whole thing, and when I got to the part about Sir — — saying, "Remember your thumb," he said, ""That is most extraordinary. I had taken over Sir — — 's old study as my consulting room that very day!"

This was all the more evidential and interesting, as I had no idea that there was the slightest link between the doctor and Sir — —, the scientist, and I think this was a very good example of an attempt to warn me, and therefore save me a great deal of time and trouble, and also to give me a good "test" at the same time.

These homely, simple incidents give one a very happy feeling of being watched over, yet (as I want strongly to impress upon you) without any coercion, or interference with one's will or freedom of choice. It is this wise, sympathetic interest on the part of our spirit friends that one appreciates so deeply. It is so free from intolerance or unkind criticism, though one is often told something unpleasant about oneself, when our discarnate friends think it necessary.



CHAPTER XIX

THE OTHER SIDE OF THE WALL

*Death cannot long divide.
For is it not as if the rose had climbed
My garden wall, and blossomed on the other side?
A. CAREY.*

“YES, but where, *where* is this invisible and mysterious other side?” is the question usually asked by the ordinary man or woman who knows nothing about spirit communication, but who wants to be able to see, feel and understand the Land Beyond just as he can Glasgow, Manchester, or any other place on earth. If one mentions Hong Kong, and tells a person that a mutual friend has been obliged to go to that place for business reasons, and that he might never be able to return to his native country, he accepts the news with a certain amount of equanimity, and without arguments as to the tangibility and reality of Hong Kong; but if one had to break the news to him that his friend had gone to the “third sphere in the Spirit World,” but that it would be considerably easier for him to communicate from that place than if he had gone to Hong Kong, he would hardly believe one. He probably has never been to Hong Kong himself, but he accepts the evidence of other people who have been there, though he might hesitate to accept the word of an esteemed and trusted friend who assures him that he or she has visited the third sphere, and talked to the people there.

If one took a census of the people living in Great Britain who said they had been to the third sphere, and who all gave corroborative accounts of it, and another census of people who said they had been to Hong Kong, I think the former would beat the latter numerically to an astonishing degree!

“Ah,” one hears the skeptic say, “but when people speak of experiences of a spiritual or psychic nature, they are prone to imagine, exaggerate or distort; that is a well-known fact.” Is it? I certainly am well aware that many give themselves more trouble to raise doubts than to scatter them,” as I read somewhere, recently; but when one knows the type and mentality of the individuals who swear that they have visited the other world, surely one can take their word for it, just as much as one would the word of the traveller who has been to Hong Kong, or says he has. Perhaps some of the people who give one long, and rather boring description of their travels to Hong Kong, Birmingham, or Houndsditch, as the case may be, are really drawing the longbow of their imagination. Listening to them I often think they are, but one's doubt as to their veracity does not wipe Hong Kong, Birmingham, or Houndsditch out of existence.

I have visited the Land Beyond. I can only *tell* you about it, and of what I have seen there. I can't make you see it, or believe that I have done so, but it will probably interest

you to hear about it.

No, I don't know where the Spirit World *is*, in a geographical sense. It seems so near. Perhaps it is really all round us — the *other* side of *this* side.

*Death is a door with two sides, and the other side of it belongs to
immortality, which is more really ours than the present.*
J. M. BLAKE.

Our spirit Communicators say this is true, and often tell us that we could see them, and hear them, if we could only “tune in” to them. The development of the clairvoyant or clairaudient faculty is simply this — learning to “tune in.” Even the best medium is opinion, a *specialty gifted person*, but is one who, either through concentrated effort or temperamental aptitude, or both, has been able to develop the ability to tune in quickly and perfectly. It is my honest opinion, and I am backed up in it by a great number of spirit Communicators, that if one wants to develop psychically, one should take one's temperament and mentality in hand first. It is no use thinking one day, “I really do feel I've got psychic power. I'll go ahead and develop it,” and the next day saying, “I don't believe I've got it at all.” One must realize the *possibility* of it all the time. Other people, quite sane, ordinary individuals, have developed these so called supernormal powers — why not you?

When I think of all the successful mediums and psychics, either professional or unprofessional, that I have known personally, I am forced to admit that they are extremely rational, practical people, fond of the simple, healthy things of life, and very impatient of anything that savors of the bombastic or sensational type.

Developing the psychic faculties means leading a quiet life, which some interpret as a dull one, but one can be busy *and* quiet, if one once learns what the true meaning is of both those states.

In a later chapter I hope to give you some hints on developing the ordinary faculties of clairvoyance, clairaudience, and other methods of communication, but in this next One I want to tell you how I first began to realize that one could leave the physical body during sleep, and find oneself on J. M. Blake's “other side of the door.”

After reading other people's experiences out of the body, I longed to be able to do the same, and I repeatedly asked Feda and my other spirit friends if they would help me to leave my physical body, and when I returned remember where I had been, and what I had done. I was impressed that I must lie down, fairly flat, in a rather darkened room, so from time to time, when it was convenient, I retired to my bedroom for an hour in the afternoon, as I found that I got nothing at night except rather ridiculous dreams which, on sifting out, I could usually trace to some very mundane origin.

CHAPTER XX

I HAVE AN EXTRAORDINARY ADVENTURE

FOR some time nothing remarkable happened, until one afternoon I was resting on my bed in my partly darkened room, when I felt a strange sensation of being lifted above the bed. I could not feel the bed with my physical body at all. I thought I must be going out of my physical body, and became alert and interested and a little excited, but immediately the feeling of floating in the air left me. I know now that I ought to have remained placid, and not thought about what was going to happen next, but this being my first experience of the kind, I began to wonder whether I might be going somewhere in my astral body — somewhere on the earth-plane or somewhere in the Spirit World. Through getting excited I became at once normal and found myself resting on the bed. I thought —“I could not feel the bed two minutes ago, I don't think I was imagining.” For some weeks after that I always lay down in a state of expectancy and mental alertness, hoping for a repetition of the experience, but was disappointed, and at length I gave up hope of having any similar manifestation.

One afternoon, after I had stopped thinking about it, I was expecting a lady and gentleman. They had been coming regularly once a week to communicate with their son, who had been giving them wonderful evidences as to his identity and his continued acquaintance with the earthly affairs of his own people. I knew practically nothing of the father and mother beyond the fact that they came to talk with their son. They lived many miles out of London and they always came alone. To prepare myself for my sitting I lay down on the bed on my right side. I felt a little sleepy, but suddenly the sleepiness vanished and gave place to a very calm feeling without any sleepiness. Then I felt a tingling sort of thrill as if a slight current of electricity were passing through my body, and I again had a sensation of not resting on the bed. I could think quite clearly, but taking a lesson from my previous disappointment, I held my mind under quiet control, saying to myself that I would notice anything that occurred but would not anticipate or wonder. What happened I shall never forget; it was wonderful. I did not move consciously in any way, either limb or muscle, and my eyes were closed. I wondered how far my body might be above the bed, and by a little mental effort I opened my eyes and looked down and saw my physical body resting on the bed, and I, in my astral body, seemed to be resting above it. To show you how clear my thoughts were, I noticed that the head of my physical body was lying on a particular nightdress case with an embroidered corner. I was surprised at seeing it there, because I was not aware of its having been changed that morning for the one I had been using. I thought, too, how funny it was that my head was resting on it, because I don't usually do that. I was pleased with myself for noticing these things.

The next thing I felt was that my astral body was getting farther away from my physical body, and I seemed to be hovering over the edge of the bed for a few seconds. Then I began to feel just a little nervous, and the thought flashed across my mind, “Shall I be

able to get back easily?" That question and slight fear drew me back about a foot towards my physical body. But my interest got the better of my fear, and I thought,

"Whatever happens, let me go through with it!"

The moment I so determined I became aware of my husband opening our flat door, which makes a slight noise on being opened, and speaking to someone in the hall outside. He was speaking in a low voice so as not to disturb me. I thought, "I should like to go and see to whom he is speaking," and I don't know how it happened, but I found myself at once standing at my husband's elbow at the flat door. I was not aware of passing through the bedroom door, which is kept closed, but there I was. I looked through the open door, and saw that the man he was speaking to was from the Gas Company. What they were talking about I did not notice, because just after I joined them (in my astral body) a maid from one of the upstairs flats passed them, and I saw my husband, without speaking to her, take a coin from his pocket and hand it to her. I thought, "That's funny? Why did he give that servant a coin?" I thought also, "I will remember that and ask him." I arranged all this methodically thus — Two things to remember: (1) the gasman, and (2) the upstairs servant.

Then I found myself again back in the bedroom without knowing how. I noticed that my clarity of thinking was leaving me, making me less conscious, and I thought that was possibly because I was about to return to my physical body. So I gave myself up to it, and ceased thinking, so as to make the return easier. In a moment or two I was surprised to find my mind begin to work again, but on looking around I saw at once that I was not on my bed, nor even in my bedroom, but in some other room I had never seen before. What interested me most was, I saw that the lady and gentleman I was expecting that afternoon were in the room, talking to a gentleman I had never seen before. I heard my own name mentioned by the lady. There was quite a conversation which I could not wholly catch, but I gathered that my sitters were inviting the stranger to share their sitting that afternoon. I pulled myself up at this and thought, "I must be dreaming, because these two people would never allow anyone to join them in what they regard as a very private and sacred matter." I looked at the stranger and saw that he was a man of striking personality, not of an ordinary type at all. I got the impression of his appearance well in my mind, to carry it back with me into my physical body. I thought, "I will hurry back and tell my husband at once, for it will be a good test if this gentleman should after all come with them."

I expected then I would be immediately back in my body, but instead of that I next found myself half-way down a staircase, which at first I thought was the staircase leading down to the lower floor of our flat. Before I could get time to put my thoughts in order, I became aware of singing and music that seemed to be coming from my bedroom. I was naturally very much surprised, for, of course, there is no piano in that room. That gave me the first indication that this could not be my bedroom; neither could it be our stairs. I looked up and saw the son of the visitors I was expecting that afternoon, standing at the top of the stairs. I knew it was their son, because at one of our sittings I had seen him clairvoyantly and described him to them.

When I looked up at him he seemed to know me too, and smiled. I said, "Hullo, Philip, who is that playing and singing in my bedroom?" I was not perfectly sure even then it was not my bedroom. He said, "It isn't your bedroom, Mrs. Leonard." I said, "Well, who is that playing and singing?" He replied, "It's Gertrude." "Gertrude," I said, "who is Gertrude?" for I knew he had no sisters. He answered, "When she was on the earth-plane she used to come every week to play and sing to us, but now she comes and does it for me."

I then went up the stairs, past Philip, into the room, and I saw at once that it was not my bedroom. There was a grand piano in a very dark frame, and seated at it was a young lady. I took note of her appearance, exactly as I had done in the case of the strange gentleman a few moments before. But I could feel, rather than see; that both she and Philip were somehow different from the people I had seen earlier, who, I knew, were on the earth-plane. They were not less tangible; they were just as real in appearance in every way; yet I felt instinctively that they were people of the spirit-world. The young lady took no notice of me. I said to Philip, "Is that Gertrude?" He said, "Yes." I went farther into the room, which was furnished as a drawing room, and looked out of the wide window into a large garden. On the lawn were a good many chairs and a table. I mildly wondered why I was there, and why I had thought it was my bedroom.

Then I seemed again to lose my power of thinking connectedly and consciously. I cannot say how long I lost it, but probably, from the duration of the whole experience, it was only a few minutes. When I resumed consciousness I found I was back in my bedroom, lying in my astral body just over the physical body. I did not know how I got there. I began to be afraid I might not be able to get back into my physical body. My astral felt quivery, and the feeling came to me there is going to be difficulty about it. Then I told myself, "There won't be any difficulty if you keep calm about it; you will slip back." I thought that, or made myself think it. I seemed then to slip lower and lower, yet not thinking again so connectedly as before, when suddenly I found I was resting on the bed again.

I dug my elbow into the bed and felt it solid, which made me realize I was back in the physical. I was immediately quite alert and keen both in mind and body. I remembered everything that had happened in detail. I jumped off the bed and went downstairs. My husband had just prepared tea, and I found it was three o'clock, my usual time for getting up. I started at once to tell him of my experiences.

When I told him I had heard him speaking to someone at the door he said, "Oh yes, but you may have been half asleep, and heard me even though I lowered my voice." My husband and I like to be very precise and accurate in considering any experience, and each of us tries to check the other from imagining anything which is not. I said, "Yes, I thought of that too at the time, but I want to tell you it was the gasman you were speaking to, for I saw his uniform."

Next I told him about seeing the servant from upstairs and his giving her a coin. Then he

had to give in, and admit that I must have seen him, although he certainly had not seen me. He said it was the gasman, and while speaking to him he had given the girl a sixpence for some trifling service she had done two or three days before, when he did not happen to have change. He had not mentioned the matter to me. In fact, he had himself forgotten it until he suddenly remembered on seeing the maid pass. Then I told him of the strange gentleman I had seen with my sitters and said I heard him invited to come with them that afternoon. My husband said, "Well, that is bound to be wrong, for you know they would never let anyone else come to their sitting; they never do." I said, "Yes, I suppose it is bound to be wrong, but I saw him so clearly." I gave my husband a detailed description of the man, and told him all about my experience with Philip and the unknown lady called Gertrude.

By this time it was 3:30, and a ring at the door-bell announced the arrival of my sitters. My husband went upstairs to let them in as usual, and a minute or two afterwards he came down looking quite excited and said, "By Jove, you were right; they have brought that gentleman you described to me!" I was amazed, and exclaimed, "They have brought a gentleman with them?" He replied, "Yes, as you described him." I said, "You don't simply think it is like him, do you? Anyhow, I shall see him for myself when I go up."

When I went into the room and saw the stranger he was so identically the same man I had seen when in my astral body, that I scarcely knew how to pull myself together and speak in an ordinary way to my sitters. I could not even collect myself before the sitting to tell them anything about my experience. The lady explained that this was her brother, that she had been telling him about me that afternoon, and had invited him to come with them, so she could not let me know beforehand that she was bringing him. I gave them the sitting, but immediately it was over the brother had to leave in a great hurry to catch a train.

Thereupon I told the lady and gentleman about my experiences. When I came to the part about Gertrude the lady said, "That is very wonderful, for Philip had a cousin called Gertrude who always came over once a week to play and sing to us." I went on to describe her, and the lady said, "That is an excellent description." Gertrude, she said, had passed over some six years previously, and Philip about one. That was the best evidence for me that my experience had been a real thing and not merely a dream, because I had never known even of the existence of Gertrude, though I had known of Philip.

I next described the room I had seen Philip and Gertrude in, and the lady said it was exactly like their drawing room at home, sixty miles away. It had a side window looking straight on to the lawn, where they used often to have tea, with their chairs and a table, when Gertrude visited them. I have been since to their home and found that the room and garden were exactly as I had seen them.

This puzzled me not a little at the time, for I thought, "I undoubtedly saw Philip and Gertrude in spirit; and how was it I had seen them in this room, which was apparently on

the earth-plane.” This difficulty was cleared up for me by Philip at a later sitting, when he informed me that his home in the Spirit World was simply a duplicate of the one he had left behind on the earth-plane and of which he had been so fond, but that, of course, it was composed of astral material. He told me that Gertrude still came and played and sang to him, just as she used to do, not only the old songs but new ones too.

A week or two later I again went out of my body, but this time I was not in the least nervous. I saw Philip standing close to my bed as if he were waiting to take me somewhere. I lost again for a few moments the power of conscious thinking, until I suddenly found myself standing in a most beautiful garden at the edge of a small wood. Philip and I walked along together, and he pointed out various beautiful places to me, in particular a wide stream running under a charming rustic bridge. He said to me, “This is like my home on the earth-plane.”(That was before I went to see it.)” This as you see it is my spirit home, where I am waiting for my father and mother. Only these grounds are on a larger scale and more beautiful.”

That was all I saw that day. A day or two afterwards I asked Philip's father and mother if what I had seen was a correct description of their home, only larger, and they said it was most decidedly so — a perfectly accurate picture. Since then I have been down to their home and stood on the rustic bridge, and found it was exactly as I had seen it — or rather its duplicate — in the astral world, excepting that the stream did not seem quite so wide.



CHAPTER XXI

I LEAVE MY PHYSICAL BODY AGAIN

ON another occasion I had not actually fallen asleep, but was just beginning to feel drowsy when I felt that slight “drawing out from,” or “getting away” from my physical body, that usually precedes an experience of this kind. I seemed to be floating or flying towards a very bright place. On nearing it I saw a large stone house, with a veranda and terraces in front flanked by roses. Several broad steps led up to a wide doorway, and standing on the top was a lady who had recently passed over, who used to visit me in order to communicate with her husband who had died four or five years previously, and whom she adored. She always longed to join him, and used to say to me, “What will it be like over there? Well, it doesn't matter much what it's like as long as my beloved George is there, and we can have our own home and garden as we had on the earth.”

When she saw me coming towards her she smiled, and held out both hands to me, eagerly. Her expression was of radiant happiness (how often one is forced to use the word radiant in describing the people and life on the Other Side! It's the only word that fits.) She was a handsome woman, and I noticed that she was dressed as carefully as ever, though I was puzzled to see that she was wearing a dress of somewhat old-fashioned design, and when she lived on earth every article of her clothing had to be the latest thing in fashion.

This particular dress was of the tight-fitting princess shape, made of cream-colored “piece” lace, and it had a slight train. Just as I noticed these details, I found myself being drawn back to my body again. Somebody had knocked on my bedroom door, and I awoke, feeling rather disappointed that I had not been able to speak to my friend, or she to me; but I had brought back the knowledge that she was thoroughly happy. I afterwards found out that the lace dress was one that her husband had loved her to wear when on earth. I never saw her again, but occasionally she brought me the scent of red roses, and sometimes violets, of both of which she was very fond.

My husband and I have sometimes been walking across a bare field in winter, and have been suddenly bathed in one or other of these scents. We smell it simultaneously, which is corroborative and satisfying to us both. It always happens in the most unlikely places. My friend always wore fresh violets whenever it was possible, and used red roses in her house for decorative purposes, in and out of season, so they were connected with all our memories of her.

Among my many sitters was a retired army officer, a very keen, intellectual man. I will call him Colonel Halifax, though that is not his name. His wife had passed over a year or two before he first came to me, and he had felt his bereavement terribly. I think he had a great number of sittings with other mediums as well as myself, and he always appeared to have derived great comfort from his sittings in which his beloved wife always

communicated with him. At the time I should have called him an absolute believer in survival and communication, but long afterwards I learnt, through his friends, that he had been uncertain in his mind about the Other Side. He apparently believed that his wife existed somewhere — somehow — and that she could, and did, at times communicate with him with more or less success. The evidence she had given had forced him to the conclusion that the entity purporting to be his *must* be she. But *how* she lived — or where — and in what manner he would meet her again — if he ever did meet her — were matters on which he never came to any very definite or satisfactory conclusion.

Undoubtedly, the feeling that his wife had sent him any message at all had changed him from a brokenhearted man to one who found life bearable, to say the least of it; and he initiated many other people into the subject that had assisted him to overcome the sharpest pangs of sorrow.

I should think his age was between fifty and fifty-five and he was very active, so no one thought of Colonel Halifax as likely to pass over himself at that time, but a rather curious incident occurred which I must tell you about. Colonel Halifax occasionally took notes for other sitters, and was in the habit of accompanying one particular gentleman to his sittings with me.

One day I was expecting them, and had run up to my bedroom a few minutes before they were due, to get a handkerchief or something, and I looked out of the window, which faced on to the road, and saw my sitter, with Colonel Halifax, walking slightly behind him. The sitter opened my gate, and Colonel Halifax followed him in, and up the path. I went out of my bedroom and, leaning over the banisters, called out to my husband, who did not always hear the front-door bell distinctly, "They are here — open the door," and went back into my room for a moment. When I went downstairs, my husband said, "The sitter is alone. Colonel Halifax has not come. Why did you say *they* are here? . . ." I replied, "Because I saw Colonel Halifax as distinctly as I see you now. He must have come right up to the door with the sitter, and then gone away again before you opened it."

Then I went into the drawing room, and my sitter told me that Colonel Halifax had been unable to accompany him, as he had a previous engagement.

I didn't like this at all.

I didn't like it, because one very occasion when I thought I had seen a person, and then discovered that he or she had not been there at all, that same person had passed over soon afterwards.

I cannot explain it. I only know it has happened several times, and not only to old people, but to young or middle-aged, and to those who' were apparently in good health as far as I knew at the time. Usually the person has passed over a few days after, at the most a few weeks, but in one case it was quite a year, though the unexpected disease

which resulted in the untimely passing of this person, made itself manifest a short time after I had seen the “double,” or whatever it is. The fatal disease must have been there at the time I saw the “double,” though unsuspected by any of his friends. As I say, I cannot explain it, but I have a *theory* which is supported by many things that have been said by experienced spirit Communicators, and it is — that when anyone is stricken with a malignant disease, or going into conditions of such danger that death is inevitable, the soul knows it, though the ordinary mind, or brain, does not. The soul *senses* its speedy deliverance from the physical. This may not be so in all cases, but from my experience, it is so in a great number. I think that the soul knows a great deal of what we call the future (tomorrow's shadow somebody told me to call it) that is, perhaps wisely, hidden from the ordinary consciousness.

But I must stop, because I am touching on matters of which I want to speak to you later on. At the moment I want to tell you about Colonel Halifax. Shortly after I had seen his “double,” he was taken ill. His trouble was diagnosed as appendicitis, and he was prepared for the usual operation, but apparently the surgeons found that the appendix did not need removing after all, and the cut was sewn up, Colonel Halifax was patched up, and seemed to be recovering; but a few days after the attempted operation, he collapsed and died from heart failure. He had been sitting up in bed talking quite cheerfully to friends when this happened.

A few weeks after his passing I was spending the weekend with friends near Harrow. On the Sunday afternoon my hostess insisted on my going to my bedroom and lying down to rest. I prepared to doze. Instead, I began to feel very much awake, but felt the same sensation of leaving my body as I described before. Suddenly I found myself standing in a very pretty garden, stocked with every kind of flower. A little way to the left was a house.

Looking around, I knew I had been permitted to visit the Spirit World again.

As I stood in the garden, I noticed that close to me on the right was a long wooden shed. I walked in. The place looked like a small engineering works. Suddenly a man stepped quickly out of the adjoining room, and to my joy I recognized Colonel Halifax.

“Mrs. Leonard, I'm so glad you've come to see me,” he said. “Now let me tell you something quickly, while there's time. It's all true. All I was told about the life here was true. Only it's so much better than I was told it would be.” He said this with great emphasis, as if he longed to impress me with the sense of his happiness.

He told me that his wife had met him immediately after his passing, and that his joy in the reunion was great and deep. Then he said, “There is someone here whom I wish you to meet, Mrs. Leonard, and please look at her well, so that you will remember her when you return to your physical body.”(He evidently was quite aware that I was only on a temporary visit to the Spirit World, and that I should be leaving again almost immediately.)

I turned, hoping to see his wife, but I saw at once that it could not be she, as during his earth life Colonel Halifax had given me a description of her, and the woman he now beckoned forward had a very different personality; indeed, she was so striking in coloring and figure that a description of her would not have fitted one woman in a thousand.

A moment after I felt myself being drawn away from the place and found myself in my physical body, lying on the bed in my friend's house.

About a fortnight later a sister of Colonel Halifax came to have a sitting with me. I had not met her before, but her brother had told her, during his life here, about me. After the sitting I told her about my visit to her brother's spirit home. I omitted the description of the shed as it puzzled me, and seemed so unlike anything the Colonel would be interested in. But when I described the — to me — unknown lady, she said, "That was one of the people he loved best in the world. She was the aunt who brought him up, took the place of a mother to him. He was devoted to her, right up to the time she died." I was pleased to hear this, and felt sure that Colonel Halifax's critical and clever mind had arranged for me to meet his aunt instead of his wife, as he knew that I had never heard of the existence of the former, and it would be so much more evidential for me, and would prove to me that I had really been to his spirit home and seen him. It was just like Colonel Halifax to think all this out, as he was always very keen on "evidence."

A few weeks later the sister passed over, too, very suddenly, and it was good to feel that her last days were happier because she had heard of her brother.

The engineering shed still stuck in my mind; I could not imagine what connection it had with Colonel Halifax.

Several months afterwards I met a friend of the Colonel's, and while talking about him I felt impelled to ask if the Colonel had ever been interested in engineering. The friend replied, "Of course he had. He had been a very clever engineer, and was very fond of it, too!" I was pleased with this information, as it was something altogether outside my knowledge of him.



CHAPTER XXII

OVER THE WALL AND WHAT IT LOOKS LIKE

How very much like the earth this other world looks! At least, that portion of it that I have seen when visiting the different friends who have passed away. There appear to be houses, gardens, meadows, woods, lakes, but I have never seen what I would call a manufacturing town, a colliery town, or anything approximating to one; at least, not on the plane where I have seen these normal, everyday sort of people like Colonel Halifax, and my other friends.

That there are other conditions than this third sphere, as it is called, I am well aware. I have never been to the higher ones, or if I have, I have not remembered on returning to my physical condition again. We probably often visit the "third sphere" during sleep, but we forget it on awaking. Undoubtedly, just as there is the physical world, or condition, so is there the spiritual or etheric world, or condition. We have the physical body which is tangible and visible to other people's sight, and we also have our spiritual or etheric bodies which are invisible to the physical eye, but are clearly visible to the sight of other etheric bodies, whether those bodies are occupied by souls that have temporarily left their physical conditions, while on a visit to the spiritual world, or whether they have "passed over" and taken up what we can only call permanent residence over there.

Of course, in this book, I am telling you of people, places, and things as I have seen them, and remembered

Other people may "see" differently, or perhaps it is that we remember them differently on awaking? At the same time, we find, on comparing notes, that there are an astonishingly large number of people who see and remember the same sort of thing while travelling in the etheric world. I have had abundant corroboration from others of many of the scenes I have witnessed in that way. (So far I have told you about the happy places and people whom I have seen; indeed, one is struck with the happiness that emanates from the people who have rejoined those they loved.

One realizes, from all that our discarnate friends tell us, that there is much for them to do over there. It is not a place of idleness. It appears that all forms of beauty are reproduced there. Musicians still create beautiful sounds, the singer sings, the artist paints, and undoubtedly the enthusiastic gardener gets a good innings there, and we have been told that those who have a gift for designing and building pleasant homes do so now, for the benefit of those who pass over and have not developed the ability, or taste, for making their own. There are no "square pegs in round holes" on that plane. The man or woman who has been squeezed into an uncongenial job on earth, but who was conscious of his or her ability to do something else far better, but did not get the chance, finds that he or she is provided with the work that suits them when they pass over: that is, if they are ready for it. People who have known nothing about the future

state, and haven't wanted or tried to know, often find themselves at a disadvantage on reaching the new world, and are helped by the relatives or friends already there to perform some quite simple tasks to which they have been accustomed (even if they have not previously felt such work to have been their *métier*) until such time as they are "acclimatized," as many of our Communicators have called it.

The watchword there is "service," and their one ambition is not only to progress themselves, but also to help those who are still on earth to progress, too, and above all, to endeavour to teach them something about life as a whole, not just the physical portion of it with which so many of us are contented, but all sides of it, especially the spiritual and mental powers and possibilities in man, so that he may be better equipped for the higher life when he is ready for it. Indeed, if we could only take their teaching literally, and apply it to our daily lives on earth, as far as is humanly possible, should we not be able to live that higher life *before* leaving our earth bodies? Is it not intended that we should do so instead of waiting in ignorance and apathy, as so many do?

What are their teachings? Well, there are so many, many books, volumes of them, that I do not need to give you a list. Two of the most recent that come to my mind are, *Your Infinite Possibilities* and *Your Latent Powers*, by Margaret V. Underhill.

CHAPTER XXIII

AN AWKWARD QUESTION IS ASKED — AND ANSWERED

ONCE I attended a direct voice séance at the house of a friend. During the séance many spirit Communicators spoke to their friends on this side, and in reply to the usual question, “Are you happy?” they replied that they were. Indeed, several did not wait to be asked but volunteered the information, each one saying, “I am so happy,” etc., in different words. Immediately after the séance, a sitter to whom it was evidently a new experience, exclaimed, “Look here, all these ‘Spirits’ say they are happy. Every one of them said so, without exception. Well, why are they happy? What right have they got to be so happy?”

Somebody replied, “Well, I suppose because they happened to be decent sort of people when they were on earth.”

“Yes,” said the new-comer, “but we aren't all saints, nor even decent. Where are the ratters? Don't they ever speak? And if they do, do they all chant, 'I'm so happy'?”

No one seemed able to answer him satisfactorily.

I hardly knew him and felt rather diffident about entering into what would have perforce been a wordy description of my own experiences in the matter, but I am sure it is a question that many people must have asked, “Where are the ratters, the thoroughgoing ratters, the partial ratters, and the lovable ratters, who are only rotten because they haven't got a spiritual philosophy that is strong enough to support them in the temptations and struggles of life on earth?”

It has been my sad and painful experience to visit, during sleep, some of the lower planes, especially where the poor mistaken souls go who have committed suicide. I am not referring now to the man who is temporarily “off his head” through illness or mental anxiety, but of the man who deliberately ignores the pain and suffering he is going to inflict on all those who are connected with him, and refusing to shoulder his responsibilities any longer, throws them off, as he thinks — “gets rid of them;” by ending his physical life by his own hand, only to discover that he hasn't “got rid” of anything, nor “ended” his life, but has only precipitated himself into another *condition* of existence.

Oh, the difference between the sphere to which such a one goes, and the happy planes which I have described to you! These lower planes are *darker*. The very air seems grey. One visit to such a place remains in my mind above all others. I realized that I had left my earth body, and after experiencing that “upward” motion which I have mentioned before, I found myself floating over a curious, desolate, rocky country. Dark gloomy

rocks, forming caverns and crevices, pools of dark water, and an overwhelming feeling of loneliness are what I remember most strongly about this sinister plane.

At first I viewed it with a certain amount of detached interest, as I half realized that I had been brought, or sent to the place, as an experience; but on looking more closely through the murky atmosphere, I saw many human forms moving about, slowly, dejectedly, and others sitting or standing on the rocks and large stones that abounded there. What astonished me was that the people all stood or sat *singly*. They appeared either to be unconscious of each other's presence, or to be uninterested. The atmosphere of depression and hopelessness was expressed by the very "cut" of the scenery, the "air" of its miserable-looking inhabitants.

I found myself drawing nearer to one particular man. I could see him distinctly, as I was so close to him. His look of abject hopelessness was terrible, and changed occasionally to a kind of puzzled wonder as to what he was doing over there. I felt overcome with pity for him. My feeling was so intense, he seemed to feel it, or sense it.

Something that looked — or did I only imagine it? ... like a faint ray of hope illuminated his face. I wanted to speak to him, but immediately found myself being drawn back to my physical body again. I awoke, remembering clearly every detail of the place, the people, and of this particular man's appearance. I felt impressed to pray for him, and did so.

Two days later, Sir Walter Gibbons called to see me, looking very tired and exhausted. I asked him what was the matter. He replied, "I have had an awful time on the astral plane during sleep. The night before last I was taken to the plane where some suicides go, and there I saw my old friend — who killed himself the previous day, because he had got so terribly into debt and financial trouble."

"Wait a moment," I said, "I think I have been there, too; wait till I describe some of it to you."

I did so, and alternately Sir Walter and I described details of the place to each other, until we were certain we had actually been to the same plane, and seen the same man, at the same time, though I did not remember seeing Sir Walter, and he did not recollect seeing me. Anyhow, we both prayed for, and thought of, his friend, who, we heard later, made good and gradually progressed to a higher and happier condition.

This was not the only plane of which Sir Walter and I brought back complete and detailed memories.

Sometimes, on awakening from such an experience, Sir Walter would look at his watch and write down the exact time. I did not do that, because in my bedroom I can hear the grandfather's clock chime in the hall below, and usually get a 'good idea of the time from that. Several times I noticed that I must have "come back" about five minutes to six, as the clock chimed six almost immediately after I awoke. Later, on comparing these notes,

Sir Walter and I always agreed regarding the time of our return to our earth bodies. There are so many planes, some below that where we saw the suicides, and some between that one and the happy plane which some people call “the Summerland.” Our spirit Communicators often tell us that those who have hurt others — deliberately and callously — go to the lower planes. Those who have hurt themselves more than others are still bound to a somewhat low condition in the Spirit World, especially if they have made themselves slaves to the desires of the physical life — the fleshly body.

An isolated sin or occasional lapse has a very different effect on the soul body compared to the constant and habitual living in the thralldom of the flesh, and the consequent elimination of every spiritual instinct.

The power, then, that a man will have, the position he will occupy, the place where he will live, all depend upon what he has made of his soul body while on earth. He cannot “will” or “choose” where he shall live in the Spirit World; he goes to the place that he has fitted himself for during his life in the physical body.

There are many people who might be classed as sinners or rotters by the “uncorrupted” folk, people who have thoughtlessly drifted into undesirable conditions — succumbed to temptations without ever realizing the significance of what they are doing. Yet in so many other ways they may be the kindest and most lovable people it is possible to meet.

