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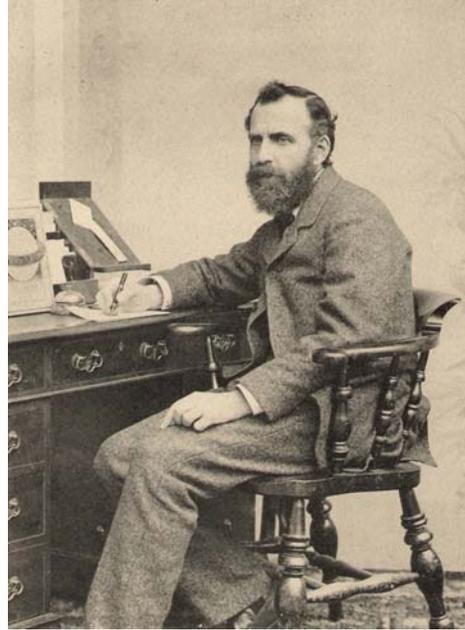
# W. T. STEAD: CHIEF OF THE OLD BRIGADE

By EDITH K. HARPER

*Psychic Science*:—<sup>1</sup>

*“The True Mission of Spiritualism is to make men spiritual.”—W. T. Stead.*

Spiritualism’s long Roll of Honour contains no name more admirable than that of W. T. Stead—a pioneer, if ever there were one. At the height of his public career, his international fame as the Prince of journalists, he boldly announced his conviction of the essential truth of Spiritualism. I use the plain term “Spiritualism” because he used it. He was never ashamed to do so, never beat about the bush. But he did *not* substitute Spiritualism for Christianity, for he held it as part and parcel of Christianity. His religion, his Universal Church, was an ideal “Great as the Love of God, wide as the needs of Man,” and included that inborn longing of the human soul to realise that physical death cannot divide those who love. Or, as Penn the Quaker said, “Those who love beyond the grave cannot be separated by it.”



So Mr. Stead’s first public confession of faith took the form of an address given at the invitation of the London Spiritualist Alliance, at their old rooms, Duke Street, Adelphi. It was on the 14th of March, 1893,<sup>2</sup> and the occasion was specially memorable, because he not only made his first speech on Spiritualism—including an account of his own personal experiments in automatic-writing, so-called, but because he then made known his intention of founding, some day, “Julia’s Bureau” of Inter-communication.<sup>3</sup> A full report of Mr. Stead’s speech, and of other speeches of various members of that crowded and enthusiastic audience are, I believe, still preserved in the archives of “Light.”

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<sup>1</sup> Quarterly Transactions BCPS: *Psychic Science*, Vol. VI.—No. 1. April 1927 pages 30-34.

<sup>2</sup> See also: Richard Boddington, “Stead’s First Appearance”:—“In 1898 was held the first really big International Conference in London, the old St. James’s Hall and the Portman Rooms being utilised. It was here that W. T. Stead first identified himself publicly with our movement. *Psypioneer* 4, No.1:—*The days when it was difficult – A pioneer looks back*, pages 8.10:—<http://www.woodlandway.org/PDF/PP4.1January08.pdf>

<sup>3</sup> *Julia’s Bureau: An Attempt to Bridge the Grave*, taken from *The Review of Reviews*, vol. XXXIX, May, 1909, p. 433:—<http://www.attackingthediabol.co.uk/reviews/bureau.php>



When I wrote “Stead, the Man,” in 1913,<sup>4</sup> Mr. E. W. Wallis, then editor of “Light,” with his usual courtesy and kindness, allowed me to make full use of that material, so, as I there quoted Mr. Stead’s speech almost in full, I need not repeat more here, excepting to emphasise his then declared intention of founding “Julia’s Bureau.” His words were these:—

“I ask you to consider it. Can anything be done?” Can some centre be established, whether it be a College of mediums, or a Bureau of Communication, or whatever you like to call it, by which any person who has lost a friend, and who wishes to receive communications from that friend, may be able to send and receive a message as to the well-being or ill-being as the case may be, and as to the whereabouts of that friend on the other side? Julia says that it can be done, and ought to be done, and she wants me to try and get it done. . . .”

“I speak as a tyro, but I intend to put this thing through. I do not intend to dawdle round it.”

That was nearly thirty-four years ago. Certainly “dawdling” was the last thing of which Mr. Stead could be accused, but “we are in the lap of the gods,” and it was some sixteen years later before Julia’s desire was realised.

On the evening of April 24th, 1909, a small group of enthusiasts dined together at the First Avenue Hotel, High Holborn, by the invitation of W. T. Stead, foremost among pioneers in any field where courage and self-sacrifice were and are their own (and often their only) reward.

That evening was a gala event; the “Coronat Opus” of his many long years of psychological investigation. It was the inauguration of that gallant and quixotic enterprise, known to fame as “Julia’s Bureau.”

We were thirteen at table. The guests included several well-known sensitives, and there were also representatives of interrelated fields of thought, including the veteran Theosophist, Mr. A. P. Sinnett, and our Hon. Treasurer, Mr. E. R. Serocold Skeels. My mother and I were also among the number. Nearly eighteen years ago!—but the memory of that happy group of kindred souls is ever vivid in my mind, as also is the séance which followed it at Mowbray House, formerly the office of the “Review of Reviews,” to which we all repaired later in the evening, for the benediction of the Invisible.

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<sup>4</sup> *Stead the Man, Personal Reminiscences*. First edition appears to be 1914 by William Rider, with an Introduction by Major-General Sir Alfred E. Turner. You can read on line, or download the 1918 reprint. Published by William Rider & Son, Ltd.—<http://archive.org/details/steadmanpersonal00harprich>

Sixteen years earlier Mr. Stead had thrown a bombshell, as it were, into the journalistic world by the publication of “Borderland,” a quarterly review dedicated to every form of psychical investigation, and, as he phrased it, to “seeking the scientific verification of the life and immortality which were brought to light nineteen hundred years ago.”

One of the chief features of that unique Quarterly was the first appearance of “Letters from Julia,” those much-discussed communications in “Automatic Writing” given to Mr. Stead through his own hand, and of which the reception had turned him from a sceptic (in such matters) into a firm believer. Julia’s first acquaintance with Mr. Stead is well known, but for the benefit of the imperfectly informed, let me first recall that Miss Julia A. Ames, of Boston, was an American woman journalist, who wrote much on Temperance and Social Reform, and was a close friend of Lady Henry Somerset and Miss Frances Willard. Miss Lilian Whiting has testified elsewhere to Julia Ames’ noble, enlightened personality and character.<sup>5</sup> She had some correspondence with W. T. Stead, but otherwise their acquaintance was of the slightest; she only saw him twice; she was not a Spiritualist, and they had never discussed the subject. But, it was she who was destined to alter his whole outlook by giving him *proofs of human survival*, that led ultimately to his throwing down the gauntlet in the face of a materialistic world, and risking all that might come of it.

He said once, when asked to state what was the most important moment in his life: “The most important moment in my life was when Julia first wrote with my hand!” and in reply to a kindly warning by an eminent Statesman, hinting at probable loss of prestige, and the like, Mr. Stead retorted: “That is nothing! I have my son Willie’s messages telling me he is alive and well in the Beyond.”

But even “Borderland” was not the *first* milestone in Mr. Stead’s Psychic Quest. Two years earlier, in 1891, he had compiled and issued as a special Christmas number of the “Review of Reviews,” a collection of *Real Ghost Stories*, as a practical attempt to “rationalize the consideration of the science of ghosts.” It was in this connection that he uttered an imperative warning that such studies were not for everyone, certainly not for the very nervous or easily excitable, and that “as the latent possibilities of our complex personality are so imperfectly understood, all experimenting in Hypnotism, Spiritualism, etc., excepting in the most careful and reverent spirit by the most level-headed persons, had much better be avoided.” And in deference to his Roman Catholic friends, he included a special caution to “those who expose themselves to the *horrible consequences of Possession*.”

Mr. Stead sometimes said he was born without the “bump of veneration,” but this was only half true, for his Puritan ancestry and deeply religious training and outlook were with him in even his most adventurous voyages.

In 1897 he published the “Letters from Julia” in volume form, entitled “After Death,” remarking in his Preface: “No one who knows anything of the prejudice that exists on the subject will deny that I have no personal interest to serve in taking up the

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<sup>5</sup> BCPS reference: *Stead; the Man*, by Edith K. Harper. Chapter IV. “Who is Julia.” Read on line Chapter IV, page 35:—<http://archive.org/details/steadmanpersonal00harprich>

exceedingly unpopular and much ridiculed position of a believer in the reality of such communications.”

After that, the Editorial Offices of the “Review of Reviews,” both in Norfolk Street and later in Kingsway, was, not unnaturally, besieged by a constant stream of *soi-disant* mediums, real or imaginary, good, bad, or indifferent. Anyone claiming the gift was sure of a hearing, and equally sure of financial assistance if needed. The “Knight Errant of Womanhood” became the Medium’s Friend.

