

The Clairvoyance
OF
BESSIE WILLIAMS

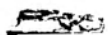
(MRS. RUSSELL DAVIES).

RELATED BY HERSELF.

Edited by
FLORENCE MARRYAT,

AUTHOR OF "THERE IS NO DEATH."

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PREFACE.

I DO not think it is necessary for me to say anything to introduce the following statements to the public.

The interest in Spiritualism has so largely increased of late that I expect they will be read with avidity.

Neither can I add anything to them.

I wrote so fully of my wonderful experiences with Bessie Fitzgerald* in my own book—*There is No Death*—that any confirmation of her assertions would be a repetition.

All I will state, therefore, is that I took

* Maiden name, Bessie Williams.

down every word from her own lips, and that I feel sure they are in all respects emphatically true.

And this is not a record of the past only.

Her clairvoyance to-day is stronger than it has ever been, and whoever doubts it can prove the truth for himself.

FLORENCE MARRYAT.

Alfred James



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The Clairvoyance
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CHAPTER I.

MY CLAIRVOYANCE.

"Sure He, that makes us with such large discourse,
Looking before and after, gave us not
That capability and godlike reason
To rust in us *unused*."

"There are more things in Heaven and earth, Horatio,
Than are dreamt of in your philosophy."

MY clairvoyance must surely have been born with me, for I came of a family of ghost seers. My father's father was of pure Welsh extraction, his mother of pure Irish. The first family ghost story that I can remember happened to my great grandmother. She had two little boys, to whom she was

devotedly attached, and who were both accidentally drowned within a very short time of one another. This double bereavement afflicted their mother to such an extent that she took to her bed, refusing to eat or drink, or interest herself in any household duties, and it was thought that she would go out of her mind or die. One day, however, she rose quite unexpectedly, and went about the house with a serene countenance. When pressed to give a reason for the sudden change that had taken place in her, she declared that as she lay weeping one evening she heard a voice say, "Mother, take me into bed with you!" and looking up had seen her youngest and favourite child climbing on to her bed. That she had taken him in her arms, and he had told her she had wept so much that his spirit could not leave the earth, nor join those of other children, and progress as it was intended to do. That since that time he had come repeatedly and slept with her, and that the fact had restored her equanimity. She would never say very much about it, but everyone could see the effect it had upon her. And the strangest thing was, that each week the little child's night gear used

to be sent to the wash with the family linen, and when that ceased her friends knew that the apparition had left her. She lived to be an old woman, but she never varied in the story of her dead child. Her daughter, my maternal grandmother, married Mr. Thomas Clarke, a well-known timber merchant of Birmingham, and the uncle of John Clarke, the comedian, who was therefore my mother's first cousin. Her husband did not behave well to her, and after a while they separated, my grandmother taking up her residence in a large house near Wrexham, which stood in its own grounds, and had an entrance gate with lodge attached to it.

One night, as my grandmother was lying awake, she heard the sound of horse's feet galloping along the public road, when they pulled up suddenly at the entrance, and a man's voice called out "Gate! Gate!" She listened, but as no one passed through the gate for the house she concluded it must have been a visitor for the lodge-keeper. In a few minutes, however, the same thing was repeated, and again for the third time. My grandmother was so startled by the occurrence that on the third cry

of "Gate! Gate!" she rose, dressed herself, and walked out to see what could be the matter. Nobody was there, and no one had heard the horse's feet and the cry of "Gate!" but herself. The next morning the incident really occurred. A man on horseback galloped up with the news that her husband, Mr. Clarke, had died suddenly during the previous night, with all the symptoms of poisoning.

My father's father was a Welsh minister, and lived in Monmouthshire with his wife and three children. On one occasion he was asked to take another duty, and as he was late in returning home at night his wife used to sit up for him. She complained much to him of being disturbed on these occasions by noises in the house — of the sound of children running about overhead, and up and downstairs, and as though a wheelbarrow was wheeled across the upper room, and apparently emptied and wheeled back again. My grandfather was very sceptical, and laughed at his wife's fears. However, she continued to persist that such disturbances took place, and one night when my grandfather was at home he sat up with her, and heard them for himself,

and was so angry that he went upstairs and thrashed his poor innocent children for playing tricks upon their mother.

His wife was sitting up for him shortly afterwards, and listening to the same unaccountable noises, when a panel in the wall of the room she occupied suddenly slid back, and out stepped a very tiny, fragile-looking little lady, with baby's feet, encased in little embroidered slippers. She wore a long green dress and a very big hoop. This little lady looked at my grandfather's wife with a haughty air, as much as to say, "What are you doing here?" and then walked deliberately round the room and into the panel again, which closed after her. My grandfather utterly pooh-poohed this story of his wife's; but she was so earnest about it, shewing him the very panel from which the ghost had issued, that he had it removed. Behind it was found an old wardrobe of musty and decayed clothes, amongst which were the remains of a green silk dress and a tiny shoe. My grandmother refused to remain in the house, which was shortly afterwards pulled down, when a large number of children's bones were discovered. A row of new houses were

built on the site, but no tenants ever stopped in them long.

My father must have been a very powerful medium, but in those days (I allude to my very early childhood) but little was known of media or mediumship, although we often heard of clairvoyance and mesmerism—this being about the time when that good and ill-used man Dr. Elliottson was doing his utmost to convince a sceptical world that there were hidden forces in human nature which had hitherto been little dreamed of. The world, of course, refused to believe anything could exist which had not already been discovered, and poor Dr. Elliottson died—abused by the medical profession, laughed at by the general public—of something very like starvation. And now, to show the irony of things, we have just passed through a little experience wherein we see the medical profession coming forward, and announcing a wonderful discovery one or two of the fraternity have made, that there is a most wonderful and potent power in mankind which they call hypnotic, and which is such a subtle, powerful, and dangerous thing that only the medical profession should, by Act of Parliament, be

permitted to practise it. Such is life—at least among the doctors.

I have often recalled to mind a time when my father had a great fright. For fun, he and several gentlemen friends agreed to try and mesmerise some one. Four or five of them met in the office of my father, one of whose clerks agreed to be experimented upon. Two of these gentlemen tried and failed. Then came my father's turn, and he so successfully operated that his subject went off into a deep mesmeric sleep, and then, to their horror, the friends found that none knew how to waken him. I think they must all have behaved like lunatics. A doctor was called, but knew no more than the trembling mesmerist; at length someone suggested that as the man was undoubtedly dying, he should be put to bed; so he was taken and put to bed, and there he slept until the next day, when he calmly woke, much refreshed after his long and lovely nap. This experiment had such an effect on my father that he never again went in for mesmerism.

One of his favourite ways of amusing us children (there were six of us) was to have his hat—a tall silk one—on the table, put

his fingers on the brim, and show us how he could make it move. I have seen the hat spin round the table, and then slowly rise into the air, moving all over the room in which we were, and this was such a common occurrence that we little ones never knew or realised there was anything out of the usual order of things in the matter. But our great delight was to get father to tell us ghost stories, and many a time I have heard him tell of how, in his young days, the ghosts stoned him.

He was a lover of Nature, and from his earliest days had found the greatest delight in rambling about the country lanes and fields and woods—a keen fisherman too; and it was while sitting on the banks of a lonely part of the river Dee, fishing, the stone-throwing first began.

It was one afternoon in the early summer when he felt a small pebble strike his back. He took no notice, thinking that as he sat under the trees a bird or squirrel might have dropped it; but when a succession of small stones struck him he began to look round, fully expecting a friend was near and wished to play him a trick; but no—search how he

might—no human being but himself was near the spot. The stones increased now to almost a shower, but none struck him. Go where he would, sitting or standing, the shower continued, until at last he fairly took to his heels and bolted. He ran until he came to a large field, at one side of which there was a haystack, and under the shadow of this he sat down to rest. How long he was sitting there he could not tell, but presently the stone-throwing again commenced, only this time they were large stones—no longer small, harmless pebbles. He got up, and once more took to his heels, and until he was well out in the main road the shower of stones did not cease. It is no use saying he was not frightened, because, man though he was, he had a terrible fright, but from the beginning to the end further than the terror he received no injury.

Many of my readers will here no doubt say, "Yes, this may be, but it is not your own personal experience." I admit it; but I should like my readers to understand that clairvoyance, mediumship, and all spiritual faculties and gifts are more frequently inherited, running as

it were in the blood for generations. This, I believe, has been the case with myself; it is from my Irish and Welsh progenitors I get my mediumship, and am very much obliged to them for the gift they have bestowed upon me, and with the blessing and help of God I have and will hold it as long as my earthly life lasts, as a priceless and blessed thing, using it only for the best and highest purposes.

I claim to be a normal clairvoyant, seeing clearly at all times, in my ordinary conscious condition; but with my spiritual eyes, scenes, objects, and people, which to the general order of human beings are invisible.

The earliest manifestation of the power that has been bestowed upon me took place when I was five months old. At that time my grandfather, Thomas Clarke, died. His conduct (as I have mentioned) had not been entirely satisfactory to his relations, and on the occasion of his death they all assembled at his house with some curiosity to learn how he had disposed of his fortune. My mother and father joined the family party, taking me with them. My relatives seem to have had some idea of spiritualism even then, for they sat

round a table the same evening to see what information they could obtain, and my mother, who knew nothing of the matter, being desired to place her hand upon the table, laid me in the centre of it to get me out of the way. My grandfather's spirit immediately manifested itself and made the contents of his will (which no one had yet seen) known. He said he had left all his personal property and money to a Miss Douglas for her lifetime, thereby cutting off his daughters from any benefit until the death of the legatee; he represented himself as already suffering the tortures of the hell he had made for himself, and repentant for what he had done. My mother became very much alarmed. The table was rocking violently under the influence of my infant magnetism, and, fearful of sustaining some injury, she seized me in her arms and threw herself upon the sofa. The table moved automatically to that side of the room, and fell against the sofa. My mother screamed, and rushed out of the room; the table followed her by itself and tried to get upstairs. This manifestation nearly killed my mother with fright, and she was ill for weeks afterwards.

When my grandfather's will was opened, it was found to contain just what he said ; everything he possessed went to Miss Douglas for her lifetime.

The next curious thing that happened through me was when I was scarcely two years old. We were living at Chester, and a detective named Whittaker lived next to us. This man had a dog which went by the name "Whittaker's Bob," and which often came over into our garden. At this time a man named Jackson was in custody, under suspicion of having made away with his own two children, who had mysteriously disappeared ; the case was in Whittaker's hands, but he had been unable to make any discovery to convict the murderer. One day "Whittaker's Bob" came into our garden, where I was rolling about the grass with my brother Frank ; he played with the animal for some time, and then I approached to do so ; but as soon as ever the dog touched and smelt me, he gave a terrific, unearthly howl, as if he had suddenly gone mad, and springing away from me he leapt over the hedge, and set off running with his nose to the ground for a plantation some

distance from the house, and never stopped until he reached the spot where the bodies of the murdered children had been buried, and were subsequently found. This incident was the cause of Jackson being convicted and hung.

There were six of us in family, three boys and three girls, and we all slept in a big room at the top of the house. My eldest sister, Caroline, was deputed to teach us to say our prayers, and we must have been a queer set of little mortals, for at a given signal she would make us all kneel down and say together, "Pray God grant that Miss Douglas may soon die and let mother have her money." I was three years old at this time, and could neither write nor read. One morning as I was toddling about a plantation playing by myself, I saw laid in my path a sheet of white notepaper with writing on it, which, of course, I could not decipher; the paper, however, was perfectly clean and fresh, so I thought it surely must be a letter for my mother, and accordingly carried it home to her; on it she found, written in a flowing hand, "Miss Douglas is dead." She became most excited and questioned me eagerly,

as to who had given it to me, whether it was a man or woman, etc., but to all her inquiries I could only lisp that "I had found it on the ground."

Now the residents in Chester knew nothing of the Birmingham scandal—my mother being a very proud woman, and too much ashamed of her father's weaknesses to expose them—so she did not know what to think of the communication. She wrote off at once to her trustees in Birmingham, only to hear that the intelligence was untrue; but who can have dropped a sheet of unsoiled notepaper in the middle of a wood at my baby feet, unless it were done by some spirit influence who wished to play a trick on us? for Miss Douglas lived to enjoy her legacy for six years afterwards.

CHAPTER II.

MY CLAIRVOYANCE DEVELOPING.

"He seemed to find his way without his eyes."

SHORTLY after this occurrence my grandmother, Mrs. Clarke, died in our house, and my first physical manifestations began to display themselves. My mother was occupied with the invalid, and I was put to bed at about eight o'clock as usual in a cot in my parent's room. As soon as I lay down loud knocking commenced in the laths of the bedstead, and continued for hours. I was frightened to death. The noise was incessant. At eleven o'clock my father came up, and seeing my terror lifted me into his own bed. Immediately the knockings ceased, and at the same moment my grandmother passed away.

My undeveloped mediumship had strange effects upon me sometimes. My grandfather had left a son behind him whom he never

acknowledged, but whom my mother regarded as a brother. One night this young man called at our house, and my mother, who was very fond of her children, must needs take him up into the nursery to see us all in bed. My brothers and sisters behaved properly, but when she brought him up to speak to me I did nothing but make the most hideous and menacing faces at him, for which my mother rebuked and threatened to punish me; but I could not stop, my face was distorted involuntarily, and both my mother and uncle remarked how terribly I looked like my dead grandfather, who was doubtless controlling me the while. Remembering how often I was blamed when a child, for actions which were completely beyond my control, I think that punishment is too carelessly administered to children, and that when the operations of Spiritualism are more widely understood, it will be found that the very unruly and determinately disobedient boys and girls we sometimes hear of are not always acting as self-agents.

I learned to read and write in a mysterious manner, no one having apparently taught me; and when I went to school, I seemed

to gain no knowledge by ordinary means. My usual *soubriquets* whilst there were, *Our Little Dreamer*; or, *The Lancashire Witch*; and when I returned home, at twelve years old, I was not much better as a scholar than when I first went to school. It is a positive fact that I never worked out a sum in arithmetic in all my life, and yet I never failed to pass with my schoolfellows our examinations.

I was always a restless sort of girl, disliking all work—needlework especially—and led a very idle life. At sixteen years old my health completely broke down, and my mother sent me for change of air to the house of my eldest sister, who was married and settled about seven miles from Birmingham, where we had removed from Chester. The morning after my arrival—a beautiful, bright morning in summer—I was lying reading in bed, having just finished my breakfast, when I felt something spring on to the bottom of the bed. Thinking it was the cat, I kicked it with my foot without looking at it, when my attention was attracted by the sound of a laugh. I looked up, and saw to my astonishment, standing by the bed, with his

back to the foot-rail, a boy of about nine years old. He was a most beautiful child, dressed fantastically in a black velvet suit of the time of Charles II., and with his hair cut across his forehead: he was so lovely and looked so perfectly natural, he inspired no terror; but all of a sudden a strange feeling of repugnance came over me, for in spite of his beauty, his face had something devilish in it, and I exclaimed "Go away! Go away!" But he did not move, or show any sign that he had heard my speech; then my feelings of horror and distaste increased to such a degree that I sat up, though sick with fear, and entreated him several times to leave me; but he only laughed in a mocking way. Then I sat up in bed and said solemnly, "In the Name of the Lord God Almighty, leave me." Thereupon the lovely face seemed to lose all its beauty, which was replaced by a sort of malignant menace—the figure gave a howl, and slipping off the bed to the floor, disappeared. I jumped up at once, horribly frightened, and ran down to my sister with the story; she did not seem at all surprised. She was a Seer—as indeed we all were—but she thought that the spirit had been sent

as a warning to me, and that it might prove the turning-point of my life.