So few of us are all black — or all white!

If we have balanced our “mistakes” by good deeds and kind actions, we shall find ourselves on a plane that is quite a pleasant one — in our earthly sense of the word — but we shall not have full power and freedom in the spiritual life because our soul bodies are not prepared and fitted for it.

The descriptions given me of the places lying between the suicides' plane and the Summerland sound very much like the conditions of earth — not earth at its best, nor its worst, but a kind of intermediate state containing neither the beauties of the one nor the ugliness of the other.

One thing I am sure of is that it is not so easy for those who occupy a comparatively low position in the Spiritual World to communicate in the *ordinary* conditions of the séance room.

Many Rescue Circles are held where mediums and sitters are specially developed so as to help and advise the unhappy spirits that are brought to them by Guides whose mission it is to do this work.

I have often sat in a Direct Voice Circle and have been deeply impressed by the facility and ease with which the intelligent and evolved spirits speak, compared to the halting and laboured communication of one who has passed over after causing great suffering

to others because of his degrading and selfish life on earth.

The plane that Sir Walter and I disliked visiting even more than the one where we saw the suicides, was a place to which we went several times before we discovered what it was, and why it existed.

I have hesitated a great deal as to whether I should describe this particular sphere or not. Yet I feel it cowardly to shirk truth because it is unpleasant, and it seems a very poor policy always to present one side of a picture, and *purposely* to ignore the other, when one knows it exists. Let us dwell on the happy, hopeful aspects of life as much as we will, but we must not imagine there are no evils to be cleared away. While we *pretend* there are none, or purposely avoid discussing, or trying to tackle them, we help them to accumulate, just as one would by ignoring the presence of dirt or dust in a room, because one didn't want to *raise* trouble by making an onslaught on it.

While I was — wrongly, I know — considering the advisability of omitting this chapter, I put out my hand, without thinking, and reached for a book that stood on a table near by. I opened it idly and at random, and staring me in the face were these words:

*They are slaves who fear to speak
For the fallen and the weak;
They are slaves who will not choose Hatred, scoffing, and abuse,
Rather than in silence shrink,
From the truths they needs must think.
They are slaves who dare not be
In the right with two or three. J. R. LOWELL.*

This made me ashamed of my hesitation, so I must just tell you briefly what we saw in those lower regions. I must give my own idea of them, but Sir Walter has seen the same, or some of the places, too.

On my first few visits I was so puzzled as to the nature of the places, that I only brought back a feeling of abhorrence, and a vague memory of animals being there. I quietly thought it over during the day, and sent out a mental request that my Guides, or whoever was sending me to these places during sleep, would give me some enlightenment as to the purpose of their existence. Otherwise it seemed a waste of time, if I was just going there to have my feelings harrowed by something I did not in the least understand.

For some time after I did not see these places, and thought my visits must have been brought to an end by my instinctive dislike of them, and I felt that I must make a conscious effort to control such a feeling in which there might be lurking an element of fear, which often inhibits genuine “out of the body” travelling and experiences.

I must mention here that I have noticed that the real astral, or etheric, experiences are stopped by reluctance or fear, but that ordinary dreams or nightmares, the kind that are

caused by indigestion or some other physical disturbance that affects the brain, are . not stopped; in fact, the more one fears, the more one is harassed by them. Many people have told me so, and children, too.

One night, soon after I recognized this fact, I found myself leaving the physical body, but instead of the soaring upward motion, I had a heavy weighted feeling, as if I were forced to travel in a horizontal position, and suddenly found myself in a narrow, dark street. I found I could just stand upright now, as if I were adjusting myself more easily to the atmosphere, but I did not want to put my feet on the ground as it was covered with mud and slime. Gloomy buildings, like stables, huddled against each other so closely that they almost touched, leaving only sufficient room for one to walk between. Here and there I saw a wider opening, which appeared to lead into a kind of yard, into which the doors of some of the stables opened. I looked in and saw that the yard was crowded with animals — bullocks, pigs and sheep — dead, and yet alive. I *knew* they were dead, but I could also see that they were alive, too. They moved very slightly, many lay on the ground. I understood at once from their appearance that they had just been slaughtered.

I pulled myself together with a tremendous effort.

The place and everything in it was so horrible that I did indeed have to make an effort — a great one. I noticed that there was a great difference in the *substance* of this plane, compared with that of the planes where I had seen ordinary discarnate human life. Even the suicides' plane was different, inasmuch as it seemed fixed and solid. *This* dreadful place gave me the impression that it had but *temporary* existence. I will not go into more details of the place and the condition of the animals, but only tell you that it was indeed most dreadful and repulsive in every possible sense.

I soon became aware that somebody was speaking to me, somebody whom I could not see, and who seemed to be a long way off. This person, who I afterwards found out was one of my spiritual Guides, told me that the place lay *between* the earth and etheric planes. Its misery was due to the tremendous slaughtering of animals for food that takes place daily; so much strong animal life is *suddenly* forced out of the actual physical condition into one that is very close indeed to earth, and yet is in no way part of the spiritual world. What happens to the animal astrals, I do not know. I was only shown this horrible scene on the astral side, which followed all the killing and pain on the earth side. In the very air around me was a most definite feeling of terrible fear, suffering, and blind resentment that was even more tangible than the buildings and walls. My Guide told me that it was this awful *feeling* that was to be deplored, not only because it was an indication of the sufferings that these wretched animals had experienced, but because it affected the spiritual and mental atmosphere of the earth, and had a bad effect on human life and progress.

Now, up to a short time ago I had been a flesh-eater. Every day I had my cutlet, cut off the joint, or piece of chicken. It always looked so nice and appetizing that somehow one hadn't thought of it as being a piece of something that had walked and breathed, and

felt pain and discomfort, just as we do ourselves. From time to time Feda had tried to discourage me and other people, too, from eating meat, but as there is only a limited amount of power that can be used, I had been obliged to devote it to the needs of bereaved sitters, and so had little opportunity of questioning Feda on this point. Now, after all I had seen, and the explanation given me of the reason for the existence of this horrible plane, I felt I wanted to ask several questions, so I got one or two sitters to ask Feda about it, while they were talking to her through me.

One thing we asked was, "What would happen if we all suddenly stopped eating meat? Surely, the world would be overrun with cattle, sheep and other animals?"

"No," said Feda. "You wouldn't be overrun with them because you would stop breeding them. There would not be anything like the number you have got if you hadn't purposely encouraged them by breeding them."

She said that, in time, as people understood more of the Spiritual World, they would eat less flesh, and be better for it, and from my own more recent personal experience, I have come to the definite conclusion that Feda was right. Since I gave up meat entirely a few years ago, my health has improved very much, in spite of strenuous work done under sometimes very difficult conditions. My husband, too, has found great benefit through becoming a vegetarian, and the same has been told us by many of our friends. My mind is clearer, and I am more "open" to direct spiritual guidance than I used to be. You must not think that all animals that die, or have to be "put to sleep," go to such places as I have described. An animal that you have loved and who has loved you, whether it be horse, dog, cat, or bird, goes usually to the third sphere where somebody takes care of it, and where it leads a normal animal life (except that it doesn't reproduce its species as it would on earth), and is even brought to see you at times while you are still on earth. I know you will meet your pets, the animal companions that you have loved. I have seen my special cats, and also a dog, a pekinese, to whom my husband and I were much attached. It seems as if the animals who love, and are loved, attain to spiritual rights and have an after-life in the spiritual world, just as we do. Whether their "post-physical" lives continue for ever, I do not know. I rather doubt it; that is, I doubt if they continue everlastingly in animal form, but they certainly live for a considerable time in the shape we loved and knew them by, and, thank goodness, they will live with us again when we pass over.

CHAPTER XXIV

MY BROWN SELF

I THINK that there are planes of an intermediate kind, where the higher spirit Guides and Teachers can meet us when we leave our bodies during sleep. These intermediate planes are not, I think, in the same sphere or condition to which people go when they pass over after death. To me there seems to be a difference. One feels it but cannot explain it.

About six years ago, after retiring at night and settling myself for sleep, I found I was leaving the body, and had a curious feeling that quite an interval passed during which I was travelling through space in what one would call a "blindfold" condition. I knew that I was being escorted by one or more spirit people in whom I felt complete confidence, though I could not see them. I only felt them. After a time, the blindfold condition began to disappear gradually, and I found myself in some kind of building, like a school or institution. The feeling it gave me was neither happiness nor unhappiness, though I am usually very sensitive to places, whether on the earthly or spiritual plane. I simply felt I was there for some definite purpose.

The room in which I stood was well lighted, and a passage led from it, not so light; at the end of the passage was a door leading into a darker room. A voice directed me to go into this room, and I obeyed unquestioningly. At first I could not see what was in the room, it seemed so dark after the lighter atmosphere, so I passed round and at last made out a low chair or seat in one corner, and reclining on this seat was the figure of a woman, apparently asleep. The sight of her gave me a feeling of deep depression. There was something about her that was so — not repulsive — but sad. For one thing, everything about her was brown. Her dress, hair, and even her skin, were of a dull muddy brown. As I stood there, I felt an overwhelming pity for her. She seemed to be so sad, without hope — stupid, blundering. I *felt* all this, and my heart overflowed with pity for her. "I must help her," I thought. "I must give her something of the spiritual happiness, the inspiration, and hope that I am so conscious of."

I bent over her, as one would over a child, intending to put my arms around her, and pour out all the encouragement and counsel I felt would help her. Just as I was doing so the woman stirred slightly, and half-opened her eyes, and I saw to my great astonishment and consternation, that it was *myself*. It was just as if I were looking at myself in a very dirty, dark mirror. It was a terrible shock, and I stood paralyzed, not knowing what to do or say. "Oh, you poor ugly thing," was the only thought in my mind.

After looking at her for what seemed an eternity, I heard a voice, though I could not see the speaker. It was a deep resonant voice, like a note on the organ. At the time, every word and every tiny inflexion of the voice was deeply impressed on my mind, but now I

can only remember that this voice told me that the “brown woman,” as I have always called her in my mind, was my lower self; and that my mediumship — my association with higher entities, and the advantages I had had through the development of my psychic faculties, had not brought about the spiritual and ethical improvement in my earthly self that there might have been. It appears that a great deal is expected of anyone with whom the Guides cooperate, and who develops the power of travelling and seeing the spiritual planes first-hand, in addition to the privilege of being able to converse with, and see, those who have passed over. Never before had I realized that when I received help from the other side in developing myself psychically, I was incurring a heavy responsibility, for which I must at some time render an account!

This applies, I know, to all those who, while still living in the physical body, are desirous of communicating with their loved ones who have passed over. It is not only a question as to whether we *can* establish communication, either through a medium or direct, but what is it going to do for us, or what are we going to let the greater knowledge make of us? Yes, the privilege of communicating brings a great spiritual and moral responsibility to us, which we cannot and must not shirk.

All this was told me at length by the Voice. I did not imagine it, and not a word or idea of it had been in my mind. Indeed, it was all a great shock to my self-esteem, as I had rather prided myself on taking care of my power, using it to help others and so on. But I was told that was not nearly enough; that there was so much selfishness and vanity, and intolerance, allied to a disposition to take the line of least resistance if anything very unpleasant had to be done, or anything that would make me unpopular. Oh, the Voice certainly “put me through it!” Every scrap of my self-complacency dwindled into nothingness before the beautifully modulated, even tones that thrust these unpleasant truths at me. It never entered my head to rebel, or deny any of it. After the first shock, I made up my mind, even while the Voice was speaking, that I would take my lower self in hand on my return to my physical body.

I looked again at the “brown woman” as the resolution formed definitely in my mind. I thought I saw a slight lightening or clearing up of the muddy depressing shade, and gradually she melted before my eyes, while I was conscious of being drawn away from the place, down and back to earth, though the Voice still kept beside me, quietly telling me what my faults were, and all I had to eradicate.

On awakening I remembered every detail of what had happened, and every word spoken to me. It was not really like awakening from sleep, but as if one passed from one room into another. There is usually no period of unconsciousness between leaving the spiritual state and re-entering the physical one; at least, I have felt none. I lay in bed and pondered over my strange experience, and wondered why. I had been given the lesson just then. As I lay wide awake, but with my eyes closed, I heard the Voice again, telling me that my physical health had been in a condition which, though not apparently serious in itself, was leading to a crisis in which I should need not only help from my spirit friends, but from my own higher self, which was even more important. Shortly after this, I had the septic poisoning from my teeth, for which Miss Macgregor gave me such splendid help, as I have related in an earlier chapter.

I realize now that had I ignored the lesson that had been given me, and refused to bring my spiritual development into line, or even ahead of, the psychical progress I had made, I could not have *taken* the help given me by my Guides and spirit friends both through Miss Macgregor and in other ways. Evidently one has to be *able*, as well as willing, to receive help from higher sources.

Apropos of this, a funny but rather pathetic incident occurs to my mind. In the early days of the Great War, a bereaved father visited me with the hope of communicating with his only son who had been recently killed at the front. Father and son had evidently been devoted to each other; the one seemed lost indeed without the other. I felt it would be a difficult sitting, because the poor man was so sure that there couldn't be a God, there couldn't be an afterlife, there couldn't be any loving Providence, or anything of the kind in a world where such a war went on, and where thousands of fine young lives were thrown away daily.

He explained all this to me while I was arranging the room, and endeavouring to get him to settle quietly in his chair for the sitting. Well, Feda brought his son to him, and he gave his father so much proof of his identity that he was staggered, and after the séance he went away without saying much to me, but he made an appointment for another sitting at an early date — I think it was a few weeks later. After this second sitting he told me he had received so much evidence that he was now sure that it was his son who had communicated with him, and who showed him that he still loved him, was near him at times, and looked forward to their being together again. He said he could no longer doubt either survival itself, or the possibility of communication. I felt very happy, as I had been particularly sorry for this man.

Suddenly he threw his note-book violently down on the table, and started to stride up and down the room. He drew his hand across his forehead with a bewildered gesture, and cried out, "Damn it! Knowing this new truth about the life to come, and my son and others seeing me, and knowing what I am doing, it's all going to be an infernal nuisance to me, it's going to revolutionize my business life. I can't go on conducting things on the old lines — I'd be ashamed. Yes, damn it, this is going to give me some trouble." He said more than this, and his language was much more lurid, but I didn't mind. I saw that this boiling over of his sense of responsibility was really the outcome of his great relief and joy in finding his boy again.

In other words, this hardened agnostic had understood in two short sittings, the lesson it had taken me several years of intensive study and development to learn.

CHAPTER XXV

PHYSICAL PHENOMENA

IN writing this book I am hoping that it will be read to some extent by people who have had little or no personal experience of the vast subject of physical phenomena. Indeed, my object in writing about my early difficulties in as simple, straightforward manner as possible, is chiefly that it may encourage some interested reader into taking his courage in both hands, and investigating for himself. So my more sophisticated and experienced friends must forgive me for sometimes explaining in a rather elementary way things with which they are so familiar that they probably know a great deal more about them than I do.

So far, I have spoken mostly of what we call mental phenomena and mental mediumship, with the exception perhaps of that one incident where Florence, Nellie and I demanded an objective manifestation of power, and which resulted in the rather terrifying experience of the hairy arm around Nellie's neck; also some of the earlier phenomena that we experienced during our table sittings, such as the silhouettes or shadow forms on the walls, and the loud knocking which kept time with our singing, and again, later on, the strong scents I told you about. These would all come under the heading of physical phenomena.

We usually speak of all objective phenomena as belonging to the physical class, because the results can be felt, seen and heard by the physical senses of touch, sight and hearing: and we speak of subjective phenomena as belonging to the mental class because one perceives, or senses, or recognizes it, through the channels of the mind. I think many people would be puzzled to know into which class they could put some of my psychic experiences, because sometimes, when I have heard a voice I have heard it *objectively* — yet I am a mental medium. Also I have had touches, and little manifestations, when quite alone, which were seen and heard by my physical eyes and ears, and not by any inner sense. It may be that in everyone of us there is some slight amount of the kind of power that is called “physical,” and given the right condition, a little can be “squeezed out” suddenly by an unseen operator, and this results in our experiencing an unexpected and spontaneous manifestation of an objective character. Whenever that happens to me, I am always aware of a very slight “suspended” or blank feeling. For perhaps the fraction of a second my mind and senses are “held up,” and immediately there follows the manifestation. In that very brief interval I think that some unseen friend has managed to draw just the small amount of power from me that was necessary for his “job.”

So now I want to tell you about physical mediumship and phenomena, which I suppose appeal to many people as being the most interesting and “thrilling” of all. Looking back, I can see how many more real thrills I have had in this way than I have ever known through seeing the most exciting and absorbing play, or reading the most fascinating

book.

My first experience in this direction, except for those with Florence and Nellie, came after I had begun my work as a professional medium, early in 1915, when I had the great privilege of taking part in a series of sittings with a well-known materializing medium. Up to this time my husband had been unable to take any practical share in our sittings at home, as Feda had always said that he must not sit with me when she was controlling me, as he also had the ability to go into trance, but into a deeper state than mine, and that it might be bad for his health unless he was able to develop gradually and cautiously as I had done. Of course it was impossible to find time and strength to devote ourselves to such an object, in addition to my work, so we agreed that my husband must keep normal, and not seek to develop psychically in any way, and that if he followed this course, his power could be utilized by the Guides in helping me; in fact, my own power would be augmented by some of my husband's, and I have had abundant proof that this is so. What it amounts to *is* — I appear to give the sittings, with Feda controlling me, but my husband undoubtedly takes an unseen part in it, and I have found that I am, to a certain extent, dependent on him for power.

For instance, in the early days of my professional work, we were having a hard struggle to make ends meet, as there were so many people who needed my services, and that of many other mediums, and who had not only lost their loved ones in the war but sometimes their source of income as well. These people needed our help even more than those who had suffered loss of the companionship of husband, sweetheart or brother, but were spared financial ruin. So we were not too affluent in a material sense, and when my husband was offered quite a good and easy engagement to tour in the provinces, we literally jumped at it, thankful to know that I should be able to carry on my work (which needed all my strength and vitality in those trying and anxious times), without the worry of wondering how to meet the expenses of the flat, firing, lighting, and the higher cost of living that very quickly made itself felt.

To our surprise Feda was not at all enthusiastic about this engagement, and after my husband had been away a month or two and was getting on very comfortably, under a congenial management, she announced that he must come back at once and *stay back*, as she found she could not use the power, or had not sufficient of it, during his absence.

She was imperative about it, and we certainly found that the quality of my sittings improved after my husband's return, so we have never since risked a separation for more than a few days at a time.

Until early in 1915, although my husband had heard of my experiences with Florence, Nellie and Agnes, and other friends, and was aware of all that Feda was doing through me, he had had no first-hand experience of his own at all. He read literature on Spiritualism occasionally, but always used to say that he couldn't get up any great enthusiasm for reading very deeply on the subject until he had some personal contact with the Other Side. So when I came into touch with a really powerful materializing medium, I thought "what a splendid opportunity for my husband to see and hear

something for himself.” Of course I ought to have initiated him gradually, by sitting at the table regularly, but in those days I had not the power, vitality or time left for many personal sittings after I had finished my professional work each day. It did not occur to me that though a materializing séance might be very convincing and thrilling, it might also be an extremely alarming experience to one who was a complete novice in these matters.

CHAPTER XXVI

SEE MORE THAN WE BARGAINED FOR

ABOUT a dozen of us assembled with the medium in an absolutely bare room, bare except for a plain bentwood chair for each sitter and one for the medium; a small octagonal table measuring about 2 1/2 feet across, and a pair of serge curtains hung across one corner of the room, and a couple of oblong pieces of thin wood, about 12 inches by 6 inches, painted on one side with strong luminous paint which, it was explained to us, were to be used by the materializing spirits to hold near their faces, so as to illuminate their features more clearly. The medium referred to these painted boards as "slates." The floor was entirely covered with linoleum.

All the sitters were known to each other, but were strangers to the medium. In these sittings the sitters were placed in horseshoe formation, men and women alternately, the open ends of the horseshoe ending close to the curtained corner, in which the medium sat for part of the séance. The medium left the gas-jet fairly full on in the early part of the sitting. One could read quite small print by the light.

The door was locked.

The medium now stood in front of the curtains, within the horseshoe formed by the sitters, with the little table — the presence of which puzzled me — by his side. He asked us to join hands, the two sitters ending the horseshoe closing their free hand over the hand that clasped the next person's hand. This, we were told, was to shut in the power until it had become strong enough to use. The magnetic power set up by this procedure soon made itself felt; it was like a weak electric current.

After a couple of minutes, the medium went behind the curtains, and we heard him rubbing his hands vigorously and breathing hard. Another few minutes, perhaps eight or ten, and he suddenly flung back the curtains and came out into the circle. We scarcely knew him. I looked closely at him to make sure it was the same person. He appeared to be at least two or three inches taller, with a most commanding, one might say imperious, almost dictatorial manner. He broke out into fluent French, and one of the sitters replied to him. He explained that he was a French-Canadian doctor — who was the regular Control of this medium, and he said that as he gained more control over the medium's brain he would be able to use more of the medium's language; this, indeed, happened, and he spoke in broken English, easily intelligible to us all, but still maintaining a very different personality from that of the medium in his normal state. He instructed the sitter who sat at the extreme end of the left side of the horseshoe, to release her left hand and throw it out towards him. She did so, and we could all see a stream of pale grey matter, like fog or steam from a kettle, oozing from her fingers. It was shaped like rods, about a foot long and an inch thick. The medium reached out his hands carefully towards the ends of the rods, and seemed to try and coax the grey

material to come farther away from the sitter, towards himself. The rods “thinned” slightly, as he induced them to extend, and after a couple of minutes the French Control said, speaking through the medium again, “No, not strong enough. Link hands up, and close in the power again.”

The sitters obeyed for a few minutes, during which the electric current became so strong that some of the sitters' hands were jerked up and down; they could not keep them still. The end sitter was instructed to throw out her hand towards the medium, as before, and this time the rod of steamy material was much thicker and longer. The Control expressed satisfaction, and began the drawing motion again. As he drew the grey substance towards himself, he appeared to rub it vigorously into his chest, and then he threw it in coils round his neck. We could see these coils lying round his neck and shoulders for a few seconds; then they seemed to be absorbed into his body. This operation took several minutes. He then placed the fingers of one hand lightly on the top of the small table, instructing the end sitter to put her left hand on it, too. She did so, and the table rose several feet into the air, lightly and gracefully. It was so high that the sitter had to stand up and hold her arm as high as possible in order to keep her fingers upon it. It was very curious to see, in a bright light, a table in the air without any kind of support under it. A simple phenomenon, but very striking and convincing.

The Control then told the sitters that he would give them an illustration of what would happen if they were to unloose hands, and break the current of power during the séance. He asked one sitter in the centre of the horseshoe to unlink, and immediately the table crashed to the ground. The sitters linked up again for a few minutes, and the end sitter was instructed to turn out the gas, which was close to her, after the medium had retired behind the curtains and seated himself on the bentwood chair. We were now almost in darkness except for a faint red light which burned high up in one corner of the room. We had been instructed to sing softly, so as to make the vibrations which appear to be necessary in all circles for Materialization or Direct Voice phenomena. We promised not to “let things down” by being heavy and silent, and set to work thinking of all the songs we could, so as not to have long pauses in between. I think we all had a feeling that we might have to wait some time before anything happened, and I know my husband had an idea that if he really saw anything under such conditions it would be in a very vague form, probably such a distance away from him that he would not be able to examine it at all closely. Imagine, then, our surprise, when the curtains were quickly thrust aside and somebody stepped out, picked up one of the illuminated boards — or slates — and turned the bright side towards himself. By this means we could all clearly see a very tall form of an Indian, about 6 feet 6 inches in height, dressed in a gorgeous robe, with a high turban, and a sword by his side. His robes seemed to be composed of many yards of material: part of it was white and hung in heavy folds from his shoulder. He moved straight across the circle to where my husband sat, and standing straight in front of him, he stooped and put his face close to my husband's, holding the luminous board so that my husband could examine every pore of the skin.

I remember that, true to our instructions, we were softly but enthusiastically singing

“Annie Laurie.” My husband's attempt to keep on singing, with the Indian standing in front of him, was comical. His teeth chattered so loudly that we could hear them above the singing. He told us afterwards that he had never before understood the meaning of “his hair stood on end,” but now he said he felt his hair rise stiffly on his head. It was unlike anything he had expected. After a minute or so, interest overcame his fright. He looked intently at the Indian's face, and could see, as I afterwards could, the tiny bloodshot veins in his large almond-shaped eyes which he obligingly rolled around, so that my husband could examine them.

Then the Indian, whose name we heard later was Abdullah, came over to me, and allowed me to examine him closely, and it was difficult indeed to realize that this handsome and dignified Oriental, whose outfit would have graced a West End production of, let us say, *Chu-Chin-Chow*, or *Kismet*, was there in our midst, for the moment apparently as solid as we were ourselves, and yet we knew that he would vanish again in a little while. Even as I watched him, he began to *melt*. That is the only word I can think of to describe the process by which he gradually disappeared in front of our eyes. It was exactly like holding wax in front of a fire, but there was nothing whatever left afterwards.

Several other forms came out from the cabinet, one at a time, sometimes so quickly that one wondered how they had managed to take the power and “mould” it on to their etheric bodies as to render them temporarily visible to our earthly eyes, because that is what happens at a materializing séance. Of course, in saying this I am trying to describe a complicated operation to you in a few words, when volumes might be, and are, used to do so.

In all, about a dozen forms showed themselves — elderly men and women, young men, young women, children, and also a small dog that had belonged to one of the sitters, and who was as pleased to manifest to his mistress, and far more excited about it, judging from his snuffles and pantings and jerky little barks, than even the “human” spirits were. The latter all expressed their happiness in being able to show themselves in tangible form to their friends on earth, but one knew that they were more *anxious* about the success of their efforts than was the little dog. The owner of the dog sat next to my husband, and when the dog ran to her he placed his two front paws on her knee, and his two hind feet were resting on my husband's foot, who said afterwards that the dog weighed just about the same as a dog of that breed (it was a pekinese) would weigh in its physical body. We happened to have a pekinese at the time that often stood on one's feet in order to clamber up to one's knee.

A few minutes afterwards another spirit materialized for another sitter some distance away on my left. As we were sitting in a half-circle I could only see the profile of the spirit, but I recognized him as the husband of the lady from a photograph I had seen of him. I noticed that he wore rather old-fashioned clothes; a black coat and a very broad white starched front with turned-down collar and black tie.

A woman sitting next to me on my right hand nudged me, and whispered: “Look, it isn't

a spirit at all; it's the medium dressed up. I recognize his coat at the back, and his collar too. The beard, shirt-front, and black coat are only hung on in front of him.”

She persisted in this, and it upset and worried me. I sent out a silent prayer that some light should be thrown on the matter, as I myself thought the back of the coat looked different from the front. An answer came quickly and unexpectedly.

The materialized spirit vanished, and in his place came Abdullah again. He stood right in front of me, looking at me in a searching manner.

I felt there was something he wanted to tell me or show me, so my eyes never left him as he walked slowly across the room to the opposite corner where the medium lay back in a chair, in deep trance.

Holding up the illuminated “slates” the spirit showed us the medium and himself-side by side!

How glad and relieved I was. Unfortunately, the sitting came to an end soon after.

I think that the difficult mental atmosphere that had arisen through my, and the other sitter's doubts, was responsible for breaking up the séance (sooner than was usual, as I found out during the long series of sittings that I had later), though so much had happened in it that was a revelation to many of us.

The medium was terribly exhausted afterwards, and that is always the case when an adverse condition has sprung up during the sitting.

When the conditions were perfect-clear dry weather, which is so important to physical manifestations — and experienced and sympathetic sitters were present, the medium seemed to experience little or no fatigue. I once sat with the same medium, with only three friends present, making five of us in the circle, and a thunderstorm came on while we were sitting.

The thunderstorm outside was nothing to the thunderstorm in the room, I can assure you. It was terrifying. The room and sitters were illuminated by great blinding sheets of light, and the electric shocks were so severe that I felt that if they became any stronger we should be electrocuted.

The medium's chief Guide suddenly spoke during a temporary pause in the “fireworks,” and said in an urgent and rather angry manner, “Unloose hands, and stop the sitting at once. Can't you see that you are forming a battery? It is most dangerous. Stop at once.” We did so. The condition of the medium was pitiable. He could scarcely stumble out of the room. It had evidently been a great strain on him.

CHAPTER XXVII

A SPIRIT WAKES US UP A BIT

WE had many sittings with this medium, and my husband became more and more interested. One evening a Control called Joey, who in his earth life was a famous clown, said to my husband, whom he had often teased for being so reserved and quiet, "Freddie, are you always so quiet? If so, I think I shall have to come and visit you in your home, and see if I can't wake you up a bit."

My husband said, "Well, Joey, I should like it very much if you would, but how should I know you were there, as we have no power of this kind to enable you to manifest?"

"Oh, yes, you have," said Joey. "I think you've got just enough for me to use, so that I can let you know when I'm there, one way or another."

I know my husband was very dubious as to Joey being able to do anything of that kind at home. We lived in London, in a maisonnette, which was composed of the ground floor and the semi-basement. Our own sitting room and dining room were in this semi-basement, and there was quite a long flight of stairs up to the entrance door of the flat. When one opened this door it led into the hall, about 15 or 16 feet long, at the farther end of which was the door used by the occupants of the flats above ours. This door was kept closed, but could always be opened from inside or out, while an electric push-bell was fixed on the private doors leading to each flat. The bell on our door rang in the basement.

After Joey's promise to "wake my husband up," this bell rang several times every day of the week following. Just as my husband sat down to a meal the bell would ring, loudly and long. My husband would jump up, and go up the stairs as quickly as possible, only to find no one there. He got very tired of this after a day or two, and rather angry, thinking some mischievous boys were doing it. He kept watch but could see no one loitering about. One afternoon I had been shopping, and I came in by the general entrance door, closed it after me, walked down the hall to the door of the flat, and rang the bell. Just as my husband was opening the door *for* me, I happened to glance at the bell and, to my amazement, I saw the little knob sink in, just as though an invisible finger had pressed it. Simultaneously we heard the ring of it from downstairs. My husband and I looked at each other in amazement. We could not understand it.

The next evening we went to our materializing séance, and the first words that Joey spoke were to my husband. "Freddie," he said, "I did wake you up, didn't I?"

"What do you mean, Joey?" my husband asked. "The bells, of course," Joey replied.

My husband told him that he was now sufficiently impressed that Joey had the power to “wake him up,” and that he need not trouble to do it any more; but Joey said he thought he could do “a few more little things” which would interest us, and then he would stop. We thanked him for all the trouble he was taking. I was secretly rather pleased that my husband was getting a really good dose of evidence that “supernormal” things could be done in one's own home.

Joey now tried a new line: as soon as my husband placed any of his belongings — tobacco-pouch, matchbox or pipe — anywhere, they disappeared. He would put something on the corner of the mantelpiece, look away for a second, look back, and it was gone. Three days or so later it would be replaced in exactly the same spot, often only a moment after one had looked at the place, and seen that nothing was there. The most remarkable of these little experiments was carried out one evening when we were setting' out to dine at a friend's house, twelve miles away. She was sending her own car for us at six o'clock. Just as we had settled ourselves in the car, my husband jumped up, saying, “Great Scot, I've left my lighted pipe in the middle of your bed, Gladys. I put it there for a second while I got my coat out of the wardrobe, and then forgot it. It may have set fire to the eiderdown.” He dashed into the house, and after a few minutes he came out again looking worried.” It isn't there,” he said, “and it isn't anywhere in the house, as far as I can see.” I told him to shake his coat and turn out all his pockets, which he did to no purpose. His pipe was a fairly large-sized one, not easily hidden in a pocket.

We went to our friend's, dined there, danced for an hour or so after, and then I went upstairs, put on my coat and came down into the drawing room again to say good-bye to our hostess. Just as I advanced towards her, I felt something touch my sleeve. No one was within several feet of me. I looked at my arm, and there, sticking in my cuff, was the lost pipe! I stared at it, so did everybody else. The cuff of my coat was so narrow that only a small portion of the mouthpiece could fit into it.

Next time we spoke to Joey, we assured him that we had had ample evidence of his ability to “squeeze enough power out of us to show us that he was there,” and that he need not exert himself further in those directions.

As a rule, the order of phenomena in these séances was very much the same. The medium went into trance, was controlled, then into a deeper trance, and the Guides who worked with him would speak and show themselves; then they would assist the relatives and friends of the sitters to “come through” and manifest. Of course, the regular operators were more proficient in every way than the new-comers, who often could only just build up their faces for us to see; whereas the more experienced were able to show us their entire forms, and every detail of their clothing.