I think it was the late Lord Milner who once affectionately characterised, W. T. Stead, his former Editorial Chief, as a fine combination of “Don Quixote, Phineas T. Barnum, and the Apostle Paul.” Never was this threefold aspect seen in more attractive effect than when psychic matters were in question. Between the appearance of “Real Ghost Stories,” in 1891 (and “More Ghost Stories” the following year), and the establishment of “Julia’s Bureau” in 1909, much water flowed under the Thames bridges. “Borderland” had run a meteoric course for three or four years,<sup>6</sup> then ceased to exist. In December, 1907, Mr. Stead received a definite “signpost,” which meant for him that he was to give everything else second place to the work of reiterating his own personal testimony that *There is no Death*. This signpost came through the death of his eldest son, and it has all been told and retold. His own words, spoken by him at a public meeting, were these:—

“I had always said I would never make my *final* pronouncement upon Spiritualism until someone near and dear in my own family passed into the great beyond, then I should know whether Spiritualism stood the test of a great bereavement, bringing life and immortality to light. And I am here to-night to tell you that the reality of my son’s continued existence, and of his tender care for me, have annulled the bitterness of death.”

So the Bureau was launched. Its whole cost was borne by Mr. Stead. It was he who paid the mediums, and the clerical staff, and the rent, as well as the thousand-and-one incidental expenses incurred in such an undertaking. As the correspondence was world-wide, postal expenses alone were enormous. A library of Psychical literature called “The Borderland Library,” was run in connection with the Bureau, but it was not an integral part. The annual subscription to the library was one guinea. This, however, did not involve the use of “Julia’s Bureau.” The latter was entirely gratis, and it did not include the Library. How Julia dowered Mr. Stead with a thousand pounds for her Bureau is another story, also well known.

For three years, from 1909 until 1912, the work went on unceasingly. At the end of the first twelve months, when we surveyed results, Mr. Stead felt his faith had been amply justified, and when I placed before him some of the sheaves of letters in which grateful hearts had allowed themselves to overflow, he exclaimed: “Whatever happens, nothing can take this golden year from our lives! But we must go ahead!”

“Whatever happens!” . . . That was soon to happen which would stop the earthly expression of all his self-sacrificing zeal, and leave his loyal helpers leaderless. In

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<sup>6</sup> First issue July 1893 cost of 1/6d. Final issue October 1897 (IV. No.4)’, this was intended as a temporary suspension, but the publication never returned.

March, 1909,<sup>7</sup> he received an invitation to speak at New York on Men and Religion's Forward Movements, and he half reluctantly accepted, because, as he said: "It will give me an opportunity to speak of Julia's Bureau in her own land."

It seemed to him another call, and he meant to extend his visit in the States, in order to give a series of lectures on this, the subject nearest his heart. A few months before, in 1908<sup>8</sup>—at a sitting of Julia's Circle—old "Grey Feather" called out in a voice of thunder: "Chief Steady, you crosse Big Pond *one time more* before you shuttee eye."

"One time more!" A curious prophecy, yet fulfilled to the letter, alas! All the world knows that! The "Titanic" struck an iceberg late on the night of April 14th, and sank in mid-ocean in the early hours of Monday, April 15th, 1909.<sup>9</sup> Upwards of 1,600 persons sank with her, among them being W. T. Stead.

*May the Lord bless and keep him.*

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## JULIA'S BUREAU

### Points of interest noted by Paul Gaunt:<sup>10</sup>



Edith K. Harper states it was 1893 when "*he then made known his intention of founding, some day, "Julia's Bureau" of Inter-communication.*"

### In 1894, Julia wrote:<sup>11</sup>

"I want to ask you if you can help me at all in a matter in which I am much interested. I have long wanted to establish a place where those who have passed over could communicate with the loved ones left behind. At present the world is full of spirits longing to speak to those from whom they have been parted, just as I longed to speak to you, but without finding a hand to enable them to write. It is a strange spectacle. On your side, souls full of anguish for bereavement; on this side, souls full of sadness because they

<sup>7</sup> This should presumably read as 1912!

<sup>8</sup> Should read 1911!

<sup>9</sup> Should read 1912

<sup>10</sup> The primary information is taken from *My Father*, by Estelle W. Stead, Published by Thomas Nelson and Sons, Ltd. London, Edinburgh, and New York, 1913

<sup>11</sup> Pages 316-318

cannot communicate with those whom they love. What can be done to bring these sombre, sorrow-laden persons together? To do so requires something which we cannot supply. You must help. But how? It is not impossible. And when it is done, death will have lost its sting and the grave its victory. The Apostle thought this was done. But the grave has not been so easily defeated, and death keeps its sting. Who can console us for the loss of our beloved? Only those who can show us that they are not lost, but are with us more than ever. Do you not think I have been much more with my friend since I put off my flesh than I used to be? Why, I dwell with her in a way that before was quite impossible. I was never more with her than have been since I came to this side. But she would not have known it, nor would you heard from me at all, but for the accident of your meeting her!

“What is wanted is a bureau of communication between the two sides. Could you not establish some such sort of office with one or more trustworthy mediums? If only it were to enable the sorrowing on earth to know, if only for once, that their so-called dead live nearer there than ever before, it would help to dry many a tear and soothe many a sorrow. I think you could count upon the eager co-operation of all on this side.

“We on this side are full of joy at the hope of this coming to pass. Imagine how grieved we must be to see so many whom we love, sorrowing without hope, when those for whom they sorrow are trying in vain by every means to make them conscious of their presence. And many also are racked with agony, imagining that their loved ones are lost in hell, when in reality they have been found in the all-embracing arms of the love of God. It is the most important thing there is to do. For it brings with it the trump of the Archangel, when those that were in their graves shall awake and walk forth once more among men.

“I was at first astonished to learn how much importance the spirits attach to the communications which they are allowed to have with those on earth. I can, of course, easily understand, because I feel it myself—the craving there is to speak to those whom you loved, and whom you love; but it is much more than this. What they tell me on all sides, and especially my dear guides, is that the time is come when there is to be a great spiritual awakening among the nations, and that the agency which is to bring this about is the sudden and conclusive demonstration, in every, individual case which seeks for it, of the reality of the spirit, of the permanence of the soul, and the immanent of the Divine.”

### **It would be another 15 years before the Bureau would open its doors:**

As noted, the Bureau was originally conceived through Stead’s automatic scripts from the spirit of Julia A. Ames. Miss Ames was around thirty years old, an American journalist who worked for the *Union Signal* Boston, and a highly religious Methodist. Stead first met Julia at his office of the *Review of Reviews*, at Mowbray House in 1890. A subsequent visit saw her meeting Stead again, this time at his home Cambridge House where she met some of his family. They had tea in the garden under

an old oak tree<sup>12</sup> that was situated at the end of the lawn. These two occasions were the only times the pair had met for shortly after her return to America, Julia died of pneumonia in Boston.

During the autumn of 1908, Julia wrote, through Stead's hand, stating that the necessary finances would be forthcoming. Stead had written an article in early December of this year entitled: "*How I know the Dead Return*," in which he gave an account of his own experiences, and reasons for his belief. This was published in the *Fortnightly Review*, *New York American*, and *La Revue*, in Australia and in India.

The publication of this article resulted in Stead being offered the position of "Special Correspondent". He accepted the post on condition that he would receive £1,000 a year. On January 19th 1909 the position was confirmed by *New York American*.

Estelle states:—<sup>13</sup>

So he founded Julia's Bureau—and founded it for one purpose, and one purpose only—to enable those who had lost their dead, who were sorrowing over friends and relatives, to get into touch with them again; to minister to the aching heart, not to satisfy the inquisitive brain.

The Bureau was formally opened on April 24th 1909, with Mowbray House<sup>14</sup> as its London office, and Cambridge House, Wimbledon as its "Inner Sanctuary"<sup>15</sup>



<sup>12</sup> This final meeting place at Stead's home was to later become the inner sanctuary of "Julia's Bureau, and the old oak tree would become known as "Julia's Oak".

<sup>13</sup> *My Father* page 320.

<sup>14</sup> Mowbray House, Norfolk Street, London, situated on the Thames Embankment was Stead's office that he took for his work in 1890 - *The Review of Reviews*.

<sup>15</sup> Cambridge House, Wimbledon Park, London SW was the Stead family home.

The cost of maintaining the Bureau fell entirely on Stead. The £1,000 he was earning as Special Correspondent to the *New York American* went towards the running of the Bureau, but this did not cover Stead's expenditure. Each person sitting with a medium worked out at two guineas (£2. 2s. 0d) over and above the outlay of the offices, etc; it was nearer £2,000 during the first year.