When I was eighteen my mother passed away. A fortnight before her death I was sleeping with her, when, as I was lying awake at eleven o'clock at night, twelve terrific blows were struck on the wall at the opposite side of the room, which was an outer wall, our house being semi-detached. I called my mother's attention to it, but she had heard nothing; the noise continued and I rose and went to my sister Fanny's room (which was next to ours) to see if she wanted anything, but she had not heard the knocking either. I was perfectly mystified at the time, but I remembered it a fortnight later, when my mother died at precisely the same hour. My ill-health was increased by this event, and a few months afterwards I went to stay with friends in Edgbaston, and whilst there broke a blood-vessel, in consequence of which the doctor ordered me to lie in bed for a fortnight without moving.

Whilst undergoing this penance I used to hear my friends had visitors in the room beneath me, and that a good deal of thumping

and singing went on that I could not account for ; but when I was able to go downstairs again, one of my friends told me that a Dr. Abernethy had called on them during my illness, who said that I should speedily recover this attack, but should never be really well again. I asked her how a doctor who had never seen me could diagnose my complaint. She laughed, and said he had been to see me several times, which I considered to be utter nonsense. There was a young medical student staying in the house, and when I spoke to him about it he told me Dr. Abernethy was a spirit, who visited my friends through the table. I made great fun of the idea, and the student and I agreed to sit together and call up Dr. Abernethy. The table moved about almost as soon as we sat down, and I said, "Ted, you are moving the table yourself," but he emphatically denied the accusation. Then the table began to make violent movements towards me, and my companion spelled over the alphabet. This message was given: "This girl is a fool, and as a fool scoffs at that which she does not understand." And this convinced me the student had spoken the truth, as I was

certain he never would have dared to say such a thing of me. It sobered me considerably, but though we sat often afterwards, Dr. Abernethy entirely refused to communicate through me again, though he sent frequent messages about my health through my friends. As soon as I was well enough I returned home, but was still compelled by medical orders to retire to rest as the sun went down, which was a great trial to me.

We were three brothers and two sisters living in the same house then, and I wondered to find how very quiet everything seemed down below, whilst I lay awake counting the long hours before nightfall. What were my brothers and sisters doing?

One evening I was too curious to remain in my room, and slipping downstairs found that they had all gone out and the house was empty. I was hurt to think they could amuse themselves whilst I was lying ill and alone, and when Fanny came to bed I insisted upon hearing where she had been. After a little hesitation she told me that during my stay in Edgbaston they had made the acquaintance of an old gentleman who lived next door; that

he was a great spiritualist, who used to sit with his housekeeper and her husband. My brothers and Fanny had been joining in the seances for months past, and were quite *au fait* at spiritualism. After this confession there was no more lying in bed for me. I defied the doctor's commands, and joined the nightly seance next door. So whilst I had had my first lesson in spiritualism in Edgbaston my family had been taking theirs in Birmingham. It was a curious coincidence.

This old gentleman had been brought to spiritualism in an extraordinary manner. He had known nothing of it, when one day he was seized with a fit in the streets of Birmingham. Of course a crowd immediately collected round him, when what was their astonishment to see him wildly gesticulating, and hear him exclaim he was Lady Tichborne, the mother of the claimant. He was taken first to the police-station, and then to a lunatic asylum, from which he was discharged because the doctors said nothing whatever was the matter with him. He was an exceedingly clever man, and in robust health, and when we made his acquaintance had been for some

months accustomed to sit every evening with his housekeeper and her husband, in order to obtain communications from his late wife.

The first night I sat with him the power was very great, not only the table but the furniture being moved. His wife's spirit came and told him that I should become a wonderful medium, when the power was properly developed. She directed them to bandage my eyes, to turn the face of the clock the other way and alter the hands, and I should be able to tell the time. I was delighted to try; so my brother Frank blindfolded me, and took the clock to the opposite side of the room, then returned and sat down again at the table round which we were seated, and after waiting for some time I told them the exact hour and position of the hands of the clock. I saw the clock's face distinctly before me. It was not the slightest trouble, and this became a favourite experiment with us. I could tell the time without the clock being in the room, and to a second how long we had been sitting, although no one else knew.

After three months' experiments and experience with this old gentleman a prophecy was

uttered by some of his controls that I should be spirited away from this earth, and I was foolish enough to believe it; it frightened me so much that I refused to enter the house again.

I should like to point out at this part how careful people should be with whom they sit at seances. Here were we, quite young people, knowing absolutely nothing of the forces or powers with which we, if the truth is to be told, were simply seeking to amuse ourselves. We knew nothing of our neighbour beyond our neighbourly friendship, and in the end paid dearly for our ignorance; for the man, though extremely clever and intellectual, was surrounded by a class of spirits who were neither elevated nor refined, often very mischievous, and in the end became very troublesome, until we broke up our circle.

I well remember how my sister and I, in the seclusion of our own home, used to pray that if there *were* any spirits they would come and protect us from harm; but we little anticipated the consequences of calling a band of spirits round us. Physical manifestations immediately commenced in our own house. The spirits

assembled in force to keep those from next door alarming us, and we never knew what rest was. They tramped round our bed all night, sat at the foot of it, leaving visible impressions there for us to see in the morning, and moved articles of furniture about the room.

A laughable incident occurred to me about this time. I had been ordered to take hot baths as a cure for insomnia, and I used to take a book and read whilst I sat in the bath, and although my sister often remonstrated with me for sitting so long in the water, as she feared it would do me harm, I paid no attention to her advice. One evening, as I was bathing and deeply engaged in my book, a loud rapping came at the door. I called out, "You can't come in; I'm not out of the bath yet." But the rapping continued, and the handle of the door was well rattled. This made me very angry, and I exclaimed, "It's no use, Fanny, rattling at the door like that; I'll come out as soon as I can." I got out, put on my dressing-gown, and opened the door to find no one there. I then went downstairs and found my brothers and sisters at supper.

They asked me what I had been throwing stones down the staircase for. When I told them what had occurred, they declared solemnly they had never left the room, but there had been a fearful turmoil on the staircase; whilst I, for my part, had heard nothing but the sounds upon the bathroom door.

About this time my brother Frederick had an unpleasant experience with his gun. He was very fond of shooting, and when he came in he used to rest his double-barrelled gun in a corner of his room. Night after night he heard this gun being moved about uneasily in its corner; but one Saturday night after he had gone to bed he saw it taken up by invisible hands and pointed at his head. He jumped out of bed, and rushed downstairs. We went up and found the gun resting quietly in its own place, and we carefully withdrew the charges. We were holding sittings in the family circle then, but we could never persuade Frederick to join our seances again.



CHAPTER III.

*COMMUNION BETWEEN "THE TWO
WORLDS."*

"Is not this something more than fantasy?
What think you of it?"

THE very first time we sat together we had a communication from a spirit calling himself "Guido Minost," who told us he had died a natural death centuries before, but ought by rights to have been hanged, as he had lived a thoroughly lawless life, but knew no better. He brought another spirit with him, and though they continually represented themselves as being terrible sinners, we experienced both pleasure and profit from their communications. We had many evidences of their kind friendship and feelings towards us, and we used to look forward through the day for the evening to come, that we might have our seance and a long talk with "Guido Minost" and "Jamöch

Imona"; and it was with real and unfeigned regret we one evening received the information that their work with us was done, and on this side we should know them no more; but I hope that wherever these two friends may now be they will know they are unforgotten by me, and that I look forward with pleasure for the time when we shall meet on the other "side" of the table.

In looking back to the times of which I am writing I cannot help regretting that an account was not kept of all our strange experiences. We had all sorts and conditions of spirits visiting us in those days—good, bad, and indifferent—but never to our injury. As an example I give the following:

One evening we sat round our little table, a family party consisting of my three brothers, sister, and myself. We received the usual greeting from our friends, conveyed by tilts of the table, which by the way was not the usual round kind used at seances, but a four-legged Pembroke, with two leaves or flaps. We were presently aware of small, faint taps, which after a time increased in sound to loud and distinct knocks, and we judged the spirit wished to

give us a message. My eldest brother asked the questions, while my second brother repeated the alphabet for the spirit to knock at the letters required.

"Are you a friend?" "Yes."

"A relative?" "No."

"What is your sex?" "Female."

"Do you know either of us personally?"

"No."

"Young?" "No; middle-aged."

"Tell us your name." "My name is Mary Wyatt. I passed away at a place called Yeovil, and have come, dear children, to tell you that I have at last realized the glorious truth that 'God is Love.'"

This was all; the spirit left and came no more. The next morning a friend, Mr. M——, called—he was investigating spiritualism, but in a very sceptical spirit. We told him of the curious message we had received the previous evening; judge of our surprise, and his own too, when he opened his pocket-book and showed us the same message, word for word, with the exception of "dear children," which had been given to him the same night, at almost the same hour, at a seance held in the

house of Mr. J——, Bull Street, Birmingham, three miles at the very least from our house.

The same night the spirit of Mary visited us, another spirit came as soon as she had left, and the following communication was received :

"Who are you?" "A friend."

"A relative?" "No."

"Whom? a friend?" "Yes; of Fanny."

"What is your sex?" "Female."

"Old?" "No."

"Young?" "No."

"Middle-aged?" "Yes."

"How old?" "Seventy-nine."

It crossed our mind here that seventy-nine was rather over middle age, and one of us said so; at this the table rocked exactly as though someone holding it were shaking with laughter.

"What is your name?" "Tom Johnstone."

Here we all began to laugh and the table to dance, and, oh! the fibs that middle-aged female told us.

For a time this was rather fun, but after a few sittings the table without our touching it would run about the room alone, slide up the

walls, climb on to a larger table, and play such pranks that it became a regular nuisance, and we could get no communications without "Tom Johnstone" interfering. Sometimes he, she, or it, succeeded in cheating us into the belief that "it" had gone, and our own friends come back, but before long Tom would betray himself, and spoil our sitting.

We discontinued our seances for a week or two for several reasons; one was, we had a troublesome baby of our eldest sister staying with us, who was always crying; another was "Tom Johnstone." One night we gathered round what he had converted into a festive board, and had not sat long when our baby nephew commenced to howl. I ran upstairs and hushed him to sleep, and had hardly got downstairs when he began again. At last I said he should cry, I would go no more, and sat obstinately at the table. It began to dance, and my brother said, "Oh, it's Tom! Go away, and put little Fred to sleep." The answer came, "Bess, go up to that child, or he will break his neck!" I did not know what to do. The child was quiet, and Tom had played us such tricks I felt sure it was another of them.

However, my sister said, "Go just this once," and off I ran. Sure enough there was baby Fred hanging head downwards over the side of the bed, kept in only by one foot being twisted in the sheet. I quickly tucked the fat lad in, and was turning to leave the room, when I heard a loud tapping on the window-pane. I looked, and there was my dear, blessed mother's face and right hand pressed to the glass, looking into the room from the outside. She smiled, and with her fingers rapped again on the glass and faded away. The night outside was pitch-dark, a good light was in the room, and yet I saw her sweet face plainly and all luminous. From that day to this we had no more of "Tom Johnstone."

CHAPTER IV.

FURTHER DEVELOPMENT.

"This spirit, dumb to us, will speak to him."

I COMMENCED now to be subject to attacks of unconsciousness. They would occur at irregular intervals, and at all times—sometimes during supper, and under a full light. I felt no pain, or faintness, or hysteria. I simply lost my senses. My brother became very anxious, and called in a doctor, who said he could not understand my condition. They used to bathe me with cold water, burn feathers under my nose, and make me generally uncomfortable without any effect.

One night Frank was fanning me, when I sat up and said, "Leave her alone. She is neither ill nor fainting. Stand further away, and she will sit up and support herself." My brothers were utterly at a loss to understand

my speaking of myself in the third person, but did as they were desired.

A few nights after Mr. and Mrs. Powell (the housekeepers of the old gentleman next door to us) came in to join our seance, when my mother came and gave us her name, desiring us to put out the light, which we did. We then saw a blue light rise about a yard from the table and form a cloud, which opened and disclosed the figure of our mother, who had then been passed away eleven months. She spoke to us in the direct voice, and told us how happy she was, and then gradually faded away. Mr. P—— was so terrified at the sight that he threw himself upon the ground; but we (who had all been devoted to our mother) were very thankful for the occurrence.

My brother Frank had a lad in his employ who brought his lunch to the office one day in a copy of the *Medium* newspaper, and Frank picked it up and brought it home. Previous to this we had not known that spiritualism had any press organs of its own, and we were delighted to find through this means that there were spiritualistic societies in Birmingham,

which we resolved to join. The spirits came and positively forbid us to do so, declaring that, if we did, I should lose the power I had gained. However we did not take their warning, but called on some well-known spiritualists, and were most kindly received by them. We joined their public seances, and much enjoyed them; but from that time for several months we never had another sign at home. Whilst at one of these seances I met with a medium who held sittings at Edgbaston, and invited me to attend them. The first time I went by myself. It was a dark seance, and there were more than twenty people present. I felt very shy, as I knew no one but the medium, and I was placed between two strange gentlemen. As soon as I was seated soft knockings commenced on the table under my hands, but I was too shy to interrogate what they might mean, so the gentleman next me questioned the spirit instead. The answer came back at once from my great uncle Sam, who had been devoted to me on earth, and said he was delighted to meet me again. "Dear child," he rapped out, "have more faith in God." He then gave the dates and

particulars of his own death and that of his wife, which I had not known. All that he had told me I found to be correct, after making inquiries at home and from distant friends. The gentlemen between whom I was sitting did not so much as know my name, or I theirs. One of them interrogated the spirit for me, and my hands were not now on the table, so there was no room for doubting that it was really and truly the spirit of my uncle who was speaking to me.

After this circumstance I attended another seance with my new acquaintance, who went into a trance, and told me there was a spirit by my side. I asked how I was to recognise her. The medium replied, "She has spoken to you often ; she has given you a sign but not her name." I recognised the spirit at once then, as one who went with us by the name of "Number Seven," as she always gave seven raps on appearing and retiring.

About this time I was introduced to a Mr. Milburn, who was vigorously investigating mesmerism. We became great friends, and he used to visit at our house, and mesmerise me for the development of my clairvoyance. This

went on for months, until my spirit friends said it was weakening me and must be given up. But it largely increased my power of clairvoyance, which after this became normal, so that I can see as well (and sometimes better) out of the trance condition than in. But I would not have my friends believe for a single moment that the powers which then began and have since developed came all at once, or without long and severe trials on my part. After this lapse of time it is impossible for me to describe all I passed through, but my readers must believe me when I tell them mediumship is not of mushroom growth, or a power which is developed spontaneously. Of course I am fully aware of sudden and unexplained manifestations taking place, but I also know that these sudden developments are not sustained, and most mediums will tell you of how after a season of wonderful experience the power suddenly failed and left them, to return sometimes only after months and even years, either in another form or in wonderfully developed or advanced condition. The explanation is this: We have a medium, often quite unacquainted with spiritualism, or the fact rather

that spirits of the so-called dead return to earth to communicate once more with mortals. He or she has the usual spirit guide which every person has, but added to them are spirits attracted by the magnetism peculiar to media. These invisibles soon find out that through this person they can communicate with earth; the medium one day becomes possessed of a sudden or extra access of power, the watchful spirits take advantage, and we get a sudden and often startling manifestation, lasting sometimes long enough to attract attention, as in the case of the Fox family of America, and at others only causing people to wonder what that noise or movement meant; or to make people say, "Oh, So-and-so was so peculiar, I think he or she must have been ill or hysterical." In my own case, as I have said in the earlier chapters, my mediumship began to show itself at a very early age; and when I grew older, and began to understand things better, it increased tenfold. But at last, after remaining sufficiently long to convince my family, friends, and self that an intelligent force was manifesting itself, that there was indeed "No Death," the manifestation ceased, and although I still

remained normally clairvoyant my invisible friends ceased to communicate, and without, at first, any intimation to myself, proceeded to develop me. As I have said, I now began to have fits of unconsciousness. I seemed unable to take any real interest in anything. I could not eat. A fearful repugnance to animal food, in any form whatever, took possession of me ; I could not bear to smell it being cooked, and used to retire to my own room, often smothering my head in the bed-clothes, dreading to smell the cooking. In looking back to this time it seems to me I must really have almost lived on air, for I cannot remember sitting down to a meal, or eating other than bread and butter and watercress, or lettuce or celery, frequently making a dinner off bread and salad, or, in the summer, peas alone. I never knew what thirst was. Then began a feeling of lethargy. I did not want to walk or exert myself, and yet felt perfectly well, and looked the picture of health and strength, and, in my own way, thoroughly enjoyed my life, which never became gloomy, dull, or depressed.