How absurd it would be to imagine that in such a séance as I have described to you, the medium could be “dressing himself up” in all these elaborate costumes, with sometimes only a few seconds in between the “changes,” and sometimes no interval at all. We have often seen one materialized spirit lay the illuminated slate on the floor, and the

second one pick it up with lightning-like rapidity. You might almost say that the one snatched it from the other, so eager were they to be seen while the power lasted. With some of the materializations it only lasts a few seconds; with others ten to fifteen minutes.

Then, think of the wonderful make-up the medium would require! People talk about *masks*, life-like affairs that delude people into thinking that they are materialized human faces. My husband is familiar with all kinds of make-up, skins, false foreheads, scalps and facial additions, but he says that one can detect them most easily at a distance of a few inches, under a good light. The medium would require a huge wardrobe of every kind of men's, women's, children's clothing, Eastern dress, English dress of all periods, military uniforms, etc. Where could he put them in the space at his disposal behind the curtains, about 3 feet wide, with only just room for his chair in the extreme corner? Of course, I am speaking now of remarkably successful sittings, due to good conditions in the way of weather, health of the medium *and* the sitters, which is important; but I have attended sittings when the chief Control has said, almost at the commencement, "We shan't get anything tonight — conditions not right. We'd better disperse as it's no good wasting the medium's power by waiting." Occasion ally, owing to the importunity of some of the sitters, who might have come a long distance and were disappointed at having to go away again without seeing any manifestation, the Guides would kindheartedly endeavour to use the small amount of power at their disposal; but the results were very poor, the materialization consisting of indistinct, blurred features that might have belonged to anybody. As the spirit of one young man, who was killed in the war, said to his mother at a later sitting, referring to his attempts to show her his face, "Mum, I felt as if I looked more like a badly boiled suet pudding than anything else." If a skeptic had been present at one of these unsatisfactory sittings, he might have been forgiven for thinking that the whole thing was either a clumsy fraud, or worthless for the purpose of proving human survival.

CHAPTER XXVIII

CONCERNING FAIRIES AND AIR-RAIDS

DURING the war, the chief Control would always know if there was an impending air-raid. How he knew I don't know, but I surmise that these Controls were probably working around the medium, and perhaps the séance room, some time before the sitting. Indeed, they have often told us that there is a great deal to be done in the way of adjusting the psychic conditions around a medium previously to a sitting. I have often been aware that something of this kind was being done to me, and one has carefully to guard against ill-temper, anxiety or excitement of any kind while this "tuning in" process is taking place. (I often think that mediumship means constant practice in self-control.) Imagine, then, what a great deal there may be for the Guides to do in preparing the little understood, complicated background of the physical séance.

As the Guides appear to be actually functioning in the earth conditions for the time being, they probably retain a great deal of the sensitiveness that they possess on their own spirit plane, and are thus able "to sense" approaching danger, as horses and cattle sense fire that they cannot see and which may be some distance away. At any rate, on three or four separate occasions, the chief Guide warned us that we must not delay, but must go home as quickly as possible, because the enemy airplanes or Zeppelins would soon be over London. They were never wrong in their predictions, and one night the warning was specially addressed to me, so as my husband had not accompanied me on this occasion, and knowing that he would be anxious about me should an official air-raid warning be given, I hurried home, arriving there more quickly than usual, because everything, tubes and buses, seemed to fit in remarkably well. No signal had been given when I entered our home, and, as I knew the Guides had always been correct, I thought I would begin my usual bread-making for the week to fill in the time; it was never any use going to bed to be awakened by the terrific noise of the anti-aircraft guns. Then, too, the people from the flats above ours used to come down and ask if they could sit in our basement, so we had to get up to let them in.

Hardly had I mixed the dough, and set it to rise in the kitchen, when the air-raid started. It was the worst one we had experienced. Shrapnel simply hailed on the roof, and as our kitchen was built out at the back of the house, and was partly glass-roofed, I had to dodge backwards and forwards to attend to the bread as best I could. Suddenly a bomb was dropped close to us, our windows were broken, electric lights went out, pictures were blown across the room, and afterwards we found that five large houses composed of flats were all demolished, and fifteen poor people, including two personal friends of ours, were buried beneath the ruins.

As soon as I had pulled myself together (the noises deafened me for a couple of minutes), I rescued the dough and put it into a place of greater safety, and went up and opened the front door to see what had happened. The street was literally covered with

broken glass, bricks and pieces of coping-stone, some of it blown from a couple of hundred yards away. I then realized why the Guide had specially warned me, as I was the only sitter living in this neighbourhood, and had I stayed in the medium's house till the usual time I should have been passing through the affected area just about the time that this huge bomb fell, and I don't see how I could possibly have avoided being injured by the flying pieces of masonry, etc.

Occasionally we had materialization of a different kind altogether, little spontaneous happenings that were very interesting indeed. For instance, the whole circle were concentrating on watching a form endeavouring to show himself by the light of the illuminated slate, which was not very strong that night as the medium had neglected to re-cover it with phosphorescent paint, for which he got a good scolding from his Guides during the sitting. My husband was sitting with his feet and knees rather wide apart. His gaze was suddenly diverted from the materialized spirit to a kind of glow near his feet. Looking down he saw a tiny man and woman, between 12 and 18 inches high, standing between his knees. They were holding hands and looking up into my husband's face, as if they were thinking, "What on earth is that?" They seemed to be as interested, if not more so, in him, and the details of his appearance, as he was in theirs. He was too astonished to call anybody else's attention to the tiny people, who were dressed in bright green, like the pictures of elves and fairies, and who wore little pointed caps. A slight glow surrounded them, or emanated from them, he wasn't sure which, but it was strong enough for him to see their little faces and forms clearly. After a moment or two they disappeared, apparently melting into the floor.

Another time I found myself sitting next to a stranger in the circle. At least, he was a stranger to me, but he had attended the circles two or three times when I had not been present. I did not hear his name, nor he mine, but I gathered from his remarks that he was a naval man, and I should think an extremely practical, straightforward, "no nonsense about him" type of man. During the sitting, which was a good and prolific one, while a great deal was happening that was occupying the attention of the whole circle (who always looked in one direction most of the time, i.e. towards the curtained corner, as the materialized spirits usually came from there), I suddenly felt a chill come over me, and at the same moment I felt my neighbour, the naval man, give a slight shiver. (You will remember that we always held hands during the séance.) In a few seconds I felt as cold as ice.

So, apparently, did the naval man, judging by his hand.

He turned to me and whispered, "Do you feel anything? Terribly cold at our backs, isn't it?" I agreed: the cold seemed to come from behind us. I looked over my right shoulder, without moving in my chair, and to my astonishment I saw, just behind us, the snow-white, stately figure of a woman, looking exactly like a lovely statue of marble or alabaster. Her eyes were closed, her hands folded as if in prayer: she was moving near us, as if she was walking in a deep sleep. She passed slowly between us. Our hands being linked, she passed through our arms, wrists and hands. At the actual second of her passing between us, the cold became a hundred times more intense, though I

should not have thought it possible a moment before. I have never felt anything like it. We saw her profile plainly as she passed so closely.

“Good heavens!” said my neighbour, “it’s my mother, but why does she look like that?”

She moved — one can scarcely call it walked, as she appeared to glide over the floor without moving her legs or feet — towards the curtains, and disappeared. A few minutes later she reappeared, happy and animated, and had an intimate conversation with her son, who was very pleased, I gathered, with all she told him.

At a much later date, a spirit Communicator explained to me that sometimes the spirits who were not ordinarily in close touch with the earth conditions, would find themselves overcome by a sleepy, dreamy condition when actually entering the physical vibrations. This only lasted a short while with most people, but if it lasted longer, they would be escorted back to their own planes by Guides whose work it is to help in that way, because they would not be able to communicate, or manifest satisfactorily, while in that condition. At the same time, it was a very weird and puzzling phenomenon, the only one of its kind that I have ever witnessed.

CHAPTER XXIX

STRANGE THINGS BEGIN TO HAPPEN IN OUR HOME

WE enjoyed many interesting sittings with other physical mediums, too. I know that many people say that they do not like materializing, or even the Direct Voice, séances, but I think it is extremely valuable to have such experiences, so that one knows what is possible to be done, given the right conditions. Why don't these things happen to ordinary people, in the ordinary houses belonging to ordinary people, is a question that is often raised. Well, they do so happen. I have had many friends who have never attended a materializing séance, and who have had extraordinary phenomena happen in their own homes. They don't understand them, and sometimes they are afraid of them, possibly because they don't understand. Therefore the manifestation is usually wasted on them.

The Guides have often told us that they knew a certain person had power that they could use, but that directly they did so, he or she became so frightened that they had to desist.

The Guides have to be very careful with nervous people, because when they, the Guides, are working on the earth, and using power that they take from us, they are in our conditions, not their own, and they don't always realize what effect they are creating. Occasionally they think that they have taken a small amount of power, and discover either that it is stronger than they expected, or for some unknown reason, they have produced a much stronger effect than they anticipated, or even desired at the time. This applies especially to cases of spontaneous phenomena, which are always more difficult to manage or control than the carefully planned, orderly phenomena of the regular séance room, where the Guides, Controls, and mediums have all been cautiously trained during a long course of development.

There are, of course, some people who have a larger fund of this physical power, apparently "near the surface," and the Guides can use it more quickly and easily than when it is "buried" deeply: though I have noticed that where it needs careful digging out, and slow patient development, it is of a better and often more lasting quality than that which springs up rapidly. Very often the power shows itself in people whom one never suspected of possessing it. Indeed, they would not have believed it possible themselves!

I shall never forget the first visit paid us by two friends, a man and his wife, who came to stay with us for a weekend. The last people in the world, one would have said, who would show signs of psychic power.

After their arrival we went out for a short walk before tea. I had a curious impression that something of importance was going to happen, though I could not imagine what it might

be. Perhaps a letter coming by the late afternoon post, I thought. Anyway, so strongly did I feel this, that I asked my friends if they would mind cutting short their walk and returning home for tea, but I did not tell them the reason.

We sat down, and while I was pouring out the tea I was amazed to notice a strong smell of incense. It was quite as strong as if one were burning it just in front of one's face. I looked at my friends and saw a puzzled look dawning on both their faces.

"Do you smell anything?" I asked.

"Yes," they both replied. "It's incense. Where is it coming from? The room seems to be full of it." It did indeed. At that moment, my friends' young son came into the room. Directly he opened the door, he cried out, "Oh, Dad, the room is full of scent. Oh, it is so strong."

We told him to come in and close the door, and have his tea. The scent died away; then came again, stronger than ever. My husband then came in, and he, too, exclaimed immediately, saying, "Why, the place is full of incense. Have you been burning some?" ... though he felt perfectly certain we had none in the house. For about half an hour the smell came and went. I got the impression that our friends must have power, and I asked them to sit at the table after tea, to see if Feda would speak to us and tell us what it meant.

We did so, using a small bamboo table, and Feda came through immediately. She confirmed my impression and said that both our friends had power for materialization, Direct Voice, and levitation of objects, which the scientific investigator calls telekinesis, but which Feda usually calls "Tincans," as she says the real name bothers her.

She asked us to begin experimenting by sitting for the Direct Voice, but that first we must sit around the larger table in the dining room. When Feda mentioned Direct Voice, I reminded her of how, some years before, I had tried to develop that for two solid years. (I have not told you about it because the sittings were almost abortive, and therefore there was nothing of interest to report.) She replied that she was aware of it, but that our friends' power would show itself very quickly indeed, and that we should soon be given proof of it, if we would sit around the larger table.

We looked at the table referred to, and laughed at the bare idea of seeing such a large and heavy one *move*.

It was always used as a dining table, and would be 7 feet long and 4 or 5 feet wide, on four solid, heavy legs, one at each corner. On the following night we did as Feda requested, and sat around it: myself at one end, my husband at the other, and one of our friends on either side. We turned the gaslight down a little, but not out. One could see clearly by it. Nothing happened, and we sat for half an hour or longer. Then I remembered that in the days of our table sittings with Florence and Nellie, Feda had always told us to hum or sing if nothing was happening, as it helped the psychic

conditions if one created harmonious vibrations.

I suggested that we might sing Feda's favourite, "Abide with me," and we did so. Directly we came to the line, "Where is death's sting, etc.," the table rose steadily on one side until two of its legs were at least a couple of feet off the floor (our hands were resting lightly on top of it). It was lowered again, and rose again, rising and lowering rapidly but rhythmically in perfect time with our singing. Had we had our hands *underneath*, and pushed it up and down, it would have been impossible to move so heavy an object with the quickness and lightness that Feda did.

Until this moment I had completely forgotten that it was always on that significant line, "Where is death's sting, etc.," that Feda began to move the table in some special way. My friends were amazed at this weighty table rising up and down so gracefully and lightly, as indeed we were ourselves. After we had sung the hymn through two or three times, Feda began tilting the table in "threes," and I gathered from this that she wanted to spell out a message by the usual code, i.e. one calls out the letters of the alphabet, and Feda tilts the table to each letter. One tilt for A, two for B, three for C, and so on. A slow method, you will say. Yes, but it was remarkable how quickly she did it. She tilted the table so rapidly that it took us all our time to call the letters quickly enough to keep up with her. By this means she spelt out a message to the effect that we were to turn a certain spare bedroom into a séance room, and gave us directions for fitting it up very much on the lines of the room used by the materializing medium of whom I told you, except that she said no one was to sit in the curtained recess, as that would merely be used to "collect the power in," and that we four — our two friends, my husband and myself—were to sit in a half-circle across the corner, and that an aluminum trumpet should be placed horizontally on a stand between the curtains, facing us.

The directions given were very clear, and we asked our friends to prolong their visit in order that we might carry them out. The next day we prepared the spare bedroom as directed, and sat as we had been told. Nothing at all happened, not even a rap, so after an hour we went downstairs and sat at the table again. Feda had very little power; apparently she had used it up in her unsuccessful efforts upstairs. She managed to tell us to sit each night at the table, and not upstairs, until she gave us further instructions. Then she spelt out the words, "Bells, get bells." We were rather at a loss to know what she meant, but the next morning my husband went to a toy shop and bought a bunch of small bells such as one gives to a child to play with.

That evening we moved the large table into the drawing-room, as the house was a semi-detached one, and on a previous evening, when Feda became rather peremptory in her instructions, she lifted the table so high and flung it down again with such force that our next door neighbours banged on the adjoining wall in protest. So not wishing to annoy them further, we moved it, though it was a heavy and difficult job. There was a screen by the door to exclude draughts, and my husband hung the bells on the corner of it by a blue ribbon which he had tied on them, thinking Feda would admire the color.

After sitting for some time, and not getting any particular results except taps on the table, we began to sing the favourite hymn again, and on the line, "Where is death's sting?"— the bells were violently rung. The noise came so suddenly and, at the moment, so unexpectedly, we all jumped, which seemed to spoil the conditions, as nothing at all happened after.

A moment before the bells rang, my husband said that he felt a small, warm hand placed right on top of his own, and left there for a few seconds. It was then removed, and the bells immediately rang.

The next night, as soon as we had sat around the table, it moved, and Feda told us that the power was much stronger, and that we could now go back to the séance room upstairs, and that we were to sit each evening for an hour, until further orders. We went upstairs at once, and sat in the same order as previously, holding hands as I had done in the materializing séances. We had brought the bells upstairs and placed them on the stand beside the aluminum trumpet.

While we were singing the usual hymn, "Abide with me," the bells rang loudly. They were beyond reach of anyone of us, either of our hands or feet. The room was almost in darkness but not quite, as a small red lamp was burning in the farther corner by the door, but the light was prevented from falling directly on us by a screen we had placed in front of it. You must remember that we were all holding hands, so that if one of us moved, the next one would be aware of it.

We sang the hymn again. This time, the stand (on which rested the trumpet), a tall wooden one, weighing several pounds, moved bodily, scraping loudly on the uncarpeted floor-boards as it did so. Afterwards we found it had moved about a foot and a half from its original position. Nothing else happened, but we were all thrilled. You know it *is* thrilling, when some familiar everyday object that you know, such as a plant-stand which has stood solidly immovable for *years*, suddenly begins to behave in this extraordinary manner, animated by this little understood force that is directed by an unseen agency.

Afterwards, during supper, we discussed it at length, and all agreed that it was more interesting and fascinating than anything we could imagine, though so far there had been no evidence of any discarnate intelligence save that of Feda spelling out the messages through the table.

Next evening we sat again. The bells began to "tinkle" softly quite early in the sitting, and we found they were being rung three times, then a pause, and three times again. We asked Feda if she could answer questions with a Yes or No, by ringing the bells three times for Yes, and once for No. She was delighted with this suggestion and rang them vigorously. We put several straightforward simple questions to her that could be easily answered by an affirmative or negative; in this way we obtained quite a lot of directions as to what we ought to do in the future. One thing she told us was that no one of us must go into trance, under any condition. This was in answer to a question, as I

had felt a tendency to go into trance. She said she wanted us all to remain quite normal, so that we could check and compare results and thoroughly appreciate any phenomena that might come.

CHAPTER XXX

THE FIRST BREATH, AND WHAT FOLLOWED IT

THE following evening the bells did not ring. We sat and sang quietly. We had also installed a musical box which was a great help, as it filled in the pauses when we got tired of singing, or could think of nothing fresh to sing. While we were humming softly, I noticed a peculiar sound coming from the floor near my feet. It was a loud, heavy breathing. The friend who was sitting next to me heard it too. I felt his hand stiffen in mine. He trembled, so did I. I don't mind admitting it. It *is* a strange experience to sit in one's room, and hear human breathing coming apparently out of the floor. It grew louder, louder still, then it came from a higher level, and soon I was able to locate it as coming from the direction of where the aluminum trumpet would be, on the stand. From being a breath, it became a "breathy" voice, but what the words were, if any, we could not tell.

This went on for two or three nights, the breathing formed itself into sounds, and on the third night we could just make out the words, "Yes, I think so," and "splendidly." It sounded to us like two or three people having a rather excited discussion behind the curtains. They were not addressing us at all, but seemed to be talking among themselves. It was like listening to the stage being prepared previous to an important production. After this, we thought we would speak to Feda again on the large table in order to find out how things were progressing, and if there were any hints or directions she wanted to give us.

By means of the usual "tilts," she told us that several Guides were helping us, Guides who had had experience in physical phenomena with other mediums, and that among them was Abdullah, for whom Feda had a very deep admiration, though she always referred to him as "Ab," which somehow didn't seem very respectful. She said we must not go on sitting every night as we had been doing, because it would not be good for me as I was giving my trance sittings each day as usual, and though very little, if any, physical power was drawn from me in the evening sittings, she knew I must go out and get more exercise in the open air. (It is wonderful the care that Controls take of their mediums; in this case, I was so intensely interested, I should never have thought of giving up the sittings, especially as I was feeling quite well.)

The following night, therefore, we did not sit, but the night after we did so and heard singing or humming in a deep bass voice. After it finished, Feda rang the bells, and regulating the sounds in the same way as she tilted the table, she spelt out, "Ab — he sing." Then the humming went on again, getting much louder, but, Feda kept breaking in with the bells, repeating the words, "Ab — he sing" at regular intervals, which was quite unnecessary, we thought, though we were too polite to say so.

The musical box was wound up and played whenever we thought it necessary, and we heard feet shuffling on the floor, softly sandaled or naked feet, keeping time to the music. Feda again interrupted on the bells with, "Ab — he dance." The effect was a swish, swish, swish sound. One could scarcely call it dancing, but we took Feda's word for it.

We now began to notice curious heavy movements in the room, as if there were several quite solid people moving about near us, and behind the curtains. Occasionally we heard them whisper to each other. I felt a warm hand placed in mine. It lay there for about five minutes, then grew warmer, until it was so hot I spoke about it, and gradually the hand cooled again till it resumed a normal temperature.

All this curious phenomena was, I learnt later, the "working up" of the power, with the idea of eventually producing materialization. Evidently the Guides and workers on the other side were as much "in the dark" as to what they could, or might be able to do, as we were. I have noticed that they often have to experiment carefully over a very long period before they can safely attempt any definite phenomena. I am also convinced that they are not always aware themselves of the *effect* they are producing, and sometimes when we on earth have been a little startled by some surprising and spontaneous manifestation, the Guides have expressed astonishment afterwards as though, apparently, they were not aware that they had been able to use the power in such a strong manner.

CHAPTER XXXI

A MIDNIGHT VISITOR

ONE startling instance of this kind was given us, which was very interesting indeed. During the sittings when "Ab" was shuffling or rubbing his feet on the floor in time to the music, it sounded so near me, as if a real, solid, physical body was doing it, I cried out, "Oh, Abdullah, how strange it is! You are so near me, yet I cannot see you. I wish I *could*." He came nearer until his moving feet seemed almost to touch mine, and again I said I wished I could see him. Our friends both echoed this wish, but we had no strong hope of it being fulfilled.

A few nights later (we had no séance that evening) my husband and I retired for the night, and as usual he was soon asleep. I lay awake for some time, and then dropped off. I must have only slept a little while when I was awakened by a sound on the landing. I then heard a fumbling at the door handle: it turned, and someone quietly entered the room. It was a moonlight night, and a wide casement window faced our bed, and in the moonlight that penetrated the curtains I distinctly saw a tall figure pass slowly between our bed and the dressing-table (I was lying on the side of the bed farthest from the door). I don't mind admitting that I was very frightened, as I felt sure it was a burglar, as there had been several burglaries in the neighbourhood recently.

The figure advanced to the side of the bed where I lay and, to my horror, bent over me. I did not dare to move. My husband is slightly deaf in one ear, and he always lies on what he calls his good ear, so that it is not an easy matter to awaken him, as I knew from experience.

I did not know what to do. I scarcely dared to breathe.

The figure bent over me and placed a hand on my left side. I was lying partly on my right side. He patted me. It then flashed through my mind that a burglar wouldn't *touch* me if he could possibly avoid it, and he certainly wouldn't pat me! "Why, it's a materialized spirit," was the thought that suddenly dawned upon me. At once all fear left me, and I quickly turned over to the left in order to try and see the figure better, but he took no notice of me, and backed away from the bed, glided round the foot of it, and out through the door again. I was very much ashamed of my fear, and my foolish thought that my visitor was a burglar, and I made up my mind to say nothing to my husband or friends about it, but I hoped that the visitor, whoever he might be (the figure appeared to be that of a man), would come again, and reveal his identity to me.

In the morning I happened, for no particular reason, to glance into the séance room, which we always kept locked and cleaned out ourselves, so as to keep the curtains, stand, bells and anything that the Guides used from contact with anyone else but

ourselves, as we felt that was their wish. I do not know what made me look in that morning as there was nothing to tidy because it had all been put straight the previous day, when we were not “sitting.” I was amazed to see that the curtains were disarranged, the stand moved to a different position and the bells had fallen on the floor. I called my husband's attention to this, and he was just as surprised and at a loss to account for it as I was, and our friends were the same.

That night, an hour or two after we had gone to bed, we were awakened by the sound of screams and a scuffling in another part of the house, but presumably upstairs. Now, my friend and her husband were sleeping in a bedroom at the other end of the landing. In this room were two single beds, and we had placed them rather close together, only about a foot apart.

What happened, as we heard afterwards, was this: my friend was awakened suddenly by a touch, and in the semi-darkness she could just discern a tall figure bending over her. She immediately screamed loudly, which awoke her husband. Being awakened from his sleep so abruptly, he forgot where he was and the position of the beds, jumped straight out and landed right on top of his wife. *She* thought the intruder had jumped on her, and hit out frantically, catching her husband right in the face. It took them two or three minutes to disentangle themselves and enter into mutual explanations.

We calmed our friends, who were shaken and upset, and I told them about my experience of the previous night, and we came to the conclusion that it was probably Abdullah who had visited us, as my friend said she had a glimpse of a *robed* figure, though she thought it was that of a man.

The next evening we sat at the table, as we thought it advisable to ask Feda if it was Abdullah, and if so to explain to him that we did not want manifestations of that kind disturbing us during the night, when we ought to be asleep.

Before we could begin Feda tilted the table and spelt out, “Poor Ab, very hurt. He very disappointed. Took much trouble to build up beautiful solid, so that you could see him, and you not welcome him. Poor Ab, no welcome, only screams and fear.”

Apologetically, we explained that we were grateful for “Ab's” visit, but that it was undesirable he should disturb us at night. Feda replied by reminding us that we had all repeatedly exclaimed, “Oh, if we could only see you,” and that we had been so importunate that “Ab” in the kindness of his heart had endeavoured to satisfy us, but had not realized that he must *time* his visit to suit us. He had found the quiet of the night very suitable for drawing out and using the necessary power to materialize himself, though he did not realize what the actual time was.

After talking it over with us, Feda agreed that it would be best to reserve any similar manifestations for when we were actually sitting for them, and this arrangement was adhered to from that time onwards.

CHAPTER XXXII

SOME DIFFICULTIES CROP UP

THE character of the phenomena now began to change. The attempts at materialization grew fewer, and most of the time was used for the development of the voices; not only Feda but many other friends who had passed over came and talked to us again. The evidence as to the personality of these friends was, at times, remarkably good, but depended to a very great extent on the conditions we could give them. Sometimes when other people joined us in sitting, people who had little or no experience of physical phenomena, they would sit in a state of tension, apparently physically incapable of joining in the singing, or talking naturally when a voice addressed them through the trumpet. Previous to the sitting I used to tell these new sitters to try and regard the whole thing as a meeting between friends, the friends who had gone over and the friends on this side. I told them to speak naturally if spoken to, but not to give away evidence, and they always promised to do so; in fact, seemed annoyed that I should think it necessary to prompt them to such an obvious line of conduct; but as soon as the sitting commenced, they seemed stricken with a kind of mental paralysis, which held up the whole séance, not only for them, but what was even more annoying, for us, too. I think that most people should go through a course of instruction before taking part in a séance of any type, but especially of the physical kind. During recent years there are many institutions, such as the London Spiritualist Alliance, the British College of Psychic Science, the W. T. Stead Borderland Library, where lectures are given and classes held, for the express purpose of preparing would-be sitters, so that they may learn how to behave at sittings and get the best out of them. This system of preparation is an excellent thing in more ways than one, because a certain number of people make up their minds that they would like to attend a séance simply because they have read about one, or Mrs. Somebody has told them about the remarkable results she has had with that wonderful medium, Mrs. So-and-So.

It is sometimes with a desire to get a new experience, a new thrill, or simply out of curiosity, that this type of person approaches the subject, and I must admit that now and again they have made excellent sitters, and settled down to a serious study of psychical matters after having had a successful sitting or two. Some of them have become most useful and helpful members of the Spiritualistic movement, but they have been few and far between. The majority of these casual investigators are often very disappointed with the results of their sittings, as they seldom bring the right conditions into the séance room, because their attitude of mind is not the right one.

Sincerity of purpose is the one thing that counts more than anything in a sitter. The Guides sense sincerity, and appreciate it. The sincere skeptic makes a better sitter than the credulous, shallow person, so long as he recognizes that there are certain *conditions* that he must make allowance for, just as he would if he were investigating in

any ordinary material field of research. I know nothing about chemistry, but I feel sure that an inexperienced person would not be invited into a laboratory and allowed to play ducks and drakes with anything he found there, and, on the other hand, he himself would not *expect* to be allowed to do so. He would be afraid of the consequences, yet he thinks he has the right to enter into the complicated and, so far, little understood, field of psychic research, and enter the séance room (which is the laboratory of Spiritualism) at random, and impose his own conditions irrespective of those laid down by the people who have patiently investigated the subject for years.

The sitter becomes almost — perhaps quite — as important a part of a sitting as the medium, who has probably spent several years in developing and preparing himself, while in many cases the sitter “blows in” without any preparation whatever. A change is taking place, however, and everybody is recognizing the need for better instruction in these matters; this will lead to a higher standard of mediumship, and more satisfactory results all round.

The controversy regarding physical phenomena waxes hot and stormy at times. So little have we explored and understood the conditions, difficulties and *possibilities* in the past, that now we do not always know how to judge the results. Some excellent and genuine phenomena are often condemned as being fraudulent because of some incomprehensible incident occurring in a séance, and at other times the most utter balderdash and obviously spurious results are hailed as “marvelous.”

The outcome of all those most interesting séances in my own home was to convince me that it was too great a responsibility for me to cope with, in addition to my own psychic work, so my friends continued their development apart from me, the wife being helped by a responsible body of Spiritualists who recognized the remarkable quality of her mediumship, and did their best to assist her in developing it on useful lines.



CHAPTER XXXIII

A JOKE AGAINST MYSELF

I MISSED the sittings very much indeed, but Feda kept assuring me it was for the best, and my common sense told me I could not have gone on indefinitely spending so much time and energy on the psychical side of life alone, and plenty of other interests and duties came along which were important, but I often wished I could see “Ab” again, or hear him sing, or his sandaled feet doing their solemn and measured dance.

One night — it was the beginning of winter — I went to bed, and feeling rather wide awake I began to read. Imagine my joy when I suddenly realized that there was a faint, but unmistakable sound, suggestive of feet shuffling on the carpet, near my bed. I did not move for fear of disturbing any delicate psychic conditions that might have been carefully built up in order to produce some manifestation for me. My husband was fast asleep, as usual, so I whispered softly, “I hear you, whoever you are, please, *please* continue.”

In accordance with my wish it seemed that the sound grew gradually louder, till I was quite certain it was not my imagination, but a *real* sound, as loud as we had had in the séance when Abdullah rubbed his feet on the floor, keeping time to the music. It went on for about half an hour, then grew fainter and ceased. I did not say anything to my husband, as I felt he might want to stay awake and listen, too, which might alter the conditions by bringing too much concentration to bear on this new development of an old and favourite manifestation, because I hoped very much that the sounds were made by Abdullah, though, as yet, it was only surmise on my part.

The next evening I took my book to bed with me again. My husband went to sleep. I lay on my back, my eyes on the opened page, trying to 'read quietly so as to maintain a passive condition.

After a few minutes I heard a slight sound, then the unmistakable shuffling began. I noticed that there were slight pauses in between the swish, swish sound, and wondered if it would be possible for whoever was producing the sound, to regulate it, and answer simple questions by making the swish sound three times in succession for “Yes” and once for “No,” as Feda used to do with the bells, and the tilting of the table. Speaking very quietly, so as not to disturb my husband, I put the above question and immediately received three distinct swishes in answer. I then asked if it was Feda manifesting (though I somehow did not think it was), and the reply was one swish that I took to mean “No.”

Then I said, “Is it Abdullah?” and at once heard three “swishes.” I was very pleased indeed, and though it may appear to be a rather restricted conversation when it is limited to “Yes” and “No” only on one side, still it delighted me more than I can tell you,

to think that my old friend, Abdullah, had not forgotten me and had sensed my wish for a sign from him.

I said, "Oh, Ab, I have missed hearing you very much."

"Swish, swish, swish," says "Ab."

"Do you think you will be able to develop this sound on to more definite lines, Ab?"

"Swish, swish, swish"— very clearly and decidedly. "It doesn't worry you, or disturb you, doing this, does it?"

A strong, single, "swish" indicating "No."

"Ah, I don't want to do anything to hinder your progression. Don't come to me if it does hinder you."

The reply was rather indefinite.

"Anyway, Ab, you know how much I appreciate the trouble you have taken to come and see me, don't you?"

"Swish, swish, swish" — very loudly.

I said a lot more, and swishes came in their threes and ones with astonishing exactitude and precision, dying away again in about half an hour's time as on the previous evening.'

Well, the following night the manifestation began again in exactly the same way. I took up my share of the conversation by welcoming "Ab," but after I had made a few amiable and appropriate remarks, I began to feel rather "stumped" about providing any more intelligent questions that could be answered by a mere Yes or No.

A desire to know *where* "Ab" was standing, and the exact spot where he was rubbing his feet, came over me, so I asked, "Are you standing near the bed, Ab?"

(Swish, swish, swish.)

"Or near the table?"(One "swish" only.)

"Or near the towel-rail?"(Swish, swish, swish.)

Now the towel-rail was not near the bed, so I was rather puzzled by this answer, and said, "Perhaps you don't know what a towel-rail is, Ab — are you near the cupboard?"

(Swish, swish, swish.)

This was more confusing than ever, as the cupboard was still farther away from the bed than the towel-rail. "Ab," I said, "I don't think your idea of distance is very accurate."

(Swish, swish, swish — in quick 'protest from "Ab.") Here I felt I simply must settle the question for myself, and I wondered if I could locate the sound better by leaving out of bed. I did so, and heard the sound, rather weaker than before, proceeding from somewhere near the foot of the bed. I got quietly out of bed, and you can imagine my feelings when I discovered that I had placed my stone hot-water bottle on the floor, immediately I had got into bed, and that the screw top was rather slack, causing the steam to escape in a succession of most convincing swishing sounds! Oh, the disappointment and disgust at my own credulity and lack of caution in investigating the cause of the "phenomena!" As it was the early part of winter, I had only commenced using the hot water bottle a few nights before, and the manifestation had begun that same evening. I think I kicked the hot water bottle before getting into bed again! However, my sense of the ridiculous overcame my disappointment, and I made up my mind to regard the incident as a necessary lesson in not accepting every unaccustomed sound as a sign from the other world.