Julia absolutely forbade any charge being made to the sitter and stated:—<sup>16</sup>

“we must not charge applicants any fee for the services of the Bureau, but that after their application had been dealt with those who had benefited by the Bureau were allowed, if they so please, of their own free will, to contribute either two guineas to defray the cost of another case or any multiple of two guineas as a thank-offering to her Bureau”

How then, was the Bureau to be financed? A minimum of three sittings a day would as stated involve an outlay heading towards £2,000 a year, and there were often more.

Four months after the opening<sup>17</sup> of the Bureau, Stead wrote:—<sup>18</sup>

“I confess that this reliance for the financing of the Bureau upon gratitude for services rendered seems to most persons on the earth plane somewhat unbusinesslike. So far the results have hardly justified the splendid confidence of Julia. But I am going on relying upon her assurance that the necessary funds will not fail to be provided when they are needed.”

Estelle Stead commented:—<sup>19</sup>

However, extra funds were not forthcoming, and after the first year Mowbray House had to be given up, and the whole of the work was carried on from Cambridge House.<sup>20</sup>

Later on it was found impossible to give more than one sitting to each applicant, though, if this one sitting failed of results, a second was arranged with another medium.

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<sup>16</sup> *My Father* Page 342-343.

<sup>17</sup> During this time 150 sittings were given by the Bureau.

<sup>18</sup> *My Father* Page 343.

<sup>19</sup> *My Father* Page 343.

<sup>20</sup> March 1910, Mr. Stead's lease of Mowbray House expired, the Bureau ceased to work from there, and the archives were moved to Cambridge House, from which the correspondence was then carried on.

I should explain here of what a sitting consisted. The sitter was required to fill in a number of forms for various reasons that we do not have the space to go into. If the sitter was accepted,<sup>21</sup> they would receive three separate sittings with different mediums,<sup>22</sup> the first being at the bureau with a staff medium. The two subsequent sittings would take place away from the bureau, possibly at the medium's premises. At each of the three sittings, a stenographer who recorded everything said accompanied the sitter. The reports were then sent to the sitters. The recipients were requested to give detailed feedback to the bureau; for example, could the information given be explained by telepathy? Could the information have been received by other means? Did the sitter think that they were brought into communication with a loved one etc? The bureau would then compare these reports with the three sittings received. Each was carefully filed in the archives, and some of the results were published.

Each morning the staff would attend a morning circle, a chair always placed at the head of the table for Julia; after all it was her Bureau [note the photograph on page 117]. Each staff member in turn took the service, with Julia generally selecting the hymn. When Mowbray House closed, Julia's Circle, as it was always called, continued, but only once a week on a Wednesday evening at Cambridge House. It was conducted in the same manner as the morning circles at Mowbray House. These continued until William Stead's death. He was referred to as the "Chief", and after his death the circles continued intermittently during the summer, with two places being reserved for Julia and the Chief.

Stead attended his last Julia's Circle on April 3rd 1912, at which he presided choosing for the Bible Reading:—<sup>23</sup>

"... the seventeenth chapter of St. John, in which Christ, feeling the hour draw nigh when He must leave the World, prays God to glorify Him, to preserve His apostles, and to glorify them, and all other believers with Him in Heaven."

"The hymn, too, told of parting and farewell, for Julia expressed the wish it should be Harriet Auber's "Our Blest Redeemer," and wrote the following message:—

"April 3rd, 1912.<sup>24</sup> It is a solemn thought that after to-night my beloved Circle may not meet in its entirety for some time. But hold the meeting weekly, in all faith and confidence, and in good time the joy of re-union will more than atone for the pain of separation. Much that is of great importance

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<sup>21</sup> To minimise any risks e.g., mischievous spirits or sitters with dubious motives, Julia undertook the personal direction of the Bureau, making the rules and conditions for all.

<sup>22</sup> Those who were unable to attend the London office were asked to send in three articles to be psychometrised by each medium. Those using the postal system would, so far as possible, receive the same treatment and process as an attending sitter.

<sup>23</sup> *My Father* Pages 371-372.

<sup>24</sup> Given through Miss Harper's hand.

will take place before then. I particularly wish dear William to preside at the service to-night. Sing 'Our Blest Redeemer.' God's blessing on you all, and a good journey to my beloved comrade."

"JULIA A. AMES."

Over 600 people<sup>25</sup> received help and consolation during the three years of the Bureau's activity. The Bureau employed well-known mediums e.g., Alfred Vout Peters,<sup>26</sup> J. J. Vango,<sup>27</sup> and Robert King.<sup>28</sup> Etta Wreidt on her visit to London, at the invitation of Stead, held séances at Julia's Bureau in 1911. After Stead's fateful last voyage on the Titanic in April 1912, he had intended to bring Wreidt back to England on his return trip. At this time she was waiting for Stead in New York, the Titanic's destination.

At some time after Stead's death in 1912, Julia's Bureau closed. In 1914 Stead's daughter Estelle, founded The 'W. T. Stead' Borderland Library and Bureau. The opening of the Bureau in 1914 was to give much support to the bereaved during the First World War. In 1936, it closed its doors forever.

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<sup>25</sup> *Encyclopedia of Occultism & Parapsychology* (Gale Research Inc), puts the number of sittings around 1,300, during the three years with Stead's running costs around £1,500 a year. Both different to Stead's daughter's information in 1913. Estelle Stead noted on page 340: "In the first four months there were 150 cases (sittings) undertaken by the Bureau, ..." I suspect the figure given (600) is yearly, rather than during the three years.

<sup>26</sup> Peters opened a campaign with Miss Stead in 1925 (the only two surviving members of Julia's Bureau). See Volume 4, No.2:—*Alfred Vout Peters – Paul J. Gaunt*, pages 29-38:—  
<http://www.woodlandway.org/PDF/PP4.2February08..pdf>

<sup>27</sup> His long career as a medium will be featured in a later issue.

<sup>28</sup> According to the *Encyclopedia of Occultism & Parapsychology* (Gale Research Inc): Robert King was the chief psychic of Julia's Bureau from 1909 – 1913. If this is correct, the Bureau continued for at least eight months after Stead's death in April 1912.

Mr. Robert King was present each day from 10am until 1pm for consultation. Giving clairvoyance and clairaudience, he had been introduced to Mr. Stead by Miss Scatcherd in the course of her own psychic investigations, and this led to his engagement by Stead as a medium for the Bureau. In Mr. King's absence Mr. A. Vout Peters acted as "locum tenens." See page 152, *Stead the Man*:—  
<http://archive.org/details/steadmanpersonal00harprich>

# THE W. T. STEAD BUREAU TO CLOSE

*Light*:—<sup>29</sup>

MISS ESTELLE W. STEAD has sent to the members and workers of the W. T. Stead Library and Bureau a circular letter announcing that the Bureau is to be closed at the end of the present session in April. This is news that will be received with regret by a wide circle.

The Library, Miss Stead informs us, is to be transferred to The Friendship Centre<sup>30</sup> at 85 Lancaster Gate, London, and to be named the “W. T. Stead Memorial Library.”

Miss Stead’s circular letter is in the following terms:

“MY DEAR MEMBERS AND WORKERS,—I have a sad piece of news to break to you, at least I hope you will feel it is sad, even as I do. At the end of this Session I am closing the Bureau, for there is other work for me to do. You ask, why? The Bureau is so well known, is doing a good work, etc., etc., and perhaps some of you will say we shall miss it; I hope so.

“I will explain. In 1912 when my father passed on through the sinking of the ‘Titanic,’ he told me I had to close ‘Julia’s Bureau’ (the Bureau he had opened in 1909 at her request for communication between the two worlds), because the special work for which it was opened had been achieved, but that when such a bureau was again needed I should know, and the means would be furnished to open it. In 1914, soon after war broke out and many were passing over, the need was great. I knew the time had come. As promised, the means were provided, and I opened ‘The ‘W. T. Stead’ Borderland Library and Bureau. The Bureau had a special work to do, and when that work was done and my term of service in this direction was over, I should know. I thought it would not be for very long and I had hopes of taking up my stage work again. But it was not to be. The Bureau, specially opened for those who passed on through the war, had further work to do. I have carried on the work happily, convinced that when the time came to close I should be given direct instruction to do so.

“Ever since my mother’s passing in 1932 I have known that time was drawing near. It filled me with sadness. I tried to persuade myself that I was wrong, for I know how many love this place and have been helped through coming here, but there was really no doubt in my mind, I knew it had to come and now I dare hesitate no longer.



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<sup>29</sup> *Light*, March 12, 1936 page 170.