Then slowly came another change, and this I think began to alarm us. As I have said, I

felt myself perfectly well, but I began to turn night into day. As the evenings came on the lethargy began to pass off, and when the rest of the family commenced retiring I was wide awake, and ready for anything. Of course I too went to bed at the same time as the others, but it was only to lie awake and read and sew, or any other work I could do sitting up in bed. But when the morning came, much to my sister's vexation, I generally tucked myself up and went to sleep. Of course a doctor was consulted, and as usual pronounced it an attack of hysteria. I laughed then and I laugh now, for I never had an hysterical attack in my life; but I took the medicine prescribed, and as a matter of course without any apparent result. The doctor said it was a very obstinate case indeed. I quite agree with that doctor, after all these years. It was an obstinate case, and one which developed my whole future life both in this world and the next, and one which I would not have been without for all this world could offer me. And when I look back to that time I rejoice with a great joy, for it was the happiest, sweetest, and calmest period of all my life. There was a peace round me then,

and it seems to me as if the sun never ceased to shine, or the world to look so lovely. I used to walk from Birmingham to visit an elder married sister living eight miles away. The road was almost entirely country in those days, and now I cannot put into words what my thoughts were as my feet gaily passed over those eight miles of lanes. I never knew what it was to feel tired, lonely, or afraid. The birds sang, the flowers in the hedges bloomed, and I, well, I was in the clouds, and as happy as the birds singing round me. I positively seemed to revel in the stillness and the sunshine, *Now* I know what was my condition. No hysteria! It was the ecstasy of realizing the spiritual spheres whilst still occupying an earthly one. Even after reading the foregoing, I do not think that a single person who knows me will accuse me of being a sentimental up-in-the-clouds sort of person. I am matter-of-fact to the last degree, and even while very enthusiastic on any subject do not lose my head, or forget to use my reasoning faculties. And I would like to impress upon any individual about to investigate spiritualism, "*never become enthusiastic until you have been*

convinced of its truths and facts for at least five years." It is the early student, and the impulsive female, who have often brought spiritualism into contempt. The former, because before he knows anything about the principles underlying the phenomena, but being convinced these are a fact, he commences to tell his friends and acquaintances all about the matter, what he has seen and heard, etc., and both in and out of season persists in dragging the subject into conversation, and is determined to force it into the system of his friends whether they like it or not, and becomes very angry with them if they laugh at him, and decline to credit his assertion.

The impulsive female is almost harder to bear than the early student. She gushes frightfully over the mediumship of the *one* medium she, for the moment, is engaged in worshipping. I have heard fat old ladies holding forth about the *loveliness*, the *holiness*, the blessed atmosphere surrounding the medium; all the time I knew the medium to be a fat, vulgar, coarse creature, whose holiness consisted of a long invocation in atrocious English, as a prelude to a performance which

ended in a *silver* collection, and whose *blessed atmosphere* reeked of whisky or double-stout, which the medium felt compelled to take before commencing the seance. These are the people who have made spiritualism and its teachings a laughing-stock to sensible, educated, and earnest seekers after truth.

I must return to ~~where~~ I was explaining the fact that all true ~~mediumship~~ requires developing and earnest care. I have often remarked, particularly of late years, that inquirers and spiritualists alike, seek ready-made mediumship; none seem to me to try *to make it for themselves*. People come to me saying, "So-and-so says I am a medium. Am I?" "Certainly you are. All people are mediums, if they did but know it." "Oh, but I've never seen or heard anything, then how can I be a medium?" "Can you play the piano?" "Oh, yes!" "Do you play by ear or note?" "Oh, by note, of course!" "Do you play better now than when you began?" "Why, what a question? I could not play at all when I began, but was very fond of music, and everyone said I should play well if properly taught." "Exactly, if properly taught. And

after all these years of practice you are a good pianist. Go and do likewise with your mediumship. You are a good medium, but it's practice alone that brings perfection. Go, and do as I have done. Sit for months, aye, years, and eventually you will be as good a medium as you are musician, painter, or what not." "Oh, but I have no time, and I want to see something!" "If it is not worth working for, it is not worth having."

I never lost any time over my developing, even at the time when I was passing through that strange experience I have told you of. I never neglected my home duties, or shirked any of my obligations. In the evenings, at the time which most families and young people devote to music, visiting, and merrymaking, we, my sisters and a few other friends, used to hold our seances. In the twilight, before the lamps were lighted, I used to practice my clairvoyance. Whilst sitting at needlework I mentally sought communion with my friends, and step by step I gradually became the medium I am at this day. I never wasted a moment of my life, or neglected anything I had to do, for the sake of my mediumship; and

I have no sympathy whatever with people who, because they happen to be mediumistic, make it an excuse to pass their days in mooning idly about.

I remember years ago knowing a young man—a medium—who lived by sponging on his friends and acquaintances, and at last married a young medium who, after the marriage, continued at the work she was engaged in previously. The husband loafed round as usual, going into trances, and getting his tea, &c. in return, until at last circumstances occurred which prevented the wife earning so much money. Of course things went from bad to worse, and one day I suggested to the man that he should work. "Oh, but the spirits intend me for lecturing!" "Well, good gracious! if they do it will not interfere with your earning your living, and save your wife working herself to death." "Oh, her mother helps her!" I felt utterly disgusted, but knew this man would become a still better medium. I therefore spoke to a very wealthy gentleman, well known at that time in the city, and who, being a good spiritualist, entered fully into the matter, and

in a few days wrote me that he had a situation ready for the young medium, which would leave him plenty of time for development and loafing. I immediately sent word to him to call on me, explaining why ; and in the course of a few hours had a reply to the effect that he had consulted his guides, and they declined to permit him mixing himself up with ordinary, everyday-life, as a man could not serve two masters. I was too disgusted to do anything further, but in the course of a week or two received a letter asking for a loan. The wife had a sudden and severe illness, brought on by working the sewing machine. I confess I did not lend the money, and eventually this young man had to serve two masters, or even more ; for the wife struck at last, and my gentleman had to work for his and her daily bread. At the same time he found time for his mediumship, and even a little idling ; but he is a great medium, and I have listened many a time to his able lectures with great pleasure and profit. Mediumship properly used will never interfere with our ordinary life, and to me it is all bosh, and so much high-falutin' claptrap, when people say, " Oh, I 'm so sensitive, I can't now sit in a

'bus, or a train, or a cab, or in a room near some people, they upset me so!" Of course lots of people believe themselves to be in this state; but my experience is—and I've had a good deal—that when people get into such a state they should give up developing their spiritual faculties, go and get a tonic, change of air if possible, and common-sense, practical companionship; and, on the other hand, if they are humbugging, to be told so plainly, and not encouraged in their nonsense. Mediumship is in every human being, more or less, because after all it is nothing but a manifestation through our physical form of our spiritual faculties; it is therefore perfectly natural, and need no more interfere with our ordinary daily life than does the practice of music with the musician, or the lessons of the artist for his pictures.

I know this will bring a howl down on my devoted head from lots of the high-falutin' ones in the spiritualistic ranks; but I stick to my guns, and I shall remain to the last, I hope, a practical and, what my friend Mr. W. T. Stead has described me, a level-headed woman.

And now a word for the wise. "Seek, and

ye shall find ; ask, and it shall be given to you." Don't, as soon as you are a medium, expect phenomena straight off. Seek it. Ask for it by work ; and, because it does not come, don't give up in despair. It is there, though it may take months and even years to prove its presence ; when it comes, it is worth more than all the world can offer in exchange.

I should like now to give an account of a seance held at the house of friends at Birmingham. My sister, sister-in-law, and myself were invited to spend the evening of the 26th of December, 1874, with our friends, Mrs. and A. Franklin. We were to hold a seance, the medium being Mrs. John C——. After tea we adjourned to the dining-room, and there formed a circle round a heavy loo table. Our host being a great invalid, and suffering at that time severely from the disease which eventually carried him off, lay on a couch near the fire, and there were eight of us at the table. The chandelier was directly over the centre of the table, and there were three gas jets burning, but turned low. We had not been sitting many minutes when a very large and heavy ivory paper-knife was taken from a table on the

farthest side of the room, and placed gently on that we were sitting round. One of the gentlemen was very sceptical, and began to look about him anxiously for tricks. The table now began to move, loud knocks were heard, and the room seemed to be full of people moving about, glasses were carried from the sideboard, and some of them were floated over our heads, and our spirit friends treated us to three or four distinct tunes by ringing the glasses together. I could not enumerate all the articles which were moved; but upon Mr. Franklin saying in answer to a question of his wife's that he felt weak, almost directly afterwards we heard the cork being extracted from an unopened bottle of brandy which stood on the sideboard. We could see no one near it, but we all saw the cork went flying across the room, and settled in Mr. F.'s beard. We took it as a sign he ought to have a little brandy, and his wife attended to him. Our sceptical friend, Mr. R—, had been making himself obnoxious in some way to the spirits, for all at once we saw the heavy ivory paper knife lifted from the table, and commence to belabour him, first upon his back and shoulders, and then

upon his head. We besought of the spirits not to hurt him, but they took no notice, and at last our only resource was to get him out of the room. This was done, but for a time our circle was broken, and it was fully half an hour before we received any further sign that the spirits meant to return. When they did, we asked why Mr. R—— had been so badly used? "Oh, we have been waiting for a long time to do that! He is a cheat himself, and imagines other people are like him; he has been giving bogus seances for some time, he won't give any more yet awhile." I learned afterwards that Mr. R—— gave up the investigation *because he felt sure* that the spirits were all low and vicious. For my own part nothing would please me better than to assist at another seance, where several bogus mediums I could name could be treated to as sound a thrashing as the spirits gave to Mr. R——.

To continue. We, by raps, were told now to put out the lights. This was done, and Mrs. C—— almost immediately began to describe a spirit standing at the back of my chair, and which I immediately recognised as that of my mother, who had then been

passed away nine months. I said, "Can mamma tell me what new article I am wearing, and who had given it to me?" At once a soft hand stole round my neck, and a locket which I wore on a velvet ribbon was lifted and let fall several times. Then it was pulled from the back so strongly that I was obliged to put my fingers between the velvet and my throat. Mrs. C—— then said, "Your mother tells me that the locket was given by your brother Frank, but she wants to give you a further proof of her identity." The form now began to fade, but in a short time Mrs. C—— said, "Oh, dear! someone is taking my comb; my hair will be down." I felt my own hair being manipulated by soft hands, and felt the hair-pins and pads being removed, and my hair fell down over my shoulders. The pads and pins were laid on the table in front of me, and then I felt a comb being gently put into my hair, and the ends which were over my shoulders lifted up, and carefully twisted round, then, with a final pat, the hands were taken from my head. Now the meaning dawned upon me, and in this I had such a proof of my mother's presence, and that she still lived a conscious

and natural life. A fortnight before she passed away I was dressing my hair in her bedroom, and lost my temper over it. I had such an abundance of hair at that time, and being very delicate, often grew dreadfully tired holding up my arms to dress it. My mother said, "Dear child, don't worry; take my comb, and twist your hair round it, and it will be better than all these pads." She had come back and given me this proof, which none but herself could ever have done. I now could feel a form standing between my sister and myself, and my right arm, which was bare from the elbow, was held firmly by a hand. I laid my left hand on the hand holding me, and then stroked the hand upwards towards the shoulder. I reached as far as the elbow, and on the muscle of the forearm felt a small black spot, which I knew my mother had in life. She had fallen when a child, and under the skin there always remained a small spot, which she used to say was a piece of coal. I felt this plainly; but beyond the elbow there was "nothing." I felt all round, but could feel no more, and then once more laid my hand on my mother's. There were no nails, nor any sign

of bones ; and, whilst busy investigating, found my hand suddenly on my own arm—the hand had simply melted away whilst I held it. I now felt my chair was moving, to my astonishment, not to say alarm. I felt all round—for I was some distance from the floor, and was positively floating across the room—for hands likely to hold my chair, but there were none. I was taken across the room, and then slowly, as I was carried, my chair was quietly placed on the floor, and I found by the sound behind me that I was sitting with my back to a closed and locked piano. The piano commenced to be loudly played, and we recognised a tune my mother frequently played when on earth. It was the "Bridesmaids' Chorus" from *Der Freischütz*.

CHAPTER V.

MY PUBLICITY.

"Methinks I see my father.
Where, my lord?
In my mind's eye, Horatio."

IN the month of May, 1875, we had some friends visiting us, and one evening we held a seance, and I went under control. There was a gentleman present who was a great smoker, and had a pipe in his pocket, but I was known to have the greatest repugnance to the smell of smoke, which always made me ill. The spirits lifted me out of the chair and deposited me on the carpet, where I squatted on my haunches like an Indian, and made signs that I wished to smoke the gentleman's pipe. It was handed to me. I lighted it, and started to smoke, which I did quite naturally, and after a few whiffs handed it to my next neighbour and signed it was to be passed round the circle, after which I took it

in my hand and made a speech in dumb show. I became much excited, and was evidently in deep earnest, gesticulating so wildly that the sitters proposed the spirit should leave control. He was immediately replaced by "Goodness," who said he was an Indian spirit, quite unable to make his wishes known, but wanted me in the future to help him in his work. He said I should have to go on a journey. The Indian spirit came several times afterwards, but could never make himself properly understood. "Goodness" was always obliged to interpret for him, but after three weeks he came no more.

The July following "Goodness" and others of my controls declared I should shortly be required to go to London. We could not believe this, as we had no friends there, and I had never thought of using my powers out of my family circle. The same month a stranger called on me, and said he had heard of me through a spiritualistic paper and wanted to have a seance with me. I told him I never sat professionally. He said, "Never mind, let us try what we can get." So I sat at a table with him, and I immediately heard clair-

audiently the name of "Jessie." The gentleman started, for Jessie was the very person he sought. He asked me if I could describe "Jessie." She at once showed herself to me clairvoyantly, and I gave him a full description of her, and a message she wished to send him. My sitter was astounded, but not more so than myself. He was a clergyman, and had never before succeeded in getting any information of his dead friend.

Letters about me now began to get into the papers, and I received them from people in all parts of the country, who wanted to have seances with me. In September, Mr. James Burns, editor of the *Medium*, came to Birmingham to see me, and then was laid the foundation of a friendship which has never been interrupted since. He tried to persuade me to visit London, but I was so shy of strangers that I did not see how it could be brought about. In November, however, I unexpectedly received an invitation to come to town. Some spiritualists, Mr. and Mrs. R——, who had heard of me from mutual friends, wrote to ask me to pay them a visit at Earl's Court. Thus was fulfilled the pro-

phesy of "Goodness," for in a fortnight I was in London.