There are quite a large number of people who are inclined to do this, and I was amazed to hear one, apparently sensible, hard-headed woman remark, when I told her the foregoing details as a joke against myself, "Oh, dear Mrs. Leonard, I am sure you were quite wrong in thinking that it was *only* the hot water bottle. I am sure it was Abdullah manipulating the screw of the bottle in a most clever and ingenious way in order to communicate with you. He *moved* the screw three times or once, according to the answer he wished to give you."

Well, it may have been so. It *may*, but it isn't the kind of phenomenon that would appeal to the intelligence of the average man or woman who wants evidence of the reality of a spiritual world. At least, that is my opinion.

Physical phenomena appeal to me most when they reveal the presence of an intelligent spirit entity behind them. When first one sees a definite movement of an object achieved by supernatural means (and by supernatural, I conclude that we mean "something beyond or exceeding the powers or laws of nature," to use the dictionary definition of the word), one is certainly thrilled, even if it is just the elevation of a small table, as occurred in the first materialization séance that I attended.

That which is called supernatural today will probably be called natural tomorrow, like the use of steam for locomotives and the "carriages without horses," to quote Mother Shipton. The simple phenomena of the table and the more complicated and difficult materialization are all accomplished by the use of a natural power which at present we cannot locate, weigh, or measure at will and, what is even more important, we cannot *command*. I think the latter difficulty may be because we are not producing the phenomena by our own volition. We have to rely on the unseen operator — the discarnate helpers — to manipulate the power which *we* provide. I feel sure this applies to all physical *and* mental phenomena. If *we* provide the power and the right conditions,

the other side will make use of them in a useful and evidential manner, if we give them time to do so.

From my long and varied experience, I am sure that there are always a number of good, intelligent spirit people waiting eagerly for someone on earth to give them the chance of revealing their existence. It is all a matter of cooperation between the two conditions, the spiritual and the earthly.

When people say, "It is wrong to call up spirits," or "We mustn't bring them back — it's bad for them," It is obvious that they have had no practical experience in this subject, or they would know that no amount of "calling up" would have any effect unless those who have passed over are willing, nay more than willing, to communicate, and even then we have to work and study hard so as to provide the right conditions, as I think I have shown you by my own and other people's investigations.

No — establishing communication with the Other Side isn't an easy matter, and it *won't be easy* until we, on earth, are living higher spiritual lives, so that we are spiritually and mentally more attuned to those who have passed over. I must admit that I have known a few isolated cases where people of little or no spiritual development have contacted the Other Side, and developed psychical powers of a kind, and for a limited time, but it has not lasted. As soon as the Other Side realizes that the person on earth, after a fair trial, does not endeavour to progress because of his new knowledge and the privilege of intercourse with the Spiritual World, they gradually withdraw from communication of the definite and personal kind, though they will continue to watch over, pray for, and surround the erring one with loving thoughts.

CHAPTER XXXIV

HOW "THEY" HELP US IN TIMES OF TROUBLE

How many thousands of people could, if they chose, give accounts of the many ways in which their spirit friends have planned and arranged things for their benefit in times of difficulty?

An example of the kind happened to me in December, 1924. My husband had always felt the coming of winter, and especially of the fog near London, very severely. At that time his chest and throat were much affected, and his general condition alarmingly weak. I did not know what to do, as we had had very heavy expenses in connection with other people whom it had been a duty to help, and the only obvious remedy for my husband was to take him away to the sea air, which always helps him. How to manage this, I could not think. Hotels and boarding-houses are expensive and often too cold for an invalid, and the right diet is difficult to obtain. A few days away would be useless; it meant a month, at least, to be of benefit.

One afternoon I had just finished giving a sitting. We were alone in the house, as I only had a daily "help" for the rough work for an hour or so in the morning, in order that there would be no noise caused that might interfere with my sittings.

Feeling tired and anxious, I went into the dining room, picked up my little dog, Ching, and carrying her in my arms, I mounted the stairs rather unusually weary in body and mind. I quietly entered my husband's room, and found he was fast asleep, so I stood by the bedside looking down on him. He looked haggard and pale.

In my mind was the thought, "It's wrong to be *anxious* about anything, but oh, how I wish I knew what it was *right* to do. Would it be right to throw up all my engagements, thereby disappointing many people who might themselves be in greater trouble than mine, and also incurring heavy expenses, by taking my husband away, and, again, where could I take him?"

I had not the slightest idea.

As these thoughts passed through my mind, I noticed my dog (who was still in my arms) turning her head to one side to watch something.

On my right side, near the bed, was a table. On the table was a rather heavy white cloth, measuring about 3 feet square. I saw that it was at this cloth that my dog was looking so attentively, so I looked, too, and saw that the cloth was beginning to rise off the table, just as if somebody had got a stick or poker and inserted it underneath the cloth, so that the point of the stick came in the centre, thereby raising the cloth in the exact shape of a tent. The cloth was raised very quietly and evenly until the edges almost, not quite, exposed the top of the table. Then it was lowered again just as

regularly, until it lay as flat as before, without a crease or sign of the “poke.”, I was astonished, but before I had time to begin to wonder what it meant, I mentally received an entirely unexpected message, as clearly as if the words were being shouted at me. It was to the effect that at that very moment something was being done which would solve my problem and difficulties about my husband, and the question of a suitable place for him. My worried feeling lifted instantly, like a cloud disappearing. I felt exhilarated and full of hope again. I did not wonder from what source help would come.

I only knew it *would* come, and that if I waited a very little while I should understand. The next morning a letter arrived from Mrs. Vale Owen, wife of the Rev. Vale Owen, whom I had only met once or twice, but to whom I had written a couple of days previously saying that I was sorry not to be able to arrange a meeting as we had hoped to do, as my husband was not well, but I would write again later when he was better. The reference to my husband was only a slight one, as I did not want to worry people with our troubles.

As soon as I opened Mrs. Vale Owen's letter, I knew it was the solution of my difficulties that I had been promised. After expressing sympathy about my husband's indisposition, Mrs. Vale Owen wrote, “We have just had a visit from a Mr. Alfred Morris, whom you have never met. He came to tea this afternoon, and we talked about you. I felt strongly impressed that I must read your letter to him, though I did not know why, except that he had said he was interested in your work, and when I read the part referring to your husband not being well, Mr. Morris mentioned that he had a delightful furnished house vacant on his private estate by the sea, and would I write to you and ask if you would like the loan of it for a few weeks or longer?”

Mrs. Vale Owen sent me several photographs of the house, in which she and her family had stayed for some time, and it was indeed a most charming and attractive place, standing in picturesque grounds such as one rarely sees so near the sea.

I was full of gratitude, as I knew that our unseen friends had brought about the whole thing. The long and short of it was that we paid a visit there of over a month, my husband became well again, and it formed the basis of a most happy and helpful friendship which still continues, and many other important links have been formed through this marvellously arranged visit.

On comparing notes with Mr. Morris, I found that his kind offer of the home was made to Mrs. Vale Owen at approximately the time I saw the cloth rise from the table, and received the clear mental message that help was coming to me in my difficulty.

This is only one example among many that I could quote as indicating the loving care with which one is surrounded by friends in the invisible world. But there is one thing that one must not do, and that is demand, or even expect, help from our spirit friends in the material things of life. One must do one's utmost, no matter how many difficulties, or how heavy the burden, as far as one is spiritually, mentally and physically able. When it comes to the point that one is, apparently, powerless to do more, then our unseen

helpers step in and give a hand. There are times when we have to undergo severe sorrow and trouble in order to learn a lesson that we cannot, or have shown ourselves unable to, learn in any other way. Then, even those who love us best “Over There” have to stand aside and watch us “going through it.” Even so, we are not alone; their thoughts of love and sympathy must and do help us, even when we are staggering and stumbling blindly through the pain and difficulty that may be the only means of strengthening and purifying us.

*Let thy gold be cast in the furnace,
Thy red gold precious and bright;
Do not fear the hungry fire,
With its caverns of burning light;
For gold must be tried with fire,
As a heart must be tried by pain.
A. A. PROCTER.*

Sometimes, when persons begin a course of psychic study with the object of developing their own powers, they find that they are severely tried by reverses of a material nature, or suffering in some form, and are inclined to resent it. The words of C. H. Spurgeon:

“The Lord gets his best soldiers out of the highlands of affliction,” would apply to them. Some people seem to come through more lightly than others, but I think all are tried according to their measure and capacity.



CHAPTER XXXV

SOME WONDERFUL PHENOMENA

AT one time I would have given anything to have been able to develop physical mediumship instead of the mental. Perhaps it was because my very practical mind demanded such concrete proof before I was convinced myself of the truths of Spiritualism that gave me the idea that other people would be more likely to believe something they could objectively see, hear and handle for themselves. Now, looking back, I am glad that the Guides advised me to develop mental mediumship alone, because I am sure, from different experiences, and from what we have been told by our spirit helpers, that they themselves are sometimes “at sea” in our physical conditions, which are no longer theirs, and which they can only contact and function in at certain times and under certain conditions. What these conditions are, we do not always know ourselves, but they appear to be very difficult to regulate.

I also think that there are some people “Over There” who are suited to the mental vibrations of earth, and others who can contact the physical ones as well. I have noticed that two entirely different types of people will take part in one manifestation, as if one set were taking charge of the intellectual or mental side of the operation, and the other set applying themselves to the physical or material part.

When my little dog, Ching, passed over, I was taken in my sleep to see her. She appeared to be leading an ordinary doggy life in the Spirit World, and to be happy. The first time I saw her, she was rather puzzled at my having to leave her again, and looked as if she would like to run after me, but knew that she must not.

I was pleased that I had seen her in her new home, but thought I would like to see her occasionally in my earthly house. I sent out the thought, rather strongly perhaps, that I might be allowed to have a visit from her. As a rule, I do not ask for any particular manifestation, especially after my experience of “Ab’s” visit, and several other events. One morning, early, I was awakened by something that felt like a heavy ball bouncing about on my bed. I was half asleep still, and stupidly called out in a cross voice, “Go away, go away.” I don’t know what made me cry out in this way, except that I was startled and had a vague idea that I had been thoroughly enjoying an extra deep sleep, from which I had been rudely awakened by this persistent bumping which had been going on, I think, for some minutes before I realized ‘what it was that was disturbing me.

As soon as I called out, I saw a figure — whether it was a man or woman I could not tell in the very dim light coming through the blind-pass between my husband’s bed and mine, and bend down and pick up the offending object from my bed. The space between our two beds was less than a foot, and I felt the impact of a solid body as the figure squeezed between.

The figure gathered up the object in his or her arms, and literally scurried across the room to the door.

Protesting gurgles, sniffs and snorts arising from what ever had been picked up, made me realize too late that my little dog had been brought to me and put on my bed, and that she had been dancing about on top of me, purposely trying to awaken me, as she always did each morning when she lived here on the earth with us. I mentally called,

“Come back,” but it was evidently too late. I had repulsed, or interfered with, something by my annoyance and aversion.

Now, the extraordinary part was this. I watched the human figure hurry across to the door, and stand there for a second or two as if waiting for the door to open. On the *inside* of the door is a chain, also a lock, and both are kept fastened and turned at night. I distinctly heard the chain being drawn up its socket, and then the key turned in the lock, not by the materialized figure but by an invisible hand. The door opened sufficiently to allow the figure to pass out, the chain was replaced and the key turned again. I heard the footsteps go down the stairs, and then the same thing happened to the bolts and key of the outer door. They were drawn and turned, the door opened, closed again quite loudly, and the bolts shot and the key turned.

I afterwards learned, through Feda, that she and some of her friends had thought to please me by granting my wish for a visit from Ching, my dog, and that two people had volunteered for the experiment: one who was accustomed to entering the physical state, and therefore materializing in a substantial way, and the other, a person who could only manipulate certain material conditions and objects, but could not use the power so as to build up his body sufficiently solidly for it to be visible. It was this second person who “stood by” and withdrew the bolts, etc., and opened the doors, because the first person had taken on the physical conditions too strongly to be able to pass through matter. Indeed, for the time being, and to all intents and purposes, a materialization becomes part of what we call matter. Afterwards the materialized material has to be shed, and this cannot always be done in a second or two.

The fully materialized spirit sensed my nervousness and annoyance. It evidently reacted unfavourably on him. He wanted to get out of my presence in order to cast off his temporary physical “husk” and regain his own condition.

I understand now, how well balanced and poised we should always be in the presence of phenomena, especially of the physical kind, as undoubtedly we charge the atmosphere around us with our thoughts and feelings, and this produces what may be either constructive or destructive conditions for the spirit operators.

When the last sound had died away, I lay awake, wishing that I had been more prepared for my spirit visitors and given them a welcome. I wondered where the power had been taken from to build up a body so solid as the one that came close to my bed.

Not since the time when Abdullah paid me his one and only nocturnal visit had I seen such a complete materialization under ordinary conditions in my own home. Morning came and my husband awoke, very slowly, with a great deal of stretching and yawning. I waited until he was fairly well awake before telling him of my experience, but before I could do so, he said, "I say, I have had an extraordinary time. It was not like a dream, it was too real. I seemed to be in this room, but there were Guides around me, and they were drawing power from me and using me as a materializing medium."

He must have been in a semi-trance in order to have known something of what was happening. I remembered that while the figure was in the room, I heard my husband breathing very heavily. This always happens if the Guides draw on him for power, and I was rather anxious as to whether he would feel the strain of this' last experience, and watched him very carefully for a day or two, but noticed no ill consequences.

The Guides seemed to sense my anxiety and do not use his power in this way now, as it is better for him to use all he has for building up his physical health, which is not very robust at the best of times.

Taking a survey of the last few years, I felt I had had my fair allowance of physical phenomena, both with a fully trained medium under the usual conditions of the séance room, and also in my own house, with only my husband and myself present. They were all useful experiences, and most valuable in showing us how the Guides can adapt themselves to earth conditions. They opened up so many possibilities, but I felt that now I knew what could be done in that way, I did not want a constant repetition of it, nor did I feel that I had any right to expect my spirit friends to be continually contacting the material side of life, or manipulating those very physical conditions merely in order to demonstrate their ability to do so. I knew they *could* do it, and that was sufficient; therefore I asked them to concentrate on helping me on the mental side, so that I could become more receptive to their thoughts and wishes.

I knew they had definite plans for helping people on earth, not only to the knowledge of the other world, but also to the very important task of preparing for it, and fitting themselves for the conditions there.

CHAPTER XXXVI

HOW TO DEVELOP YOUR PSYCHIC FACULTIES

So many excellent books have been written on the subject of developing your psychic gifts, that there would seem to be little or nothing left to say on the matter, but a great number of people, mostly strangers, write to me and ask for my personal advice on the subject. Can I advise them how best to conduct a circle for Direct Voice — or how to do automatic writing, or see clairvoyantly? Indeed, they ask a hundred and one questions, and it is very difficult to advise anybody as to the best way of developing any of these forms of mediumship, unless one knows the persons, their health, mentality and general conditions and surroundings. There are many cases where one would discourage the would-be mediums, if one knew them personally, so I always send them along to some well-known Institution where classes are held for the purpose, and where the applicants will be interviewed by some responsible and experienced person, who will ascertain their qualifications and the desirability of encouraging them to sit for it, just as you would if you intended developing any other gift, such as music, painting, public speaking, etc. Then count the cost, in time, concentration and, above all, remember that a certain amount of sacrifice is involved if one wants to do first-class work as a psychic, not just for a little while, but to be able to go on working, year after year, and keeping up the quality of one's mediumship.

But you may say, "I really don't want to go in deeply for it, and give up my life to it. I only want to develop a little power, just enough to enable me to see our spirit friends occasionally. I don't want to devote my life to it."

Well, if that's all you want, and if you have made up your mind to stop just at that point, you can still follow the advice laid down in the following pages, but you will find it is very difficult to draw lines as to how much you want to do, or not to do. The' spirit operators who will gather round you in order to help your development (and you can't do it "all on your own," you know), are eager to open the eyes of everybody on earth to the beauty and reality of the Spirit World. They continually tell us that they long to spread this knowledge of the Life Beyond, and great joy is theirs when they find some willing, earnest person in the physical body, who will cooperate with them for this object. What better work could there be than demonstrating the existence of this Other World to the hopeless, the sad and the weary?

*May I reach
That purest Heaven — be to other souls
The cup of strength in some great agony,
Enkindle generous ardor — feed pure love,
Beget the smiles that have no cruelty —
So shall I join the choir invisible,
Whose music is the gladness of the world. G. ELIOT.*

Do not these words appeal to you, kindle in you the desire to become "a cup of strength" to some poor brother or sister who is bowed down by sorrow'? And what more efficacious way can there be than by making him or her *sure* of another world where they will meet again those that they "have loved long since and lost a while"?

I do not, mean that you should all aim at becoming professional mediums, though I hope the day is dawning when a greater number of people will qualify for, and enter, the professional ranks of mediumship, and therefore become accessible to genuine inquirers, especially bereaved persons.

Many people wish to preserve their amateur status, and as the law stands at present (by which anybody who openly follows such a calling may be prosecuted and fined heavily, or even imprisoned), one cannot blame them; but one aspect of the matter, Let that they are thereby making it extremely difficult for strangers and people in need of psychic help to approach them, has probably not entered their minds. In the early days of my development, I rebelled strongly against Feda's idea that I should ever take up the work in a professional sense. It was only when I realized that by working merely among my friends and acquaintances that I was narrowing the sphere of my work, that I at last consented to become a professional medium.

How awkward it would be if a clergyman, a doctor, or a lawyer, were to have qualms about accepting fees for their services. We should find ourselves often saying, "Oh dear, we really can't ask Dr. Smith to come again. He's already been twice lately. It's presuming on his time and generosity." Even in an emergency, we should feel diffident about taking up the expert's time without a *quid pro quo*.

All professional people, especially doctors, do a great amount of work for nothing. So do mediums; several whom I know personally do as much unpaid work as they do paid, but like the doctors, exercise discretion and, as much as possible, only give their services to necessitous cases.

However, there may be circumstances in your life that prevent you from, giving up your entire time and energy to mediumship. You may have other very important work to do on entirely different lines which you cannot give up, and which it is your bounden duty to consider perhaps for the sake of other people even more than your own.

In that case I would advise you not to attempt "trance" work. Keep to some "normal" form of development, such as automatic writing, clairvoyance or healing, which probably ought to come before anything, as it was the one power above all others that Our Lord used when on earth, in order to demonstrate the power of His spiritual gifts. We know He used clairvoyance and possessed a wonderful power of materialization, but judging from the records in the New Testament, it appears that He practised the "laying on of hands" and healing, generally, more than any other kind of psychic gift.

If possible, pay at least one visit to a reliable and experienced psychic, in order that he

or she, or the Control, may perceive the direction in which your psychic power is best developed.

It also is possible that you can remember some incident of a psychic nature in your life which will substantiate the conclusion arrived at by the medium.

For instance, a man who always maintained that he had never had any evidence whatever (how positive these people are!) that would lead him to suppose that he possessed any psychic power of any kind, *went* to a medium, whose Control at once perceived that he had strong healing power, in addition to the gift of diagnosis, which is even more rare than the ability to heal. The man could scarcely believe it was true, but the Control reminded him of two or three cases in which he had been brought into contact with someone who was ill, and that his presence had had a remarkably beneficent effect upon the patient.

A few years previously he had been told that his child was dying of an incurable disease, and that a very drastic operation *might* prolong life, but there would only be the slightest chance of saving it. He had felt a keen revulsion to the idea of the operation, and without any ordinary reason for coming to such a conclusion, he said that "something told him, in spite of the unanimous verdict of the eminent doctors, that his child would *not* die, but would recover completely." This actually had happened, and the medium's Control explained to the father how in his rebellion against the doctors' edict, he had stayed in his daughter's company more than ever, and thrown out all his thoughts in the direction of her recovery. He was really using his undiscovered healing power upon her, and the close physical and mental contact with her gave him the right conditions in which to exercise it.

This man took the Control's advice, and read several books on the subject of healing, chose the methods that appealed to him most (there is a great deal in doing that!) and went ahead without joining any classes, or receiving any personal tuition except for the few hints given him by the Control in that one sitting.

Another man, when told he had the gift of clairaudience, stoutly denied it, though he said that he would prize such a thing more than anything else in the world. When asked carefully to think back and remember whether he had not had some evidence of it, he said, "Not the slightest. Never been psychic in my life." His wife interposed here by quietly remarking, "Well, dear, what about that voice you said you heard in the trenches, that you said was like your mother's?" "Oh, that — er — well — yes. I *did* hear a voice. It said to me, 'Clear out of that spot, my boy, quickly,' and I did, or I'd have been killed the next minute."

"Well," we all asked, "wasn't that a psychic experience?"

"I don't know. I hadn't thought about it. No — yes — well, I suppose, now I .come to think of it, it *must* have been psychic, but I never thought of it in that way before. I just *heard* a voice that sounded like Mother's."

This man took steps to develop his psychic gifts. He is an exceedingly hard-working business man, but spending what time he can manage in learning all he can about the subject of psychical power has opened his sensibilities and powers of perception, and he says he is more successful, happier and more useful to other people than he has ever been before. The very occasional "glimpses" he gets of those who have passed over give him added strength to get through the difficulties of his strenuous material life, cheerfully and courageously.

Yes, you will find that a great number of people have had some definite psychic experience, and have never recognized it as such. Why, they don't know, neither do I; but we can only think it must be because anything of a psychic nature has been relegated to the rubbish heap of one's memory, as something not quite normal, not quite the thing, so it has been put away quickly, where no one will see it, not even oneself.

A young widow I knew, whom I will call Mrs. A., had a great tie in the shape of an aged relative who depended on her. There was no one else in the family who could take her place, and she led a very circumscribed lonely existence, in a small provincial town, attending to the wants of the invalid for many years, until she herself arrived at middle age, when the invalid passed away, leaving her' niece very little money. Fortunately, a year or two before the aunt's passing, the niece had come into contact with a medium who saw that she had an excellent power of clairvoyance, which could be developed quietly at home, and she gave her some simple directions, which I will repeat in a later chapter. Mrs. A. carried them out, but only progressed slowly. The medium visited the town again several months later, and told her she would be helped in her development by meeting some people who were interested in the same subject and were neighbours, inasmuch as they happened to live only a short distance away.

The promised meeting came about in an apparently accidental way.

Long after, my friend was told by her Guides of the infinite trouble they had taken to bring her into touch with these people, who proved themselves to be the greatest help to her, firstly, by talking to her about her development in a sympathetic way, and, secondly, by allowing her to practise her rather elementary clairvoyance upon them as often as she felt impressed to do so. This was a great help, but the meeting might have taken place some time before, and valuable time been saved, because at the first sitting the medium had advised my friend to attend the local Spiritualistic Church, which she, the medium, was visiting that very week for propaganda work, and addressing the Sunday evening meeting that was held there regularly. Such meetings have been held for many years, in almost every town, large or small, in England, Wales and Scotland, if only one takes the trouble to find them out.

Now, Mrs. A. had taken steps to find the meeting place, but she only went and *looked at it* from the corner of the rather dirty little street where it stood. She happened to see the local postman and his wife, and some of the rest of the congregation whose social status she guessed to be even beneath that of the postman entering the building, and she promptly walked home again!

I have often found this regrettable feeling of snobbishness exists, and it masquerades under the guise of intellectual superiority. People have said to me, "Yes, I know there is a Spiritualist Church at such and such a town where I live, and I've heard there's an excellent developing circle held in connection with it, but my *dear*, you should see the *place*, and you should see the *people* — *too* awful for words. It simply can't be done; grates on one, you know."

Yes, many things can grate on one, if one lets them, but in this subject, as in others, one has to take the best means to hand, and make the *best* of it.

To return to Mrs. A., the Guides were very understanding, and they saw that this particular woman was merely a slave to convention and custom, so they waited, and then brought her into touch with these other people who were, what she would call, of "her own class," but who had been attending the very church she despised, ever since it opened!

Naturally there is something to be said in favour of this "environment" idea. Who doesn't feel happier in congenial surroundings, with refined cultured people around them? Probably one can accomplish anything more *easily* under *easy* conditions, but may not the development that is attained by strenuous and persistent effort, and in spite of, not because of, material conditions, be of the finest and strongest growth in the end?

Please don't think me egotistical if I just refer to the fact that my own development took place under what Mrs. A. would have called "impossible" conditions, surrounded by impossible people, in shabby, even dirty places, people talking on all kinds of subjects, even quarrelling, just a few yards away from the room in which we had to develop, but we made the best of it — Florence, Nellie and I. For a little while before each sitting we "charged" the air with welcoming and happy thoughts towards the spirit friends who, we hoped, might be gathering around, preparing to speak to us.

In other words, we made our own conditions, instead of wasting years by waiting for conditions to be made for us.

Our anxieties were put on one side for an hour, our thoughts lifted up in a simple prayer for a blessing on the expected communications, communicators and ourselves, and our sordid, ramshackle room was transformed into a little bit of heaven.

Accomplishing this night after night, undoubtedly helped the three of us to get cheerfully through the drab and dreary lives we had to lead. Speaking for myself, I do not think I could have had the courage to struggle through it, had it not been for this comforting contact with our friends who had passed over.

Fortunately, the friend of whom I have been telling you, possessed a fund of sound common "sense," in spite of her little social prejudices, and she worked hard, reading any books that she could borrow, as she could not afford to buy them. She had only a

few friends to try her power on, but she succeeded and eventually came to London, and did a great deal of useful platform work, going regularly to all the churches in and around London, where her clairvoyance was much appreciated.

CHAPTER XXXVII

SOME NECESSARY SPADE-WORK

I HAVE quoted the case of Mrs. A. because it shows what we can accomplish without money or influence. Of course, if you *can* go to a good medium and get advice, it saves time, and possible mistakes; but if you can't do so, and have not sufficient confidence in your ability to go ahead alone, by study and opening up your receptive powers, then there is another way (but it usually requires the assistance of at least one person), and that is, through the table, just as I began with Florence and Nellie. From my own personal experience, I would say this is a very good way indeed. (The best method for conducting a table sitting you will find in another chapter.) The table appears to absorb a certain amount of your "power" or "magnetism," draws it out of you, which is a good thing in itself, as one of the difficulties you are faced with is that of *projecting* the power. While it is buried in you it cannot express itself, or produce any result. At first you will only get the usual tilting of the table and the laborious spelling out of messages, but by this rather slow method you can get sufficiently into touch with your spirit friends to enable you to ask them whether you have any special gift, if you have a Guide ready to help you to develop it, and so on.

Your spirit friends may tell you that it is too early for them to see precisely what form your power may take. If they tell you there is a Guide attending you who has some particular work to accomplish through you, he will probably have a good idea as to what form your mediumship will take, and he will tell you at once. You will remember that Feda told me, almost as soon as I got into touch with her, that my work was to be that of a trance medium, and that she would control me. This was the last form in the world that I wished for, or would have thought suitable in my case. The Guides seldom make a mistake. Of course, before you ask them for such important information, you must make sure of the *bona fides* of your spirit Communicators. If you sit regularly for a few weeks, or if possible, months, you will soon find out whether they are what, and who, they purport to be. After all, how do you prove the genuineness of your friends on earth? Only by getting to know them as well as possible, "trying them out" in quite ordinary ways, and if you find them honest, truthful and straightforward, you trust them to any reasonable extent. Well, if you apply the ordinary common-sense rules of everyday life to your table sittings, and any other form of investigation, you won't go far wrong.

When you have established contact with your Guide, either through the table, or the help of a fully developed medium, and found out what kind of development you are to try for, then you can go ahead; but if your spirit friends tell you that there is no Guide ready for you at present, you have no other course but to wait, and join in the development of whichever other members of the circle may be fortunate enough to contact his Guide, and start his special development. You will get a great deal of interest and pleasure from doing this, apart from the knowledge that you are helping another person's unfoldment. Agnes, Florence and Nellie were most unselfish in

concentrating on my development, but they gained a great deal of psychic experience and were comforted and helped by the sittings which we all shared. Though Florence and Nellie were apparently not being developed for any special work, their own power must have been developed considerably by the sittings, as they got most interesting phenomena in their own home when they were quite alone. It was always of a spontaneous character, and they both had the strong conviction that they were not meant to try and “harness” it, or use it in any public or professional way. This, I think, was a pity, as they developed remarkable power in physical phenomena, especially in the movement of heavy objects without contact.

Anyway, you will be a gainer and not a loser by taking part in well-conducted table sittings, attended by sincere and serious persons, whether you are singled out for a special line of development, or if you simply sit and help someone else.

Previous to starting the development, one of the best things you can possibly do is to take a course of Mental or Thought Control, so that you understand the power of Thought and its influence on everything in our daily lives.

This is most important. The average person understands nothing, or very little, about his higher mind. (In Helen Macgregor and Margaret V. Underhill's book on Psychic Development, it is referred to as the Superconscious, and I like that word.) He may not even know of its existence, and of the possibility of reaching up to it, and through it, to the treasure house of the Spiritual World.

Truth, intuition, inspiration may all be his, through this linking up of the conscious mind with the higher, because it is the higher mind that our spirit friends contact, and if there is a gap between the two minds very little can be expected to filter through into the ordinary consciousness. By ordinary, I mean that part of our mind which we habitually use in everyday life, and through which we register impressions of objective things and facts. This part of the mind *reasons, compares, deducts*, and it is often wrong in its calculations and judgment, even when the greatest care has been exercised in trying to arrive at the right conclusions. But when one uses, or contacts, the Higher or Super-conscious mind, one finds intuition and inspiration, and all the attributes of the world of Spiritualism and truth. Then, our spirit friends and Guides can help us, because we have reached up to their own plane of being. We can, spiritually and mentally, *live with them* at times.

This does not mean that we must ignore the physical life and its material interests and duties, or neglect to exercise our powers of judgment and reasoning. Far from it. The contact with the higher realm of thought, the realization of Love and Truth will sharpen our ordinary faculties, augment them, and cast an illuminating light on everything around us.

One important lesson that should be mastered is the *control* of thought. I mean the deliberate shutting out of pessimistic, jealous, envious, cruel, or any other undesirable kind of thought that is apt to fly into our minds. We must not *hold* those thoughts. It may

be difficult at first to prevent them *entering*, but directly we realize them, we must literally throw them out again at once. We must not allow our minds to become rubbish heaps, littered by any unwholesome fragments that may be blown on our way, any day, any time, in these days of grave stress, strife and difficulty.

A short time ago, I was very much in touch with a certain man and his wife. I often saw the most pleasant and happy spirit people round the husband. He was a sane, cheerful and sympathetic man, whom everybody liked. His wife should have been liked, too, as she was extremely kind-hearted and even generous to a fault, and at times she could be what is called very good company, besides being young and pretty. The man was older and plain of feature. Though I always saw his spirit friends visiting him quite naturally, and apparently finding pleasure in being near him, I never saw anybody near his wife. Once I saw her husband's father approach her, and then *stop*, exactly as if some invisible barrier had been placed between him and the wife. He looked surprised for a moment, made another effort to reach her, gave it up, and went back and joined the happy little group around the husband again.

While I watched them both, I was struck by a kind of luminous condition, which I saw clairvoyantly round the husband. It extended over an area of four or five feet from his physical body. Then I looked at the wife, and not only was there no luminosity, but the atmosphere immediately around her appeared to be considerably darker than that of the rest of the room.

I wondered why; but after some time in their company, I discovered whenever any of the spirit people were mentioned, she would always remember the most harrowing details of their respective illnesses and deaths, or any misfortune or suffering they had undergone in their physical lives. She scarcely, if ever, mentioned the loving, happy and jolly things they had done, or said. As soon as I mentioned anybody who had passed over, she would break in with, "Did you know she died of so-and-so? It was perfectly awful, my dear, her sufferings were terrible. She used to — —"and here would immediately follow a category of physical complaints, given with such gusto and elaboration of every unhappy detail, that I think a great deal of it was imaginary; but you see, it came from my friend's mind, it was born and held in her mind, whether it was true in substance or not. If this woman saw anybody with a swelling on the gum through toothache, she would whisper to me, "Shouldn't be surprised if that was a malignant growth. *You see*. It's just the way poor Aunt Emily began," etc. etc.

One day she asked me why I never saw any spirit friends around her, so I plucked up courage and told her that she was making a gloomy undesirable thought atmosphere around her, which her friends could not enter.

She was astounded.

At first she denied that she was "gloomy" and reminded me that she was always considered to be "the life of the party" wherever she went, which was quite true; but the "party" didn't see and hear her at other times, as I reminded her.

She was a reasonable woman, and thought seriously over what I had said. When I met her again a few weeks later, she had improved tremendously. I was able to see several spirit people quite close to her. Her health became better, and her face in repose wore an entirely different expression. The sudden fits of depression to which she had been subject had almost gone, and she told me that as soon as a destructive or hurtful thought entered her head, she would say, "Get out — I've no time for you — go — get out!"