<sup>30</sup> Stephen Foster founded the Friendship Centre in 1929; it became the home of the Conan Doyle Memorial Psychic Library and Museum. In early 1937, the Friendship Centre became known as—“The Friendship Centre and the ‘W. T. Stead’ Memorial Library.” See *Psypioneer*:—5, No.5, this entire issue is dedicated to Sir Arthur Conan Doyle:—<http://woodlandway.org/PDF/PP5.5May09.pdf>

“I have carried on the work for 22 years. All the time I have been conscious of the guidance of my father and Julia, our Presidents in the spirit world. It has been a real joy to me to carry on in conjunction with them the work they started. As I look back over the years my heart is full of thankfulness for the many who through coming to the Bureau have been brought into touch with their loved ones in spirit; have gained a better understanding of God’s Kingdom; a wider outlook and a more definite purpose in life, secure in the knowledge that there is no death. I am also happy in knowing that so many of our Mediums love this place and have found sympathy, understanding and encouragement at the Bureau before branching out on their own.

“When the Bureau was opened in 1914 there were very few centres; now doors are open and opening all over London and the provinces for the seekers after knowledge and the sad who need comfort.

“To the members and workers who have so loyally supported me I give sincere thanks, and I gratefully acknowledge all I owe to Mrs. Bayley Worthington, our President, who made it possible for the Bureau to open in 1914,<sup>31</sup> and has stood by me so faithfully all these years.

“When I close down this side of the work in April, I feel it will be au-revoir and not good-bye to many of you, for after a time of quiet and attention to personal affairs, I hope the work I am to do will bring me into touch with many of you again”

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<sup>31</sup> Mrs. Bayley Worthington provided rent for rooms for two years.

**Interested!**

**UCL**  
**Centre for the History of Psychological**  
**Disciplines**

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**CALL FOR PAPERS:**

**PSYCHICAL RESEARCH IN THE HISTORY OF**  
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**14-15 SEPTEMBER 2012, UNIVERSITY COLLEGE LONDON**

**Keynote speakers:**

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<sup>32</sup> UCL Centre for the History of Psychological Disciplines, University College London, London WC1E 6BT <http://www.ucl.ac.uk/cehp/chpd>

<sup>33</sup> Leslie Price writes:—"I plan to offer to this conference selection committee, a paper about Augustus and Sophia De Morgan and their early investigations into Spiritualism. He was apparently the first UK scientist to engage in such research."

# Felicia Rudolphina Scatcherd

1862–1927

In last month's issue of *Psypioneer* we published an article "Notes on Mr. Stanley De Brath's Career" which originally appeared in *Psychic Science*, 1924. On page 104 of this issue,<sup>34</sup> I included a psychic photograph taken by the Crewe Circle, at the British College of Psychic Science on July 24th 1924. The psychic photograph showed an "extra" of the recently deceased Dr. Gustave Geley, with three sitters Mrs. Barbara McKenzie, Stanley De Brath, and Miss Felicia R. Scatcherd.

Miss Scatcherd was well acquainted within Spiritualism and Psychical Research, as her obituary, published below shows.<sup>35</sup>

## The Passing of Miss F. R. Scatcherd.

*The Two Worlds*:—<sup>36</sup>

As briefly announced last week, we have to record the passing to the higher life of one of the most enthusiastic workers that Spiritualism has had of late years, in the person of Miss Felicia Scatcherd, whose transition took place at her residence, 14, Park-terrace, London, on Saturday, March 12th, at the age of 64 years. Her transition followed a long period of uncertain health, but she had looked forward to a complete recovery.

Felicia Rudolphina Scatcherd (Felix Rudolph),<sup>37</sup> was the daughter of Watson Scatcherd, of the Indian Civil Service, and Emily Frances, only daughter of the Rev. Augustus Crofton. She was for some time editor of the *Asiatic Review*, and up to the time of her passing was still associated with that journal as honorary co-editor. She was a member of the Council of the East India Association, life member of the Sociological Society, and of the British Association for the Advancement of Science.

She had travelled extensively in the Near East, and had lectured on social science, psychology, Spiritualism, and on behalf of the oppressed nations. She was one of W. T. Stead's helpers in his great European effort to establish international peace, and assisted him in the founding of the "Julia Bureau."<sup>38</sup> She was hailed by him and others as the "M. P. for Humanity."

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<sup>34</sup> *Psypioneer* Volume 8, No.3:—<http://www.woodlandway.org/PDF/PP8.3March2012.pdf>

<sup>35</sup> Note by LP:—The College of Psychic Studies (CPS) recently displayed on their main staircase a fine study of Miss Scatcherd by Miss Dora Head, the photographer whose work was much appreciated by Spiritualists." CPS:—<http://www.collegeofpsychicstudies.co.uk>

<sup>36</sup> *The Two Worlds*, March 25, 1927 pages 182-183.

<sup>37</sup> Wikipedia: Felicia Rudolphina Scatcherd:—[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Felicia\\_Rudolphina\\_Scatcherd](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Felicia_Rudolphina_Scatcherd)

<sup>38</sup> A search in, *Stead the Man, Personal Reminiscences*, brings up some of her involvement with Stead and Julia's Bureau:—<http://archive.org/details/steadmanpersonal00harprich>

At the time of her transition she was the Vice-President of the Stead Bureau and a member of the Society for Psychical Research. She was also Vice-President of the Greek Socialist Party and the Greek Labour League. She was a delegate to the International Conference of Housing and City Planning in New York, 1925, and to the International Spiritualist Congress in Paris, 1926.



Her pen had been used widely, and her publications include “Human Radio-Activity,” “Sir William Crookes and Psychic Research,” and numerous articles on the Near East, Armenia, Russia, “The Friends of India,” etc. She was a very capable lecturer, and certainly one of the finest conversationalists we have ever met. She had friends in every country in Europe, and had worked long and arduously for the oppressed nations of Europe, particularly the smaller nations in the Far East. During the war she did a large amount of international work, and was well known in most of the chancelleries of Europe.

In the realm of psychical research she gave very valuable assistance to Sir William Crookes, Sir William Barrett, Professor Richet, and Dr. Baraduc.<sup>39</sup> Her experiments in psychic phenomena were very varied. She began as a student of psychical research, but early arrived at the conclusion that Spiritualism held the true solution to its problems.<sup>40</sup> She threw herself whole-heartedly into the Spiritualist movement, was a member of the S.N.U., and was always the stalwart friend of mediums. She conducted extensive experiments in psychic photography, particularly with the Crewe Circle, and there was scarcely any phase of humanitarian, political, and religious work in which she was not known.

To know Felicia Scatcherd was an education in itself. She was a mine of information upon scores of topics, and had met practically all the great men of the last forty years. She was small and sparing in build, but her eyes were always bursting with spiritual life. To know her was to love her, and any close association with her engulfed one in

<sup>39</sup> Dr. M. Baraduc held similar interests in psychic photographs, for example: Thought Photography. Examples of his work can be found in Stead’s Borderland, July 1896 Vol. III No.3.

<sup>40</sup> A debate was held on November 9, 1922 at the London Spiritualist Alliance on the ‘Relations between Spiritualists and the Society for Psychical Research’, presided by Dr. Abraham Wallace. Miss Scatcherd “referred to the rooted disinclination of the S.P.R. to investigate physical phenomena in the past. In 1906 she made repeated efforts to induce them to investigate Eva C., but without success. She also drew attention to the manner in which the work of the most distinguished past President of the Society (Sir William Crookes) had been ignored and even attacked. Mr. Dingwall, the present research officer, had characterised Sir William, Dr. Lindsay Johnson, Dr. Geley and Mr. Stanley De Brath alike as unskilled investigators. She definitely declared that Mr. Hope was anxious for the investigation referred to by the previous speaker”.

her ideals. For her, life was an adventure; she loved humanity with a broad and deep affection, and was always insisting upon the greatness which lies before the human race.

Sir Arthur Conan Doyle in his last psychic novel, "The Land of Mist," alludes to Miss Scatcherd as "Miss Delicia Freeman," a small lady with delicate face and bright bird-like eyes, who carried a handbag containing leaflets and tracts of many kinds, and says "There was not a newspaper office, a statesman's sanctum, or a political chancellor which had ever presented a barrier strong enough to hold her back where she believed there was good work to be done," and again, "There was something compelling in the absolutely unselfish enthusiasm of this small person who did, at a moment's notice, take on anyone, from a Mormon elder to an Albanian brigand." Sir Arthur does not exaggerate the pertinacity of this wonderful character.

Wherever there was an "under-dog" or an unpopular cause, whether individual or national, her sympathies went out to them, and in all the great movements for reform her physical presence will be sorely missed. With such a character working assiduously on the inner side of life, it may well be that the physical loss sustained for Spiritualists by her passing will be more than recouped by her continued mental activity.

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## **The Cremation of Miss Scatcherd.**

By HORACE LEAF. F.R.C.S.

IN the presence of a large and distinguished company which filled the chapel to capacity, the mortal remains of Miss Felicia R. Scatcherd were cremated on Thursday, March 17th, at Golders Green Crematorium, London.