I had been there a week, when I was controlled by a strange spirit, who gave her name as the wife of Dr. M——, and asked the R——'s to take me to see him. My friends demurred at this, as they were quite unacquainted with Dr. M——, who had recently established himself in London as a magnetic healer. The spirit however insisted on it, and they accordingly started with me one morning for Southampton Row, where the doctor lived. We had to wait an hour and a half before we could see him, and then his manner was not conciliating. The R——'s explained the matter to him. "Oh! is that all?" he replied, "then I have no time to attend to it." I was extremely indignant and annoyed that we should have taken the spirit's advice, and, with my friends, rose to leave the room; but what was my astonishment to see standing by Dr. M——'s side the Indian spirit who had controlled me in Birmingham! The doctor is about six feet two inches in height, and the spirit was still taller. The Indian spirit pushed me back into my chair, and "Goodness" whispered to me,

"Tell the doctor what you see!" I did so. I said, "There is a tall Indian spirit standing by you, who calls himself 'Simoset.'" Dr. M——'s manner immediately changed, and he became as agreeable as he had been rude, and most earnestly asked us to remain, which we declined to do, for he had much offended us, and we left him. That evening a letter arrived from him, with an invitation for us all to supper, which, a few evenings later, we accepted; and on arriving found a large party assembled, and learned there was to be a seance, with myself as the medium. Immediately, so great was my timidity, I became frozen with fright. It was a dark seance, and we sat round a table. I soon began to experience great internal pain, which travelled up to my throat, and threatened to suffocate me. I had too a filthy taste in my mouth, as though it were full of ulcers, and a burning thirst. At the same time I heard a voice repeating, "I am Mary Ann, I am his wife." At length I repeated the words aloud. I was quite conscious at the time I said them. Dr. M—— said, "Let Mary Ann come!" I urged the spirit to remain, and described her feelings; and before she had finished

Dr. M—— left his seat, and coming to my side placed his hands on my shoulders and said firmly, "Mary Ann, come!" From this moment I remember no more, but was told afterwards I fell back unconscious in my chair.

Dr. M—— lifted me up in his arms and carried me into the next room, where for some time he conversed with the spirit that controlled me. When I came out of the trance he told me that his wife had come through me, and given him proofs of her identity, which he had been vainly seeking in England, America, and the Continent. This statement he repeated to the assembled sitters, said the symptoms I described myself as suffering from were quite accurate, as his wife had died from a malignant cancer.

After this manifestation I was glad to return to Birmingham, which I did on the Sunday, for I felt very weak and exhausted.

On the Monday evening I attended a lecture by Cora Tappen, the American inspirational speaker. Whilst in the hall a spirit whispered to me, "A letter has been posted to you in London, but you will not receive it yet." I repeated this communication to the friend who accompanied me. On the following Wednesday

I received a letter from Dr. M——, telling me that on Sunday he had called at the R——'s, and found me gone—that thereupon he had written to me the same night, but to a wrong address, and the letter had been returned to him. He enclosed it, thanking me for my seance, and asked me if I should receive any further messages for him to send them by post.

On the Friday following, as I was sitting by myself reading, a spirit voice said, "I want to send a message to my husband." I asked, "Are you Mrs. M——?" "No!" replied the voice, "I am his wife Mary Ann." "Then you must be Mrs. M——." "No! I am Mrs. McGeary." And then followed a long communication concerning money for Dr. M——. I wrote to him to the effect that I was afraid the spirit was deceiving me, since she quibbled about her name, but I repeated what she had said. He wrote back at once that the spirit was perfectly correct—his real name was Mr. McGeary, and he had only adopted the one of M—— for professional purposes. After a while he wrote again to me to the effect that as he saw I was extremely delicate, he would agree

to give me magnetic treatment in return for the exercise of my clairvoyance in his profession. I was very ill and weak at the time, and after talking the matter over at home, it was settled that I should accept the offer and return to London. I made no preparations for the visit, however, as I intended to stay there only a fortnight; but after I had been in London a week Dr. M—— asked me to accompany him to Lancashire to a meeting of spiritualists for Christmas-day. A Miss F—— went with us, and we arrived in Oldham on Christmas Eve, and went to a hotel, where Dr. M—— had taken rooms for us. The two bedrooms were at the end of a short passage, and the sitting-room was exactly opposite. The door of the room which Miss F—— and I were to occupy together had two panes of frosted glass in the upper part of it.

During the morning we had many callers, amongst others a party of three gentlemen, one of whom (for no particular reason that I could bring forward) greatly embarrassed me. In the afternoon we attended the spiritualistic meeting, at which we had an audience of eight hundred people. Dr. M—— left the gathering

at eight o'clock ; Miss F—— and I remained until nearly eleven. Just as we were preparing to leave, Miss F—— asked me if I minded sleeping alone, as she had met some friends, who wished her to return home with them. I was not in the least alarmed at the prospect, and returned to the hotel by myself. The bedroom was an extremely small one, as the hotel was full of visitors ; there was only one door to it, and no fireplace. The bed was set close against the wall, and I looked underneath it in case of burglars, as was my usual custom, but there was not sufficient room for anyone to conceal himself. Then I locked and bolted the door, and congratulated myself that there was a good light in the corridor, which shone through the frosted panes of glass, as I never cared for total darkness on account of the queer sights I had seen. I got cheerfully into bed, and I lay for some time reading before I put out my candle. After doing so I saw reflected on the glass door the shadow of a man. I sat up in bed, and saw distinctly the back of a man, dressed in walking apparel, looking into the sitting-room, which was just opposite. I could hear no sound, and I

thought he must be some hotel thief. As I gazed at him he disappeared also noiselessly. I got out of bed, and tried the fastenings of my door; they were all safe. I then saw I had a good piece of candle left in case of need, and looking at my watch found it was just twelve o'clock. As I laid down again a waiter crossed the passage, and, to my disappointment, put out the gas, which I had hoped would burn all night. I have never been a good sleeper, and had lain for perhaps another twenty minutes, trying to compose myself, when all at once I felt a heavy weight on my feet. I had thrown my travelling rug across the foot-rail of the bed, and I thought it had tumbled over. I sat up to replace it, but could feel nothing there, so thinking that I had been mistaken, lay down again; in a few minutes the heavy weight returned, and this time it extended from my feet to my knees, and felt like a large bundle. I now became frightened, and drew my knees as near up to my chin as possible, when suddenly I felt a body throw itself outside the coverlet of the bed, next the wall. There was no noise or sign, only a leaden weight like a log. I cannot

describe the feeling of terror I experienced. I was paralysed with fear and could neither move nor speak. The figure was as silent as myself; it never stirred from its position, and I could hear no breath—it was rigid and motionless. I believe I must have fainted, for when I recovered sufficient nerve to light my candle, I found it was half-past three o'clock. There was no sign of any disturbance, and whatever had been on the bed was gone. I rose and examined the room; the door was still bolted, and there was no sign of any living creature, excepting that on the pillow next mine there was a distinct mark where a head had lain, and the coverlet was pressed in from the weight of the body. I dressed myself and went and sat in the sitting-room, until the servants came in the morning to light the fire.

Although Dr. M—— had visited Oldham on a professional visit, and I was his clairvoyant, nothing would induce me to stay there. When we met at breakfast he exclaimed, "Good heavens! What have you been doing to yourself? You look eighty." I told him my story and he searched the room himself, and was so impressed with the narration that he

agreed to leave Oldham at once and proceed to Manchester.

Arrived at Manchester, he placed me under the charge of some spiritualistic friends, and went to see his patients. In about an hour a card was brought to me from a gentleman, who said he particularly wished to see me. At first, being a stranger to me, I denied myself to him, but he would not leave, and was so very urgent in his entreaties for an interview that I consented to his being shown upstairs. Directly he entered the room I recognised him as the gentleman who had called on Dr. M—— at Oldham and embarrassed me by his peculiar manner, and also as the man whose shadow I had seen cast against my bedroom door. He was a perfect gentleman in his manner, and we soon got into an interesting conversation, during which he asked my opinion concerning the powers of the astral body. I knew nothing about the subject, and felt extremely doubtful if separation of the two bodies (whilst living) was possible. He replied that he had the power of appearing at a distance whenever he wished to do so, and was in the habit of writing letters in his own hand through a medium in

- Birmingham. I laughed, and professed to disbelieve his statement, until it dawned on me that he must be the person who had frightened me so terribly the night before. Then all my aim was to get rid of him, and I requested him to leave me, but I had great difficulty in persuading him to do so. For some days he persecuted me with his visits, but at last he was convinced that I had no desire for his acquaintance. Thus ended my first and last unpleasant experience of mediumship. I have met with jesting and playful spirits, but I have never been controlled by blasphemous ones, and I do not believe that they come to those persons who have no desire to communicate with them.
- Gibson

CHAPTER VI.

EXPOSTULATORY.

"They say—What say they? Let them say!"

I SHOULD like to take this opportunity to try to remove (if possible) from the public mind an idea which I find is gaining ground, *i.e.*, that the investigation of spiritualism leads to immorality. I think that most people, reading this account of my experiences, will admit I have a right to speak. For more than twenty years I have held seances, and attended them whenever I had an opportunity. I am acquainted with all the principal mediums in England, but I have never yet met with a single instance where evil of any kind emanated *from the spirits*. If there were anything wrong it proceeded from the persons who sought spirit communion.

During the last twelve months many tales have been told me of immorality, presumably

induced by the spirits. I have no hesitation in declaring these tales to be lies told by persons who, either from sheer vice, personal animosity, or disappointment from having failed to turn spiritualism into a money-making speculation, try to make capital out of denouncing it—either as a social evil or gigantic fraud. Some people, I believe, have met with unpleasant and peculiar experiences; but as we all know that “like attracts like” we need go no further for an explanation than to the persons themselves, who have obtained the knowledge *for which they sought*. If ever any of these unpleasant stories are repeated to me, I immediately institute inquiries into the morals and habits of the man or woman who has propagated them, and in no instance have I failed to trace the source of the evil to its true home.

Because we have in our churches, chapels, and all religious sects, parsons, priests, and ministers, and others of bad character—because we constantly read of clergymen being summoned to our courts for swindling, adultery, and other phases of immorality—do we immediately assume that their religious

teachings are wrong, and the cause of their wickedness? No! We look to the man himself, and find he has sinned—not because of his belief, but in spite of it. I claim the same tolerance for spiritualism.

During the last twenty years I have given hundreds of seances, and publicly challenge any man or woman to come forward to prove they have heard or experienced a single instance of impure teaching, or practice, from my controls. On the other hand, I have in my possession letters from respectable members of society (so-called) which speak for themselves, and throw a lurid light on some of these would-be investigators of spiritualism. Despite of any assertions to the contrary, I maintain that the investigation has no danger for the honest, the pure, and the earnest seekers after truth. "Seek, and ye shall find," is written in that Book, which also says, "Try the spirits." "Prove all things, hold fast to that which is good."

The greatest medium of all time is He whom we all acknowledge as the Master. He tells us both of good and evil spirits; and again he says, "By their fruits, ye shall know

them." And so I say of spiritualism. The moral nature of the investigator shall be made known by his experience, never mind to what agency he may attribute it.

I have three little children, whom I love better than my life, and whose moral welfare is my sole desire. These little ones I am training in the faith of spiritualism, and with God's blessing and assistance the world will be all the better for their living in it. If we investigate this great subject in an honest manner, its real and beautiful nature will soon reveal itself. It will teach us to know ourselves, it will teach us our duty towards our neighbour, it will open our eyes to our vast responsibility. It will prove that we hold in ourselves the exact rate of progression and development required of us by God. It will teach us to take our own sins on our own shoulders, instead of laying them comfortably on those of the long-suffering Christ. It will instruct us to be true men and true women, recognizing our true position on earth as the crowning effort of nature, and showing us that our organism contains all the powers of knowledge which have been accumulating through

countless ages, and will continue to develop until the end.

I do not want to hint for a moment that *all* spiritualists are saints, for doubtless there is room for vast improvement amongst us; but before we are condemned, let us have a fair trial by competent judges. Come to us unbiassed, hoping for the best, and you will receive the best.

Some mediums are accused of selling their gifts; but if they do they only follow the example of their pastors and masters, who do not minister in spiritual things to the faithful unless they receive a *quid pro quo* in the shape of bread and cheese. How many of them labour in the Lord's vineyard for the *love* of the thing? They say they have "received a call," but you may put it down as a call to dinner. And of the two workers, mediums will generally be found to be the more exhausted, and just as much in need of physical refreshment as the parsons.

If a medium is caught tripping, there is an universal howl of execration. If a parson goes wrong, the excuse is, "The poor man must have gone out of his mind from over-

study." But my wonder often is that there is not more chicanery in spiritualism. Rogues creep in wherever money is to be made, and until the public learn to investigate in a common-sense manner, there will arise tricksters calling themselves mediums, and ready to pounce down on their shillings and pence. I know from my own experience that mediums are often all but driven or bribed into cheating, and I will explain here in what way.

I am a clairvoyant, or reader by second sight. Apart from that gift (which I claim as normal) I am endowed with other mediumistic powers, as these papers have shown. Among other manifestations I have obtained materialisations, but it has always been spontaneously, and I have never sat for it among strangers. My friend Florence Marryat, in her book, *There is no Death*, describes the various spirits that appeared to her, through me, in materialised form, and when that book went forth to the public I was inundated with requests for seances, for materialisations. No matter how firmly I declined, nor how plainly I declared I never sat for such manifestations, the answer invariably was, "Oh, do! Pray do!

I don't care what I pay." And I have been offered large sums of money for a single sitting. Now we have arrived at the secret of fraudulent mediums. Had I been poor (as unfortunately many of our most gifted mediums are), it may be I should have been tempted to prostitute my mediumship in order to increase my gains. As it is, I kept the faith, and intend to continue to do so.

This is a long digression from the account of my experiences; but I considered it the proper place in which to put it, "for my profession is sacred from above."

CHAPTER VII.

SOME PERSONAL PRIVATE EXPERIENCES.

"There is something in this more than natural, if philosophy
could find it out."

IN August of the year 1874 my sister Fanny and myself held a great many seances in our own home, and as many of our friends who cared to come were welcome. We had many and varied experiences, but as we kept no account of them as a rule I am unable, after so long a period, to give more than one or two which particularly struck me at the time.

Every Tuesday evening, at the house of our friends, a Mr. and Mrs. W——, their son Willie (a lad of sixteen), Mr. King, Mr. Jones, and a Mr. South (both the last-named gentlemen being good mediums), my sister, and myself, sat.

Our seance room Mr. W—— had had built

specially, and was a grand room for our purpose. It was raised on a platform about twenty feet from the ground, and reached by a staircase, closed, and with a door we could lock and bolt inside. The window was near the ceiling of the room ; there was no fireplace, instead was a cabinet for materialization. A round table was screwed to the floor, and seven chairs, numbered to correspond with numbers marked on the table. This was all the furniture the room contained. It was under the strictest test conditions that we sat. We provided no tube for speaking, no musical instruments, or illuminated slates. The only things on the table were a few sheets of blank note paper and a blacklead pencil. These our spirit friends often used.