It is quite possible to overdo the "optimistic business" as a friend of mine calls it. One must not shut out all thoughts of caution or discretion, or try to become impervious to a sense of danger. Catching a thought ray of danger, and holding it gently at the back of one's mind, being careful not to let it unduly shadow any of one's actions with which it has obviously nothing to do, until such time as we have bridged the difficult span which it was given to warn us of, is a very different thing from being victims and slaves to any chance thought that we allow to enter our minds and have never learned to turn out again.

To be fatuously optimistic is not only a sign of some innate form of selfishness, but often leads to harm when the person is investigating psychic matters.

Some years ago, a lady — I will call her Mrs. N — came to me for a sitting. That same day she had received a letter from an old friend whose son was killed during the war, and had been in communication with his parents by sending messages to them through Mrs. N. whenever she went to a medium, which was very often, as she was, what might be called, "an ardent Spiritualist." This letter contained an urgent request that "Jacko," the son, should be asked by Feda "if he had any special message to send to his relatives." No other indication was given as to the possible nature of the desired message. Mrs. N. told me nothing about it until after our sitting — in which I had been in a trance as usual.

"Did you get a message from Jacko?" I asked.

"Well, no — not exactly," replied Mrs. N. "Feda was rather strange about it. She said something important had happened, and that Jacko was looking after his mother. It was very important, but Feda said she could not explain. Something prevented her saying anything more about it. Of course, I know exactly what it was. Jacko has been with his mother, manifesting to her as he promised he would do, so I just told Feda not to bother herself, as I wanted a nice pleasant chat with — —"(mentioning her own Communicator),"and Feda was getting so *terribly* serious."

"What a pity you didn't try and get more about Jacko," I observed.

"No," said Mrs. N."I didn't want to spoil my lovely sitting because I knew just what it was — Jacko had been doing something extra clever for his mother, showing himself, or rapping, or something. Now wait and see if I'm not right!"

At this moment, almost before Mrs. N. had ceased speaking, I saw in front of me a large bright red light, exactly like a danger signal. I saw it *objectively*, and *mentally* there came with it the impression of great and sudden danger, and a certainty that Mrs. N. was wrong, and that Feda had tried to break some news to her of a tragic kind, but that Mrs. N.'s mind was so opposed to it, she had not been able to get it through.

I immediately told Mrs. N. what I saw and felt.

She was very positive that she was right and I was wrong, and rather indignant that I should suggest "unpleasant things of that kind," so I could say no more.

Three days later I had another visit from her. She was very upset, as she had just received a letter from Jacko's people explaining that the reason they had asked for a special message from him was because his mother had been run over and killed by a motor lorry the night before. It was dark and she had not noticed the lights of the lorry as it had suddenly come round a bend in the road. They were terribly disappointed with the distorted version of the "message" Mrs. N. had passed on to them, and perplexed, too, as well they might be.

Mrs. N. realized how obstinate she had been, and sent them a full account of what Feda had really said, and what I had seen and said after, which helped them to some extent. I have related these incidents just to show how much harm the persistently pessimistic, and, on the other hand, the persistently optimistic people may do. One must learn to open oneself to *Truth* calmly and without bias to whatever it may be. Any books, such as "In Tune with the Infinite" and "Thoughts are Things," are most helpful; and recently, the two books by Miss Underhill which I have already mentioned, and which contain full and detailed information about your Spiritual and Mental powers; and if you read them in conjunction with Miss Macgregor and Miss Underhill's joint work, and *apply* to yourself the perfectly straightforward and 'simple advice and rules contained therein, you cannot go wrong, and you will have already started well on the way to reaching your goal.

Many mediums have developed their psychic power without any conscious mental training beforehand, and have done excellent work. The spiritual and mental knowledge has come afterwards, as a direct outcome of the mediumistic work, but I maintain that the best and safest plan is to understand and control one's mentality as far as possible before proceeding with the mediumistic development.

CHAPTER XXXVIII

DEVELOPING PHYSICAL MEDIUMSHIP

THE term physical covers a wide range of phenomena, such as Materialization, Direct Voice, Telekinesis, Spirit Photography, etc.

Let us take materialization first. It is one of the rarest of powers, and sometimes manifests itself during the early childhood of the medium. It occurs spontaneously at first, and the relatives and friends of a child who possesses such a gift are often perplexed and frightened at the phenomena that happen at most unexpected times. The natural child-medium is usually very sensitive, forward and precocious in some things; backward, and even stupid, and obstinate in others. Difficult to his parents, and difficult to himself, as neither they nor he have understood the reason of the strange "happenings" that occur in his vicinity.

In these enlightened days, it is probable that some intelligent friend may explain the reason, and the child can be taken in hand, and guided carefully through his early youth, not suppressing or killing the phenomena, but explaining them to him in a simple way, and helping him to concentrate on any healthy absorbing subject, preferably connected with out-of-door life, for a few years. He should be told the facts about life after death, and encouraged to look upon those who have passed over as being kind, wise friends of his, who will help and protect him when occasion arises. Treatment of this kind would banish so much of that unnecessary fear of being alone, or in the dark, that many children have.

As time goes on the phenomena may disappear, and the child forgets all about them. Then, later on, something happens which brings them to his mind; the manifestations begin again, perhaps in a different or modified form, but sufficient to remind him of his early experiences. He links the two together, and resolves to "do something about it." Or he may have had only a slight amount in his childhood, so little that it has scarcely been noticed at the time, but in later years it may show itself more' strongly.

For any person who thinks that he or she possesses power for materialization, the best way to begin development is to form a circle of say five to a dozen people, a few of whom should be experienced sitters, and one of these should take the' entire leadership of the circle.

As a rule, the sitters form a complete circle, joining hands. A pair of curtains of some substantial, but not too heavy, material are hung across one corner of the room. Serge or fine woolen stuff of a darkish shade is good. We found claret color successful, but also dark blue or green. The medium usually sits in a chair in front of the cabinet, as the space behind the curtain is called. Later on, his Guides may tell, or impress him, to sit inside the cabinet, leaving a vacant space in the side of the circle, thus forming it more

into a horseshoe shape; or a large table may be used around which the sitters are placed with their hands resting on the table, just on the extreme edge. Their little fingers usually touch, but the thumbs of their own hands must not touch each other. The object is for the power to run freely round the circle, from one sitter to another; so if one places his thumbs together, he blocks or cuts off the current at that point.

Sometimes a materializing medium has developed a certain amount of "trance condition" first, either of the semi-, or entirely unconscious order. The Guides who are going to manipulate the psychic forces are already known to him, and he has probably been controlled by one or more of them. If not, then this part of his development will probably begin now, and the Control, speaking through him, or impressing him, may alter or modify some of the arrangements from time to time.

If the circle sit round a table, it is most likely that messages will be given through the table, at first by tilting, and then by loud raps. This happened in one circle in which I sat. The raps were so clear and distinct that we used to call them "postman's knocks." By means of the alphabet the Guides will spell out any directions they wish carried out, and other messages; but it is as well not to use up too much power in getting answers to questions, or there will be little or none left for materialization.

A great deal of patience may be required. One cannot tell how long it may be before anything outstanding occurs, but there are sure to be interesting signs, such as lights, raps, sounds as if some unseen bodies were moving about the room, sweet scents, and the sitters may be lightly touched. Whatever occurs, always acknowledge it immediately, so that the Guides understand exactly what effect their power has had on you. They are experimenting with the power, and it is extremely useful for them to be told, promptly and accurately, the result on *your* side of whatever they have been doing, or trying to do on *theirs*.

With regard to the temperature and lighting of the room: first of all, it must be warm; about 70 degrees was the temperature insisted on by one very successful and wise Guide with whom I came into touch.

It would be a good thing to have a small lamp, either a low-powered electric bulb painted red or a small oil lamp with a red shade, placed in a part of the room farthest from the medium and the sitters. The light, no matter how dim, must not shine directly on either. It must be deflected by placing some kind of screen immediately in front of it. I have no doubt whatever that physical phenomena take place more easily and quickly in *absolute darkness*, but I also believe that it would be advantageous from every point of view, if a reasonable amount of light could be introduced. The phenomena might be slightly weaker, and take longer to produce, but it would be worth it.

It is not always the medium who objects to the presence of a light; but the sitters, who are so eager to hear or see something, have not the patience to wait longer for it in the light, when they know they will probably get it more quickly in the dark.

This happened at a circle in which I sat. Phenomena of a most interesting kind were happening in a good red light, but being a rather old worn-out oil lamp, the light fluctuated, and we noticed that the manifestations, especially the Direct Voice, were stronger in proportion to the weakness of the light, and one or two sitters who were bereaved, and had been greatly comforted by hearing the unmistakable tones of their "lost" ones' voices, requested that the light might be screened more thoroughly, so that the manifestations would be stronger. We did so, and touches, voices and all the phenomena palpably improved, but the scientific value lessened for any sceptical person from that time onwards, as the medium began to react to the regular sitters' desire for less light, and to be very sensitive to any impatience on their part because of the rather long waits between phenomena on the nights when we had a stronger light; so after a time we found ourselves sitting in complete darkness, which was a great pity from an evidential point of view.

Keep up as constant sound vibrations as you can during the sitting; a good musical box is a great help, better than a gramophone as with it there are no records to be changed, and anything that causes undue movement or disturbance must be avoided at all costs. If the sitters will sing softly, but lightly, any suitable songs or hymns, it is better than anything. Usually, as soon as a manifestation begins, it is well to lessen the sound, and the Guide may have: previously directed you to stop the singing or the music entirely as soon as any definite phenomena occur. It is as well to make sure beforehand what the controlling Guide wishes, if he or she is sufficiently in touch with you in these early stages.

One hears a certain amount of Direct Voice at most materialization sittings, but when the circle determines to "sit" for Voice phenomena alone, the procedure is somewhat different.

Sometimes, a medium who has developed strong power for materialization may exercise that form for several years, and then find that his power is being used more and more for producing Direct Voice, and less and less for materialization; or a Direct Voice medium find that his power is eventually utilized for materialization. I have known cases of both. Perhaps the voice medium possessed the power for materialization in the beginning, to a certain extent, but not' sufficient to enable the Guides to produce such phenomena, but sitting for the Voice may have increased the power; the Guides realize this, and gradually introduce a different type of phenomena from time to time, more of a physical character. Then, if the medium is willing, they will probably suggest some alterations and adjustment in the conducting of the sittings and proceed on the new lines.

One man who possessed great gifts as a materializing medium, and used them for many years, found his health deteriorating, not, *be it noted*, as a result of his mediumship, but of the "adverse" conditions set up by some of the sitters, who had behaved very badly while he was in trance, and it reacted on his nervous system. This happened several times, and his Guides advised him gradually to give up the materializing sittings, which necessitated his going into deep trance, and they would use

the power for Direct Voice, so that he could remain normal and conscious. This he did, and found that his health vastly improved, as he could protect himself during the séances.

Your Guides will tell you whether you should concentrate on the “heavier” type of physical phenomena, called materialization, or the “lighter,” meaning Direct Voice alone. I know mediums who are able to manifest the Direct Voice, who could hardly be classed as “physical mediums” at all.

Indeed, I doubt if ectoplasm is used in some cases, especially where no trumpet is used, and when the Voices are formed in the air, apart from medium or sitters.

As a rule, the cabinet or curtained recess is unnecessary for the development of the Direct Voice. When the Guides advise the use of curtains, it is usually because they wish to test the strength of the power by producing certain other phenomena, which often accompany Direct Voice, such as touches, lights and scents. Indeed, these signs usually precede the production of the Voice phenomenon itself. It is worthwhile asking whether the Guides wish for a cabinet for this purpose. If not, you simply place the sitters in the shape of a horseshoe, the medium being at one end. A sympathetic and experienced sitter should sit at the other end of the horseshoe, and should decide any points such as the placing of the sitters (the Guides may give special instructions about this), the choosing of the songs or hymns to be sung, and so on, so as to avoid argument and unnecessary discussions during the séance; argument is very different from the harmonious effect of singing, or quietly talking to each other or to the spirit Communicators.

An alternative method is to sit round a table of convenient size, the top of which should be denuded of as much polish as possible. A plain deal table would be the best of all, but as a round or octagonal shape, with not *too* thick a top, is usually preferred, it is not easy to obtain in plain wood, so the best Way is thoroughly to sand-paper an ordinary table until there is very little polish left.

The trumpet, made of aluminum or cardboard, can be placed in the centre of the table. If no table is used, it should be placed on the floor in the centre of the circle, unless the Guides advise otherwise; a basin of fresh water in the room is a good thing, and rinsing out the trumpet (if a metal one is used) with water just before the sitting is to be recommended.

The sitters play a most important part in the development of the Direct Voice. Try to find people who can remain normal and “unpsychic” during the sitting. The medium is the only person who should be negative, or register impressions of a psychic nature. The sitters must be cheerful, wide-awake, ready to recognize and acknowledge any kind of phenomena that occur without being excitable, fidgety or aggressive.

It is surprising how difficult it is to find sitters who have these simple qualifications, and who adhere to them during the course of the séance. I found this out during my two years' course of sitting in order to develop such mediumship myself. During these actual

sittings there was very little evidence of Direct Voice, and from my later experience I can now see that the power was used up in too many other ways. For instance, one of the sitters happened to possess the gift of clairvoyance, and began to exercise it during the sittings, and any Voice phenomena were always cut off for that evening.

I myself made many mistakes, because having developed as a trance medium for mental phenomena, as soon as the spirit friends drew near, I sensed them and knew sometimes what they were feeling, doing, or wishing to say, and instead of waiting for them to try and give their message in the Direct Voice, I repeated what I had heard clairaudiently, using the power in giving it *through* the physical channel of a larynx (as they often do), or make sound vibration in some other way. Later on, Feda explained to me that by becoming conscious of my mentally psychic power, I drew all the available force towards me, and transmuted it into the mental power; so that instead of the Voices being produced *outside and away from me* they were produced in and through me, like ordinary “control.”

So delicate are the forces in the initial — and, indeed, in some later-stages, that the Guides themselves are occasionally unaware as to whether they are speaking outside the medium, or inside him or her. This may only happen on rare occasions, but when it does often results in unfounded accusations of fraud, because the Voices are located as being suspiciously close to the medium. Whenever the power is weak through any wrong conditioning, the sounds always appear to be nearer the medium, even when he is fully developed.

I could not claim that I myself actually possess Voice mediumship, but I seem to have the ability to draw out any latent power of that kind that another person may possess. In my ordinary trance sittings, if the sitter possesses such a power, even though he or she may be utterly unconscious of its existence, a certain amount of Direct Voice may be heard, quite apart and distinct from myself or the sitter, the sound usually being located at two or three feet, and sometimes farther, away from either of us. Of course, it is only a fragment of a Voice, a word or two, or short sentence, as most of the power available is being used up by Feda, in speaking *through* me. I generally find that the sitter with whom this happens can, if he or she will, develop the Direct Voice by sitting regularly for that purpose.

One can never tell how long it will take to develop this gift.

I have known a case where good results were obtained after a dozen sittings, and another where the circle has sat for three or four years without success. You may be encouraged to know that all the sitters will find that any gifts they do possess will be strengthened by these sittings, though they have been debarred from exercising them during the Voice — developing séances. In a circle of this kind, you will probably find that one or two sitters have latent — or partly developed — clairvoyance, clairaudience, writing or healing. If the Voice sittings are held under good conditions, and do not last too long (an hour to an hour and a half is quite long enough), such gifts should greatly improve by these regular meetings.

This would not apply in the case of a psychic who already has as much regular mediumship work as he or she can safely manage. To sit in developing circles as well might be too much, unless he gave up a certain amount of regular psychic work, when he might find the developing circle restful and interesting. A musician, an artist, a teacher, or worker of any kind, cannot keep on indefinitely on one line of work.

If you really make up your mind to try and develop Voice phenomena, remember that it needs great patience, as it may take a long time, but while you are waiting, for it you are not wasting time; neither are the sitters, as your other psychic and mental powers will be improved if a happy, cheerful and harmonious condition is maintained during the sittings.

As regards Spirit Photography, I have very little personal experience in its development. Again I must refer you to the book by Margaret V. Underhill and Helen Macgregor, where detailed instructions are given I have never tried to obtain results in this way myself, and I believe that it takes a long time to develop such a gift, as the power fluctuates very much. During the early stages some striking and evidential results may be obtained and then, for no obvious reason, nothing at all occurs for a long time. I think myself that this may sometimes be due to some alteration that the sitters have made in all good faith, but which has interfered with the flow of the power. Whenever you get a good result with any kind of phenomena, stick to the conditions under which you obtained that result, no matter what suggestions may be made, with good intention, by the sitters or anybody else. Of course if the Guides suggest an alteration, that is different, but as far as you are able, *leave well alone*.

CHAPTER XXXIX

TABLE SITTINGS — AND HOW TO CONDUCT THEM

ONE type of séance that I know more about than any other, except trance, is table sitting. Directly one mentions it, people say, “Oh, I'd never have the patience to sit so long, while the table tilts out a few words, letter by letter. It's so slow and laborious.” Yes, if it begins and ends there it might seem so to many people, but I have heard most striking, clear cut and definite evidence given in a few words through its means, which, had I been a skeptic, would have convinced me more than anything else I can think of.

Apart from the messages themselves, sitting at the table is such a good starting-off point. I have met a great number of mediums of varying types, who found and developed their particular gifts through this means.

Some people class the table phenomena as “physical;” others as “mental.” I would call it a mixture of the two, because one obtains messages of an evidential character, and physical phenomena of a most varied nature may occur, too. Raps in other parts of the room, lights and scents are often obtained in addition to the ordinary table movements and spelling of messages.

Almost any number may sit round a table, so long as there is sufficient room, and the sitters are chosen carefully. They should sit, male and female alternately, and if the sexes are not represented in equal numbers, a man who is of a negative, sensitive temperament may take the place of a woman, or a woman of a strong positive type take the place of a man.

The light should be dim. The chairs should be plain wooden ones, windsor or bentwood. A musical box will help, but is not indispensable so long as you keep up a vibration by singing when nothing is happening, and especially at the commencement of the sitting. Appoint one of the sitters as speaker for the evening; another should be chosen to call out the letters of the alphabet, and another to remember, if possible, the order of the letters, as indicated by the table, or to write them down. In the latter case the recorder should not sit at the table, as he will have to be continually taking one hand off to write the letters.

During the early stages of the development, it is a pity to have anybody sitting in the room apart from those who are sitting round the table, and the best way is for everybody present to put their hands on the table, until the phenomena have grown so strong, and the power is in such good working order, that it would take a great deal to upset the conditions; then a recorder can be appointed to write down the letters as the table spells them out.

I know of one person who gets the most evidential messages spelt out through the table, sitting quite alone, but I do not recommend this method. Two are better than one, and a larger number will bring greater power which may ultimately result in more varied phenomena in addition to the messages, but the greater the number of sitters, the more trouble there is in keeping order, and as I said before, fidgety movements and impatience must be avoided at all costs. I think myself that three or four sitters is a good number.

After placing your hands upon the table, it is a good thing for one of the sitters to say aloud some simple prayer for protection, guidance and help in assisting the Spirit Communicators to manifest their presence to you. Personally, I would strongly advocate the use of prayer at the beginning of every sitting of any kind, and especially during development. Say the Lord's Prayer if you do not know any other that you consider to be more suitable. Some people are so self-conscious over prayer, or anything that they consider "religious," that they seem incapable of speaking aloud any spiritual thoughts that come to them, yet at a regular service in church they would join lustily in any set prayers or responses.

I am aware that some people agree to sit round a table to "see what happens," more for fun than anything, and' that others are determined to sit in the "scientific spirit" only. Neither type realizes what they are dabbling in. To attempt communication in any shape or form with the "Dead" is not a light matter, and no person should undertake such investigation except from the best and highest motives.

So begin with prayer in any circle, and in the table sittings the quiet singing of hymns, or other suitable songs, is very helpful. The table will begin to tilt. Directly it does, encourage it quietly so as to' let the spirit operators know that they are producing some effect. After a little while, when the tilting, or it may be rapping — but tilting is more usual — grows stronger, ask the Communicator to stop a moment while you explain the code by which you hope he will communicate. Tell him to tilt the table three times for "Yes," once for "No," and twice for "I'm not sure" or "Doubtful." As soon as this is understood, and demonstrated several times, then say that you will call aloud the letters of the alphabet, and request that the table be tilted to each letter, and stop when it reaches the required letter. Some people prefer to call over the alphabet and for the table to tilt only when the desired letter is reached, but I have always found that the first method is better.

When this is understood, ask the Communicator to spell some simple word for practice, that is, of course, unless he or she is experienced in such work. Once the Communicator has grasped the method, you can go ahead. Find out who he is, and why he is speaking to you, and if others are with him who are also desirous of communicating, but in the early stages of development it is wisest to keep to one Communicator, who can give you information about the others, without letting them actually control the table. Later on, when you feel that you are in easy touch with the one, ask him to help some other friend through, but do *not* let more than two Communicators speak at one sitting, or it will result in muddles. The sitting, by the way,

should not last longer than from an hour to an hour and a half.

Now, supposing that there is no special medium in the circle, as far as you are aware, you had better ask the chief Communicator to tell you if anyone of you possesses any special gift, and if so, if there is a particular Guide present who is ready to go on with its development.

Of course, the Communicator may volunteer this information. It is better if it comes in an unsolicited manner, but if it doesn't, after two or three sittings it is as well to inquire. You may sit once a week, or twice, according to the time at your disposal. Florence, Nellie and I sat every evening, because our work happened to bring the three of us together and made such an arrangement very easy, but this might not be possible, or advisable, in many cases.

As you go on sitting and getting into natural and easy communication with your spirit friends, one or more of the circle may develop signs of clairvoyance or some other gift, and may be advised to join another circle more specially suited to the development of that power. From sitting at the table, under good and harmonious conditions, you may develop almost any kind of psychic gift, of either a physical or mental kind.

A few people have told me that they have been much troubled by Communicators giving false messages through the mediumship of the table. When I have dissected the pros and cons of the matter, I have usually found that the sitters have put some difficult test questions which the Communicators were not ready to answer, and a muddle has resulted in which wrong information regarding the question was given. Now, we have been given two explanations of this.

The first was that there are always a certain number of spirit people who are desirous of communicating with persons on earth. These would-be Communicators are not necessarily mischievous, but so anxious are they that they will "butt in," just as some people will in the physical body when, finding themselves in company in which they wish to obtain a footing and make an impression, they often volunteer information about subjects of which they know very little or nothing.

The second explanation was that by sitting round the table and placing our hands upon it, we charge it with some subtle emanation of psychic force, which animates, or gives life to, the table; so that it only requires a *mental* effort on the part of our spirit friends, firstly, to *move* the table and, secondly, to *regulate* the movements so that they can form words and sentences, and spell them by regulating the force in the table that has been supplied by *us*.

Now, because *we* have supplied the power or force, we can *interfere with it mentally*.

I say we *can*, but we should not do so.

The mental control of the force should be left *entirely in the hands of the spirit*

operators, but they tell us that when once the table is “charged,” it is extremely sensitive and is likely to respond to mental suggestion from either side, physical or spirit.

Once the spirit operators have obtained good control, the table is literally in their hands, and will only respond to them. But should some question be asked that is difficult for the spirit Communicator to answer, there may be some misunderstanding. Because he probably has to think out the answer very carefully in what are (no matter how perfect we may succeed in making them), after all, not his own natural conditions, he loses hold of the power, which ebbs back from him towards us, and becomes sensitive and responsive towards any conscious or sub-conscious thought of ours.

Also in such conditions the table may even “pick up” any thought vibration that may be projected towards the sitters by other people on earth. By this means some entirely wrong message may be given, which thoroughly upsets and disappoints the inexperienced investigator.

I incline, myself, to the second explanation. In all the table sittings I had — hundreds of them — with Florence, Nellie, Agnes and my other friends, we never had a misleading or false message given.

Now, apropos of this second explanation as to the suggestibility of the table, which can apparently be controlled mentally, either from our side or the Other Side, I heard a friend remark: “The table messages are all bunkum. I have always been able to make the table say whatever I have wanted it to say.”

Yes, of course he could, but why do it? Whatever is the good of sitting round a table and charging it with psychic force, and deliberately or ignorantly causing it to repeat mechanically the meanderings of one's own conscious, or sub-conscious, mind?

Remember, your friends Over There are reasonable, intelligent people (presuming they were so when on earth!) and they are as eager to give you proofs of their identity as you are to receive them. The great thing is to let them give you what they can in the way of evidence. Do not fetter them by imposing upon them your ideas as to what you consider will be proof. You will find that their ideas on the subject of proving identity are far better than any you can devise for them.



CHAPTER XL

DEVELOPING TRANCE MEDIUMSHIP

THERE are three kinds of trance condition. In one, the spirit Control takes entire possession of the medium, controlling his brain so completely that he is unconscious of what is being said or done through his organism.

In another, the controlling Guide only succeeds in making the medium unconscious for very short periods during the “trance” state. The rest of the time the medium hears what the Guide says, but cannot interfere without causing a break in the control, which would probably put an end to the sitting.

In the third kind, the medium is entirely conscious *all* the time. He knows the Control is using him, hears everything that is said, and can either curtail or lengthen it if he chooses, because during the sitting his control of his own organism and mental faculties is stronger than that of his Guide. This third degree has its advantages in some respects, as the medium learns a good deal if the Control is able to handle interesting subjects — science, spiritual philosophy, etc. On the other hand, it has its disadvantages, because the medium may seriously interfere with the material that the Guide wishes to give through him, especially if it is of a spiritual or scientific nature, on matters entirely outside his normal range of knowledge; his sub-conscious nervousness of its being incorrectly given may bring about such a strain and “tightness” that very little can come through at all. Whether this happens or not depends largely upon the mental make-up of the medium. If before embarking upon his psychic development, he has taken a course of mental training, such as I advocated in a previous chapter, and if his mind is accustomed to making itself receptive to whatever he chooses — which in this case would be the controlling entity — this third degree will prove very satisfactory. It is certainly the easiest and usually the quickest method to develop.

Many would-be mediums make up their minds that they will have the first kind of trance, or none at all, which is a pity, as it may be impossible for them, or they may find that they have to wait months or years while their Guides are striving to induce a condition of complete unconsciousness. Whereas, if the mediums were only willing, they might be given a good deal of useful material through the Guides during that period of waiting, and the full trance might eventually be developed quite naturally and with less strain; the power of the Guides and mediums could thus be utilized during the whole time of development. Looking back, I see how I myself wasted years because I insisted that Feda should control me entirely, or not at all.

I have known of several cases where the psychic began as a “normal” medium, doing excellent work, and gradually developing the trance condition along with it.

So my personal advice to any person desirous of developing as a trance, or controlled, medium, would be that he should allow his Guide to control him consciously, in the first place, letting the Guide impress his brain with whatever he can, and he himself should conscientiously cooperate as far as possible by not intentionally, or willfully, interfering with, or doubting, anything that the Guide says or does through him.

Of course, if the student shows signs of complete trance in the early stages of his development, well and good. He can proceed then by simply giving his Guide every facility for controlling him, at suitable times and under suitable conditions. But there will be very few cases of this kind, compared with the much larger number who could develop fairly quickly, and satisfactorily, under the third system; so I repeat, do not waste time by continuing to impose the first degree on yourself and your Controls, when you have tried for a reasonable amount of time and failed. By reasonable, I mean compatible with whatever may be available to you in the way of time and opportunities. Of course, one realizes that many sitters prefer to speak to their spirit friends through a medium who is entirely unconscious as to what is being said through him; naturally, it creates an atmosphere of greater privacy. Some people think that the full trance state gives the Communicator more scope, allows him to say what he really wants to say. This may be so, but I think there may be exceptions to it.

The majority of full trance mediums are controlled by one special Guide, as Feda controls me, and naturally this Guide becomes very proficient in passing on messages about almost any subject that the spirit Communicator may give; but in this case, surely the condition of strict privacy is nullified by the presence of the Control. I have heard sitters say, "Oh, but a spirit Control isn't a bit the same as a person in the physical body. I never mind what a spirit Control knows or hears about me."

Well, if once you accept the Spiritualistic hypothesis, there doesn't seem to be much to choose between the presence of a discarnate spirit Guide controlling the medium's body for a short time and the medium himself, who is also a spirit, only he happens to be inhabiting his physical body for a longer time than the Control can do. Each of them, the Control and the medium, is a human personality. The Control, you may argue, should be, by virtue of living in a spiritual world, of a purer and higher mentality than the medium. Facts have not always proved this idea to be correct. The Control is usually chosen in the first place for his or her peculiar suitability for the task of messenger or transmitter, but not entirely for his or her holiness or spirituality.

As his work proceeds, the Control develops and progresses. His is a life of service.

What more beautiful work could there be for one who has passed over than devoting some of his time to assisting others to communicate with and comfort their bereaved and sorrowing friends on earth? Such a Control's life is a happy and interesting one, but it entails sacrifice and strict self-discipline.

Feda has often reported to us from time to time that she has "gone up a step" because of the work she has been able to do in helping sad and hopeless people, but she also

told us that she wasn't at all "good" when she first reached the Other Side. She was young and ignorant, but had a very quick, eager, enthusiastic mind. Her powers of observation and perception were suitable to the work of a Control and many others are chosen, simply and solely, for that same reason, i.e. their adaptability and suitability for the work.

When the medium is being trained as a speaker on spiritual and philosophical matters, a Guide of a different order altogether is appointed as Control, probably one who either worked as a teacher or preacher when on earth, or has been specially trained since he passed over. Some trance mediums have a Guide of this order only, who gives what are known as "Spiritual addresses" or sermons, often of a very impressive and inspiring character. Other psychics have two or more. Controls, one of whom is proficient in test, or evidential work, and the others who attend to the spiritual side.

Speaking of myself, I have only had Feda as a regular Control, and her work was undoubtedly intended primarily for the purpose of providing evidence of the personal identity of those who have passed over, but she also possesses the ability to make of herself a mouthpiece for the more intellectual Communicators, and repeats what they say, even if it is relative to difficult .spiritual or scientific matters. She does this so rapidly and easily that the sitters say it is almost the same as if it were being given by the Communicators direct.

Occasionally, these Communicators have controlled me themselves and have attained a certain amount of fluency, but usually they give their messages *through* Feda, who passes them on again.

If you have been told by your Guide that trance work is your forte, ask him which of the previous methods would be best for you. He may tell you that he cannot tell definitely until you have "sat" for a while. In any case, you should never attempt to develop the trance condition by yourself I think this might be an unwise, and in some cases even a dangerous proceeding.

Join a fairly large developing circle that is presided over by an experienced medium and teacher.

I know that you can develop many of the psychic faculties such as clairvoyance and automatic writing by sitting in a circle of people who have had little or no experience. You will remember that all my own development took place with Florence, Nellie and Agnes, in the first place, and Florence and Nellie had done no more of that kind of work than I had myself, but the many table sittings we had, coupled with, if I may say so, a very rational and intelligent general outlook on the subject, seemed to be all that was necessary.

But it might be difficult to find three such intelligent, willing, sensible, broadminded and unselfish people as Florence, Nellie and Agnes. Yet two of them had had very little in their lives in the way of financial or social advantages.

They read and they thought.

They had no complexes, no strange and worrying *theories* about anything. They accepted people and things at their face value. Had Florence wished to buy a pound of butter, and gone into a decent-looking shop for it, she would have expected the butter to be good, and would have been disappointed at finding it bad. She would not have analysed it and probed into all kinds of subtle and involved reasons for its badness. There would have been no post-mortem on it, but she would have promptly returned it, given the seller a piece of her mind and not gone to the place again, unless she was assured to her satisfaction that it was a pure mistake one unfortunate case in a thousand.

She would have treated the matter of communication and development in exactly the same frank, simple, straightforward manner, proving the Spirits by their fruits.

If you can meet a few Florences, Nellies and Agneses, you need not look any farther for your circle. But the finest psychical gooseberry bush in existence doesn't bear very many such; so you will save time and the risk of disappointment by joining a developing circle held in connation with an established Spiritualist institution, or conducted by any reliable or professional medium who specializes in such work. You may find it better to join a very small circle, where the medium or president will have time to concentrate on your individual development, or you might have private lessons, but in the first place, the larger circle will probably help you most, as the flow of psychical and mental power and magnetism is helpful in the early stages.

If you are developing for full trance, in what I have called the first system, you may feel "pins and needles" in your feet and hands; sometimes, as though a band were round your head; or you may think that you are swelling to an enormous size. (This last symptom is one that I have felt more than any other.) It should never be so acute as to be disagreeable or painful. When people say to me, "Oh, I *did* feel so queer in the circle last night. It was really painful iron bands squeezing my head till I thought I should scream, and dreadful prickles all over me," and so on, and so on, I suspect them as belonging to the type who are busy making mountains out of molehills every day of their lives, magnifying every tiny thing that happens to themselves. Well-meaning people, but too self-centered.

If you are overly sensitive to "sensations" and the feeling does become unbearable, then do the obvious thing, throw it off mentally, or tell the presiding medium, who will help you to do so, probably by making passes. In all the sittings I had during my development, I never experienced anything that I should have called painful or even disagreeable. You may feel *nothing at all*, and after sitting for many months, or even years, you may begin to think, as I did, that there has been a serious mistake made at psychic headquarters, and that you have no power of any kind and never will have. This may be the very moment when you will suddenly find yourself falling into complete trance for the first time.