The service was conducted by the Rev. Fielding Ould,<sup>41</sup> who spoke feelingly of the deep respect in which Miss Scatcherd was held by her many, friends and admirers. In a moving speech he referred to her as "a great and good spirit. Great was her courage, great was her energy, her compassion was easily aroused. Her happiness was found in trying to find happiness for other people." He felt sure that her old friend, W. T. Stead, and the wise Sir William Crookes, who also knew and admired her, had met her, along with a group of Greeks and Hindus and members of other races for whom she had done so much. "One by one we cross the frontiers of that other country. Blessed are they who, like our friend, are followed by the loving prayers of those left behind. Such souls are rare."

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<sup>41</sup> Rev. F. Fielding-Ould, M.A., died in June 1930.

Re – his brother Robert Fielding-Ould: At this time Sir Arthur Conan Doyle was president of the London Spiritualist Alliance (LSA), unknown to all but a few people, Sir Arthur Conan Doyle resigned his presidency of the LSA., a few days before his death (July 7th 1930), because they would not join his deputation to the Home Office. See: *Psypioneer* Volume 2, No.7:— *New light on the final days of Sir Arthur Conan Doyle*, pages 139-147:—<http://www.woodlandway.org/PDF/PP2.7July06.pdf>

Many beautiful wreaths were sent by Spiritualists, members of other organisations to which Miss Scatcherd was attached, and private friends; all of them containing written expressions of affection and regret of the senders.

Our departed friend had been a tireless worker, speaker and organiser for various bodies, religions, scientific, political and humanitarian, and had won recognition in many ways and in many parts of the world for her wholehearted earnestness and tireless energy for the Truth.

As a member of the British Association, the Society for Psychical Research, an active worker in the House and City Planning and Garden City Movements, Editor (and later honorary co-editor) of the "Asiatic Review," she crowded into her 64 years of life a splendid record of work and achievement.

No movement will feel her loss more than Spiritualism, whose fearless advocate she was for many years. Her analytical yet sympathetic nature made her a most excellent, observer and judge of psychic phenomena; and her excellence as a speaker and writer enabled her to support her opinions in a manner difficult to surpass. Only a few hours before her passing she was planning with Dr. Abraham Wallace fresh experiments for the purpose of establishing even more definitely the fact of human survival.

Although not destined to conduct these experiments on earth, she has seized the opportunity of doing so from The Beyond by controlling a well-known medium in the presence of the Reverend Vale Owen, three days after her death, sending among other messages, her "love to her dear friend Dr. Abraham Wallace,"<sup>42</sup> promising him that when she has rested she will continue her work through some medium. She gave every indication of great happiness and enjoyment of her new experiences.

Among those present at her cremation were Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, Dr. Abraham Wallace, Mr. and Mrs. David Gow (Editor of "Light"), Mr. and Mrs. Leigh Hunt, Mr. G. R. S. Mead (Editor of "The Quest"), Major. C. Peters (National Laboratory of Psychical Research), A. Vout Peters, Mr. Glover Botham, Mrs. M. H. Wallis, Mr. Dawson Rogers, Captain Carnell, Mrs. St. Clair Stobart (British College of Psychic Science), Mrs. Ellis Powell, Mrs. Prosser, Miss Hickman, Mrs. Deverell, Miss Read, Mrs. Krebs, Mrs. Westbrook (Sociological Society), Mrs. A. Gloceltes, Miss Schartau, Mrs. Clifton, Mrs. Lawrence, Mrs. Forbes, Mr. R. H. Bates, Rev. H. M. S. Bankart, Dr. Damoglou, Mr. Francis Nash, M.A., Mr. and Mrs. Hopgood Hart, Miss Mercy Phillimore (Secretary, London Spiritualist Alliance), Mr. Dawson Rogers,<sup>43</sup> and the Rev. Vale Owen.

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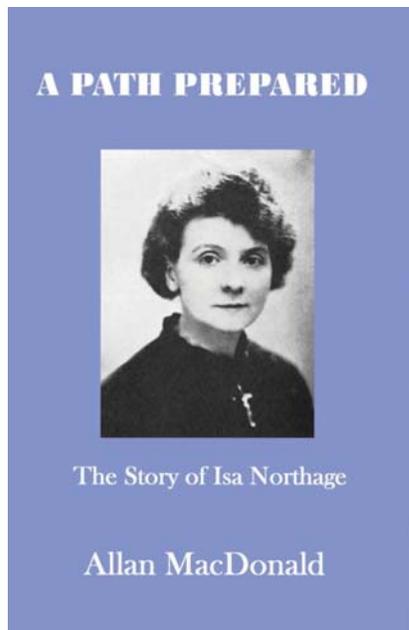
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<sup>42</sup> Dr. Abraham Wallace, M.D., passed away at Paignton, Devon, at the ripe age of 80 years. His wife pre-deceased him only a year before. He leaves a son and two daughters. In 1889, he came to London and settled in Harley Street as a specialist in Gynaecology. He was on the staff of the "Lancet," and a member of the Council of the Society for Psychical Research. He had at his death been a student of psychic facts for sixty years, and had personal friendships with Miss Florence Cook, Mrs. Mellon, Cecil Husk, Mrs. Emma H. Britten, Florence Marryat, Stainton Moses, J. J. Morse, Bournsnel, and many other workers, including F. W. H. Myers. The mortal remains were cremated at Golders Green, January 27th, the service being conducted by Mr. E. W. Oaten, whose personal friendship had extended over twenty years. Taken from: The Quarterly Transactions (*Psychic Science*) B.C.P.S., April 1930 Vol. IX. No. 1, page 70.

<sup>43</sup> The careful reader will observe that Mr Rogers, son of the late famous editor of the same name, is listed twice!

## Book Review by Leslie Price:

### REMARKABLE PHENOMENA IN NOTTINGHAM



About 1960, a book was privately published about the physical mediumship of Mrs Isa A Northage of Nottingham. It was compiled by one of her co-workers Allan Macdonald, and included material by him, by the medium, and by grateful patients, as well as newspapers reports. Now *A Path Prepared* has been reprinted by Saturday Night Press Publications (SNPP).<sup>44</sup> There is a new foreword by Hannah Carlin, daughter of Mrs Northage.

Since the book is extremely scarce, SNPP have performed a signal service in making it available again. Although it will be of especial interest to students of physical mediumship, there are references to pioneers of particular interest to us. In 1949, for example, the editor of *Two Worlds* (TW) Ernest Thompson sat with Mrs Northage and heard from Mr Peter Lee. (p.69). Lee was a founder of the SNU more than once mentioned in *Psypioneer*. It

took Thompson some effort to verify the details given by Lee. Another communicator, in 1941, claimed to be Joseph Armitage of Hanging Soothill (p.67), and that he had been a Unitarian preacher before he became a Spiritualist.<sup>45</sup> It fell to Mr. Oaten at TW to follow up and confirm this.

Some communicators are less evidential. Madame Blavatsky, described as “a noted medium” (p.38), returns to say she was wrong in teaching reincarnation. She said much the same in speaking through Mrs Carl Wickland.<sup>46</sup> But in another circle, active in England, reincarnation was being taught.<sup>47</sup> Conan Doyle returns with a native, Nicoolai, to whom he pays tribute for saving his life at the cost of his own in the African jungle (p.40). Just possibly this may refer to ACD’s voyage to West Africa on the Mayumba in 1881, although our Doylean, Garth Willey, has pointed out to me that this cargo boat (with limited number of passengers) on which ACD had employment as ship’s surgeon

<sup>44</sup> For more details see:—<http://snppbooks.com/A-Path-Prepared.html>

Also available at Amazon:—[http://www.amazon.co.uk/Path-Prepared-Mediumship-Including-Materialisation/dp/1908421045/ref=sr\\_1\\_1?s=books&ie=UTF8&qid=1335170780&sr=1-1](http://www.amazon.co.uk/Path-Prepared-Mediumship-Including-Materialisation/dp/1908421045/ref=sr_1_1?s=books&ie=UTF8&qid=1335170780&sr=1-1)

<sup>45</sup> In *Psypioneer* May 2010, we called attention to the unexplored links between Unitarians and early UK Spiritualism. Page 130-131:—<http://www.woodlandway.org/PDF/PP6.5.May2010.pdf>

<sup>46</sup> *The Gateway of Understanding*, Carl Wickland, Los Angeles, 1934, page 217. Garth Willey points out that the longer account of the communication by Madame Blavatsky in Wickland *Thirty Years Among the Dead*, (1924) is remarkably similar to the one given in “A Path Prepared”. It seems possible that there has been an editorial slip by the 1960 compiler; perhaps a passage was copied from Wickland at some time, and later became mistakenly included among transcripts of messages received by Mrs Northage. LP.