Our mode of obtaining the written communications was thus : The spirits would select, by raps on the table, four of the circle by rapping out their respective numbers. These four then stood up, and with the thumb and finger of the right hand held the corner of the sheet of paper next them about two feet above the table ; the pencil was laid on the paper, and in a few seconds we could feel the paper

become so tightly stretched as to feel like parchment. The pencil would then, by unseen spirit hands, be raised upright, and in a very short space of time our paper would be filled with written messages from our beloved spirit friends.

Our next manifestation was that of a bell ringing over our heads, and, it will be remembered, I have stated we had no such thing in our seance room, or near it. When we first heard our aerial bell it was sounded outside the room over the window, and just as though the rain-spout round the roof was being struck with a piece of iron; the sound was distinctly metallic, but without any ring. Of course we knew at once that only the spirits could have produced this noise, as our room was quite isolated, and all the circle sat with linked fingers.

For several seances this was repeated, but each time came nearer, and became more clear and ringing, until one night we were charmed by hearing right over our heads the most beautiful chiming of bells, and all our questions were now responded to by the mysterious chimes.

Our friends became physically stronger at each seance, until at last, as we sat holding hands round the table, we could hear their footsteps about the room, and feel them heavily leaning over our chairs. These delightful meetings were broken up at last by a most severe illness contracted by the sons of our host. Small-pox in a most malignant form developed itself, and, to the regret of all, our sittings were perforce discontinued.

I must not forget to mention that though our bells became exceedingly loud and strong, and would be rung all over the house, following us from our seance room to the street door, we never once saw them. The seven of us have sat to supper in a brightly lighted room, the bell ringing loudly most of the time, but invisible. For nineteen years I have never heard that bell; until, about three years ago, to my utter astonishment, whilst sitting in the gloaming with my two little ones and a lady friend, I once more heard its sweet old chime; and now, when in bed at night, the last thing I hear is the soft, sweet tinkle of my spirit bell.

When the W—— boys recovered from their

illness, their parents decided upon removing farther out of the town, and took a house about two miles out : and now comes a peculiar experience of my own.

I received a letter from Mrs. W——, telling me they had taken a new house, and hoped to enter in about a fortnight from then. That night we held a seance with a number of friends, and after sitting a short time a spirit took possession of me, and began talking loudly and incoherently.

A Mr. Bird, who was present, tried to reason with the spirit, who refused to be calm or quiet, and at last, after being repeatedly requested to leave, declared he would stay as long as he liked, possession being nine points of the law, and that only on one consideration would he be quiet : if we would give him a drink. This request was immediately complied with, and a glass of water handed to him ; he raised it to my lips, but finding it was water tossed the glass and water over the head of Mr. Bird, and called loudly for rum. Of course this was out of the question, and after some time the guides succeeded in turning out this troublesome spirit. For the next fortnight he was a perfect nuisance

at our seances, making such movements with the table and any movable article, that we decided to hold special sittings, at which, by prayers for him, we might raise him out of his earth-bound and low condition; and, to our great joy, he became at last calm and quiet.

Our friends, Mr. and Mrs. W——, by this time, had been in their new abode about a week, when one Sunday morning the boys came to ask my sister and me to go to their mother, who was seriously ill, and wished my doctor spirit to advise her; so we went home with them and found their mother ill and weak and very hysterical. She said she never had been at rest since entering the house, and if something were not quickly done she should go mad, for the house was haunted.

She was sitting on the side of the room facing a large window, against which Mr. W—— was sitting, with his back to it and facing his wife; my sister sat near the table in the centre of the room, and we four were the only occupants. I turned from Mrs. W—— to go to the window, and when within a few steps of Mr. W—— I received a blow, or rather a push, for I was not hurt, in my

back, which sent me straight into Mr. W——'s lap. I sprang up very indignant with whoever had done this, and was surprised to see both Mrs. W—— and my sister calmly talking, and they asked me how I came to fall.

"Fall, indeed!" said I. "One of you pushed me, and please don't do it again, for I am not fond of jokes of that kind."

As they were assuring me that neither of them had stirred, I received another push, which dropped me on to Mrs. W——. We were all aghast, and to our dismay heard a loud, unpleasant laugh in a man's voice. We did not know what to do, and as we stood in the centre of the room I suddenly saw, standing not a yard from us, the figure of a big, stout man. His face looked a bluish-black, the eyeballs protruded fearfully, the tongue hung from the mouth, while round the neck was a rope. I screamed loudly with horror, and before anything could be done the spirit had control of me, and was demanding a drink. My sister, by his manner, recognised the troublesome spirit of our home seances, and she told him if he would be quiet he should have one. A large jug of water was procured,

and before any could be poured into a glass he seized the jug and drank the water up; when the jug was empty he deliberately bit out the side of it (with *my teeth* of course). I don't know how they calmed him, but think some of our spirits must have done so, for presently he told his tale as follows:

"He had committed suicide in that very room only thirteen months previously in a fit of *delirium tremens*. On the day my friend had taken the house she wrote to me, and he had followed the letter, and whilst watching our seances had waited for an opportunity and taken control of me, when, on feeling the earthly surroundings, the old love of and thirst for drink had returned, and this was the result. He wanted to be better, and our prayers had touched him, but he could not become an angel all at once: he promised never to do anything to hurt the medium [myself] again."

The next day Mr. and Mrs. W—— interviewed their landlord, who confirmed all we had been told, but did not for a moment believe his house was haunted; nevertheless my friends paid up their quarter's rent and found another home.

Though I have never since met with the suicide (John) my friend Ned often brings me news of him, and tells me that my unpleasant experience freed a suffering soul. So I was glad, and do not ever regret receiving the blow on my back.

CHAPTER VIII.

SOME PUBLIC EXPERIENCES.

"What's past, and what's to come, she can descry."

"Be not amazed, there's nothing hid from me."

IN the year 1876 I was at Uttoxeter, acting as before for Dr. M——, from which place the following letter was written, and published in the *Medium and Daybreak* newspaper :

"UTTOXETER, *January 4th*, 1876.

"Dr. M—— was accompanied in his provincial tour, and assisted by a remarkable clairvoyant medium, Miss Bessie Williams. It was wonderful to observe the accuracy with which she located the seat of disease, and described the pains felt by the patients. It is well for her that the days of fire and faggots are passed, or the fact of her being young and pretty would not save her from the stake.

"R. BEWLEY, Jun."

The succeeding letters which appeared about the same period speak for themselves.

"MISS BESSIE WILLIAMS' MEDIUMSHIP.

" 'Wondrous things concerning our welfare,
And strange phantoms doth lette us ofte foresee,
And ofte of secret ills bids us beware.'

"SPENSER. (*Faerie Queen*, book ii. st. 47.)

"*To the Editor.*

"DEAR SIR.—Though not affected with a *cacoëthes scribendi*, yet I feel it my duty to acquaint the spiritualistic world, through your columns, of the wonderful nature of the mediumship of the above-named lady.

"Miss Bessie Williams is a clairvoyant and test-medium of highest order. Her development within the last six months has been astonishing, and I have no hesitation in saying that in a short time she will be one of the most lucid and reliable seeresses in the world.

"Personally Miss Williams is a charming young lady of about twenty-one, of a nervous temperament, quick, volatile, and extremely sensitive, of considerable refinement and education.

"The manner in which she exercises her wonderful gift is simple indeed. She places her hands over her eyes, and, without losing consciousness, immediately becomes *en rapport* with the intelligences that accompany her interrogators.

"To the gift of Clairvoyance is added Clairaudience, so that not only are descriptions given of relatives, &c., but their Christian and surnames also. So startling is the effect of this that I have on several occasions seen those to whom she has made such a revelation start from their seats, and, with clasped hands and voice choking with emotion and astonishment, exclaim, 'God, have mercy upon me; that is my dear child!' (husband, wife, &c., as the case may be).

"With true devotion Miss Williams some time ago threw open her residence in Birmingham on Tuesday evenings to the public, the result being that a few Christadelphian youths, consummate alike in ignorance and impudence, and burning to enlighten their fellows, attended weekly, trampling under foot the pearls that were presented to them, and airing their own dogmas *ad nauseam*.

"These shining lights never asked permission to attend, nor even had the common politeness to say 'Thank you' for the great privilege extended to them, but when the sittings were concluded would take up their hats and bundle out without saying 'Good-night.' With such creatures the *argumentum baculinum* would be of infinitely more value than the *argumentum ad judicium*.

"Anyone at all acquainted with mediumship will not wonder that with such unfavourable conditions and the delicately strung organism that is a characteristic of the test medium, her health so deteriorated that the public seances had to be discontinued. Thus ignorant fanaticism refused this opportunity of learning somewhat of the laws and phenomena of psychology. One cannot help exclaiming, '*O tempora! O mores!*'

"But it is in the quiet family circle that the greatest results are obtained. It has been my great privilege to witness on numberless occasions the extraordinary nature of Miss Williams's mediumship when alone, or in the presence of her sister. She can almost at pleasure throw herself into the *spirituelle* con-

dition, and her controls, when entranced, are most interesting.

"One is that of a French spirit—Renee, or Catherine, as she is more frequently called—a natural daughter of the Duc de Guise, and wife of Edouard Jacques Jerome, a Huguenot captain. It is impossible to describe the graceful deportment and refinement that characterizes this control. The descriptions she gives of the manners and customs, dress, furniture, &c. of the French courts of the Guises, Charles IX. and his mother, Catherine de Medici, and Henry of Navarre, afterwards Henri Quatre, are most minute and important to the French historical student. She also clears up many doubtful points in their lives, and those of their contemporaries, Gaspard Coligny, Conde, and Javannes, and gives most vivid pictures of the massacre of St. Bartholomew, in which her husband Edouard was slain.

"Whilst listening to her descriptions I often wonder when our historians will cease quibbling among themselves over doubtful passages, and solve the question by studying psychology, and getting into direct communication with

the subjects themselves, and communing with 'the assembled souls of all that men hold wise.'—*Davenant*.

"Another of her controls is called 'Goodness,' and a more fitting name it would be impossible to select. She is the guide of the medium, and has partly materialised on several occasions. Her sterling worth is such that it is quite usual for Miss Williams' friends to exclaim, 'I'll ask Goodness' advice!' whenever they are perplexed by mundane affairs.

"A short time ago Miss Williams determined to sit for physical phenomena, and obtained some decided manifestations; but she was so nervous, and became so frightened when left in the dark cabinet, and the exhaustion that followed them was so great, that she wisely discontinued them.

"And now a word before closing to the earnest student—anthropological, psychological, and metaphysical. Professor Babbage says, 'The air is one vast library, on whose pages are for ever written all that man has ever said, or woman whispered.' And Professor Denton, in his *Psychometric Researches*, has demonstrated the truth of it, and now the key

to this vast library is discovered. With the proper development of such mediums as Miss Williams depends the opening up of this inexhaustible store of knowledge. The ancients knew more of these subjects than we, worshippers of Mammon; and their Oracles (or test mediums) were not allowed to endure the shock of uncongenial influences. Let us borrow wisdom from them, and endeavour to preserve those who possess such a priceless gift from the bitter blasts of material doubts and obstinacy, that in an atmosphere of sympathy and love the tender flowers of the soul may blossom in perfection.

“Enclosing card and address,

“I am, yours truly,

“A COUNTRY SCHOOLMASTER.”

— *Medium*, October, 1875.

MISS BESSIE WILLIAMS AT WALSALL.

"To the Editor.

"DEAR SIR,—Walsall has been visited by Miss Bessie Williams, of Birmingham. Her manners and mediumship have given much satisfaction.

"She was, while here, the guest of the editor of the oldest and most influential Walsall paper, who for the last twenty years has taken a deep interest in all psychological subjects, though, as I have not asked his permission, I do not feel at liberty to give the gentleman's name. Miss Williams arrived here on Saturday, February 5th, and, after tea, a few of the editor's friends, including myself, being present, we adjourned to the drawing-room, where, after some extremely interesting clairvoyant experiments with a crystal, we formed a seance.

"The first control was of a family nature, and must therefore be considered too sacred for publication. I can only say it was so affecting, so strangely accurate and thrilling, that there was not a dry eye in the room.

'Goodness' and 'Catherine de Guise' also controlled, and spoke to us in the tenderest and most touching manner. The influence that pervaded the whole sitting was most heavenly.

"Now 'Gentlemen of the Press' are not the most susceptible of creatures, for, penetrating as they do daily beneath the surface of society, they become case-hardened and unimpressionable. But all had to give in to the potent influence of that hour.

"A second sitting was held on the Sunday evening and many tests given; indeed, until her departure on the following Friday, numberless instances of the reliableness of her mediumship were afforded.

"We were exceedingly sorry to part with our agreeable friend, but as she had received some pressing invitations, we hope to have the pleasure of her company again shortly.

"It is only just to Miss Williams to remark that her visit was entirely non-professional, she receiving no fee whatever, but simply taking the character of a guest. W. RUSSEL."

"CONCERNING MEDIUMS I HAVE MET.

"DEAR SIR,—It is rather a long time since I have contributed anything to your pages, and I have thought it not inopportune (now that a year or two have been added to my experience in spirit communion) to submit to you a few remarks on the subject.

"Miss Bessie Williams, who is, I believe, already known to you, is a medium I feel much indebted to, but have never been able to requite her to my satisfaction.

"I have had many opportunities of testing her powers, and as she is one of those sensitive beings who shrink from pushing themselves forward before the public, and thus getting wider scope for the exercise of their gifts, I think it my duty, both to your readers and to herself, to do what little I can to prevent her light from being hidden under a bushel, by calling attention to some of what I consider her most remarkable mediumistic gifts. You are doubtless well aware that she acted as clairvoyant for a long period to Dr. M——, and I have no doubt there are very many

amongst his patients who could testify, if they would, to the accuracy and completeness of her diagnosis of diseases (or to those who have given no attention to medical phraseology I had better say), her power of examining internally, and describing the state of, all the organs of the body. In my own case I can say that she has repeatedly described to me the internal state of my own system, and advised remedies and diet, from the use of which I have derived much benefit.

“But the exercise of this kind of mediumship, it is well known, is exceedingly exhaustive to the vital fluids, and involves a considerable amount of suffering and even ill-health, to a medium too sympathetic to throw off the influence of each case as soon as done with; and it has been deemed advisable by her guides to put an end, by means of their own, to the great strain upon her system which the number of patients made necessary, and thus leave her strength to devote to the exercise of her other very valuable phases of mediumship. It was she, or rather one of my own guides speaking through her, who first informed me of my own healing mediumship, and who first

instructed me how to use it, and how to cultivate it, nearly two years ago. She has a most valuable power of defining the mediumship of her sitters, and of judging as to the best means of developing, and the special conditions necessary in each case.

"Then as to her trance mediumship, the ease with which she is controlled is very unusual. She passes into the trance state before you are aware of it; and while you are conversing with her, it is quite a common thing for another intelligence to step in and take up the conversation. She is the only medium through whom my father has ever been able to speak to me, and the tests he gave me of his identity were simply indisputable. He was a man of exceedingly gentle and sensitive nature, with the moral region finely developed; and although he had ample firmness and sufficient self-esteem, he had little of that more animal firmness, generally expressed in a large and prominent under jaw, and generally possessed by those who have the power to control the actions of others to any extent.

"Then as a developing medium—I mean a medium for the development of mediumship

in others—she is the best I have met with. A sensitive person cannot remain long in her presence without becoming aware of a power around him which seems at times almost to take him out of himself, and open his spiritual sense. I have myself several times, when she has been sitting at my table with my wife and some members of my family, felt as if I were an outside observer of the scene, and have listened to my own voice as though it were one I had never heard before. I never felt this perceptibly in the presence of any other person, and this, with many other experiences which I will not now describe, convinces me that the emanations surrounding her are of a quality most conducive to the development of that quality of being which distinguishes most mediums, and in fact most of the highly-gifted ones of the earth, whether so-called mediums or not.