If you decide on the second or third system, the proceeding is very different, because you begin “working” by trying to cooperate with your Guide from the very commencement.

Find the right circle, and try to feel “at home” with the other sitters, as well as the medium. Make up your mind not to notice all kinds of little personal things in them that you instinctively dislike. There may not be one person that you feel you could live with. Well, you haven't got to live with them all the time, so why worry about them?

I know a woman, kind-hearted in most things, charming, and possessed of an excellent psychic faculty of clairvoyance. I advised her to join a very good developing circle. She did so, and I saw her a little while after and asked her how she was getting on.

“Not at all,” she replied. “I simply couldn't stay in that circle. It was too awful for words.”

“What was the matter with it?” I asked. “They have had some splendid results in developing several mediums.”

She said, “It was the *conditions*. I'm so *sensitive*, you know. I feel things and people so terribly. The other people who were sitting got on my nerves. There was Mr. — — there, who drops his h's all the time, and Mrs. — — who perspires, and Miss — — who is so *irritating*. She's got an aura, you know, simply hits one. I'll have to find another — a more harmonious one. Perhaps, “hopefully,” you can recommend one to me?

I didn't, but I saw her a little while ago, and she had tried several more circles in the meantime, and wasted six and a half years. To put it plainly, it's no good looking for a condition ready-made for one. One can make the conditions fit oneself by determining to ignore the petty little things that don't matter and have no connection with one's objective, and if they are rather obvious, by just remembering the words, “Oh, that's some power the guides give us,” etc. The other sitters *might* feel the same about *you*, if they had time to think about you — instead of their development.

Your part in the development of your psychic powers is to make yourself sensitive to your Guide's influence. The attention of your conscious faculties must be taken off the earth people and things around you, and turned inward and upward to the thoughts and impressions of the Spiritual World. You must do this for the duration of the sitting. At all other times, unless your teacher has definitely instructed you to “sit” alone and make yourself psychically sensitive, you should keep as normal as possible. The more you are interested then in other people and the objective things around you, the better. Just before the sitting starts, try to be as calm as possible. Your Guides will probably be working on you for a little while previously, and the result makes you *more* sensitive than usual; but if you recognize this fact and are prepared for it, you will use your willpower, and quietly but firmly refuse to “fuss” or be upset by anything if you can possibly help it.

Even now, after all these years of mediumistic work, I am sometimes taken unawares.

When I am giving a sitting I may find I am getting into a nervy, highly strung condition. Perhaps a letter of a worrying nature has arrived; people very often write to mediums and pour out their troubles, evidently under the impression that the medium possesses some special kind of power that will be automatically set in operation directly she receives the letter, and will stir the Guides into action on the writer's behalf. People who have not studied the subject credit a medium with all kinds of fantastic powers. The only thing we can do for these people is to pray for them, unless, happily, there may be something definite we can do to help them, but this, in many cases, is out of the question.

Whatever the trouble has been, I suddenly realize that it *is* there, and that I am registering it more than I should do because of the super-sensitive condition that I am being put into by the Guides and Control, and that my part of the job consists in shutting out the worrying earthly thoughts while still retaining the condition of receptivity. By this means one attains a passive, yet highly sensitive, state, which is exactly what the spirit operators require.

One of the best and simplest physical things you can do is to take a regular course of breathing exercises. I always do this before sitting.

Stand by an open window if you are indoors. Draw the breath in through the nostrils, into the lower part of the lungs, taking care that the upper part and chest do not expand more than you can possibly help. Hold the breath a few seconds, then slowly expel it through the mouth. Do this a few times *only*, to start with. Then take the breath in as before, deep into the lungs, and allow the chest to take in some, too, so that the entire lungs are filled. Exhale again, slowly, through the mouth. Then, if you are not used to "deep" breathing, take a few easy breaths with the upper part of the lungs, in your usual way.

Any simple breathing exercises that can be done without strain are helpful.

Unfortunately I find that walking (or any form of exercise, beyond a few simple movements after my morning bath) has a bad effect on my sittings, so I have to leave it till afterwards. I love gardening, but it would be fatal to a sitting if I went out and did any just before. In fact, I am not able to let myself be *actually* interested in anything until after I have finished my psychic work for the day; then I have a perfect orgy of digging, planting, cooking, dressmaking, and anything else that happens to be going. Of course, some sittings take it out of one to such an extent that an interval of rest must intervene between the end of the séance and the active physical work.

In the days of my actual development, I was not able to carry out these instructions, but I am giving them to you because I know they are right, and I should have been saved a great deal of time and disappointment if I *had* been able to adopt them. If you have to go some distance to your developing circle, don't tire yourself by walking there; ride, if you can, and walk afterwards. Save yourself up for the circle. Some of my readers may have a long arduous day of office or some other work before they "sit." The only thing

then is to make the best of whatever time there is between leaving your work and arriving at the place where the circle is held, mentally relaxing as much as you possibly can. Florence, Nellie and I had always had a strenuous day before we were able to sit in our circle in the evenings, but we were all three blessed with the ability to “throw things off” and put everything of ourselves into the enjoyment of our sittings. Even when we had no result, we felt a deep sense of happiness in merely sitting with the knowledge that our spirit friends were around us, and that they knew we were there simply in order to meet them and be among them, even if we did not get a word or sign the whole of the evening.

The developing circle may open with prayer, or silence, or some special lesson in concentration, but as soon as that is over, try to visualize your Guides as being around you. They *are* there, or they wouldn't have told *you* to be there. Remember, their object is to train your mind to receive impressions of anything that your would-be control may wish to give through you. As you are developing under what I have called the third system or degree of trance, you will be fully aware (in the beginning, at any rate) of all that the Guide says through you. Indeed, what he says will appear to you as if an *idea floats into your mind*, apparently from nowhere, and you must immediately receive it. Don't reject, or mentally dissect it, or your own mind will become too active, and interfere with whatever the Guide is trying to give you. Give way to the desire to articulate and repeat aloud the words that are forming themselves in your brain. Do not hesitate or you stem the flow.

It is possible that your Control has noticed some particular spirit standing near one of the sitters, and will try to describe him through you as a useful exercise, which will help him to become *en rapport* with your mind and brain. Supposing the spirit he wishes to describe is that of a young, tall, pretty woman with, let us say, auburn hair, hazel eyes, and fond of music. She is the wife of the sitter, and she passed over in a motor accident a couple of years ago.

These details may float through your mind, not in the order I have given them, or as one would expect them to be given; you may get the cart before the horse, so to speak. The Guide will show them in the right order, but your untrained mind may miss the first portion of his description, and only respond to the last item, and you will suddenly be aware that you have been given the impression of a motor-car.

You need not immediately make the bald and unsatisfactory statement, “There is a motor-car.”

That is obviously incomplete. Hold the *idea* of the car, and wait tentatively and expectantly for another link. It may come quickly, and will probably be the description of the spirit. You may “hear” the words, “bright hair — auburn — tall woman — beautiful — young,” and yet there may still be nothing definite with which you can connect the lady with what you first got — the motor-car. You must hold on to all the details as they come to you, and *still go on being receptive*. Then you may get the missing link between the woman and the motor-car by *feeling* or *sensation*, not by being *told it*. You may get a

sense of shock — tragedy — then accident. Directly you get this, give it out at once, quietly, without excitement.

The Guide will realize that you have given out what he has given you, and will immediately endeavour to give you more.

The Guide has to find out, by continual practice, which of your senses are more easily affected. He may find that your sense of hearing is the one that can be affected psychically more quickly than any other you possess, in which case he will begin by “telling” you about the lady who has been killed in the motor accident. He will “tell” you the color of her hair, about her musical talents, and so on.

You will not “see” them, unless your Control finds that your “sight” sense is very receptive. Feda often tells me that she switches from one sense to another in the same séance, but can very seldom use all the senses at the same time.

Even if you are a full trance medium, entirely unconscious throughout the sitting of anything that the Control says or does, he or she is using your brain in very much the same way as if you were developing for conscious, or semi-conscious trance; in the latter you can interfere with the messages or descriptions by quibbling about the probability of their being correct, or you can help by quickly obeying the impression to repeat with your throat, tongue and lips whatever the control has impressed on your mind. Intelligent and conscious cooperation of this kind makes controlling an easy matter for the Guide. In the unconscious state he has to do all the work, impressing your brain, and making your lungs, larynx, tongue and lips respond to his wishes, without your conscious assistance.

After the Guide has become easily able to impress your mind with descriptions of people, and any definite and evidential facts concerning them, he will go a step further and take a message from the spirit, whom we will now call the Communicator, and try to pass it through you. He can only do this efficiently if he is able to use your psychic sense of hearing, unless the message refers to a matter that can be given in a pictorial way.

Supposing the Communicator wants to say that she has seen her little son on earth looking at her portrait, the Guide could show a picture of the boy standing by the portrait of the lady; but there may be many messages that can only be given by being repeated word for word, and that will require a good deal of practice.

Perhaps you will wonder what I mean by the term psychic sense, or seeing?

Well, as I understand it, all our physical senses — sight, hearing, touch, smell, and even taste — have their psychical counterparts. That is, the soul body in which we shall function after “death” (and which is accessible to us during earthly life if we learn how to be conscious of it) has its own set of senses, corresponding to every sense of the physical body, and probably possessing others that we do not as yet understand. In

mental mediumship, it is these senses of the soul — or as many call it, the etheric body — that perceive people and things on the spiritual plane or on the earth, at such a distance away that the physical senses could neither see nor hear them.

Perfect mediumship is perfectly conscious cooperation between the senses of the physical body and those of the soul body. In trance mediumship, the Control works through the soul senses first, recording through them the necessary description or message to which the physical senses then respond.

Take again the case of the lady wishing to say that her little son has been examining her portrait. The image of the lady, her son and the portrait would be recorded, firstly, on the *sense* of sight of the soul body, then on to that of the physical. The Control's task is to link up the two minds as quickly as possible, so that little time is lost between the “taking” of the vision of the lady, and the “recording” of it. The soul body might be likened to the lens of the camera, and the physical body to the negative which receives the image.

If the spirit lady wanted to give a verbal message that could not be given in a pictorial way, she could only do so if the Control is able to use the psychic and physical sense of hearing of the medium; each word would have to be repeated as it came, each particular word, and no other.

It is so much easier, Feda tells us, to give a message in a symbolical or pictorial way. There are so many alternative representations open to one. If the Communicator wished to state verbally that a relative on the earth was very ill, he would have to say definitely the words, “So-and-So is very ill.” But if he chose to give it pictorially, he has a choice of two or three methods, showing the relative in bed, showing him sitting in a chair *looking* ill, or by giving the medium the *feeling* of illness, perhaps even indicating the actual place in the body that is affected by the illness.

Feda says she often finds it easy to give a name, either Christian or surname, in this way. Ivy — MayLeo — Green, Smith, Potter, and so on.

The psychic sense of hearing may possibly be developed and used before that of seeing, or they may develop simultaneously.

Whatever you do, on no account give way to the temptation to exercise the psychic faculties at all kinds of times. The only cases when I have known any strain or discomfort arise through the development of the mediumistic gifts is where they have been willfully misused. I say willfully, because some very self-willed and self-opinionated people insist on disregarding the advice of those who have had many years of personal experience in the fields of psychic research. They think they are specially gifted and can therefore ignore all the rules that other people have found it necessary, nay, essential to follow.

It *is* a temptation, when one finds oneself opening to the hitherto hidden beauties and

wonder of the Spiritual World, to enter into and dwell in them as much as possible, but we must remember that the physical life must be lived, not *drifted* through, and that allowing ourselves to live entirely in mental contemplation of spiritual things, to the active neglect of earthly duties, is to be guarded against at all costs.

Only a few people, fortunately, fall into this abstract selfish kind of life. The great majority find that the realization of the existence of the Spirit World, and of those they love who have gone to dwell there, spurs them on to carry out their jobs on earth more thoroughly than ever. I think that is where the development of “conscious or semi-trance” scores over that of “full trance,” because in the former the medium joins in, so to speak, and benefits by all that comes through him.

When Feda first told me that I should have to develop full trance before she could work through me, I was disappointed in quite a selfish way, as I wanted to have the advantage of realizing all she would say and do through me. She assured me that if I would consent to work “blindly” for awhile, I should find that there would be times, though not during my trance sittings, when I should be able, consciously, to open myself, and both see and hear on the spiritual plane, which, of course, did come to pass.

Still, I had to wait several years for it, though it was well worth it when it came. The great thing is, as soon as you realize what your Guide has seen or heard, and wishes to impart through your organism, to *let him do it: give way to him*. Self-consciousness and shyness are the greatest stumbling-blocks to doing this. It is not always easy, in a circle composed of people whom you scarcely know, suddenly to give way to the psychical impulse to describe a spirit form to them, or give them a message that, for all you know *normally*, may be utter nonsense. The naturally reserved and shy person must try to overcome these drawbacks as much as possible in their *normal* lives, apart from the sittings. That is why I recommend a course of mental training before embarking on the mediumistic development.

I should like to say something here which applies not only to the different degrees of trance, but to all other forms of mediumship as well. The question as to whether you can develop as a medium does not depend upon the *amount of power* you possess. It is this: have you the *right temperament and will to use the power?*

It is my firm conviction, and has been confirmed by many experienced Communicators from the Other Side, that everybody is born with the same amount of psychical power. It is not given to the fortunate few, and denied to the majority for some totally incomprehensible reason. The *power, the faculty, is there — in you — belongs to you*.

The will to use it depends on you.

In other words, can, and will you, develop the power to use the power, if I may put it in that way?

You can develop character, and will and power, and alter your temperament if you wish. Thousands of people have done it, for ordinary, everyday reasons. A man who thinks he is temperamentally fitted for one vocation, but finds that circumstances impel him towards another entirely different work, will mould his ideas, his will, his ambition on the lines of his new work. No matter how different it may be, how much opposed to all he thought he desired to do, if he applies his will and energies to it, because he is determined to make a success of it, he will succeed in doing that thing well.

Instead of saying, "I am going to join a developing class where I can learn to gain psychical powers, clairvoyance or clairaudience, "say," I am going to learn how to *adjust* myself to the quite normal gift which I received at birth, and which is common to all humanity."

The psychic power is a natural one, as I say, common to all; it is the form it takes that may be different, and will depend upon the mental make-up of the medium. Just as one musician develops his musical gift so that he can interpret a certain school or class of music better than others; or one artist excels in watercolors, another in oils, another in sepia, and so on. I think that all art belongs to the psychic rather than to the mental realm, and that mediumistic gifts are only an expression, or offshoot, of the artistic powers. Some people have told me that when they developed psychical gifts, such as clairvoyance or clairaudience, they apparently lost any artistic faculty they possessed, but experience has shown me that this need only be for a time. The mind has to stop concentrating on the one before it can obtain firm hold of the new branch, but once this is done, the artistic, or any other faculty should be improved, not impaired, by the awakening of the consciousness to the Spiritual World.

The Guides occasionally advise a student to abstain from concentration on another subject until he has reached a certain point in his development, but that does not mean that he need lose all interest in it. They usually leave it to our common sense to judge how much time we can give to one or the other, but if there are very special or nervous conditions that might make intense concentration on more than one subject at a time undesirable, the Guides often advise accordingly. Of course, it depends a great deal on the nature of the student's normal work. If one is able to lead an active, healthy life, without too much mental strain, one might be all the better for pursuing it in addition to the psychic development. One must bring a sane and reasonable outlook to bear upon this question, and determine it for oneself as well as one can.

A great deal is said about the evil results of being a trance medium. Many are the pamphlets that have been sent to me anonymously by people who must be absolutely ignorant about this kind of development.

One leaflet stated that all trance mediums eventually became obsessed by evil spirits, and ended their days in a lunatic asylum, unless they were driven to suicide in the meantime.

Evidently the writers of these pamphlets know nothing about the care that is taken in a

good developing circle to instruct the students about their development, and to watch carefully for the slightest sign of any unwise behavior. No one should allow any discarnate entity to control them unless they know who and what that being is. I do not mean what its name is, but its character and purpose in wishing to control.

Before I consented to let Feda control me, I had proved her genuineness and honesty of purpose, and every prospective medium should do the same with regard to his or her control.

Undoubtedly, the very fact of development accentuates one's characteristics, both bad and good. One becomes more sensitive to feeling, suffering, impressions of all kinds; therefore, all the more reason to *know yourself*, and be able to control yourself, before you commence this "opening of the door." It is not the machinations of evil spirits that you need fear, but the operation of your own sub-conscious shortcomings, unless you have trained yourself mentally on the right lines.

You will have nothing to fear from "evil spirits" if you have nothing to fear from yourself. Doctors and people who have been present at operations say that many persons of irreproachable character and behavior, when under the influence of an anesthetic, occasionally use the most foul and obscene language. I think this is not actual evil in their own natures, but simply a re-awakened memory of something heard at some time, that has so shocked the hearer that he has stuffed the obnoxious material into his sub-conscious mind, repressing and, at the same time, holding it, until the time comes when the action of the anesthetic frees it, and it comes up to the surface, sometimes to the astonishment and dismay of anybody who may be listening.

Good people who live exemplary lives often have dreams which shock and disgust them.

I suppose the psycho-analyst would explain these on the lines of "repression," and doubtless he is right, but if the people whose sub-consciousness has stored up these unsavory records, and unlooses them under the effect of either chloroform or natural sleep (which is, in a sense, an anesthetic) learnt to control their conscious minds by selecting the right thoughts and ejecting the undesirable ones during their ordinary daily lives, I think it would be found that the material they poured out when "unconscious" would be free from anything objectionable.

When I refer to selecting the right and ejecting the wrong thoughts, I do not mean to suggest for one moment that one should try to become oblivious to the evil and suffering in the world. It's our job to perceive it, and tackle it, as hard as one can. It's the stupid, aimless, and unnatural dwelling on the unpleasant, without making any move to eradicate it, or take definite steps to improve matters, that creates the unhealthy sub-conscious condition. Understanding the importance of mind-control does not mean shutting out other people's troubles, but will give us a better perspective regarding *theirs* and our own.

I am afraid there are a good many people (not necessarily Spiritualists, nor those

training as mediums) who make a cult of never thinking, speaking, or allowing anyone else to remind them of anything unpleasant. They never help in any reform, or in any progressive work, because they willfully blind themselves to the *necessity* for it. They are always dodging the truth if it is not palatable to them.

By adhering to this selfish policy of self-protection, they may appear to have safeguarded themselves from the knowledge of cruelty, suffering and strife in the world around them, and created a little island of make-believe upon which they have marooned themselves, but they are not happy.

Indeed, they usually reveal themselves as being the most unhappy and miserable people when one comes to know them thoroughly.

The danger of obsession in trance is negligible, indeed, I honestly doubt if it exists at all if one pursues the right lines of both action and thought at all times, as far as one is able. By obsession, I mean the possibility of an evil or unprogressed spirit controlling one's mind while in trance.

There is one very important condition that should be guarded against more than any other, and that is, egotism.

It is, in my opinion, responsible for more trouble, disappointment, and mischief generally in psychic development than any other cause. It is also at the root of most cases of insanity.

I have known a good many insane people, as I have always found that I exercised a beneficial effect on them, for some reason I don't quite understand; therefore, if one comes my way, I usually try to keep in touch with him or her. Even with those of the apparently quiet, meek order, one will find under the surface an invincible and unalterable egotism. It has always been there, hidden away until illness, shock or some other cause has made it come nearer the surface, where it expresses itself under the guise of a delusion as to the person being Queen Elizabeth, Cleopatra, or some other famous person. Even if it does not individualize itself in this way, it produces a stubbornness about certain things that becomes a mania in time, instead of the idiosyncrasy that seemed so harmless to the patient's friends before something happened that shocked the sub-conscious into action, and threw the mental perspective more completely out of gear.

So guard against the slightest sign of egotism, or of a too positive or aggressive tendency. The egotistical and positive conditions often go hand in hand in people who are extremely negative in some other respects. It is the wrong "balancing" of these two states — the positive and the negative — that often makes a person a slave to "moods." Here, again, comes the value of a good developing circle, carried on under the auspices of a wise and experienced person, who will watch for any signs of an undesirable kind, and will at once warn the student either to take steps to eliminate the condition, or give up the idea of psychic development (especially trance) altogether. Perhaps the student

has been unconscious of possessing this particular trait; probably no one has ever liked to tell him of it, and if he is in every other way sensible and reasonable, he will at once see the desirability of improving matters. If he does so, such a person may become a first-class psychic instrument and worker in the movement. The very forceful and positive element that threatened to be a source of danger will prove to be a valuable asset to him when it is pruned and trained on the right lines. In every step he takes towards such an end, he will be helped by his Guides.

CHAPTER XLI CLAIRVOYANCE

CLAIRVOYANCE and clairaudience come under the heading of normal mediumship. Personally, I hold to the opinion that all mediumship is normal. One person goes into a trance, and is controlled by a discarnate entity, another person sees or hears psychically without being controlled, but still has to be helped by a Guide. The majority of the fully developed clairvoyants I have met have told me that they have been conscious of the cooperation of a Guide in their work, but there are many people who possess quite remarkable powers of this kind who have no idea as to their source, or how to regulate them, and have never attended a séance. They simply know that at certain times they “see” or “hear” something that is outside the range of their ordinary vision, or hearing. They are usually spoken of as natural clairvoyants. I think that the term natural in this case means that the faculty of clairvoyance is simply nearer to the surface in some people. In others it has to be brought out by development. How many people who have never been to a séance, or even read a book on the subject, will tell you that they have had some definite manifestation of a psychic nature at some period of their lives! I think nearly everybody could, given the desire, opportunity and right conditions, develop clairvoyance or clairaudience.

A great many different focusing points are used to help with this object, such as a bowl of clear water, a crystal, or a bright metal knob that catches the light.

If a knob or metal ball, the object should be put in a position where it will catch and reflect a beam or ray of light. The rest of the room should be sufficiently dim to be restful to the eyes, and to show up the ball.

Sit some five or six feet away from the ball, which should be placed on a stand so that it is on about a level with your eyes. After doing some of the simple breathing exercises I have described, sit quietly, in a relaxed — never tense — condition, looking steadily at the ball. Here is an important point. In most books on the subject you are told to concentrate. My experience has been that it is better not to *concentrate*, but to *contemplate*. Concentration makes a rather tense condition in this case. In a great deal of psychic and mental work, especially the latter, we know that concentration is necessary, but in so many forms, such as clairvoyance and clairaudience, contemplation should be used. It is not advantageous to be tense, and positive; one must be passive, and sufficiently negative to be truly receptive. Tenseness may make one sensitive to sounds, thoughts and feelings that belong to the *earth*, but not to the spirit or soul.

When one becomes extremely tense, is it not true that fear enters easily?

If one is alone in a house and hears a sound that suggests burglars in the dead of night,

one immediately concentrates and becomes tense. The more one does it the more nervous and highly strung one can become till the slightest creak or sound of wind-shaken window casement suggests all kinds of terrible things that have no existence in reality.

Therefore, learn to *contemplate* the ball or knob. It is really a very mild form of self-hypnosis, detaching one's mind and attention from material or objective things, and allowing one to see with the soul or psychic vision, instead of the physical.

One may “see” with the eyes open or closed. Because one sees with one's eyes open, it does not follow that what is seen is in any sense objective. A second person in the room might not see the same thing at all. I have seen a spirit form sitting on a sofa in a drawing-room containing five or six people; two at least were looking straight in the direction of the sofa, but they saw nothing of the form that I saw clearly enough to describe in detail. It seemed to me that I saw with my physical eyes, but I think it is as if the soul's eyes used the physical ones, just as one uses a pair of suitable glasses to augment the physical sight at times, though one can manage without them at others.

You may see rather meaningless, and even silly things, at first. Your Guides may show you something that will prove to you that it is nothing that you would have imagined yourself.

One of the first things that I saw clairvoyantly was a parrot sitting in a ridiculous cage composed of a large red satin tea-cosy, out of which a section had been cut, and little gold bars placed across. After sitting several days and seeing nothing else, I was very much disgusted at this result, but Feda told me afterwards that it was merely a little exercise, something I could not imagine had been in my mind. A parrot sitting in a tea-cosy was about the farthest thing from my mind that could have been chosen, as I have never had a parrot, nor been interested in one, and I dislike red satin!

You must look upon the isolated and meaningless objects that you may first see as psychical “five-finger” exercises — to use a musical simile — or as the pot-hooks that a child has to be proficient in seeing and making before he can inscribe perfect letters, join them together and form words.

After a reasonable number of exercises of this kind, do not form a habit of seeing these disjointed things; ask your Guides to help you to go farther, and to show you one thing that you can join to another and make sense of, just as the child has joined up the letters to form a word.

You will probably be given symbols. Try and develop the power of understanding their meaning. The interpretation will probably come to you in an inspirational way. At this stage it may be well, if you are sitting alone, to have by you a writing-tablet and pencil. Do not use a metal pencil, by the way; plain wood encased ones are best. Then you can quietly jot down any important symbol or interpretation that is given you. Do not strain to do this. Some people can take notes of this kind so much more easily than others. It is more important in the early stages to learn to “see” and to become established and pro-

ficient in seeing, than to record what you have seen. Later on, a sympathetic friend may be introduced, who will not interfere with the psychic conditions, but can take notes of, whatever you describe.

All the above directions are intended to apply to the student whose circumstances compel him or her to develop alone, but most people find it easier and quicker to develop in a circle, under the supervision of an experienced medium. Personally, I am in favour of the developing circle every time, but it is a matter for the individual. I *have* known people who developed excellent powers of clairvoyance quite alone, to the great improvement of their physical and mental health, but they were all extraordinarily well-balanced people with plenty of other healthy, normal interests.

On the other hand, there are exceptions. The helpless invalid, for example. To a bed-ridden person it is an unutterable blessing to be able to develop such a gift as clairvoyance. It passes away the long weary hours of compulsory idleness and inactivity, if they can see and hear the spirit friends around them, who take extra trouble to make themselves known to the sick and suffering souls on earth. Many such people have told me of the great joy that has been brought into their lives by coming into contact with Spiritualism and its teachings, and finding that they can get occasional glimpses of their spirit friends, and of the Other Side.

Whether you are developing by yourself, or in a class, as soon as you realize that you can clairvoyantly see a face sufficiently well to describe it, proceed to do so. It is most important to develop the gift of registering anything that you see on your brain, and describing it, during the early stages. We are all familiar with the person who describes a spirit form in such vague terms that the description would fit one's father, grandfather, uncle, brother, and perhaps at least half a dozen cousins, or a great number of friends, or acquaintances.

A quick recognition — and immediate description of the details of a face will be of great help later on, when the student is fully developed and using his gift to help and convince others of the reality of the Spirit World.

Some people are not clever in observing and recording details of the appearance of the people they meet in their ordinary earthly lives. Such a person should immediately set about to remedy that defect by practising on people he sees in the bus, train, or tube. He can look at the face of a fellow traveller for a moment, then look away, or close his eyes, and see if he can remember the features clearly enough to be able to describe them should he be called upon to do so. It is surprising how this simple exercise improves the power of observation, and it is a useful faculty to possess for dealing with the mundane affairs of life as well as being most necessary in psychic work.

When you have developed so that you can see, and describe, faces and forms of the spirit friends, ask your Guides to enable you to get some kind of message from the Communicator.

“Why ask your Guide?” I hear someone say. “Hasn't he got the sense to help you to get a message without being asked to do so?”

Yes, of course he has, but he can't always tell whether you are ready for him to give some more difficult and possibly complicated material. He might only confuse you if he attempted too much before you have become proficient and easy in the more elementary stages of seeing. So let your Guides know when you are ready for more. The first messages that come may be — often are — given in symbolic form, as the pictorial manner of giving messages will be the easiest until you have developed the power of clairaudience. The latter may be developed concurrently with the clairvoyance, but it does not often happen in that way.

Symbolism is the most useful form of communicating a message, but there is a danger that a certain type of mind may cling to the symbolic method, without developing the power to interpret it, or never get beyond it so as to “hear” a definite message.

I remember one boy who had passed over in the war, and who was communicating with his mother through Fedra. A short time before the sitting, his mother had been to consult a psychic who had given a remarkably good description of his personal appearance. Through Fedra, the mother asked the son why he had not been able to send her a convincing message through this medium, instead of showing her symbols which she was evidently not able to interpret, and which the mother did not understand either. The boy said, through Fedra: “Well, Mother, I knew the medium saw me, but as soon as I wanted to speak to you through her, her Guide said she was not developed on those lines, and that I must find some symbol that would explain my meaning, or that he, the Guide, would do it for me. As I was killed in an aeroplane, it was easy to show a picture of a machine falling as evidence of identity, but I couldn't think of much more that I could show as a picture, so I had to let the Guide and the medium do it for me, and they did make a holy mess of it. I listened to them, and after they had described a rainbow, a dark cross that turned into a light one, flaming stars, flocks of fine sheep with joybells hung round their necks, and every animal that went into the ark, I got sick of it and gave up.”

Many of us have had examples of this never — ending, boring description of symbols that only confuse and worry us. So *don't* stay in that groove. If you have developed sufficient clairvoyance to “see” a fat sheep wearing a bunch of joybells, then you should have developed sufficiently to be able to see something more applicable to the circumstances and more easily “translatable.”

Another method of developing clairvoyance is looking into a crystal or bowl of water. The crystal or bowl should be placed on a piece of black velvet. The velvet should be slightly raised round the crystal, but not too close to its sides. Look quietly into it.

Again it is a matter of contemplation.

Some people tell us that they see forms of people, scenes and pictures *objectively* in

the crystal, but the majority see subjectively, I think. The few and only times when I saw anything myself, I know it was my subjective sight that was being used. The contemplation of the crystal or water simply produced the right kind of mental condition that enabled my psychic sight to function, just as looking at the bright knob did.

I have found that the best way for myself to induce clairvoyance was by lying flat on my back, on a bed for preference, with not too high a pillow. The room should be dimmed but not dark. I close my eyes as a rule, but merely remain passive. I do not do this often, as I definitely developed on “trance” lines, and do not want to use the power up in other ways. One can only see a certain amount each day. The best clairvoyance has always come to me spontaneously, usually when I am *least* expecting it, but in this chapter I am trying to tell you how to develop the power so that you can, to some extent, harness it, and use it for other people's benefit when necessary. It is very much like developing music, or any of the other arts. One decides which branch of music, or instrument, is best suited to one's individual musical talent, and if one chooses the violin, and gives all one's energies and time to it, one does not expect to be a first-class pianist as well, though it is possible to perform quite decently on the piano.

In the earthly life, everything has to be brought into line with *time*. It would not be possible to spare sufficient time from the study of the violin, and also get sufficient practice for the very different fingering and understanding of the piano.

Then again, there are times when the musician is not at his best, but he plays all the same, knowing that his interpretation is not on the highest level, but is the best he can do in the circumstances, and probably is much appreciated by his audience. It might be suggested that he should not play if he feels he is not at his best, as it is often said a medium should never “sit” or attempt any psychic work when not certain as to the quality of the power; but that might frequently happen and would cause a great deal of disappointment to people, and it is always possible, indeed, most probable, that if the audience (or sitters) are sympathetic and appreciative at the commencement, the atmosphere will become charged with such helpful conditions that the performer, or psychic, will give an even better rendering than usual, though he did not “feel like it” at all at the beginning.

Several clairvoyants have told me that they had stood on the platform wondering how they were going to get through the service, perhaps feeling unwell, or an absence of power that may have been brought about by so many different causes. Soon after they have begun their clairvoyance, they have become aware of a gradual improvement which has developed to such an extent that when they got down again they realized that they had done much better than ever before.

It might be very pleasant and easy if one need only work when the spirit moved one in a very unmistakable way, but it would be hardly possible to accomplish all the work that is needed in this short earth life, if one always waited for an attack of psychic energy to be given to one. Development means that we must make ourselves willing and ready to reach out and take hold of whatever is available, not merely wait for it to be given us. It

is like walking in an orchard of beautiful ripe fruit, wishing for it, and yet never reaching out one's hand to pick it. If one walked about expecting it to drop into one's mouth, one wouldn't have got much by the end of the day.

It is extraordinary what images some people can see, and describe, in the red embers of an ordinary coal fire. One may laugh and say "rubbish," but I think that some people find their subjective power of clairvoyance is provoked by very different means. Personally, I can never see anything in the fire, though another person with me may be telling me that she can and describing what she sees minutely, and with a perfect wealth of detail.

I remember that at the outbreak of the war, I was, very concerned about a friend who had become infatuated with an officer in the Prussian army. This friend came to see me one afternoon. We did not discuss her love affair, as it was rather a controversial subject just then. After she left, a second friend, quite a stranger to the first, came in, sat down at the fireside, and we began to discuss clothes. Suddenly she broke off, and exclaimed, "Someone has been here in this room, who is in love with a Prussian officer. I can see him quite plainly in "the fire."