<sup>47</sup> *Of Love between Two Worlds* by G. & R. Blake, SNPP, 2012, see:—*The Brake Memories – Book Review – Leslie Price*, page 88:—<http://www.woodlandway.org/PDF/PP8.3March2012.pdf>

moved down and up the West Coast of Africa and that there is no validation of the existence of Nicoolai travelling with the boat nor any risk to ACD's life in the jungle..

There is clearly a need for an independent historical study of Mrs Northage and her work – her church at Pinewoods still exists. Although it is not explicitly stated, it appears she came from Seaton in Northumberland. Ann Harrison tells me that she was born in 1898 and passed in 1985.

The range of her phenomena, which included spirit operations and apports, and the religious rites which were performed at her centre, suggest an incipient religious movement beyond ordinary mediumship.

LP.

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[**Introductory Note by LP:**—We continue reprinting sections from Trethewy's classic work. This appendix is of some significance, as it makes clear the relationship between the communications written down by the medium; the revised version published in the newspaper, and the further revised book revision; the example quoted of a change is worth pondering. The entities make a modest claim- that they don't know about man's origin, which the medium reverses. Other sections from this book may appear later.]



## The “Controls” of Stainton Moses.<sup>48</sup>

### PUBLICATION OF SPIRIT TEACHINGS

EXTRACTS from the books of automatic writing, consisting chiefly of passages containing religious teachings, were printed in the *Spiritualist* from 1873 to 1876. As far as the script shows, this publication was begun without the knowledge of the “controls,” but continued with their consent, and was not accompanied by any revision.

The first mention of revision was in Book XVI on August 29th, 1875, when this step was suggested by Imperator instead of further publication, and was

<sup>48</sup> *The “Controls” of Stainton Moses (“M.A. Oxon.”)*, by A.W. Trethewy B.A. Hurst & Blackett Ltd, nd. Appendix 1, pages 195-197 inclusive.

approved by Stainton Moses, who, nevertheless, continued to get extracts printed and deferred preparations for revision. In 1876 he was frequently reproved by his “controls” for the delay; he ought to have had the passages copied in a form convenient for correction by automatic writing, but he was not ready with the papers when the “controls” could have taken up the work, and when he was ready in May, 1876, it was too late for them to take it up, apparently because his organism was not fit to be used by them for such a purpose. The matter dropped, and it was not till Christmas, 1878, in Book XXII, that the project was again discussed. Then, and early in 1879, it was decided that the text should stand without revision and rearrangement, and that Stainton Moses, in his supraliminal state, should supply an introduction and explanatory notes besides dividing the teachings into sections. He then wrote a memorandum describing how he selected passages for publication under automatic guidance, and stating that all, both old and new, would undergo verbal revision.

There was further discussion up to 1883, when the book *Spirit Teachings* was published, containing very little more than had been already printed in the *Spiritualist*. The script is silent on the subject of any revision having been undertaken for that journal; the various references to the matter imply that the teachings were printed there without being edited in any way, and were subsequently to be revised for publication in book form. This, too, seems to be the obvious meaning of Stainton Moses’ words on pages 4, 5 of the Introduction to *Spirit Teachings*. The opposite, however, was the case. A comparison of the original text with the *Spiritualist* and *Spirit Teachings* shows that there is much more difference between the script and the journal than between the journal and the book. Some paragraphs were inserted in the *Spiritualist* which had never been written in the original text, and the contents of others were much altered. There does not often appear to be any important difference in the sense, but there has been much expansion and some development in the argument.

The most significant departure from the original is that in the *Spiritualist* of 1875, Vol VI., p. 182, and in *Spirit Teachings*, p. 153, Imperator is represented as saying:

“Of man we know more than we are permitted to tell, as yet. . . . Of the origin of man you may be content to know that the day will come when we shall be able to tell you more certainly of the spiritual nature, its origin and destiny; whence it came and whither it is going.”

whereas the words in Book VI, August 31st, 1873, are:

“Of man we know more than man knows of himself, but we know not all. Of his origin we know nothing, nor of his development until the period when human records tell us of his history. We have never seen or spoken with a spirit who can tell us of man’s origin.”

Throughout the printed volume of *Spirit Teachings* the style is that of the “controls,” not of Stainton Moses himself; so there is no reason to doubt the correctness of his statement on page 4 of the Introduction: “What is now printed has been subjected to revision by a method similar to that by which it was first written.” He must have forgotten the sequence of events and confused the earlier occasions, when practically all the work was done, with the later preparations, which led to very little result. Where there is a departure from the original, one may reasonably suspect that the amended

version has been coloured by the medium's mind, for when he sat down with a pen in his hand and the idea of automatic revision in his head he must have found a difficulty in keeping his normal opinions in the background.

We might be justified in attributing to this source the difference in the passages quoted above, and there are other cases in which it is impossible to feel certainty as to the origin of the alteration. Stainton Moses, moreover, in the exercise of his normal discretion, must have made omissions and even verbal corrections which did not affect the sense.

A second series of *Spirit Teachings* was published by Stainton Moses in *Light* during the years 1881-1884 and 1889. After his death Mrs. Speer supplied a further series for publication in the same paper during the years 1896-1898, and passages were printed in the issues of 1899 and 1900 which, for the most part, had already appeared in the issues of 1881. These particulars refer to the communications in the automatic script and not to trance addresses, which are sometimes included in the index of *Light* under *Spirit Teachings*.

Except for some omissions, chiefly of a personal nature, there is very little difference between the original text and the version printed in *Light*.

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[**Introductory Note by Psypioneer:**—In the November 2011 issue,<sup>49</sup> we published the first part of a series of *An Historical Survey* by Leslie Curnow, written 1924 especially for *The Two Worlds*, and serialised weekly. Some of this material will cover well-trodden ground for readers, but it also brings forth much long forgotten material. The full serialisation will now continue in Psypioneer. Curnow has already been featured in the August 2009 issue of Psypioneer; *Conan Doyle’s Australian Helper- Leslie Curnow*.<sup>50</sup>]

# The Physical Phenomena of the Past

*The Two Worlds:*—<sup>51</sup>

## An Historical Survey

### Spirit Lights

#### Marvels Unknown to Science,

By W. Leslie Curnow, B.A.<sup>52</sup>

A RAP, as we have seen, started Modern Spiritualism, and next to the Rap the most familiar manifestation at spiritual seances is the Spirit Light. It has, indeed, almost taken the place of the former as regards frequent occurrence. It marks an advance in the operation of spiritual forces. The Rap was a hard, crude call suited to a materialistic world; it was succeeded by something infinitely more beautiful, mysterious and suggestive. The Spirit Light is a form of matter, as we shall see, but it is matter of a wondrous, sublimated kind.

#### KNOWN IN THE MIDDLE AGES

The appearance of what we now have good reason for supposing were Spirit Lights was common in the Middle Ages, as readers of Iamblichus are aware. Joan of Arc, we know, declared that “a light” usually appeared with the Voices which came to her. So, too, the whole literature of spiritual manifestations abounds with instances of lights accompanying the phenomena. Iamblichus regarded the “heavenly light” as an evidence of the spiritual nature of Divination.

We do not propose in this article to examine the question of the reality of Luminous Phenomena. It is enough to show, by indicating their universal occurrence, that they are

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<sup>49</sup> See Volume 7, No.11, pages 349-355:—<http://www.woodlandway.org/PDF/PP7.11November2011.pdf>

<sup>50</sup> See Psypioneer Volume 5, No.8, pages 270-279:—<http://www.woodlandway.org/PDF/PP5.8August09.pdf>

<sup>51</sup> *The Two Worlds*, October 17, 1924 pages 577-578.

<sup>52</sup> Member of the Society for Psychical Research, and late Assistant Editor of “Light.” (*Two Worlds* reference)

a fact in Nature. They come with visions seen by scores of people who know nothing of Spiritualism or of Psychical Research, as the numerous instances given in that monumental work, "Phantasms of the Living," attest. They are also frequently observed at Revival meetings; in fact, everywhere in connection with events which have a relation to the psychic realm they have been witnessed. Their extremely intimate connection with psychic phenomena cannot be better illustrated than by recalling that our spirit friends frequently speak of the medium as "the light." In the case of the celebrated medium, Mrs. Piper, of Boston (U.S.A.), this is their universal custom. They see her radiant aura, hence the name.

So, from Joan of Arc and earlier, to Evan Powell, the famous Welsh medium of our own day,<sup>53</sup> and many other modern mediums, lights are observed to accompany psychic manifestations.