“I have not yet said anything as to the value of her mediumship in matters of business. I have repeatedly consulted her on such matters, and have always (so far as I can at present remember) found her information correct when she has ventured to speak positively. On one

occasion I had reason to regret I did not take the precautions which her guide, whom she calls "Goodness" (and who, I must say, I think deserves the name), advised. Her Indian control, called "Dewdrop," is one of the most pertinacious, as well as amusing and good-natured little sprites I have met with, and seems to take a delight in what she calls "poking her nose" into any matter about which information is desired. I have been recently much surprised to find that a matter directly affecting Miss Williams, but which I had not chosen to inform her of, Miss "Dewdrop" has "poked her nose" into, and found out all about, so that she seems to know as much about it as myself.

"This letter, I fear, is getting rather long; but the importance of disseminating as widely as possible a knowledge of the various phases of mediumship, I trust you will deem a sufficient excuse for its prolixity.

"I am, dear sir,

"Very truly yours,

"J. G. S.

"BIRMINGHAM, *Dec. 6th, 1877.*"

I have had dozens of such letters, both in print and manuscript, in my possession, but I never thought that I should read them again, so they have been destroyed. But the few I have transcribed here will serve my purpose perhaps as well as the many.

CHAPTER IX.

"DEWDROP."

"Are they not all ministering spirits sent forth to minister?"

AFTER I returned from my provincial tour I settled in London by myself, giving my services to Dr. M—— gratuitously. All his patients, all his correspondence, passed through my hands. Sometimes I saw as many as twenty or thirty patients a day, and their physical condition was as apparent to me as if they had been made of glass. I sat on my own account also, and had as much work as I could possibly do, both for medical diagnosis, business affairs, and clairvoyance on all subjects. I had no physical controls or manifestations. My guides were "Jack Wright," "Renée," and "Goodness."

Renée was a French lady. She had been a Huguenot refugee, and is mentioned in the foregoing letters. She was a small, fragile-

looking woman, as I used to see her clairvoyantly. I knew no French, but when under her influence I spoke it fluently, and, according to those who knew the language, correctly. Renée, however, did not remain long with me, and was succeeded by an Indian spirit called "Dewdrop," and the way in which I became acquainted with "Dewdrop" is worth recording.

I had never heard of her, and had a strong objection to Indian controls, when one day a lady called on me with some fruit, which she had brought for "Dewdrop," who talked to my sister, and on recovering consciousness she informed me of what she had said. I was astonished, but could not disbelieve her statement, and set myself to solve the mystery. My other spirits then confessed that "Dewdrop" had controlled me for three months past, but they had kept it a secret on account of my expressed dislike to Indian spirits, and from that time there was no secrecy. "Dewdrop" became my best friend, and is to this day my principal control. Her influence and advice are of the greatest value to me, and I would not exchange them for

anything in the world, and were I not a spiritualist, I should say her performances were nothing short of miraculous, and I could bring evidence and testimony from all parts of the world to confirm what I say.

Many people have asked me why, since others have grown rich through my means, I am not myself a millionaire. It is because the advice given them, though transmitted by "Dewdrop," comes through their own controlling spirits, who watch for the chances in their favour. In reality, perhaps "Dewdrop" has done more for me than anyone. She promised when she took control of me that I should never want gold in my purse, and I never have.

She predicted the death of the late lamented Duke of Clarence as far back as February, 1891, and she told Mr. Stead that he would not recover before any hint of his illness being serious had appeared in the public news.

In like manner she prophesied the death of the Emperor of Germany eight months before it took place, and insists he died of cancer even now, though she was out exactly a month in the date of his passing over.

Under her control I have sat to diagnose the diseases of patients for several medical men, and can produce letters to prove the truth of my assertions. From one Scotch doctor in a London hospital I have received as many as five or six locks of hair in a day, that I might describe through clairvoyance the exact internal condition of their owners, and to the present moment I am in constant receipt of letters from all parts of the country asking for medical diagnosis.

At one period I sat regularly for a city merchant, now passed over. Through me "Dewdrop" almost managed his business for him; she was often able to predict the state of the market months in advance. He made forty thousand pounds in a fortnight through her means, and in acknowledgment of his indebtedness he sent me in return a silk dress and a dozen of port. "Dewdrop" foretold the death of this gentleman from cancer, and gave the exact date of it before any medical man had discovered from what he was suffering.

Another business man had ample proofs of "Dewdrop's" astuteness. He consulted her

regularly for fifteen years, and was in the habit of calling on me before he went to the city in the morning to hear what she advised him to do. At his death he left me a substantial proof of the gratitude he felt for my assistance. For family reasons I withhold the names of these two gentlemen, but they are well known to my friends, and I am ready to substantiate my assertion for anyone who has a right to ask it.

Brigadier-General A——, who knew me and “Dewdrop” very well, and had sat with me many times, was very anxious to see some manifestations when he was quite alone. As he was returning from a visit to me to his home in Somersetshire, and travelling by himself in a smoking carriage, he felt something kick his boots, and looking up from his newspaper he saw a little brown naked foot resting on his. He turned, and found a slight, tall Red Indian girl, dressed in her native costume of mocassins and blanket and feathers, standing beside him. He described her afterwards as very handsome. He exclaimed aloud, “Surely this is ‘Dew-drop!’” and she nodded her head several times, and then disappeared. But many times after-

wards this gentleman woke up in bed in Somersetshire to find her by his side, sitting on a chair.

Shortly after this his mother became ill, and he consulted me about her health. My spirits insisted that she would not recover, giving the date of her death. The general said that the doctors had no anticipation of a fatal termination to her illness (that was in July). However, by the end of August she was dead and buried.

A very old lady once came to visit me, bringing as an introduction the name of my friend Florence Marryat. We had a sitting, with which I believe she was completely satisfied; but as soon as she was gone "Dewdrop" told me her real name and condition, and instead of being an old woman she was young, and one of the most beautiful actresses on the English stage, and although she deceived me she could not deceive "Dewdrop," though I had never met the person in *propria persona*.

Some friends of mine spent a season at the gaming tables of Monte Carlo. They used to write letters to me in Italian (a language of

which I have not the slightest knowledge), and which I answered also in Italian under the control of spirits of that nationality. These letters related to the business they were engaged on, and they made a pile of money through the advice my controls tendered them.

Mr. M—— came to spend an evening with my husband and myself a short time ago, and when I went to my bedroom to dress I heard a voice say, "Tell him I am 'Kelsus,'" so when I went downstairs I told him what I had heard.

He exclaimed, "Oh, is *that* it? I am engaged on an article concerning 'Celsus,' and I have been wondering if the C should be pronounced hard or soft."

I then passed under control, and "Dew-drop" said, "Celsus has a message for you, so you had better sit; but you must not be frightened if 'Medie' (as she always calls me) looks very white and ill, because she will do so, but it won't hurt her."

My husband told me afterwards that I turned as white as marble, and sunk back in my chair, holding out my hand as though to

receive something, and in a few minutes a piece of white paper fluttered into it, which, on being examined, proved to be for Mr. M——, signed "Celsus." He was unable to decipher it then, but took it away with him, and in a few days returned it with the translation as follows :

"Tu mio amico non sia abbattuto benché il morido ti refuita." Celsus.

"Thou, my friend, be not cast down, although the world denies thee." Celsus.

CHAPTER X.

"DEWDROP'S" MINISTRY.

"He shall give His angels charge over thee."

ONLY twice, to my certain knowledge, has "Dewdrop" ever materialised herself. Once when I was sleeping with Miss Marryat at their house in Regent Park Terrace, and the second time at a seance I had with a Mr. Bastian, an American medium.

It came about in this way: One July day, in 1880, I received a visit from a very old friend whose home was in the North of England, but he had come up to London for a short holiday. He was a clergyman, and much interested in the subject of spiritual phenomena. He told me he had arranged to attend a seance with Bastian, and added that if I wished to go he would be happy to take me.

I accepted the invitation, but begged my

friend not to mention my name, as I wanted to see if I could get any manifestations from my own friends, without running the risk of being asked by some of the other sitters to give a seance myself.

The seance was to be held the following afternoon, and when our parson friend had left us I called "Dewdrop," and asked her what she thought of the arrangement I had made, and would she go with me?

"Oh, yes!" she would be there certainly.

"And will you try to materialise yourself so that we may all see you?"

"I'll try, if there is sufficient power."

Together we then arranged that when she came she should pat me four distinct times with her hand on my knee or head.

This, as a secret, I kept entirely to myself, and the next day met my friend, the Rev. Dr. M——, and accompanied him to Vernon Place, where, at that time, Bastian had rooms.

We found waiting three gentlemen, one of whom, an American, I was well acquainted with, but whom, being a very excitable man, I did not care to sit with often. I whispered to

him not to mention my name, as I was anxious to get a thoroughly good test.

The medium seated himself in the centre of the room on a chair, and on the floor all about him were a number of articles, such as a musical box, fairy bells, tambourine, speaking tube, and one or two other things. We five sat in a half circle facing him, and with our backs to the two windows, which had the blinds drawn and shutters closed. It was three p.m. on a summer's day, but the room was in total darkness.

As soon as we were settled down I remembered seeing, while the room was light, that there was a footstool under my chair, and hoping to make myself quite comfortable, stooped and drew the stool forward, and was settling it in front of me when I felt on my hand four distinct pats. I sat upright, the pats were repeated on my knees, then on my head, back to my knees, and then the dear little soft hands stroked my cheeks.

I whispered to Dr. M—— that "Dewdrop" was with us, and had proved her presence physically to me beyond a shadow of doubt, and that she wished to touch him. He was

very pleased, and immediately felt her hands, giving him the signal that she and I had arranged.

Whilst she was patting my friend's head, I quickly felt all around to see if she had materialised her form, but could feel nothing whatever, and consequently was rather startled, when I suddenly felt a face pressed quite close to my own, and heard "Dewdrop's" familiar voice whisper :

"Medie, can you see me? I am here, and have given you the signal."

I said, "Yes, darling, you have ; and I'm so glad."

Unfortunately I spoke aloud, and attracted the attention of my American friend, who, until now, had been talking to the medium (Mr. Bastian), and he now called out :

"What! Is that little 'Dewdrop'? Do come to me! Pray, come and let me see you!"

He grew very much excited, rose from his seat, and of course upset all our conditions ; and poor little "Dewdrop" faded away whilst speaking to him.

Although "Dewdrop" does not materialise,

she is often fond of giving physical manifestations of her presence, and often plays us tricks by removing articles from one room to another, and seems to take a special delight in proving to my husband that she, like love, laughs at locksmiths.

He, to prove her powers, will frequently bring things into the house without mentioning the fact to me, lock them in his safe, and then wait for further developments. She will come quietly to me, and sometimes, showing me an exact counterpart of the article, with great glee will tell me to —

“Look, Medie! this in Dick’s big box; been there one day, two days. ‘Dewdrop’ find it. ‘Dewdrop’ poke nose!”

Then I challenge my lord and master to bring forth his new possession.

But “Dewdrop’s” mission is not simply to amuse; and there will be many a one reading these lines who will stop to whisper a word of love and thanks to the Indian spirit girl who has helped them in times of sorrow and trouble, saving them from despair, and, in more than one or two instances, suicide.

For reasons which are very obvious I

cannot give names ; but there are living now three whom we call "Dewdrop's" boys, who, through her timely assistance and watchful care, are to-day respected members of society.

Here is one instance. Seventeen years ago, early in April of the year 1875, "Dewdrop" came to me whilst still in bed in the early morning, and said :

"Medie, get up! Send a telegram to Mr. W——, and say I want to speak to him."

As soon as I could do so I sent the telegram, and between eleven and twelve Mr. W—— drove up to my house. He inquired anxiously what was my reason for sending for him. I told him personally I did not know, but that "Dewdrop" wished to see him.

In a few minutes she controlled me, and when I recovered myself I found Mr. W—— very much upset, and in a great hurry to be away.

As I was in the habit of sitting for this gentleman for business purposes, I quite concluded that it was business alone which his spirit friends wished to talk over with him, and

of which I was totally ignorant, neither understanding, nor caring to understand, anything about it, and so did not inquire why he was so distressed.

It was some time before I learned the reason for the sudden call from "Dewdrop." Mr. W—— had a son away at school who had been very troublesome at home, and when the boy was sent away Mr. W—— had received a promise from "Dewdrop" to look after him as far as possible, and to keep him out of mischief. He had been away for three months, and was supposed to be doing well.

When "Dewdrop's" telegram brought the father in such a hurry to me, her orders were, "Go at once, and bring Jack home; he has been disgracing himself, is now rambling about the town of C——, having slipped away from school. He has stolen several things, and if you are not there to-day the police will have him. He has in his possession two articles belonging to school-fellows, and, among other things, a most objectionable book, which he has had sent by a man in London.

This was a message not pleasant for a loving father to receive, but Mr. W—— had sufficient confidence in "Dewdrop" to do as she told him.

He started off by the earliest train for C——, and, after a search, the erring Jack was found where "Dewdrop" said he would be; viz., in a pawnbroker's shop trying to pledge some of the "borrowed" property. He was taken by his father back to school, and was then asked for the book, which, after some little trouble, he said was in his box; and there sure enough it was, but it was not the only one.

I have now in my possession a letter from a lady, whose son was in the same school, telling me the story, and, as she was a spiritualist, asking me if I thought it possible the spirits had had anything to do with this affair, as there seemed some mystery attached to it. It was really through this letter that I myself discovered "Dewdrop's" performance.

Master Jack was brought home, and once again since that time in his life he has had reason to thank "Dewdrop" for her watchful

care of him. This is only one of many tales
I could tell of this sprite of mine.

“Hand in hand with angels
Through the world we go ;
Brighter eyes are o'er us
Than we blind ones know ;
Tenderer voices cheer us
Than we deaf will own,
Never walking heavenward,
Can we walk alone.”

CHAPTER XI.

LATER EXPERIENCES.

"Thinkest to beguile me?

I know thee well, though never seen before."

"To see now God in all His creatures' works."

SHAKESPEARE.

IT has often caused me considerable amusement to find that people desiring to hold seances write to me under assumed names. They believe in my powers of clairvoyance sufficiently to make them curious to see and talk with me, but are afraid of the fact becoming known, that they have consulted a "medium." So they try to hide their identity under a false name, quite forgetting that, if my clairvoyance is worth anything, it is impossible for them to deceive me.

Last year a lady sent me a nice friendly letter, which (contrary to my usual custom, for I am overwhelmed with correspondence) I answered at some length. When I had finished

my control "Goodness" said to me, "Tell the lady that the signature to her letter is assumed, and that *we know her title.*" I did so, and received a letter in return, admitting the fact, and giving her real name and title, but only for my own satisfaction.

Almost simultaneously I had a letter from another lady, who gave me her name as the "Countess C——." As usual, I read her epistle clairvoyantly—*i.e.* not what she *said*, but what she *should* have said—and found that she was as much a countess as I am. I refused in consequence to give her a seance.

A few weeks ago Miss Marryat made an appointment with me to sit with a gentleman—a friend of hers—who did not wish that she should divulge his name. I consented. The gentleman came to see me, had his seance, and departed. A fortnight later I wrote a name automatically, with which I was not acquainted. On asking who it was, the answer came, "I am A. B. My relative, the Earl of B——, sat with you such a day."

Now I am positive I never sought this information, nor cared to know who my sitter had been, for I see so many people in the

course of a week that I do not even remember their faces.