She gave correct details of his face, figure, and uniform (I had never met him, but my friend, number one, had described him to me). She gave the initial of his name, and that of my friend, and said that there would be great trouble around her. I pointed out that that was rather obvious, as there was a war in progress, and each belonged to different sides, but she said, "It will not be the war; it will be through other causes," and proceeded to give me one or two indications of the kind of trouble that would visit my friend. Later, all this came to pass. Every detail was correct. Yet at the time, strain as I might, I could see nothing myself in the grate except a mass of red burning coals. My friend kept drawing my attention to the different pictures she said were there, but I still saw nothing.

I once visited an old lady who possessed remarkable clairvoyant powers, the genuineness of which many people had proved up to the hilt. She accurately described many people and places to me that I was sure she knew nothing about normally, and I wondered how she saw them, what method she used. I noticed that she kept her eyes wide open nearly all the time, and that she would frequently look up to a certain place on the wall of the room, a few feet away from her.

This was so noticeable that at last I asked her why she did it.

She explained that she was looking at a picture — an ordinary print — of three little boys, and that the expressions on the boys' faces altered very definitely, so that if she got a clairvoyant vision of a person, and wished to find out whether the conditions around, or prospects of that person were bad or good, she had only to look at the face of one of the little boys in the picture, and she would get the right answer from his expression. In fact, she assured me that the boys' features changed in so many different and expressive ways, that she was able to draw a great deal of information from them.

She demonstrated the truth of this assertion to me in an unmistakable way.

At the time I was anxious about my brother who was in the war, and of whom I had had no news for rather an alarmingly long time. The old lady described him to me (she looked interrogatively at “the boys” now and again, as if asking for confirmation on different points, and assured me that they nodded their heads vigorously several times, though I could see nothing of this extraordinary activity on their part!).

Here again, I think that she had made a “focusing ground”— if one can use such an expression — of the picture, just as one can of the crystal-water — balls-knobs or fire. Another friend had a holland blind over the window of her sitting-room. One day, when the blind had been lowered to exclude the strong noonday sun, she was reading an interesting book and suddenly realized that the sun had disappeared, and that it was necessary to raise the blind. She looked towards it, feeling loath to disturb herself and cross the room to raise it. While looking at it, to her surprise she saw shapes beginning to form on it, silhouettes of people whose profiles were easily distinguishable, almost like a cinematograph or magic — lantern entertainment.

From that time onward, she used to lower the blind whenever she felt impressed to do so and often saw upon it pictures of people who were thinking of her, or intending to visit her, and many things of a prophetic nature. It was remarkable how many of these prophecies were verified later.

Strange to say, though I had failed in seeing anything in the fire, or the picture of the boys, when I tried this last method and drew my blind down, I saw, and was able to describe accurately, forms and faces that were unknown to me, which if other persons were present, would usually be recognized by them. The form would appear to be finely drawn on the blind like a pen-and-ink portrait, but as soon as I “discovered” it, it would take on more definite shape and would “come out” from the blind, intensifying itself, so to speak, until I could see it quite clearly in color, standing (away and apart from the blind).

Judging from these experiences, I think it would be quite a good idea for anybody to try the blind as a focusing or “building up ground,” in preference to the crystal.

It would be worth trying. The blind I had was a blue linen one.

It may be urged that a highly imaginative person could see anything by such methods, whether it had any real existence or not. I should not recommend a person of this kind to try to see anything, *anywhere*, at any time.

Imagination is a wonderful gift, but must be kept under control of the will and reason, and above all, if the owner has learned to develop' it on the right lines, only using it as his or her higher instincts direct. As I have several times suggested, if the mental training is taken previously to the psychical, the imagination will then become the useful weapon or tool of its possessor, instead of his becoming a poor slave to the vagaries of

an unbridled, uncontrolled, and all-impelling power, into which the imagination can develop.

Whichever of these methods *appeals* most to the student will be the best to adopt in the first place. If you can't progress with one, try another, until you find the right one. If you belong to the fortunate ones who do not need an external help for their clairvoyance, and who can make their focusing grounds in their own minds, by all means dispense with any other means. On the other hand, by judicious use of such extraneous means, you may find the development is assisted in its early stages, whilst later on they can be dispensed with.

CHAPTER XLII

CLAIRAUDIENCE

CLAIRAUDIENCE is a different form of power from the Direct Voice, though I have often heard the two referred to as being the same. Direct Voice is heard by everybody present; in clairaudience it is only the psychic who hears.

There are two or more forms of clairaudience.

Some people tell you that they hear a voice that *appears* to them to be an objective one, because they apparently hear it through the medium of the ear, like any ordinary physical sound. Others say they only hear “in the mind,” and yet again you will meet people who tell you that they hear objectively at times, and at others mentally. I hear in both these ways myself.

With the first kind the voice is unmistakable. One is as certain of it as one would be of the voice of anybody in the earthly body who happened to speak to one. Even the tones — timbre — are so distinct that one can usually recognize to whom the voice belongs, unless, of course, it is that of an unknown Guide, or stranger.

With the second kind, one may find it more difficult to be sure that one is hearing a voice psychically and not imagining it, but this is only in the early stages of development. We know that we can often remember an earthly, physical voice so clearly as to hear it in our minds, yet we are only reproducing it in our imagination and memory. A mental effort has been made to do this, but with the super-normal voice, one makes no effort; it *comes*, and this is a very important distinction to make, and I must try and do my best to describe it. When one hears a super-normal voice it strikes one as being thinner, smaller, and yet in some curious way clearer and more distinct than any remembered or imagined voice could ever be. It is very easy to get a false message in this way until one has learnt to distinguish the difference, and such a message usually comes as an answer to something that has been strongly in one's mind. Unless one is very sure of one's mediumistic power in this direction, one should not ask for an answer to a question about which one is very anxious or feels acutely, as the subconscious mind that feels and fears the anxiety may also provide an answer, usually of a misleading nature. False messages of this kind are often put down to the agency of evil, or mischievous spirits. In my estimation, based on seventeen years of practical experience and several more spent in investigation, I am certain that very few, if any, come from such a source, but are supplied by the hearer's mind alone. For some reason people are very reluctant to acknowledge that they have been mistaken in anything that they purport to have received super-normally; they love to think that they are infallible in psychic matters, and therefore it is more palatable to them to throw all the blame on impersonating spirits, instead of acknowledging frankly that they themselves have not yet learned to discriminate between the psychic and the imaginary.

Here is an instance of the kind that happened to me. I had not developed the faculty of hearing psychically until a few years ago, but I was always anxious to do so. In 1917 or 1918 I was expecting my sister from America to come to England to offer her services to the English Red Cross. As the submarine warfare was then at its height, I was very anxious about her; in fact, it might be said that my mind was full of her from the moment that I knew she stepped on board the liner at New York.

Early one evening, while writing letters, a strong feeling of uneasiness came upon me, and then I mentally heard a voice saying distinctly, "Grace," which is my sister's name. Then, "Danger — danger — great danger."

I felt as if I were surrounded by a large expanse of water. It seemed as if I were almost in it, with a sense of noise and confusion all around me, though I could see nothing except the blue water.

My normal mind then became acutely active. Had I known what I know now, I should have endeavoured to remain as passive as possible, so as to keep in exactly the same psychic condition as when I heard the first words, "Grace — danger," but I sat straight up in my chair and called out aloud, "What is it? What has happened to Grace? Tell me, I *must* know." I was filled with an awful sense of tragedy, and suddenly I heard the word "drowned."

Immediately I felt certain that my sister was drowned. I was so sure about it that nothing would have shaken my certainty, and the next day I was relieved, yet astounded, at receiving a telegram from my sister, sent at Liverpool, saying, "Shall arrive by such and such a train. Love — Grace."

I could not understand it at all. The voice had seemed so clear.

Directly after her arrival my sister began to tell me of the terrible experience she had had. It appeared that at the very time that I had felt the sense of danger, she was standing on the deck of the ship, with a young American by her side with whom she had become friendly on the voyage. An enemy submarine had been sighted and everybody was ordered to "stand by" the lifeboats. Apparently a torpedo had been fired by the submarine, which appeared to have struck the liner and lifted it partly out of the sea. There was a good deal of confusion and excitement, and as the boats were being got ready for lowering, everybody thought the ship was hit, and probably going to sink. The young American having had experience of being submarined on a previous voyage, suggested to my sister that it would be hopeless to get into the boats, as there appeared to be a great difficulty in loosening them, and he was certain that the ship was badly hit, judging by the terrific force of the impact of the torpedo, and that it would probably sink immediately. My sister is a first-class diver, and so was he. They had discussed diving and swimming a great deal during the voyage, also the possibility of being submarined, and both had decided in the event of such a catastrophe, that they would dive and swim quickly to a safe distance from the ship, and, being strong

swimmers, they expected to be able to keep afloat until they were picked up, providing it was daylight and a fairly calm sea. As it was both, being the afternoon of a beautiful summer day, directly the expected happened they selected a spot from which to dive. The young man said he would dive first and be ready to help my sister should she need it. He did so, but no sooner had he entered the water, than the captain gave an order for the vessel to go ahead as quickly as possible, as it was discovered that the torpedo had passed *under* the ship; at least, that was the explanation, as my sister understood it, that was given later. My sister was on the very point of diving when she realized that something different was happening, which was altering the whole course of events. She shouted out that there was a passenger in the water, but it was absolutely impossible for the ship to wait as it was clear that the submarine intended to get the liner if she possibly could, and the only chance to save all the other lives aboard was by going full power ahead as quickly as possible.

They escaped the submarine, but my sister couldn't get the idea of the young man out of her mind. She said that she kept repeating to herself "Drowned," in a shocked, dazed way, as if she could hardly realize it.

So you see, I heard the real super-normal voice say, "Grace, danger, etc.," and I sensed that somebody was drowned; but my own imagination fixed the true facts in the wrong relationship to one another, as I had been unable to hold my mind in the right psychic condition. My mistake was in trying to get more information than came to me naturally and spontaneously. The, first part of the clairaudience and clairvoyance came without bidding, and was true in detail. Then when I mentally "pushed forward" with a definite question, I got a confused, partially wrong, and certainly misleading answer.

The reader may ask: May not one expect help or advice to be given clairaudiently if one is in great trouble? My reply is, "Yes." Help is always freely given by those who have passed over to those on the earth plane when it is desirable and right, but if one's clairaudient faculty is not strongly developed, it is better not to attempt to get some very evidential or definite answer oneself but to go to some experienced psychic whose mind is ignorant (therefore unprejudiced) of your trouble.

I often ask the spirit friends to cooperate with me in some project, especially helping people in great distress, whether it is of a spiritual or material matter, but I always remind them that I don't *demand* their assistance. I only tell them of the circumstances and people that need their, and my, help, in the hope that it will be right and permissible for them to do so. I regret to say that I do know a very few enthusiastic Spiritualists who proudly boast that they "never do anything, not anything, my dear, without consulting the dear Guides." How tired of them the dear Guides must be!

One day I was lunching at the house of a lady who was an ardent supporter of everything Spiritualistic or psychical. She was a clever, sensible woman of the world in most ways. Just towards the end of the meal, the dining room door burst open, and an extraordinary apparition (very earthly) entered — an elderly woman, her eyes tightly closed, one hand clutching a wet dishcloth, from which trickled plenty of greasy water

on to my friend's sumptuous carpet. In the other she held a saucepan lid, also dripping with water. This, together with a wet apron, suggested to me that she had made a sudden exit from the scullery straight to the dining room. She staggered a few steps into the room. "I'm 'ere, my love, I'm 'ere," she said, in a very throaty, artificial sort of voice, with a pronounced cockney accent.

My hostess literally sprang from her chair and advanced on the stranger, saying in a hurried aside to me, "It's Herbert." (Herbert was the name of her deceased husband.) She enfolded "Herbert" in her arms in an ecstatic embrace, dishcloth, saucepan lid and all.

"Herbert" gurgled and spluttered several times, but the only sense I could make out was that he was "ere." That seemed quite sufficient for my friend, who gently led the "medium" to a chair, where she was "brought to" with a glass of old port. My hostess then informed me that this wonderful manifestation on the part of "Herbert" occurred every night. He *always* clutched the dishcloth, she said, "never let it go," but wasn't quite so particular as to what he held in his other hand; sometimes it was a cruet, or teapot, but always the dishcloth in the other.

I couldn't reconcile "Herbert's" predilection for the dishcloth with what I knew of his tastes on earth, but I was too dumbfounded to argue either that point or any other. My friend also told me that Herbert gave her the most wonderful information as to what she was to do in every detail of her material life. A new tap to the bathroom, a rug for her bedroom, repairing the cistern, nothing was done without consulting Herbert.

I was anxious to understand how or why this woman, who was so sane and reasonable in every way, had come down to such a ridiculous level in her beliefs. From what she told me, I gathered that in her early investigations on the subject of survival, her husband had given her a very good proof of his identity by describing to her a certain change that had been made to some property of his, about which she knew nothing. He said he had himself arranged the change, and had been able to impress the men on the earth who carried it out. On finding it to be true, she was so impressed with its evidential value that she thought Herbert could not only see and hear every single thing that happened on earth, but that he could alter it, control it, just as he wished. Unfortunately she engaged a woman as temporary cook who had been in the employ of a credulous friend, who told her that this cook was a "wonderful medium." My friend engaged her chiefly because of this, and it was not long before "Herbert" made his appearance. Fortified by the knowledge of the convincing nature of the test he had previously given her, my friend asked him all kinds of questions about pretty well everything under the sun, and not only believed in, but acted upon, every word of advice that was given her through this means.

I argued and reasoned with her; tried to show her the weakness, even wrongness, of such a policy, but she was very obstinate and told me frankly that evidently I had not come into contact with such perfect mediumship as her cook's, or such a wonderful Control as Herbert. I think that some of the remarks I made carried weight though, and

luckily a short time after, she received a bad shock through “Herbert” giving her some information that turned out to be so untrue — and *absurd* — *that* it convinced my friend that the message had nothing whatever to do with her husband.

No, it wasn't an evil or impersonating spirit that gave all these ridiculous messages. I give the evil spirits credit for having something more interesting to do than arm themselves with dishcloths and other unpleasant but harmless implements, and talk mild rubbish about the desirability of not getting out of bed till eleven on a Monday, as the early part of that day was unlucky, and to discard a certain dress as its “vibration wasn't good,” which are specimens of some of the inspiring messages that my friend attributed to Herbert.

The whole thing was a conglomeration of silly thoughts that the poor cook (who possibly might have been “sensitive” and psychic in an elementary way) could not help catching, and reacting to, as my friend was a very positive, insistent and enthusiastic person, who always seemed to imbue people in her vicinity with her own ideas.

The realization of the absurdity and untruth of “Herbert's” messages, in addition to my expostulations, was a lesson to her. She saw fully why and how she had gone wrong, and carefully steered herself on to the right lines.

If one starts out on one's development with the realization that one's spirit friends are not omnipotent, neither are they sufficiently in touch with the material things of earth to be engrossed in them, or have control over them (except under very special conditions and circumstances), one will not be troubled with any of these meaningless and silly manifestations. Surely we must not wish those who have entered the higher planes to be limited to the things of earth? Love, friendship and sympathy for all life, whether on the earth or in the spirit realms; loving interest in, and communication with, those whom they have left behind, and cooperation in any scheme that has for its purpose the upliftment and progress of humanity — yes, we expect and hope for all this because participation in such objects will benefit *them* as well as ourselves. It is in this healthy constructive work that we should hope for, and *fit ourselves* to receive their assistance and guidance, not in expecting them to find a lost brooch, or purse, or advise us about stocks or shares, as some people expect their spirit friends to do, though I am thankful to say that their number is very few, thanks to the instruction that is so freely dispersed from the various institutions, training centers, and Spiritualist papers and magazines.

CHAPTER XLIII SENSING

THE word sensing should often be used instead of the terms clairvoyance or clairaudience. I have heard a psychic say, "I see a man," and go on to give a detailed description of him, and, when I asked her *how* she saw him, was it with, or without, her physical eyes, she replied, "No — I can't say I really saw him at all." I then asked her how she was able to give such an excellent description and minute details of someone she could not see, and she said, "I simply *knew* each detail. I didn't see it, but I knew it. I can't explain it except by saying that I knew the man was tall, I knew his hair was grey, I knew his body was very long in proportion to his legs, and I *knew* all the other details I gave you. I always say, 'I see,' because it saves such a lot of questioning that I should find almost impossible to answer."

This medium told me that she also "heard" in the same way.

Most psychics refer to this type of seeing and hearing as "sensing," but it really is "knowing," though the former may be the better word for most purposes. When one enters a house that is supposed to be haunted, one often "senses" an unpleasant condition.

An interesting fact is that one person may sense an entirely different condition from another, in the same house.

I have lived in a very old house, of which I have been, and always shall be, very fond. When we first went to there some years ago, we arrived in the early evening. It was the first time I had entered the house since the previous inmates had left. Indeed, they had only moved the last remaining pieces of their furniture a few days previously, as we were in a hurry to take possession. As soon as I entered the house, which is three or four hundred years old, I went straight upstairs' by myself. As I stood in the room that I had adopted as my bedroom, I suddenly felt impelled to go down on my knees, make the sign of the cross, and a little impromptu prayer sprang unbidden, unexpectedly, to my lips. It was only a few words, simply asking that all those souls who had ever lived in that room in the past, should be blessed and helped to rise to greater heights, to higher things, better lives in the Spiritual World; that they should cease to think of whatever tied them to the lower conditions of earth — any sins or tragedies that their earth lives had held for them, and that the hands of those they loved, who might have risen to higher planes Over There, would be stretched out to help them on, if they would only turn their vision upwards.

I am only repeating the gist of my prayer from memory, but at the time I was rather surprised at it coming so spontaneously to me. No sooner did the words form in my brain than they tumbled from my lips. I got up and went into the next room, and felt that I

must do the same thing again, and so I went on from room to room. As it was a rambling old house, by the time I had visited all the rooms my knees ached and I felt stiff and tired, but had a curious feeling of having done something that needed doing. By this time the very earthly and impatient voices of my husband and maid were demanding my attention for the placing and disposing of the furniture, which the removing men were now bringing in, and I at once became immersed in a whirl of material activity, and the whole thing passed from my mind.

The next day, a very difficult and troublesome matter arose, which caused me grave anxiety. It came like a thunderbolt. I could see no way out of it. It appeared to be one of the most serious troubles that had ever visited me. I went to bed thinking I should not sleep a wink, but to my amazement I passed into a most peaceful sleep as soon as I had got into bed. I awakened in the morning about seven o'clock. The room was light with the morning sun shining through the rather thin curtains. Standing against the wall, on the opposite side of the room, was a woman, about thirty years of age, dressed in the period of about 150 years ago. Her features were perfectly cut, her eyes and skin were beautiful, though the expression was as if she had passed through a trial, and come out of it purified and spiritualized. I received the *impression* of this very strongly. I saw her quite clearly, noticed every detail of the pink silk frock and lace berthe or tucker that she wore. She spoke, her voice was round and full. Only a few words, but I understood them, and knew that she referred to the trouble that had descended upon me. Her words contained absolute reassurance, saying I should be protected and helped. She stood there looking at me for two or three minutes, and disappeared. The trouble was lifted from me, entirely cleared away by what appeared to be a series of coincidences, about five days later.

I settled down in the house very happily. One evening two very psychic friends came to see me for a trance sitting. After their sittings they are usually very appreciative and vivacious, but on this occasion I was surprised to find that they were extremely silent; in fact, they seemed to be most depressed.

"Is anything the matter?" I asked them. One of them said reluctantly that there was, as she had seen the most unpleasant figure of a man standing near me just as I was going under control. She gave me a description which sounded like that of a rather bloodthirsty pirate. She said she "sensed" that he had committed a terrible crime, and that she had been on the point of sensing what it was when Feda began to control me, and the entire vision and conditions disappeared. It all sounded so melodramatic that I'm afraid I laughed inwardly. My friend assured me that she had felt the whole thing was very tragic and *real*, and I knew that her psychic power was of an excellent order, but as I could not understand the purport of the man's visit, I just left the matter where it stood.

A week or two later, another friend came to see me.

She also was psychic, but had no connection with the first lady. They had never met, nor did this second friend know of the first one's visit to me.

I took her for a tour of inspection of the house.

We were talking about all its domestic advantages when suddenly my friend turned pale, and staggered. I thought she felt ill and took hold of her to help her to a chair. No, she told me she wasn't ill, but had a shock at seeing "a very villainous — looking man" standing near me, and that a clear "sensing" of tragedy and sin came strongly into her mind. I asked her to describe the man, and every detail corresponded with that given by my first friend.

I then told her about his previous visit, and she said that she was sorry she had been so overcome but she had not been prepared for seeing such a murderous-looking person. I was just about to remark that I had not seen or felt any of these alarming people and conditions, when my friend said that the man was still there, but he had nothing but good feeling for me, as I had helped him by praying for him, and that he wanted to tell me so. She said that he had tried to do so before, but his message had not been received. (I realized that my first friend's aversion to his appearance had closed her psychic sense, so that she did not "take in" what he wanted to tell her.)

A few months later the first friend came again. I said nothing to her at all about the mysterious man's second visit until we had seated ourselves in readiness for our usual sitting, when she exclaimed: "Gladys, I can see that same man again, but I don't mind him as much as I did."

After a pause she continued, "He is trying to tell me that you have helped him, and that he has interested himself in happier conditions than before, and is progressing." I then told her about the fright he had given to my other friend, and the message she received, which was now corroborated.

Later on, Feda explained that it was not the man *himself*, i.e. his spirit, or soul body, that had been seen by either psychic.

When he passed over, many years ago, his thoughts were so strongly on the house, and the memory of all he had done in his life there was so strong he could not bring himself to take any interest in any other plane; in fact, it appeared to him as if the life he had left was the only *real* one, and that any other was only a dream, and that he himself was now functioning in neither, so he persisted in *living in memories*, instead of turning his attention to his new life. Not one of the people who had known him on earth had troubled to pray for him, or even remember him if they could help it. They seemed glad to be rid of him, though from Feda's account he had not had an evil soul so much as an unbridled nature, which had led him into many difficulties and ended in tragedy.

The effect of his persistent memory of the earth conditions resulted in his producing a thought form of himself in my house. Many of his spirit friends had tried to help him by attempting to turn his thoughts to their own higher plane, but he would not open his mind to them. When I arrived at the house, these friends were able to contact me, and

impressed me to pray for him in the manner and form that would best suit his case. It appeared to be the first time anybody on earth had done so; and, being so much, more in touch with the earth conditions than he was with any other, he caught the sense of my very definitely worded prayer, and made an attempt to respond, or rather cooperate with it.

It, seems as if the power of thought is all-powerful on both the spiritual and earth planes, but those on the lower planes of the Spirit World, sometimes respond to the thoughts of people in the physical bodies, more than they do to those of a higher plane. Therefore, it is most important that we should remember our responsibilities in that way, and make certain that our thoughts (not forgetting our deeds and words) are such that will uplift and help them.

How often one hears the statement that it is dangerous to communicate with the Spirit World, because one may put oneself in the power of the spirits on the lower plane! I know I shall raise opposition by what I am going to say now, but as I firmly believe it to be true, I think it right to do so.

Those on the lower planes are more in our power, more at our mercy, than we are in theirs.

I know there are cases when it seems as if an individual is influenced adversely by a discarnate spirit from a low plane. Yes, it is possible, but only if the individual on the earth is living and thinking on as low a plane as that on which the discarnate spirit lives. Directly we leave the physical body, we are tied by our own thought conditions. They label us, so that no one can mistake us. *Where our thoughts are, there we are. What our thoughts are, so are we.* On the earth, in the physical life, we can do a great deal of camouflaging, pretend to be something we are not. A certain amount of cunning and “push” and we may force ourselves into pleasant material conditions to which we have no spiritual or moral right. If other people around us had developed their psychic senses, we shouldn't be able to “carry it off” for long, as they would see through the veneer to our true soul conditions, and all our artifice and pretence would avail us nothing. We should be toppled from our stolen pedestal, and put back where we belonged, and we should “stay put” because we should have no real power to do anything else.

As things are, and the majority of people have allowed themselves to remain spiritually and psychically blind, we go on suffering hypocrites and selfish humbugs if not gladly, at any rate sympathetically.

In developing the art of “sensing” you develop a very useful gift, as it covers much of the same ground as clairvoyance and clairaudience. There are times when it is more satisfactory to the psychic to be able to “see” a person or object clearly, or hear a definite word or name, though the latter might be given in a symbolical form that could be “sensed” without being “heard.” People who become proficient in “sensing” as a rule find other psychic gifts are developed along with it, or may come at a later stage.

Any form of development that helps any of the psychic powers to unfold themselves is useful, so don't be disappointed if for a time you find that your development consists of *feeling* things instead of seeing or hearing them as you expected to do. Almost invariably one leads to the other.

Many promising students have held up their progress by insisting on a definite form of clairvoyance. They say they "would never be able to trust themselves if they had to rely on sensing."

It may be more difficult for them to "trust themselves" in the early stages of their development, but as they gain practical experience they will be able to discriminate between their own thoughts and ideas and those that their Guides wish them to respond to.

Here, I must remind you that you should develop your faculties so that you can get in touch with *your own higher self*, at any time. This is an essential part of the psychical development. The Guides and Control augment and assist you in your work of service for others, but they themselves wish you to realize and use your own faculties in the best and on the highest lines.

A very convenient and easy method to learn "sensing" and also to check your results at the same time, is to ask a friend to let you hold an article that has been worn by somebody you do not know. A ringbrooch — glove or necktie — anything that has not been cleaned, or worn by some other person since the owner wore it. Make yourself passive and wait and see what impressions come to you. Whatever comes, relate it quietly, without effort or excitement, or voluble affirmations that "you are quite sure it isn't right but you feel so and so," which only waste whatever psychic power is available. Whatever you feel, say it.

Arrange with your friend to check you by saying "Yes" when you are right, and "No" when she is absolutely sure you are wrong, *but not unless*. If she is at all uncertain, she should say, "I don't think that is correct, but I'll try and find out," or, "I'm not certain about this point." *You* may be right, and subsequent investigation will bear you out, but a *positive* denial at the time may give the sensitive and rather undeveloped psychic faculty a setback, and put a stop to anything else coming through for that sitting.

One rather serious objection to psychometrizing things in this way is that you may get into the habit of picking up thoughts of people, places and conditions that belong only to the earth plane. If you can develop so as to use the ring, or other article, simply as a link to help you to contact the discarnate person to whom it belongs, well and good; but I think myself it is often difficult to discriminate between the two, though it is possible and should be done.

Feda often refuses to touch an article proffered to her by a sitter, saying she is afraid of only getting "earth impressions" from it.

Still, I think that it is a very useful elementary exercise for awakening the psychic senses and making oneself receptive to impressions, and it is so easy to know whether one is doing so correctly if one obtains the help of a sensible and sympathetic friend, who will quietly check and weigh up whatever you describe.

CHAPTER XLIV

AUTOMATIC WRITING

OF all the forms of mental psychic development, I think that automatic writing is one of the most useful and at the same time one of the most perplexing.

Planchette comes under the same category as automatic writing. Inspirational writing is often only a higher form of the automatic kind. In the latter, the hand is generally moved by the communicating spirit quite independently of the volition of the medium, who often feels a hand touching, or guiding, his own, but usually has no idea what is being written through him, or what will come next. At times, he may begin a word without knowing what the end of it will be. He may be aware of the letters as they come, one by one. The hands of some automatists are used so rapidly at times that they cover an immense amount of ground in an incredibly short time. Others find that the Communicator can only use them very slowly and haltingly, and during the early stages of development quite a long time may be expended in forming pothooks, circles, or curves. This usually happens when both medium and Guide are desirous of obtaining a purely automatic form of writing, which sometimes takes a considerable time, as the Guide may experience more difficulty than he expected in obtaining complete control of the physical hand of the medium, just as in the case of the student who determines to develop the complete trance state before his Control shall speak through him.

I have myself done very little in the way of real automatic writing. If I sit for it, I scarcely ever get it; it usually comes spontaneously while I am in the middle of writing an ordinary letter, and then, occasionally, a message is interposed about which I know nothing, but which subsequently often proves to be very evidential.

In order to develop automatic writing, I would recommend the student to try and sit with some person who has already developed that power. If that is not possible, he should make up his mind only to try it at certain times, say once or twice a week, according to his circumstances, and he should not sit for more than half an hour at a time, at any rate in the early stages, and until he is able to tell how long the power lasts without him being overtired.

A pencil is better than a pen; a plain wooden one, from which the varnish or polish has been carefully sand-papered, is good. It is best to use a large sheet of paper, in case the hand wanders about and therefore likely to run off a small sheet. A quiet, peaceful condition is necessary for this, as for any other form of psychic development. Excitable, nervy, impatient people should not try to develop automatic writing. I should hesitate to recommend such people to develop any kind of mediumistic power until they had learnt to control their minds to some extent. It may be remarked that most mediums are extremely sensitive, highly strung individuals. Yes, so they are, but all those whom I have met have checked any tendency in themselves to undue excitability or impatience;

mediums, that is to say, whose powers have become so highly developed that they could be put to some useful service. A professional medium who gave way to “nerves” or tantrums of any kind would eventually become useless for public or private work. The amateur medium who wishes to do useful and evidential work, should endeavour to attain absolute control over his nerves and imagination.

This is specially desirable in automatic writing, as even if the student begins his development by sitting with another person, later on he will often have to work alone when he has developed the power to some extent. In all cases where the nature of the mediumship makes working alone desirable, the greater is the wisdom and caution needed not to exceed the limits of one's physical and mental endurance, and of keeping a happy, sane outlook on everything.

Here are a few directions that can be followed, if one must sit alone, and has no psychic friend to advise or sit with one.

Place the paper on a steady table, and rest the hand on it, holding the pencil rather loosely. There should be some light in the room which should not show directly on to the paper, or writer. Make yourself as passive as possible by emptying your mind of any problems or special interests that may have been occupying it during the day. By the way, 6 o'clock in the evening is, I have found, a very good time, but this, again, must be governed by your circumstances. Many people are not free to “sit” so early in the evening, and have to wait till much later.

Personally I never sit after a heavy, or even ordinary, meal.

Do not look at your hand; forget about it. After a time you may feel a tingle in it, or a slight pressure. If the latter, your hand may feel as if it wants to move by *itself* as it may appear to you. Let it do so. It may wander about the paper, and produce nothing legible for some time, as your spirit Guide or Communicator may be practising and finding out to what extent he can be sure of controlling your hand independently of your mind. Some people find they have covered sheet after sheet of paper with a series of curves, but after a while it will be seen that a letter is more or less perfectly formed here and there. Directly you notice this, speak to your Guide, aloud or mentally (aloud is best, if he is trying to control your hand in the physical sense, and is therefore wholly or partly functioning in the physical conditions for the time being), and tell him that you have discerned certain letters among the curves and scribbles. The number of legible letters should then increase, and you will find words forming, and then sentences.

Suppose you go on for a long time, and nothing comes except meaningless or undecipherable marks on the paper, then I should advise you to give up trying for the automatic kind of writing, for the time being, and try for the mental type instead. In this, you would follow very similar instructions to those I gave in connection with “normal” trance mediumship, clairvoyance or clairaudience. Have the paper beside you, and hold the pencil, but wait for the words to come into your mind instead of on to the paper.

Again comes the question: "How shall I know whether I'm getting the words psychically from a discarnate intelligence or from my own mind?" Only by practice, and by checking and verifying the result as in any other form of mediumship. The best way of making sure is to ask your would-be spirit Guide or Control to tell you some information that is not in your own knowledge, possibly about a friend, where he or she is, or anything that may be evidential or easily checked up afterwards. For myself, I should prefer to ask the Guide to find, if possible, some relative who has passed over, or other person well-known to a friend who is on earth, and to ask the spirit to come and give you some details of his appearance and character, his life when on earth — anything that he can think of that will be evidential of his identity. Do not ask for elaborate and difficult tests. Let the Guide and Communicator, between them, provide the material. They may be able to give names or initials, but if they cannot, do not ask them to do so. They know you want as many names and other evidential details as possible, and it is best to leave it to them to give these facts when and as they can.

As the details are "given" to you, write them down as quickly as possible, but with no feeling of flurry or haste. It will appear to you almost as if you are writing from dictation, but if you go on, you may find that the Communicator, or your own Guide writing for him, will gradually learn how to control your hand, and the writing will then become automatic. As you progress in this development you may find that your Guide can use either the automatic or inspirational method alternately in the same sitting; or he may use the automatic all through, and the inspirational at another time.

Though I have advised would-be automatic writers only to write at certain times, and not on any account to allow themselves to be controlled at any odd time, I must admit that the only occasions when I have been controlled for writing have happened unexpectedly, but as it was usually only two or three times in a year there was no possibility of overdoing it. Only at one period, about twelve years ago, did I get a short series of messages regularly. I think they came about once a week. At those times my hand was controlled, and messages came through for a man living a long distance away in Cornwall, while I lived in Buckingham, and all referred to matters of which I knew nothing. I had only seen this gentleman twice. Quite definite statements were made by the spirit Communicator, many of which were unknown to the recipient, who afterwards had to verify them through a third person, so that all idea of telepathy between us was excluded.