### AT THE START OF MODERN SPIRITUALISM

It is natural to expect to find these manifestations occurring with the Fox girls, and the records show this to have been the case. Leah Underhill (the eldest sister), in her book, "The Missing Link in Modern Spiritualism" (New York, 1885), says that she seldom sat in a darkened room without the appearance of lights, which were visible to all present. She notes their variety, and this is a feature of the lights seen with every medium with whom they show. She writes that the lights vary in form, colour and intensity. "Sometimes they will be the size of a spark, sometimes of that of a hand, or larger, sometimes flitting or flickering about, sometimes—especially when a spirit is communicating with you by touches or caresses or otherwise—fixed in front of your face, like a person looking into your eyes; sometimes a vague, luminous cloudiness, suggestive of a form or not, as the case may be." She also mentions on occasion when very bright lights seemed "almost blazing." Catherine (Kate) Fox was a wonderful medium for Lights, of whom we shall speak presently. To conclude the glimpse at the early days of Modern Spiritualism we may mention that lights occurred in the home of the Davenports, when the two boys were mere children, and they were seen often in their later public appearances, as at the historic séance in London at Dion Boucicault's house on October 11th, 1864, when it is recorded "a phosphoric light shot from side to side over our heads." In April, 1854, a Memorial was presented to the United States Congress (with 13,000 signatures) praying for the appointment of a Scientific Commission to examine the prevailing psychic phenomena, and in their enumeration of these we have

"Lights of various forms and colours, and of difference degrees of intensity, appear in dark rooms where no substances exist which are liable to develop a chemical action or phosphorescent illumination, and in the absence of all means and instruments whereby electricity is generated or combustion produced."

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<sup>53</sup> Evan Powell – see *Psypioneer* issues:—*Sir Arthur Conan Doyle and Evan Powell* – Paul J. Gaunt & Evan Powell's *Mediumship* - Leslie Curnow, pages 219-227:—<http://www.woodlandway.org/PDF/PP7.7July2011.pdf> - *Evan Powell the Welsh Physical Medium* - *Psychic Science*, pages 235-242:—<http://www.woodlandway.org/PDF/PP7.8August2011.pdf> - *Evan John Powell and Sherlock Holmes* – Paul J. Gaunt, pages 327-335:—<http://www.woodlandway.org/PDF/PP7.10October2011.pdf>

This mention in such an important document shows that Spirit Lights were a familiar happening at that date.

### SIR WILLIAM CROOKES

There is an embarrassment of riches in the records of Lights.<sup>54</sup> Perhaps the most amazing demonstrations occurred with Kate Fox, D. D. Home, Mrs. Everitt, William Eglinton, and Stainton Moses. Sir William Crookes, whose researches into what he calls “Luminous appearances” were made with Kate Fox and D. D. Home, writes (“Researches in the Phenomena of Spiritualism,” 1874, page 92):—

“Under the strictest test conditions I have seen a solid, self-luminous body, the size and nearly the shape of a turkey’s egg, float noiselessly about the room, at one time higher than any one present could reach standing on tip-toe, and then gently descend to the floor. It was visible for more than ten minutes, and before it faded away it struck the table three times with a sound like that of a hard, solid body. During this time the medium was lying back, apparently insensible in an easy chair.

“I have seen luminous points of light darting about and settling on the heads of different persons; I have had question answered by the flashing of a bright light a desired number of times in front of my face. I have seen sparks of light rising from the table to the ceiling, and again falling upon the table, striking it with an audible sound. I have had an alphabetic communication given by luminous flashes occurring before me in the air, whilst my hand was moving about amongst them. I have seen a luminous cloud floating upwards to a picture.

“Under the strictest test conditions I have more than once had a solid, self-luminous, crystalline body placed in my hand by a hand which did not belong to any person in the room. *In the light* I have seen a luminous cloud hover over a heliotrope on a side table, break a sprig off, and carry the sprig to a lady; and on some occasions I have seen a similar luminous cloud visibly condense to the form of a hand and carry small objects about.”

In the description in his closing sentences Sir William is coming into the domain of Materialisations, for it was a partly materialised hand that moved the objects. It is remarkable, and well worth study, to see how the different phenomena inter-relate. Raps are made (at times) by Lights, which in turn condense into human hands, faces and full forms. Lights are made, as we shall see, of material gathered (mainly) from the body of the medium. In a word, they are Ectoplasmic, and Ectoplasm is the grand key to the secret of *all* psychic manifestations of the physical order, even including Spirit Photography, strange as this may seem.

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<sup>54</sup> For modern day light phenomena see *Psypioneer* Volume 4, No.7:—A sitting at Scole - Dr Alan Gauld, pages 156-164:—<http://www.woodlandway.org/PDF/PP4.7July08.pdf>

## HOW THE LIGHTS ARE FORMED

As my valued friend, the Editor of this journal, has often said, if you want to know about the next world, ask those who are living there. So if we want to know how Spirit Lights are constructed, ask those who make them. This is the way to gain knowledge. It has to be remembered, however, that in speaking of these supreme mysteries our Senior Partners have a difficulty in, so to speak, describing a four-dimensional world to those who live in a world of three dimensions; or, to take a more homely illustration, in someone trying to describe an aeroplane to a fish.

The finest exponent of Spirit Lights was William Stainton Moses (M. A. Oxon), and it is from his Guides that we get most information.<sup>55</sup> One of them (Grocyn) explained that the lights were made from “a germ of magnetism” which was brought by the spirit people. “This germ was invisible to the natural eye, and continued so until it was surrounded by an envelope of something which was taken from the circle and medium. This was covered with spiral drapery.” Mentor, another Control or Guide, on one occasion explained that the germ or nucleus which he brought could not, in certain unfavourable conditions of a seance, be surrounded with the luminosity which he obtains from the circle.

At one sitting with Stainton Moses there was an alarming fiasco, and the explanation is deeply instructive. From under the table there suddenly arose great clouds of luminous smoke, and Stainton Moses confesses that he was “fairly frightened,” and rushed from the room in a panic. His hands seemed to be ablaze, and the flame showed on the door and handle which he touched. Of course all explanation was sought from the operators on the Other Side, and this is the story they told of an experiment that went astray.

### THE SPIRITS' ACCOUNT

I want to ask about that extraordinary phosphoric smoke. I wish much for information.

“We are scarcely able to write. The shock has destroyed your passivity. It was an accident. The envelope in which is contained the substance which we gather from the bodies of the sitters was accidentally destroyed, and hence the escape into outer air and the smoke which terrified you. It was owing to a new operator being engaged on an experiment. We regret the shock to you.”

I was extremely alarmed. It was just like phosphorus.

“No, but similar. We told you when first we began to make the lights that they were attended with some risk; and that with unfavourable conditions they would be smokey and of a reddish yellow hue.”

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<sup>55</sup> See *Psypioneer* “John King’s spirit-lamp” Volume 7, No.6:—*The Beginnings of Full Form Materialisations in England; Herne and Williams Conclusion* – Paul J. Gaunt, pages 182-199:—<http://www.woodlandway.org/PDF/PP7.6June2011.pdf>

Yes, I know, but not that they would make a smoke and scene like that.

“Nor would they, save by accident. The envelope was destroyed by mischance, and the substance which we had gathered escaped.”

What substance?

“That which we draw from the bodily organisms of the sitters. We had a large supply, seeing that, neither of you had sustained any drain of late.”

You draw it from our bodies—from all?

“From both of you. You are both helpful in this, both. But not from all people. From some the substance cannot be safely drawn, lest we diminish the life-principle too much.”

Robust men give it off ?

“Yes, in greater proportion. It is the sudden loss of it and the shock that so startled you that caused the feeling of weakness and depression.”

It seemed to come from the side of the table.

“From the darkened space between the sitters. We gathered it between you in the midst. Could you have seen with spirit eye you would have discovered threads of light joined to your bodies, and leading to the space where the substance was being collected. Those lines of light were ducts leading to our receptacle.”

From what parts of the body?

“From many: from the nerve-centres and from the spine.”

What is this substance?

“In simple words it is that which gives to your bodies vitality and energy. It is the life- principle.”

Very like sublimated phosphorus

“No body that does not contain a large portion of what you call phosphorus is serviceable to us for objective manifestations. There are other qualities of which you do not know, and which not all spirit can tell, but this is invariable in mediums for physical manifestations.”— (*Spirit Teaching in Light*, 1898: page 98.)

This is one of the clearest expositions I have met of the process involved, and with less detail it can be endorsed from many other spirit sources. There is only one other quotation I want to give, where Emperor, Stainton Moses's chief Control, says:—

“We have a higher form of what is known to you as electricity, and it is by that means we are enabled to manifest, and that Mentor shows his globe of light. He brings with him the nucleus, as we told you.”

As that acute Italian critic, Ernesto Bozzano, has remarked, this explanation coincides perfectly with what we know of the X-ray, whose energy is none other than “a higher form of electricity.”

#### CHARACTER OF THE LIGHTS

The diversity of the lights is so great that there is no fixed quality. They are large and small; their radiance only extends a few feet, they light up the whole room they are solid, a hand can be passed through them; they are white, green, blue, like pale moonlight, or a blaze of flashing luminosity; they rush like meteors, they remain for forty-five minutes. Each spirit has his own peculiar light and shows it to indicate his presence.