* * * * *

In the summer of 1880 my health rendered it advisable that I should give up my seances for a while, but I soon found that the less I employed my clairvoyant and inspirational powers, the stronger became the physical manifestations, which took place quite unsought for by me, and often without any apparent reason.

For example: After the family had all retired to bed at night the piano would be played by invisible means, sometimes for a few minutes only, and sometimes for an hour or two. Occasionally it would sound a few gentle, disjointed notes, or it would give a tremendous crash, as though the instrument were broken. On the whole we preferred the crash, as it soon exhausted the power, whereas the tinkling would go on all night.

I found the strangest manifestations took place when I was alone in the house, with a young maid-servant who slept in my room. This girl was a good physical medium, although unknown to herself.

One night I woke up, feeling very ill and weak and nervous. I found my medicine had not been placed near my bed, and, owing to some recent experiences, I confess I felt too frightened to get the bottle from the washstand. I felt ashamed to wake Sarah for so foolish a reason, and lay there wondering what I should do to allay my faintness, and begging "Dewdrop" to get the medicine for me. All at once I saw Sarah get out of her bed, which was at the foot of mine, walk across the room, help herself to a glass of water, which she drank, and then quickly return to her bed again. The sight gave me courage, for, if Sarah could do it, why not I? So I got up, took my medicine, and went to sleep again, but not till I had listened to a triumphal crash of music from my piano in the room below.

When Sarah brought me my breakfast in the morning, I asked her what she thought of the music in the night. She replied that she had not heard it, she had slept too well. I told her she could not have failed to hear it when she got up to drink.

"Drink!" she exclaimed. "What drink? I did not leave my bed all night."

"That is nonsense," I said. "I saw you leave it, and you poured some water from that bottle into the glass and drank it."

Sarah walked to the washstand, and held up the bottle and glass, laughing. The bottle was full to the brim, the glass unwetted.

I was astounded, and asked her for my medicine bottle. That was right enough. I had had my usual dose, and had not been dreaming.

I asked "Goodness" for an explanation of this, and she told me I was so ill they were afraid to let me go without my medicine, so they had caused Sarah's *double* to get up and go through the action of drinking, in order to give me the necessary courage to follow her example.

All through my life my spirit controls have helped me in times of difficulty and trial, and I could tell of many acts to prove the loving care the so-called dead still take of those they cherished when on earth.

When my head aches (as unfortunately it very often does) my mother invariably comes

and strokes it in the old familiar fashion, for I was blessed with one of the kindest mothers in the world.

My old uncle, who loved me as a child, still visits me with kind remembrance; and when "Dewdrop" puts in an appearance she is hailed with delight by my children, who look upon her as their greatest chum.

To show how much she is with them, I will relate an incident that took place only a few months ago.

The children all have season tickets for the Crystal Palace, and go there very often, and I always ask "Dewdrop" to go with them.

One day when the last pantomime was being played the little ones went to see what was going on. They were away some time, and on coming home my little girl found that she had lost the case with the tickets. We were very vexed about it, as they were only a few days old. She insisted that the tickets were lost in the theatre of the Palace, so we gave notice at the lost property office.

In the evening I interviewed "Dewdrop" on the subject, and asked her if she had gone with the children as usual?

"Of course I did," she answered. "I promised."

"Do you know Mab has lost the tickets?"

"Yes; I saw her lose them."

"Then why did you not prevent it?"

"Don't be a fool, Medie! How could I help it?"

"Mab says she dropped them in the theatre. Shall we ever find them again, 'Dewdrop'?"

"Yes, I expect you will; but she didn't lose them in the theatre. She dropped them in the long passage coming out, and a man picked them up."

"What sort of man?"

"A workman, with a dark moustache."

No more was heard of the tickets for some days, when one afternoon a man called at the house with them to claim the reward.

I went out to speak to him. He was a workman, with a dark moustache.

I asked him where he had found them?

He said, "In the long corridor, near the entrance."

"Why did you not return them sooner?"

"Because I was only at the palace for that

one day, and have been working at some distance until to-day."

One peculiar experience, or rather two experiences—for they occurred at separate times to my husband and myself—might interest my readers.

One night in the summer of 1884 Miss Florence Marryat had been dining and spending the evening with us, leaving about 11 p.m. Directly afterwards I went up to my room to go to bed, leaving my husband to finish his cigar in the dining-room.

When he joined me about twelve o'clock he said, "Bess, did you hear me hunting about?"

"No," I answered. "What was it for?"

"Such a funny thing. Directly you had left me I sat down with a cigar and a book, and was astonished a few minutes after to hear the chirping and hopping about of a bird. I was thinking Flo must have bought another bird on her way here and left it behind her, when it began to sing loudly. I looked about for a cage, but there is no cage; but the singing is still going on. What does it mean?"

I could not explain it. I was certain Miss

Marryat had brought no bird with her, and we had none. I could only suppose, knowing her love for all birds and animals, that some little spirit bird had followed her, and sung for us.

A fortnight later she came again to spend the evening with us, and after she had left I was alone in the kitchen, the servants having gone to bed, when suddenly the whole place rang with the song of a bird. I was charmed, but startled, and wondered if the maids had a bird unknown to me. I searched everywhere, as my husband had done, and with the same result. I found no bird anywhere, and, I am sorry to say, we never heard it again.

Here is a case of the same experience happening to two persons at different times.

Many people may smile at the idea of a "spirit" bird, but the same people do not smile when they are told, that the spirit is the life, and consequently life is spirit. I have frequently seen the spirits (or departed life) of animals, and some years ago one of my greatest pleasures was to watch my growing flowers, of which I am passionately fond. The result of my watching has been, that I

never *cut* a flower, or *wear* one. I cannot bear to see them dying. I have not found that they suffer pain. I fully realize that they have spirits, as sweet and beautiful and as full of life as our own; that they possess nerves and fibres as we do, and have a right to enjoy as long an existence as their Creator designs for them.

“For they are all, the measured things that are,
As free to live, and to enjoy their life,
As God was free to form them at the first,
Who, in His sovereign wisdom, made them all.”

CHAPTER XII.

MY FRIEND "NED."

"I do not set my life at a pin's fee ;
And for my soul, What can it do to that,
Being a thing immortal as itself?"

"It harrows me with fear and wonder."

—SHAKESPEARE.

ANOTHER control of mine who constantly manifests himself is called "Ned." He was brought to me by a higher spirit whilst in Birmingham in 1874, who wished him to be attached to me in order that he might develop, for he had left the earth plane in a very low condition.

According to his own account he was a plate-glass maker, who died at St. Helen's, where I was born. He is a rough Lancashire lad, given sometimes to be coarse, but had greatly improved during the eighteen years I have known him. He is a good-humoured spirit, fond of a jest, which he gives in the

broadest Lancashire dialect, and quite devoted to me, and is one of my favourite friends. "Ned" is full of fun, and is kindness itself. My children love him dearly, and nothing pleases them more than for him to come for a good talk, and to tell them stories of his earth life, and how he and his little dogs used to spend their days together. "Ned" owns to have been a terribly lazy fellow while on earth.

He can make himself very useful, however, to me, for whenever I am in need of any extra physical strength I always call "Ned" to my aid.

As an instance. Quite recently we have had an extra room added to our house. I had ordered a cork carpet to be fitted to the floor; but the men not coming soon enough, we decided upon trying to lay the carpet ourselves. Three of us set to work, and after struggling for a couple of hours I decided that it was no use, strong-minded though we were. It was not women's work, and it must be left for the man.

As soon as I had decided in this way I heard "Ned" say, "Missis, send that gal (the

servant) away, and I'll lay the carpet for you."

I sent the girl downstairs, and remained in the room with my companion, a Miss B——, who knew him very well indeed, and then "Ned" took control of me.

When I came to myself the linoleum was properly fitted to the floor, and Miss B—— told me that "Ned" had lifted the heavy roll about quite easily, and seemingly as if he had been in the habit of laying carpets all his life.

He had laughed and talked all the time, until at last Mary had come upstairs and asked Miss B—— if the man had come to do the room, as she had heard a man's voice she was sure.

I could not help laughing, for it will be remembered by many that in Florence Marryat's book, *There is no Death*, I am described as a soft-voiced little woman. Yet "Ned" had spoken through me, using my vocal organs, in a voice that a servant maid described as a man's voice, and in consequence was very much exercised in her mind as to the meaning of it, and a short time after she left—she said

she didn't care to live with a witch. I don't think for a moment that she intended this as flattery, but it was the best I ever had, and was worth a great deal to me.

Some years ago my husband, my two children, a young lady and myself, were staying for a few weeks with an American lady living near Regent's Park.

One afternoon in April, 1884, "Ned" said to me, "There is something wrong upstairs. Go quickly."

Thinking the children had met with some accident, I started off at once to see what could be wrong. When on the first landing I was met by Isabel (the young lady I have mentioned as being with us), who said, "Oh, do come up quickly, smoke is pouring downstairs from the top floor!"

I said at once, "It must be fire. Where are the little ones?"

"They are with me in my room."

I said, "Get their clothes on, and be ready to go out of the house."

I ran upstairs to the top floor, on which were four rooms, two large ones communicating with folding doors, and two smaller ones each

side the landing. I found the place in dense darkness, but in the centre of the large front room, which I knew was occupied by an invalid lady, I saw a great red glow of fire. I called out, "Mrs. S——, where are you?" but received no reply, only a kind of groan.

I heard "Ned" say, "She is there, burning to death."

I thought I should go mad with the horror of the thing, when again "Ned" spoke and said, "Turn round, here is water." There, sure enough, was what is termed a house-maid's sink, a tap and pail.

I did not wait to call anyone, but drew a pail of water, and reaching into the burning room as far as possible, threw the water in the direction of the fire. This I did several times, and then turned and ran downstairs. I found my husband seated quietly, talking with our landlady, but at the sight of my face he quickly jumped up. I could not speak, or even make a sound. He shook me gently, and at last I gasped "Fire!"

That one word was enough, and in a moment everybody was roused. My husband started off for fire-engines, and I

rushed upstairs again with a young man-servant.

I never to this day can remember how I got upstairs, but when there seemed to have sufficient strength for anything. I moved about in the smoke as though the air was perfectly clear. While the man was opening the windows, with no human help I moved a large mahogany wardrobe away from the folding-doors, threw them open to let out the smoke, and then I found, as the dense, black cloud rolled out of the windows, the poor burnt lady: she lay on the floor, across the foot of the bed, burned almost to a cinder. The remains of her clothing were still on fire, so also was her hair, of which she had an enormous quantity. With my bare hands I squeezed out the fire, picked up the poor burnt form, and laid it on a blanket, which the servant-man had brought in, and then he and I carried what was left of Mrs. S—— into the next room. She was alive, and lived for about twenty minutes or half an hour.

I have entered into all the details, as I wish to show how I was helped and protected by the spirits. That day I handled fire as easily

as the pen I now write with, but my hands had never so much as a spot of burn on them. I squeezed the burning mattress on the bed until I extinguished the burning corner. I did the same thing with the remains of the clothing on Mrs. S——, and never felt even the heat.

I moved a heavy piece of furniture which took two men to move. I was told of the water-tap, of which I was totally ignorant until that moment, and I claim that all this was the work of the so-called *dead*—the work of living spirits, who can, and do, help us mortals whenever or wherever their help is needed.

I positively declare that at this time my health was so bad that in my ordinary everyday life, although an active, energetic woman, I could not have lifted anything a quarter the weight of the wardrobe, or even have run half way to the top of that tall house without being utterly exhausted. "Ned" through my little body did the work, and took care of me, and by his action alone doubtless saved our lives and the house from being gutted.

An account of some of his performances will be found elsewhere; but whilst speak-

ing of him I should like to give one more proof of his power, to show that there is "no death."

Early in December, 1891, we were holding seances on Sunday evenings, and a gentleman with whom my husband had recently become acquainted, begged to be permitted to form one of our circle. We assented, and although he knew absolutely nothing whatever of the subject, he was so surprised at the result of our sitting that he mentioned the matter to several of his friends, and during the week I received a note asking for permission to bring a friend on the following Sunday evening.

Again we consented, thereby breaking our hitherto strict rule of never admitting strangers to our *family* circle.

The second gentleman was a total stranger to us, and almost so to the first one. They knew each other merely from staying in the same hotel, and had known each other only a few days, and both were newly come to reside in Norwood.

On their arrival, about 7.30 p.m., we, seven in number, seated ourselves round a heavy oak dining-table, and after lowering the gas we

opened our seance with our usual invocation, and singing a hymn.

I will not enter into particulars further than that I saw and described several spirits with the two gentlemen, whose names, by-the-bye, both commence with M——, though not the same. I had better distinguish them as No. 1 and No. 2.

No. 2 I soon found was extremely sceptical, and seemed to be firmly convinced he was going to be tricked; but at length I described a spirit standing near him, and who told me his name was B——.

I asked No. 2 if he knew him, and he said "No."

The spirit then said, "Oh, yes! he knows me, and he lent me some money years ago, which I was unable to repay, and it is troubling me."

No. 2, upon hearing this from me, suddenly exclaimed, in a startled manner, "Oh, yes! I know now. Good heavens! I had forgotten the whole thing," and begged me to assure Mr. B—— there was nothing to be unhappy about, that it was his misfortune, not his fault, and he was to trouble no further.

After some conversation with "Dewdrop," "Ned" put in an appearance, and had a few words with all the sitters, and closed the seance.

The following Sunday No. 1 and No. 2 again put in an appearance, and almost as soon as we sat down I saw with No. 2 the spirit of a clergyman, whom I described, and No. 2 immediately recognised a deceased friend, who gave me a message, the nature of which completely convinced No. 2 there could be no imposture here.

In a short time "Ned" controlled me, and physical manifestations now began, and No. 2 was quickly on the alert to discover how it was done; but in spite of having, during the preceding week, been able to expose at the Aquarium, Brighton, how the little Georgia Magnet did her tricks, he failed to catch 'Ned' at any, although we had many manifestations of his physical powers.

No. 2 at last said, "Ned, can you go away from your medium and manifest your presence?"

"Oh, yes!" said Ned, "I can go anywhere I wish, and if there are any mediumistic

folk about can soon let you know where I am."

"Can you go home with me, Ned?"

Ned's answer was characteristic. "My lad, I will."

No 2 treated this as a good joke, and went home.

I will now tell, in his own words, his experiences that night.

"I went home, had a light supper, and sat smoking till twelve o'clock. After turning the gas low, that 'Ned' might not be disturbed by too much light, I got into bed, and at once dropped off to sleep. I immediately found myself assailed in a spirit of mischief by some agency whose great endeavour seemed to be to turn me out of bed, which was lifted up, first one side, and then the other. I lay and heard my clock strike two. I was half inclined to strike a light, but did not, and fell off to sleep in a few minutes, and the same struggling began again, but in a greater degree. It seemed to be one constant effort to keep from being thrown out of bed.

"I looked at my clock; it was just before four. Off I went to sleep again, only to go

through the same performance, and I finally lay awake until 7.30.

"Whilst marvelling greatly over the occurrence of the night, I suddenly felt my left wrist, which was under the bed-clothes, firmly clutched by an invisible hand, and I distinctly heard a voice say, 'Now, am I with you or not?'

"Of course many will say that it was a nightmare or dreams. Let them. I am convinced that the real truth is that 'Ned' kept his word, and was with me that night.

"The voice was clear and distinct, so was the clutch on my wrist decided and firm. I was wide awake, and in full possession of all my faculties.