During the war a lady from South Africa sat with me a few times for my usual trance sitting, in order to get into touch with her son who was killed in the war. She was only in England for a year or two, and went back to Africa soon after the end of the war. She asked me to write to her occasionally, and I did so. One day, I sat down just to send her a few lines, when I suddenly found that I could not think of a word to say to her. I really knew very little of her personally, and tried hard to think of some item of news that might interest her. As I sat there quietly, my mind being in a passive yet receptive condition owing to my waiting for what I thought would be a "normal" inspiration, I felt that my hand wanted to move though I was not conscious of what it would write. I had begun my letter, "Dear Mrs. L" but now my hand began to write the word "Mother." I let it do so,

and felt it wanted to go on, in a rather curious cramped style. Some more words were written with a certain amount of difficulty. My hand and arm felt stiff and moved jerkily.

After a few moments the speed increased, and two or three pages of note-paper were covered with a small handwriting. Part of the time I had no idea what was coming next, but now and again I knew what the next sentence was going to be, while my hand was actually writing the previous sentence. The Communicator ended just as an ordinary letter from a very affectionate son to a mother would do, and I found my hand signing a man's name — a pet name — which was not the one that his mother had used when speaking to me about her son.

When the writing ceased, I read over the last two or three sentences, but saw that they were of an obviously intimate and private nature referring to family matters, so I did not like to look through all the messages; in fact, I had a strong feeling that it was not intended that I should do so, so I simply added a postscript, telling the lady briefly what had happened and begging her not to think me quite mad in sending her the whole thing as it was, as, for all I knew, it might have been a farrago of nonsense; I had so little personal experience of automatic writing.

Later, I had a reply from her, telling me that she had perfectly understood all the messages, and that they were most evidential and asking me to send her any others that might come. I saw that the communication had been a great comfort to her, and as soon as I could spare the time, I sat down and waited expectantly for her son to come and write again, but nothing happened, though I waited for nearly an hour. I tried again, with no result.

Then a few months afterwards, while writing to another friend, I suddenly felt I must write to Mrs. L. in South Africa again. I got out some larger sheets of paper, and as soon as I had written a few words to her on my own account, I felt the same stiff jerkiness come into my writing that I had noticed on the previous occasion. Again the son wrote a letter to his mother, and she wrote later and told me that he had referred to a series of spiritual meetings she had arranged, and about which no one in England knew, but she had mentally asked her son to help her with them.

This correspondence between mother and son was kept up for about ten years. Sometimes no messages at all came for several months, and then one would come in two or three successive months. It was never any use my trying for one. Perhaps that was because I was sitting regularly for my own trance sittings, and the boy had to wait until I had a free time — or was not already psychically depleted before he could “get through” to me.

Then came a time when he stopped altogether.

I sat down one day and began to write to his mother, and then found myself tearing up the letter. I waited a few months and then tried again. I began my usual, “Dear Mrs. L.” and made a few commonplace remarks “on my own” in the hope that the son would

come in as usual; but nothing happened, and I was afraid the mother would be very disappointed when she received a letter from *me* without any message from her boy, as I had hardly, if ever, written to her all by myself, for some years.

Something in my mind kept saying, "Don't write at all," but I thought it was merely a selfish instinct to save myself trouble, and I forced myself to write an explanatory note, telling the mother that I had felt that her son no longer came to see me, but that it occurred to me that perhaps he knew I had had a little trouble with my hand, and thought it might interfere with my writing, but would she speak to him herself, and tell him that my hand was all right again, and that I was only too pleased to write for him, if he would come to me again.

One night, soon after I had posted this letter, just as I was going to sleep, I saw the face and figure of the mother distinctly. She did not speak to me and I only saw her for a few seconds.

Some weeks later I had a letter from one of her relatives telling me she had passed over. On comparing times, I found she must have joined her son soon after his last communication through me, so then I understood why he no longer wanted to write to her through me!

Feda afterwards explained to me that his only link with me was the psychical one, which he was only able to use through his great love for, and affinity with, his mother. When that was removed from the earth, he no longer had the power to communicate with me himself, but his mother had tried to let me know that she had passed over, and remembered me, by showing herself to me that night just before I went to sleep. Automatic writing is a very useful form of medium-ship that can be used to help people who live at a distance, perhaps in some out-of-the-way place where they have no chance of attending a séance or circle of any kind. There are so many people placed in this position. I have had most pathetic letters from people — one in a lonely spot on the Gold Coast, another in India; in fact, all over the world. It would be most helpful if a few psychic people (who had developed their power of automatic writing sufficiently well to enable them to obtain a certain amount of reliable and evidential matter) would form themselves into a small society for the benefit of bereaved and lonely souls who are isolated in out-of-the-way places abroad, or even in England, where there are people who are tied by their work, lack of money and so on, from attending sittings or taking any active part in these things, just as much as if they lived in the Sahara or the backblocks of Australia.

Some people tell me that they never get real *automatic* writing; they are fully conscious of every word they write, yet they know they are not providing the material out of their own minds; indeed, they are often unaware of what the next word will be. I have experienced this kind myself, though I think that the comparatively small amount of writing that has come through me has been a mixture of the automatic and inspirational. It is not only possible to get short evidential messages in automatic writing,, but of late years there has been some wonderful work done in this manner. Look at the "Scripts of

Cleoph as,” by Miss Gertrude Cummings. Many learned people who have read this book say it stands out as a marvellous and inspired work, the like of which has never been equaled. I believe that a great deal of what is called normal literary work of a high order is inspired by people on the Other Side. That does not mean that we possess no creative power of our own. We *do*, and we must develop it as much and as well as we can, but the help of an expert on whatever subject we are concentrating, will certainly be helpful, even if the expert has passed over to the Other Side. The fact that he has passed over will make his assistance all the more valuable, as he will help without interfering; he has no axe to grind, and has left jealousy and envy behind, and therefore may make a better collaborator than any you could find in the physical body, if only you can put yourself in touch with such a one.

I believe there are many noble intellectual souls on the Other Side whose mission it is to help with the spiritual and mental progress of those on earth, and who are eagerly watching for an opportunity to work through a suitable psychical instrument. Here, again, is the necessity for us to develop our mentality so that we can think and live on a pure and lofty plane of thought, for otherwise we cannot contact the minds of these Higher Ones.

CHAPTER XLV

HEALING AND DIAGNOSIS

WHAT a wonderful demonstration of spiritual power can be given through healing, whether it is by the “laying on of hands,” or of the mental kind!

In this chapter I am not speaking of the wonders of Christian Science, but of the helpful work that can be done if one cooperates with a healing Guide, one who may have been a doctor in his earth life, or a natural healer. Many of the latter are North American Indians who practised the art of healing as a part of their normal lives when on earth. They seem to have tremendous power in helping to direct the healing forces through a suitable medium. I think there is no doubt that the power for healing is available to all. We have only to learn how to use *it* — *conduct* it, as it were.

When Our Lord was on earth I feel sure He meant us to understand that this was so, and that we could and *should* draw on the Divine power in order to heal ourselves, *and others*. It is a curious thing that it is always easier to heal others than heal oneself. It is as if the power can only *flow through* one and out again to another person, almost as if it cannot *stay* in one unless it is directed there by someone else. This is a difficult thing to explain, and I know there are exceptions, but I am sure that this is the general rule. In other words, the physician finds it very difficult to heal himself.

In an earlier chapter I told you how North Star came in touch with me, and he certainly helped several people in an extraordinary way. Fedra, too, has a certain amount of healing power, but has very little time to spare for using it, as it is all taken up by transmitting the messages from the different Communicators to the sitters. Many years ago, just before I began my professional work as a trance medium, I worked with a West End doctor as a trance subject for the purpose of curing patients of different troubles, usually of a nervous order, such as stammering, stuttering, hallucinations, melancholia, etc.

This process was called “Suggestion by Transference” as far as I remember. I would go into the trance state (no one has ever put me into that condition — I always induce it myself) and the doctor would speak to my subjective mind and tell it what was wrong with the patient, and that it must get into touch with the patient's subjective mind so as to eliminate the trouble from it. At least, this is how the doctor explained the process, but Fedra always flatly contradicted him. He did not believe in the existence of Fedra, and sometimes she used to insist on talking to him with the idea that she must convince him that she was really a person. He always repeated the same thing to her over and over again, “No, you are not a personality, you are simply subjective mind. “Fedra did not understand the term at all in those early days of her work, and used to assure him,

“Fedra is *not* a subjective mind; Fedra is a person.”

The arguments must have been very trite and uninteresting, as evidently the doctor and Feda said very little else to each other on the subject of her personality except the sentences I have given, but they apparently never tired of repeating them to each other over and over again. Now and again Feda would give him a message from some relation of his on the Other Side, but he always put it down to the “subjective mind,” and I think Feda imagined this was rather an opprobrious term, because for a long time after, if she disapproved of anybody, she would say she was afraid the person was an objective mind. “Eventually Feda produced such a convincing bit of evidence for the doctor that he could no longer attribute it to “subjective mind,” and request a mutual friend to call and ask me to tell Feda that at last he was convinced that she really was an entity — a personality — and not a subjective mind at all. Feda took the news very calmly, but I think she was pleased, as she liked the doctor in spite of his rather peremptory methods with her.

All this is rather “by the way,” but I had to bring it in, in order to point out the difference between the entirely mental lines of healing and those of the spiritual.

I found the mental kind was extremely exhausting, so much so that soon after beginning my trance mediumship, I had to give it up entirely. When I worked with North Star I did not find it so tiring, but of course I found I could not do it in addition to my “Feda” sittings, for the simple reason that I had not got the time for both. I think that the healing work of the doctor was really helped a great deal by spirit doctors and Guides, though at the time he would not believe it. Indeed, I think it was the lack of *conscious* cooperation with, and appreciation of, the work of the spirit helpers that caused me to find that work so exhausting.

The healer who knows and acknowledges the cooperation of Guides finds that though he or she may feel a certain amount of natural bodily and mental tiredness after a long spell of healing work, he gets something back later — is recharged, in fact. It is extraordinary how quickly one recuperates. This had not seemed to be the case at all when I was working entirely on the “subjective mind” lines. I was very tired after, and did not recover until I had had quite a good deal of rest.

Quite a number of people possess the power of healing, but it depends on the way they develop and use it whether they kill or cure by it. I think that it is very necessary to understand a few simple rules — rules that perhaps the experienced teacher of healing would hardly think it necessary to impress on the student, yet which I personally have found to be most important in actual practice.

There are now many centers for healing, and for instructing people how to heal, too. No one need say, “I don't know — how to set about learning such a work.” In London there are excellent institutions where healing classes are held, and even in small provincial towns such circles may be found, where they are always ready to admit anyone who sincerely desires to develop their gifts and help others in their turn.

When North Star controlled me for healing, he always appeared to appeal to someone far higher than himself before commencing his treatment. He never spoke, but he used to hold his hands upward and outward as if he expected something to be put, or poured, into them. His attitude was obviously one of prayer, or supplication, though he was usually in a standing position. After a moment or two he would approach the patient. If the trouble was a local one, he usually found the exact spot and began to treat it, sometimes kneading the air just above it, making curious little movements, and touching the place very lightly, so that even if it were very tender, I have never known a patient who felt any pain when he did so, only a curious soothed feeling. This happened even when the patient has been unable to bear the pressure of a sheet upon the affected area.

It is most important that you should previously make yourself sensitive to your Guide, and be sufficiently in touch with him for him to be able, through you, either to diagnose the patient's condition, or sense the diseased part or seat of trouble, directly he begins to control you.

If the trouble is one of nervous origin, the Guide will probably treat the spine, back of the neck, and head. Through me North Star would always make *downward* passes, after he had treated the trouble locally (if it were possible to do so), finishing the passes either at an angle, such as the shoulders to begin with, the elbows, finger tips, then down to the knees, and finally sweeping downwards from the crown of the head to the tips of the toes, as if he were finally clearing the entire organism. His movements were extremely vigorous at times, but his *touch* was extraordinarily light and delicate. Nowadays, he often goes to work with a gentleman who is not a professional healer, but who has done a great deal of work by "absent treatment."

You will find excellent instructions for both present and absent treatment in Margaret V. Underhill's and Helen Macgregor's book on "Psychic Development," which I have previously said should be read by everybody who is desirous of developing any of the psychical faculties. I only gave the details concerning North Star and his passes because it was my own personal experience of healing; but there are many other different methods, though several people I know have worked very successfully on North Star's lines.

There are two things which I feel every healer should avoid. The one is attempting to give too long a treatment at a time. The other is talking, and allowing the mind to wander while treating a patient. This, of course, applies to healers who use their power "normally," as the majority do; only a comparatively small number of people heal in "full trance."

A friend of mine (I will call her Mrs. B.) had excellent powers of healing, when she chose to use them properly. She helped me very much on one or two occasions, and I began to be very hopeful indeed about the quality of her power, and of her service to sick and suffering people. One day we went together to visit a friend who was almost a stranger to Mrs. B., for she had only met her once or twice before. Our hostess complained of a

very bad headache, and Mrs. B. proffered her some healing treatment, which our hostess believes in and usually responds to very quickly and satisfactorily. While treating her, Mrs. B. kept up an incessant flow of talk, mostly reminiscences of people, places and things about which her patient knew, and I am afraid, cared nothing. After about ten minutes of it, I tried to give Mrs. B. a hint that it was better to keep her thoughts on the matter in hand, but she did not take it. All this time her hands were making passes, and the “healing” was apparently being carried on, but our hostess was visibly wilting under the treatment, and at last she could stand it no longer, but made some excuse and escaped to her bedroom. The next time I saw her she told me that the “treatment” had almost unnerved her; her head was worse; she had spent a restless night and felt very poorly all next day.

Mrs. B. came to see me again a few weeks later.

She remarked that I looked tired, and kindly suggested she should give me a treatment. I consented, because I wanted to find out whether she would have the same drastic effect on me as she had had on my friend. I sat down and she began making the usual passes.

It was very soothing and relaxing, and I began to feel the benefit of it quite quickly. After a few minutes Mrs. B. began to talk about some mundane subject that had no connection with the healing treatment she was giving me. At first I took no notice, but tried to keep my mind and body passive and receptive so that I could absorb her “healing” power, but after a very short time I began to feel a most irritable condition of the nerves. I could not sit still — I felt so unusually jumpy — and eventually I had to stop the treatment, feeling worse than I had before she began it.

Afterwards Feda explained that it was most important that the mind of the healer (when he or she is working normally and consciously) should help to direct the power, cooperate with the Guide in focusing it on the patient. Feda said that using the mental power to remember and retail incidents that had no relation to the matter in hand would absolutely waste the power. In fact, the Guides have again and again warned me never to waste my psychic or mental energy in unnecessary talk when I am intending to use my psychic powers in any direction, either on sittings or creative or constructive work of any kind. I believe that one is *throwing away* power when one uses up one's strength in meaningless chatter. There are times when a certain amount of talking “loosens” one — an enthusiastic exchange of views and plans between friends is often very stimulating and opens the safety valves, so to speak, but one should be chary of indulging even in this pleasant pastime if one has some definite work to carry out. I never talk before a sitting or allow myself to listen to anybody else doing so, if I can help it.

I know there are a few people who tell me that they simply exist on excitement and bustle, and do their best psychic work when in the midst of it. “Well, perhaps they do accomplish a certain amount of psychic work, but I have also known some of the friends they claim to have helped, and if they had heard what these unfortunate people said about the results of their “help,” I think they would change their tactics.

CHAPTER XLVI PROPHECY

*Build a little fence of trust around today,
Fill the space with loving work and therein stay,
Look not through the sheltering bars upon tomorrow,
God will help thee bear what comes of joy or sorrow.
M. F. BUTTS*

IF we were all content to live in today, and do our very best in it, life might be a better and certainly a simpler affair than it is for most of us.

Probing into the probabilities of tomorrow brings very little real happiness, and I think we can wear out our powers of resistance in the *contemplation* of tomorrow's difficulties, and render ourselves incapable of tackling today's work as well.

Some people seem to have a remarkable gift of prophecy, or seeing into the future. I think the gift itself is a most useful one in disposing of the assertion that all messages given in a "super-normal" way are merely the result of some form of telepathy between mind and mind on the physical plane, which ceases when the physical brain dies.

We know that many most unlikely happenings have, from time immemorial, been prophesied through psychics and have come to pass exactly as foretold. I have had some very striking illustrations of this kind myself. Though I used the words, "Some people seem to have a remarkable gift of seeing into the future," I only did so because that is the way their gift is usually described, but from the personal experience I have had, and from information received from several trustworthy Guides on the Spirit Side of life, I think that we can always look for one or two explanations of the information regarding the future, which we designate as prophecy.

What I have been told is that those on the Higher Planes are always drawing up and arranging certain plans for the benefit of humanity on the earth plane. The spirits who are in communication with earth are allowed to cooperate by making their friends on earth, with whom they are in touch, acquainted with the plans, or as much of them as it is desirable they shall know, so as to enlist their help in the matter. Some mediums seem to be better qualified for correctly passing on details of plans relating to the future than others. Indeed, there are some psychics through whom nothing comes but the record of things and happenings that are *past*. Others cannot touch upon the past but seem to "tap" the minds of the spirit helpers on matters pertaining to the future only, and can — give practically no information regarding one's friends on the Other Side or evidence about them at all. I once went to such a medium in the West of England. I thought it might be interesting to get a message from my father or mother, or some other friend, should they wish to give one, as I had not given them an opportunity to communicate with me for a considerable time. The medium gave me a sitting lasting

nearly an hour, but from first to last he never described or attempted to do so, anybody I knew, but he *did* give me some very remarkable messages about an important matter regarding which I knew nothing at the time, and which I verified three or four months later. He described, minutely, the people who would be concerned in the affair, people whom I had never seen at the time of the sitting.

Some time after, Fedra told me that she had known about the whole thing, as it had all been arranged by people on the Other Side and was connected with my psychic work. As neither she nor any of my relations could get anything through about themselves at the sitting, Fedra thought she might as well utilize the power and time by telling me something that I should be able to prove later on, and would be interested in. It was not very important that I should know anything about the matter, but on the other hand, there was no particular reason why I should *not* know.

This medium was quite unaware that he was being given the information by a discarnate entity. He said, "I see — or hear — such and such a thing," never once referring to anybody or anything on the Other Side. At one point, soon after he commenced the sitting, I interrupted by saying, "Thank you, what you have told me is very interesting, but do you not see anybody who has passed over near me? Do not any of my spirit friends want to send a message?"

That was quite sufficient. He paused a moment, then raced off, as if he had suddenly been wound up, "A way — over — in — the — valley — of — shadders — I — see — a — man — and — a — woman — do — you — know — them?"

He then waited for me to recognize this rather vague description and I hastily told him I couldn't be sure, so would he kindly go on again on his own lines. I could see that he was a genuine psychic, as he gave me excellent evidence about things belonging to the earth, but directly he contacted "The Valley of Shadders" he seemed lost. Evidently his Guides had been unable to develop him beyond the field of prophecy.

The most striking prediction — and one that affected my whole future, and work — was given to me in the year 1906. It was during that difficult period when I had insisted on attending Spiritualistic meetings in spite of my mother's opposition and bitter dislike of anything or anybody appertaining to the subject. I had lost my singing voice, so far as its being any good for professional purposes was concerned, but with the remnants of it I occasionally sang at the Sunday Spiritualist meetings.

A friend had asked me if I would sing one Sunday afternoon at a children's meeting (the kind of Spiritualist Sunday School that I told you about in an earlier chapter), and she asked me to call for her at the house where she lived so that she could accompany me to the hall. She was an orphan and had made her home with a friend — an older woman who was a medium, and was going to direct the service that afternoon, and also give the clairvoyance at the evening meeting that followed the children's service. I arrived at my friend's house, and was shown by her into a sitting room. She went out of the room to fetch her friend, the medium, whom I had not seen before. I forget this

lady's name, but I will call her Mrs. A. Well, when Mrs. A. entered the room, she advanced towards me with outstretched hand. I put mine into hers, and she looked into my face and said, "Don't say anything, don't interrupt me — your Guides are here, and wish me to tell you something of great importance."

At this time I knew very little about my Guides, if anything at all; in fact, I don't think I had been told that I had any special ones.

Mrs. A. closed her eyes, and still holding my hands, appeared to be speaking partly, or almost entirely, under "control." She said that my Guides were going to prepare me for an important spiritual work, but that my present conditions were antagonistic to it; that I should not be able to embark on it until great changes had taken place and I had met the man who was my affinity, towards whom the Guides were going to direct me.

At that time I had not thought seriously of doing any work myself in the movement. The stage seemed to be the only opening for me, but like most young girls I was thrilled by the reference to "my affinity." As soon as I decently could, I asked the medium whether she could describe the man whom the Guides were so kindly saving up for me.

"Yes," she said, "I see him quite plainly," and to my disgust and disappointment she proceeded to describe "a man about sixty-five, large grey moustache, hair white at the sides, hooked nose, tall, over 6 feet, very thin; wearing cherry-colored trousers ("What a guy," I thought!), pale blue coat trimmed with fur. Hat made of patent leather or some shiny material. Bunch of white feathers at side of it."

She said I ought to meet him within a year. Anyhow she was most emphatic that he was the man for me, and was the one best suited to the spiritual work I should do. I looked for him for some months, and forgot him now and again. When about ten months had passed I joined a company that was playing a sort of romantic drama of the mythical kingdom type, in which an Englishman who, because of his extraordinarily heroic deeds, is proclaimed king of one of those mysterious kingdoms, always described as being in the "heart of Europe."

I had not wanted to join this company, as I had a much better engagement open to me, but I felt strongly (though at that time I would not have called it psychically) impressed to take this particular part. I made friends with another girl, and during our exchange of confidences I told her, rather as a joke, about the very uninteresting and elderly figure of fun who had been described to me as being my affinity, and mentioned that I had not yet met him, and hoped I never should. My companion remarked that we had seen all the men in the company, and there was no one like that, so I was safe for that tour at any rate.

Now, we did not have a dress rehearsal, and did not know what all the costumes were going to be like, as some of the hampers of clothes were late in arriving. So on the opening night, most of us looked very different.

I had just come off the stage after my first entrance, and was waiting in the wings, watching what followed, when to my amazement on walked my affinity, with cherry trousers, pale blue coat, trimmed with fur, grey moustache, black shiny hat, feathers and all, and looking just about sixty-five. (He was supposed to represent an officer in the Silovonian army.)

I rushed to my dressing room and shrieked to my friend that I had seen my affinity, and that it was a man whom she and I absolutely detested as he was dreadfully strict and always "bullying" us for chattering and disturbing the rehearsals. My new friend was as dismayed as I was, but comforted me with the suggestion that if we put our heads together, firmly, we might possibly concoct some scheme for "getting him the sack."

Well, we didn't put our heads together over this worthy object. Instead, we found ourselves, gradually and quite naturally, becoming good friends with him; and eventually everything turned out just as the medium had foretold nearly a year earlier.

Now the whole thing showed proof of a definite plan on the part of the Guides. The medium had either "tapped" the plan, or had been purposely told it by the Guides. I am not quite certain which, and I don't think it matters. Many "predictions or prophecies" simply mean that we are told what is being arranged, or attempted, by our own Guides and friends Over There. Occasionally, when things go wrong and it seems as if the prophecy were not coming true, it is because we ourselves have in some way interfered or bungled matters. It is extraordinary what a number of these predicted happenings do come to pass, and how few fail.

Miss Louise Owen, who may be known to many of you by name, possesses a remarkable gift in this direction. In the winter of 1924, when Mrs. Vale Owen had written to me concerning Mr. Alfred Morris's offer to lend me a house by the sea, Miss Louise Owen (who is no relation to the Rev. George Vale Owen) came to see me, and I told her that we were shortly going away for a change, and when I told her the name of the place, she informed me that she had a cottage there and lived there part of the year. Just before she left me, she turned and said, "I have a strong impression that you are not only going to this place for a month, as you think; you are going to have a house there, and will settle there. It will be good for your husband's health and the Guides will help you to arrange it. I can, clairvoyantly, see you there."

It seemed so impossible at the time that I did not even discuss the possibility of it; in fact, I forgot all about it. Over three years later, things began to move in the direction of our having a cottage near the sea, where I could take my husband occasionally, as hotels and boarding-houses were so expensive, and he could not get the right diet in them. Taking other people's furnished houses was very expensive, and we could not always be sure of getting accommodation just when it was needed. Without remembering Miss Owen's prophecy, I found myself negotiating, raising a mortgage and building a little house by the sea, just as she had said I would. Everything conspired to help me, but not until I had started on the task of building did I remember what had been said.

I drew the plans for the house myself, and knew that my father, who was a clever amateur architect, helped me. I was fortunate in finding a builder who did not laugh at my plans and drawings: in fact, he said they were quite practicable. Before the building actually commenced, Miss Helen Macgregor invited me to have a sitting with her. Her Control is a very vivacious, clever little girl called Pollyanna. Miss Macgregor knew nothing about my building at the seaside, but during the sitting, which was an extremely evidential one, Pollyanna suddenly introduced the subject by beginning to describe the house that I had sketched, and she went on to describe it in detail. Everything she said applied to my plan of the cottage except in one particular which puzzled me very much at the time.

Pollyanna said, "Missus" (this is how she addresses anybody — married or unmarried, old or young), "what is that big glass thing sticking out at the *side* of the house?" I said, "Nothing, unless you are clairvoyantly seeing one of the casement windows standing open; they open outwards, of course." She replied, "No, it isn't a window — it's part of the house. There's a lot of glass in it, and it has a roof, same as the house has."

I told her that was quite wrong, as I had been impressed to draw a square house, with no angles or projections, as it would be much cheaper to build. Even the windows were to be flat — no bays — and the builder had approved, from the point of economy, though of course I would have preferred a more "broken up" and artistic outline could I have afforded it.

Pollyanna was quite positive that she was right.

She consented to go on to other topics, but throughout the rest of the sitting, she ejaculated from time to time, "Yes, it has got a very big piece built out, it has, it has." I did not take any notice, as I felt so sure she had made a mistake. I did not mention the matter to my husband or anybody.

Three months later, the little house was nearly completed. The roof was on, and only a few minor details about distempering and painting remained to be seen to. My husband and I made an appointment to see the builder at the house one morning.

When we arrived we were very pleased with everything.

Suddenly I became aware that my husband and the builder were discussing something, and pointing to the side of the house. The builder began taking measurements. I asked them what it was they were doing, and they explained that it had suddenly occurred to them that it would be absolutely necessary to add a roomy porch, or vestibule, to the house, so that the strong north-easterly winds would not blow right into the front door when it was opened. The builder said he feared we should not be able to use the principal door many times in the winter unless we had the porch, with a second door built on. Strangely enough, none of us had thought of it before.

So Pollyanna's clairvoyance was right after all!

When the porch was finished it was exactly as she had described it: "Big glass thing; roof like the house." She had seen the completed building as my father knew it ought to be.

Pollyanna is remarkably accurate in giving information of things that are entirely unknown to the sitter at the time of the sitting. Her medium, Miss Macgregor, possesses extraordinary power of diagnosis. A lady whom I know went to see her for a sitting a fortnight before she was to have an internal operation; everything had been arranged for it. Miss Macgregor told her she would not have it, as there was "nothing there to operate upon." When the sitter went to have the operation, the surgeon examined her again the day before, and told her that the trouble had unexpectedly dispersed and that no operation would be necessary.

These are only two little instances of the accuracy of Miss Macgregor's mediumship. I have known her make many statements that one thought must be wrong at the time, things about which one would be entirely ignorant as well, but I have never known her to be wrong. I am certain that this is not only due to the strength of her psychic power, but to her natural qualities and characteristics of conscientiousness and sincerity. She is so sure of her ground, her spirit Guides, her *facts*; and that makes all the difference in the world when a psychic has to "fit in" to many different Communicators, and to difficult and varied conditions.

CHAPTER XLVII

FROM DARKNESS INTO LIGHT

*Through love to light! Oh, wonderful the way
That leads from darkness to the perfect day;
From darkness and from sorrow of the night
To morning that comes singing o'er the sea.
Through love to light! Through light,
O God, to Thee,
Who art the Love of Love,
The eternal Light of Light.*

R. W. GILDER.

WHENCE does all this investigation of phenomena, this spiritual and psychical development lead? This is the question that so many people ask — people who have not studied the subject of Spiritualism.

“What's the good of it all?”

My answer, my carefully thought out, definite answer, founded on many years of personal experience, is that Spiritualism leads from ignorance to knowledge, from darkness into light, from “the sorrow of the night to morning that comes singing o'er the sea.”

Is there any other subject under the sun that can do so much for us? Once we realize that there is a Life Beyond, where our dear ones wait for us, does it not make all the difference in the world, not only to our happiness, but to the building up of character, making us have thought for others because of our realization of the continuity of life and love.

I know that the Church tells us to have faith. A few of us seem to be born with a good amount of it. A *great many* ' seem to be born with none at all. What a wonderful thing to have — Faith! Who would not have it if they could? I think there is a path, a direct route to faith for those who were not blessed with it at birth. It is the path of knowledge and reason that we can attain through the study of Spiritualism. It may be objected that faith that has to be based on knowledge is no longer *faith*. Yes, it is, it is a stronger faith, one that can stand the onslaughts of difficulty, sorrow, and even tragedy.

I have seen people who at one time would have sworn by their faith, ministers of the orthodox Church, and others, but when an overwhelming and unexpected sorrow has

come in the form of a bereavement, their faith has been shaken and, in some cases, shattered.

The evidence that they afterwards received through Spiritualism, the comfort and satisfaction of communication with the "lost" beloved one, gave them back the fragments of their broken faith, now cemented beyond any possibility of breakage by the strength of their new knowledge and *certainty*. J. G. Whittier wrote:

*We live by Faith, but Faith is not the slave Of text and legend.
Reason's voice and God's, Nature's and Duty's, never are at odds.
What asks our Father of His children, save Justice and mercy and
humility! A reasonable service of good deeds, Pure living, tenderness
to human needs, Reverence and trust, and prayer for light to see
The Master's footprints in our daily ways.*

I think that communication with those who have passed over helps us to follow "The Master's footprints in our daily ways," not in theory only, but in practice. Many sitters, professed Christians, atheists, or agnostics, after establishing communication with their dear "departed" ones through Feda have asked for a formula, some plain, straightforward spiritual plan on which they could begin to mould their lives afresh. The answer has always been the same.

"You have already got the *only* teaching, the *only* plan, the *only* example that you need. Turn to the New Testament. Read the record of Christ's life, His deeds and words, while on earth, and follow it as well as you can. Stop arguing about abstruse and incidental and subsidiary points, and simply obey His behest to Love one another, and Do unto others as you would be done by."

I smile when I read the nonsense that is written about the ease with which evil spirits impersonate the ones we love, using their names, adopting their manners, being able to read the entire past history of the one whom they impersonate, his relationship to the sitter, and a hundred and one equally marvellous performances.

The evil spirits must really be ministering angels!

"By their fruits ye shall know them," we are told. The only "fruits" I have ever had any personal experience of have been wise and loving guidance, exhorting us to good deeds, pure and noble thoughts. Never, in all the thousands of messages that I have known of during many years' work, have I heard one word that could have any but a helpful and ennobling influence on the character and mind of the recipient.

Of course, I mean this statement to apply only to the communications that have come through properly developed psychics, or to investigators who sit under the right conditions with nothing but "good" in their own minds. I am not referring to the matter that may come into the distraught, unhinged mind of an hysterical or mentally unsound person.

I have had some experience of lunatic asylums, having visited them personally, and also I have two great friends who worked in such places. As a result of our inquiries and observation, and these are supported by statistics, we came to the conclusion that many of these poor people may be suffering from religious mania, but they have never attended a spiritualist séance in their lives. Certainly they have not studied the subject properly and thoroughly, or they would not be there!

How many people have told me that they have been *saved* from the lunatic asylum, not driven into it, by what they have heard and seen through Spiritualism!" If they see our trials and our sorrows, how can they be happy?" I am often asked.

They are happy because they can see farther than we can: they know that it is only for a little while that we mourn, and struggle here. They are not callous to our suffering, neither do they want us to give way to it, but to benefit by it, letting it help us to understand other people's troubles, until we can join them again.

I do not know who wrote the following words. I read them recently in a little book to which no name was attached, but I must give them here, because they are such a complete answer to the oft-repeated question, "Do those we love, who have passed over, see us, and know what we feel about them?"

We are quite sure
That He will give them back — bright, pure and beautiful,
We know He will but keep
Our own and His until we fall asleep.
We know He does not mean
To break the strands reaching between The Here and There.
He does not mean, though heaven be fair,
To change the spirits entering there
That they forget
The eyes upraised and wet,
The lips too still for prayer,
The mute despair.
I am quite sure we will be very glad
That for a little while we were so sad.

THE END