#### THE PURPOSE OF THE LIGHTS

Beyond all doubt the propose of the lights is to call attention. They are material products suited to a material age. Stainton Moses’s guides had ethical and spiritual communications they wished to give the world, and they had to secure a hearing. They obtained this through phenomena. The important point to observe is that apart from the wonderful character of these lights, they showed intelligence. As in the case of Crookes, correct answers to questions were furnished by means of them. “The Prophet’s little light came, and we held a long conversation with him, the answers being given in flashes. It was a very pretty manifestation, the light being turned in each case to the questioner.” This is only one instance of many with Stainton Moses, and his guides have assured him that they are the self same people who produce the phenomena and communicate spiritual teaching.

#### TISSOT’S MASTERPIECE

M. Tissot, the celebrated French artist, had a sitting with William Eglinton in May, 1885, at which appeared two materialised figures illuminated in a wonderful way by spirit lights. This scene Tissot afterwards immortalised in his historic picture entitled “Apparition Medianimique,” a copy of which is to be seen at the rooms of the London Spiritualist Alliance. The male figure is Ernest, the medium’s guide, and the lady, Katie, the artist’s bride. Both spirits hold lights in their hands. Tissot describes it as a blue light, but more white, “as if portions of the moon had been taken and put into the hands of the apparitions.” Ernest held his spirit light so that the artist could gaze into Katie’s face, and Tissot, in deep joy, cried in a low voice, “How beautiful she is! She is more beautiful than I had hoped to see. It is truly Katie.” Katie leaned forward and kissed him upon the lips.

[TO BE CONTINUED.]

## “Apparition Medianimique”



## DECEASE OF M. TISSOT:

The well-known artist, M. James Joseph Jacques Tissot, painter of the ‘Life of Christ,’ and who spent ten years of his life amongst art circles in England, passed away on Saturday last in the Abbey Bouillon, near Besancon, at the age of sixty-five. The ‘Life of Christ’ was the enterprise of a conscientious labourer who had already passed his fiftieth year. To accomplish that realistic panorama of over three hundred water-colour drawings, besides designs and sketches, tracing the history of the Redemption from the beginning to the end, in the personal mission of Christ, Tissot took long and fatiguing journeys in the Holy Land, studying on the spot every detail of the Divine Tragedy, and actually becoming in the process as much an

archaeologist as a painter. The effort was an enormous popular success, visitors from all parts of the world flocking to the Paris Salon to see the wonderful Tissot Room. The pictures were also exhibited in London, and attracted crowds of visitors. How great the success was may be gathered from the fact that a French firm bought the series of water-colour drawings of the ‘Life of Christ’ for 1,100,000 francs. An English house had offered £60,000 for them, but had withdrawn the proposal on the ground that the drawings were too realistic. Spiritualists, however, will remember M. Tissot best for his exquisite picture entitled ‘Apparition Medianimique,’ representing two spirit forms which showed themselves through the mediumship of Mr. Eglinton, one of them that of Mr. Eglinton’s spirit friend ‘Ernest,’ and the other that of M. Tissot’s departed *fiancée*. Taken from *Light*, August 16, 1902, page 389.

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## Photograph References:

### William T. Stead (page 111)

Photograph taken from *Borderland: A Quarterly Review and Index*, January 1894

### Edith K. Harper (page 112)

Taken from: Stead the Man Personal Reminiscences, 1918 edition, facing page 178.

### Julia (page 115)

Taken from: Stead the Man Personal Reminiscences, by Edith K. Harper, 1918 edition, facing page 44.

### The Sanctum: “Julia’s Bureau,” Mowbray House (page 117)

Taken from: Stead the Man Personal Reminiscences, by Edith K. Harper, 1918 edition, facing page 150.

### Estelle W. Stead (page 121)

Page 3: How I know the Dead Return, by William T. Stead, first published in 1911.

### The International Congress at Paris (page 125)

Front-page photograph of the *Two Worlds*, September 25, 1925,<sup>56</sup> we can note sitting in front of Miss Scatcherd (top left), is Ernest Oaten’s wife Amy. Two seats to her right is Miss Lind-af-Hageby, who later in early 1935 would become President of the London Spiritualist Alliance (LSA), following the resignation of Arthur Findlay in late 1934.<sup>57</sup>

### William Stainton Moses (page 129)

Supplement to *Light*, November 5, 1892 the whole issue was a Memorial Issue, to their editor. Moses died on September 5th, 1892.<sup>58</sup>

### M. James Joseph Jacques Tissot (page 138)

‘Apparition Medianimique,’ this was also published in John S. Farmer’s (biography of the medium William Eglinton) *Twixt Two Worlds*, The Psychological Press, London, 1886.

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<sup>56</sup> 1925 International Congress at Paris: For the early history of the International Spiritualists’ Federation see: *Psypioneer* Volume 4, No.3:—*A sketch of the History of the I.S.F. – M Beversluis*, pages 70-74:—<http://www.woodlandway.org/PDF/PP4.3March08.pdf>

<sup>57</sup> See *Psypioneer* Volume 2, No.7:—*Findlay resigns from the L.S.A. story of intrigue behind the scenes*, pages 142-147:—<http://www.woodlandway.org/PDF/PP2.7July06.pdf>

<sup>58</sup> See *Psypioneer* Volume 4, No.10:—*The grave of William Stainton Moses – Paul J. Gaunt*, pages 231-233:—<http://www.woodlandway.org/PDF/PP4.10October08.pdf>

## BOOKS WE HAVE REVIEWED

*If you have any problems locating a copy we can contact the author*

**An Extraordinary Journey:—The Memoirs of a Physical Medium**, by Stewart Alexander, published by Saturday Night Press Publications, England, 2010. Paperback ISBN:—978-0-9557050-6-9., available at Amazon. Psypioneer review, by Leslie Price pages 294-296:—<http://woodlandway.org/PDF/PP6.11November2010.pdf>

**Helen Duncan The Mystery Show Trial**, by Robert Hartley published by H Pr (Publishing), London 2007. Paperback ISBN:—978-0-9553420-8-0. Psypioneer review, by Paul J. Gaunt pages 244-247:—<http://www.woodlandway.org/PDF/PP3.11November07..pdf>

**Aquarian Evangelist: The Age of Aquarius as It Dawned in the Mind of Levi Dowling**, by John Benedict Buescher Theosophical History Volume XI available at:—<http://www.theohistory.org> then—Occasional Papers. Psypioneer references by Leslie Price page 7:—<http://woodlandway.org/PDF/PP4.1January08.pdf>

**Dead Men's Embers**, by Gerald O'Hara, published by Saturday Night Press Publications, England 2006. Large Paperback ISBN:—978-0-9514534-6-9., available at Amazon. Psypioneer review, by Leslie Price pages 1-2:—<http://www.woodlandway.org/PDF/PP3.1January07..pdf>

**Mrs Miller's Gift' - a Celebration of 75 Years of the Edinburgh College of Parapsychology formerly Edinburgh Psychic College & Library**, by Gerald O'Hara & Ann Harrison, published by Saturday Night Press Publications, England 2007. Paperback ISBN: 978-0-951-4534-9-0., available at Amazon. Psypioneer review, by Paul J. Gaunt pages 1-4:—<http://www.woodlandway.org/PDF/PP4.1January08..pdf>

**Mrs Miller's Gift CD:—Helen Duncan Séance, Ernest Oaten and Harry Edwards**, Written and produced by Gerald O'Hara B.Sc. Psypioneer review, by Paul J. Gaunt pages 106-107:—<http://woodlandway.org/PDF/PP5.4April09.pdf>

**The Indescribable Phenomena – The Life and Mysteries of Anna Eva Fay**, by Barry H. Wiley published by Hermetic Press, Inc., Seattle Washington 2005. ISBN: 0-945296-50-9., available at:—[http://www.hermeticpress.com/product\\_info.php?products\\_id=45](http://www.hermeticpress.com/product_info.php?products_id=45) Psypioneer references by Leslie Price pages 39-42:—<http://www.woodlandway.org/PDF/PP5.2February09.pdf>

**Immortal Longings – FWH Myers and the Victorian Search for Life After Death**, by Trevor Hamilton published by Imprint Academic in Exeter, U.K (also VA, U.S.A) 2009. ISBN: 9-781845- 401238 H.B, 9-781845-402488 PB, available at Amazon. Psypioneer review, by Leslie Price pages 157-148:—<http://woodlandway.org/PDF/PP5.6June09.pdf>

**Talking to the Dead – Kate and Maggie Fox and the Rise of Spiritualism**, by Barbara Weisberg published by HarperSanFrancisco New York 2004. Hardback ISBN: 0-06-056667-1., available at Amazon. Psypioneer review, by Paul J. Gaunt pages 9-10:—[http://woodlandway.org/PDF/Leslie\\_Price\\_PP2.pdf](http://woodlandway.org/PDF/Leslie_Price_PP2.pdf)

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