"Without seeing Mrs. Davies I went that day to Brighton to spend a few days with my family, who were staying there; and on my return to Norwood, before going home, called upon Mrs. Davies, and the first remark she made was, 'Well, Ned has told me the pranks he played on you the other night, and he has since then been to see a friend of yours in the same house.'

"I went straight home, and my friend con-

firmed this, and recounted experiences very similar to mine.

"I have had no further experiences of 'Ned,' although I have asked Mrs. Davies to send him. "A. M.

"THICKET ROAD, S.E."

Mr. M——, although wishing to keep his name from being made public, is perfectly willing to communicate privately with anyone anxious to assure themselves of the truth of the above, and I will forward any letter addressed to my care to him. He is not an easily blinded individual, for he is a senior wrangler of Cambridge, a clever chess player, and takes great delight in solving the most abstruse problems.

"Ned" proved to Mr. M—— that there is "no death." Our dear ones have only gone before; they are neither dead nor sleeping; they live and love and watch and wait for our coming to them. The little child we thought had gone to that "bourne from whence no traveller returns" has not left our side; the soft baby fingers still cling to the loving and unforgetful mother.

Sorrow no more! A new day has dawned, and the world will soon be glad to acknowledge that the days when angels talked with men are the present ones.

"Then a spirit passed before my face; the hair of my flesh stood up, it stood still, but I could not discern the form thereof: an image was before mine eyes, there was silence, and I heard a voice, saying, Shall mortal man be more just than God? shall a man be more pure than his maker?" (Job, iv. 15-17.)

CHAPTER XIII.

A GHOST.

"Before my God, I might not this believe,
Without the sensible and true avouch
Of mine own eyes."

—SHAKESPEARE.

AFTER giving an account of how "Ned" assisted at the fire, I will go on to tell of the manifestations which followed.

The poor lady lived only twenty minutes after she was carried by the young man-servant and myself into an adjoining room, and at 11 o'clock at night her poor burnt body was removed in a shell by the undertaker.

Our own bedrooms were on the floor immediately below the burnt rooms, and our hostess's room below ours again.

We were very late going to bed that night, and my little girl and our young lady friend being very nervous, I decided to sleep in their room, which was a large double-bedded one.

I said good-night to my husband, who was sleeping in the next room, and retired to bed. Isabel, my young friend, was in bed with my little girl Mabel, and I had my little boy with me. We talked for some time, for none of us seemed able to sleep, and I think it must have been quite 2 a.m. when I heard a distinct sound of footsteps in the room overhead. I turned over to see if Isabel had heard, and when she found I was awake she whispered, "Mrs. Davies, there is someone talking overhead."

I said, "Yes! How very strange! It can't be Mrs. G—— (our hostess), for I know she is so upset and ill; she has been in bed for hours. Who can it be?"

We lay and listened, and for the next hour there was a steady promenade kept up in the room above us; but while we listened we both fell asleep, worn out with fatigue and excitement. At breakfast we spoke of the footsteps. My husband had heard nothing; and Mrs. G—— insisted it was our excited imagination. She herself had slept soundly, and had not been disturbed. The cook had gone to bed helplessly drunk, the housemaid was away

for the night, and the man was beyond suspicion.

"Very well; then," I said, "it was a spirit."

Mrs. G—, who scorned such an idea, said, "If that's the case I'll spirit them, for I'll watch to-night."

We slept this night as on the previous one. I and the children in the large back room, my husband in the next—a front room. We lay listening, and, hearing no sounds, I dropped off to sleep, but had not long been unconscious when I was suddenly aroused by hearing the same footsteps overhead. I looked at Isabel; she was also awake, and asked me if I could hear.

"Certainly!" I whispered. "Who could help it?"

The footsteps increased in noise and pace, until it sounded exactly like someone running all around the room. We had a gas jet burning, and could distinctly see everything about us. The noises ceased upstairs, and we both lay down; my back was to the door, while Isabel lay facing it. All at once I saw Isabel rise slowly up in bed, with a look of

awful terror on her face. She tried to speak, but no sound came from her parted lips. She could not even gasp, but I saw her slowly lift her arm, and point towards the door. We sat up, and together we watched it slowly open wide. We heard the latch turned distinctly; very quietly was the door opened, as wide as it would go.

Then I heard Isabel gasp, "Look! it is Mrs. S——."

Sure enough we saw a small grey shadow walk into the room, and when half way across stand still and fade out of sight. The door then began to close as softly as it opened. Isabel fell back fainting, I jumped out of bed and went as I was out on to the landing, to see if there was anyone playing us a trick.

Mrs. G—— was sound asleep in her room. I ran back and called my husband, who procured a light, and searched the house from top to bottom, whilst I looked after poor Isabel. The servants were found to be asleep, and next day, as I was perfectly certain we had seen Mrs. S——, I told my husband we would get out of the place as soon as ever we could, for fear of the children being frightened. But

that night I was taken very seriously ill, at one time my life being despaired of.

I do not think our young friend has ever recovered the shock she received through the fire and the visit of the spirit.

We had to remain in the house for three weeks longer on account of my illness, and during the whole of that time there was not a single night when we did not hear the footsteps pacing overhead.

CHAPTER XIV.

A SCEPTIC CONVINCED.

"Because you want the grace that others have,
You judge it strait, a thing impossible,
To compass wonders."

—SHAKESPEARE.

WHEN I recovered from my illness, and we were settled in our own home, of course we resumed our seances, in which we were very often joined by Miss Florence Marryat, who had just then returned from her successful tour in America, and full of her grand experiences with some of the media she met there, and of which she gives a graphic account in her book, *There is No Death*.

One of the spirits who came very frequently, told us that he had followed Miss Marryat from America, that he was a nigger, and gave his name as "Julius Cæsar."

He turned out to be a wonderful merry fellow, but did not seem to realize the great

amount of physical power he possessed; he occasionally became rough and boisterous, and we invariably had to ask "Ned" or "Dew-drop" *to sit upon him*. I never could find out how he did it, but almost every seance we had, he would take off one of my boots without unbuttoning it (there were twelve buttons), and put it on to the table; this while we were all holding hands.

We had living with us at this time a Miss H——, as governess, a clever, strong-minded lady, who used constantly to declare that nothing would ever make a spiritualist of *her*.

I would tell her "not to worry herself in the least, there were many cleverer people than herself spiritualists, and as it was a matter of perfect indifference to me who believed or who did not, I should never take the trouble to try to convince her." Nevertheless she very often sat at our seances, of course at her own request.

One evening we were alone, and Miss H—— proposed a sitting.

My husband said, "What do you think, Bess? Shall we see what we can get?"

I agreed, and we three adjourned to the drawing-room.

My husband locked the door, and handed the key to Miss H—— to hold.

We seated ourselves at a small round table, and in a few minutes I said, "We are going to have a first-rate seance, for I see the 'power' gathering in great clouds round us, and I hope, Miss H——, you are not nervous."

She laughed heartily, and said she knew of nothing to be nervous about, and asked what I meant by the *power*.

I explained to her, that when sitting for physical manifestations I always saw spirits gather as it were a vapour, which ascended from the people who were holding the seance. They (the spirits) would hold their hands exactly as we ourselves would do in drawing anything to us which was hanging above our heads. I could see this vapour in their hands, which when full they would lay on the top of the head of the person who was the physical medium. I could then see the medium's body becoming full of light, and from all parts of it sparks would be constantly flying out. These sparks were of all colours,

but everyone extremely bright. They would strike as it were the table, and then there would be a distinct physical sound, a rap in fact.

I have seen a large mass of these lights suddenly dart from the body of a medium, settle immediately over a table, which would at once commence to rise in exactly the manner a piece of steel would follow a magnet. I have never seen a knock or sound produced by a spirit personally touching the article from which the sound proceeded. The spirit communicating will hold some part of the medium's body, and in answer to a question the sparks will be emitted from the medium, and striking to all appearance the table, produce the sound of knocks.

This is what I called the power, and the medium is the reservoir in which it is stored and condensed for use.

Whilst I was explaining all this we had many manifestations of the spirits' presence, and my husband suggested that as we were in such good form our friends should do something exceptional, and he hoped they would materialize or speak in the direct voice.

By raps we were then told they were going to bring something from another room, and asked Miss H—— if she was sure the door was locked.

She said, "Oh, yes! But I have the key, and will see for myself."

She went to the door, found it secured, and returned to her chair, still holding the key. Very soon afterwards we heard sounds in the room overhead, which was my bedroom.

I mentally asked "Ned," who was by my side, "What are the others doing upstairs?"

He replied, "They are going to bring something down."

I said, "Where from?"

"The wardrobe, I think."

"But it's locked, and the key on the bunch in my pocket."

He only smiled, and said, "I thought you knew better than that by this time, my lass."

All was still now, and we sat quietly waiting, when suddenly something fell on to the centre of the table with a loud bang. We were startled, and my husband, putting out his hand, took the thing from the table, and said, "Why, it feels like fur. What is it?"

I felt, and found it was my own seal-skin bag, and the hard metal frame in falling had seemingly damaged the table, and the clasp of the bag was broken. I felt vexed, but it was partly our own fault.

Miss H—— was considerably surprised, and asked, "Would the spirits do anything for her?"

"Yes," was rapped out; and my husband said, "Ask mentally for what you want; it will be a greater test to you."

We waited for fully ten minutes, and then in a most excited way Miss H—— said, "Good God, there is a hand putting something into mine, a small, warm hand! and, oh, I think it is the very thing I asked for! Get a light. Oh, do get a light!"

We lighted the gas, and found Miss H—— was holding in her hand a small leather case, inside of which was a photograph.

She told us that, being very sceptical, she had mentally asked for this to be brought, because she knew it lay in the bottom of her box, and had never been unpacked since she left home to come to us.

There had not been the faintest sound of

any kind in the room, and the case was put into her hand so noiselessly that, listening as we were, we knew nothing of it until she spoke. She was convinced the hand was her mother's, who had been remarkable for the smallness of her hands and feet when on earth, and Miss H—— had asked for the portrait of her father.

This lady became not only a spiritualist, but a good medium.

CHAPTER XV.

A WEIRD EXPERIENCE.

"For murder, tho' it have no tongue,
Will speak with most miraculous organ."

—SHAKESPEARE.

BESIDES these dear constant friends, I am often controlled by the friends and relatives of my sitters, who would probably hardly know how to manifest themselves were it not for the assistance of these well-practised spirits—"Dewdrop" having left this earth four hundred years ago, and appeared in New York and other places long before she came to me.

I have lived in several haunted houses (or perhaps the houses became haunted when I went to live in them); but the worst disturbances I have ever heard took place in a little country

house, in the South of England, where we went to stay in 1887.

I was not well, and needed rest and quiet, and at first we were quite charmed with this rural retreat, which stood in its own grounds. The house consisted of an old portion, to which a new wing had been added. We knew nothing of the character of the place, but on taking possession our spirit guides told us never to hold a seance in the old portion of the house. They gave no reason for the caution, but we obeyed it.

One day, however, our little children (who are as familiar with spirits as we are) proposed to hold a make-believe seance in the old part of the house. Forgetting for the moment the prohibition of our guides we consented, and sat for almost ten minutes for the amusement of the little ones, who went through a little drama of their own, pretending to be materialised spirits. That ten minutes cost many a terrible moment.

The same night we were waked from sleep to hear a fearful noise, as if several men were tramping through the hall. My husband caught up his revolver to prepare to receive

burglars, though it struck us both as very strange that burglars should come with so much noise. When he reached the staircase there was nothing to be seen below, excepting that the drawing-room door, which had been kept closed, was open.

I got up also, and we examined the house carefully, and found the servants' room locked inside, and the servants asleep. No trace could be found of any human being having been in the house. We fastened the door, and returned to bed.

On inquiring the cause, our spirits told us we had neglected their warning, and that the brief seance we had given the children had afforded the evil spirits, which lingered about the scene of their former misdeeds, power to materialise, so far as to cause the disturbances from which we had suffered. If, however, we kept a light burning they would be powerless to harm us.

The noises, however, continued at intervals during our whole stay. On the anniversary of their first outbreak they were more violent than ever. Blows and scufflings were as distinctly heard as though men were struggling

with one another, followed by heavy falls. Then one of our guides told us that some centuries ago a man and his son had occupied the ancient part of the house, and kept it as an hostelry. They were desperate villains, and now and then would murder some unfortunate visitor who had put up for the night at their inn. After stabbing their victim they would bury the body in a deep pit in the garden, over which there stood some outhouses. He said these spirits were most malignant, but could do us no harm unless we gave them the chance.

I must give the rest of the story in my husband's words, as he wrote it for a friend.

"One evening I was sitting at the supper-table, whilst my wife sat opposite to me with her baby in her arms. Suddenly she cried out—

"‘I feel as if I had been stabbed in the arm—such a pain!’

"‘Rheumatics,’ said I, but she returned no answer.

"I looked at her, and to my horror I saw her face horribly distorted, and gradually it assumed a most devilish expression. Instead

of my dear wife's merry laughing face, there sat before me an old man, with low, beetling brows and stony eyes, that evaded mine with a furtiveness that half-fascinated, half-frightened me. I had heard of transfiguration before, but had never witnessed it. I rose from my chair and stood by my child. The arm around the baby gradually relaxed its hold, while the other hand gently crept on to the table and towards a knife, which I at once seized and placed out of her reach. My wife at once gave a heavy sigh, and to my great relief I found her controlled by one of our spirit friends."

After this adventure we had had enough of the old house, and resolved to quit it.

Another strange experience of mine was in a haunted house in Brighton. We had taken it furnished for three months, and were all anticipating a pleasant holiday.

Our family consisted of my husband and self, two children, and a nurse; and after reaching Brighton—with which I was barely acquainted, knowing no one there, and none of the gossip of the place—and engaging two more servants, we soon settled down in our

new abode. The children and nurse occupied a bedroom at the back of the dining-room, and leading out of the hall. On the floor above was the drawing-room, with a bedroom adjoining, and on the third floor were two more bedrooms, one of which was used by the servants, the other by my husband and myself.

It will be seen that the bedroom on the drawing-room floor was unoccupied, and I decided to use it as a dressing-room, to save myself the trouble of running up to my own room at the top of the house.

We had not been there for many days before I had taken such an unaccountable dislike to this spare room that I could not bear to go into it even to take my bonnet off, and a cold shiver, ran through me each time that I passed the door.

One day, as I was descending the stairs from my bedroom, I looked into the spare room, the door of which stood open, and, to my astonishment, I saw standing at the foot of the bed, and looking intently into it, a strange man. He was in his shirt sleeves, and wore a dark waistcoat and trousers. For

a moment I thought it must be a workman from the house agent, but then I perceived this could not be the case, without our having been told to expect him.

These thoughts passed rapidly through my mind as I stood gazing into the open doorway, and I felt almost too frightened to move, as I saw the man look up straight into my face and then fade away.

I have not the least idea how long I stood and gazed at this apparition, for such it was. There in the broad daylight, with the sun streaming in at the windows, this spirit-man stood long enough for me to take in in full detail his whole appearance — his ghastly white face with dark, piercing eyes, high bald forehead and black beard and moustache. I saw him so plainly that I should know him again among thousands of others.

As soon as he had disappeared I rushed downstairs. I wished to ascertain beyond a doubt if any trick had been played upon me, but I found the nurse had been out for some time with the children, that one servant was preparing lunch in the kitchen, and the other was cleaning the hall, so that it was

quite impossible that anybody could have left the house without her seeing him.

My husband had gone for his morning stroll, and I waited impatiently until I could tell him my story. When he heard of it (though he knew that I am not a woman given to fancying such things) he started a search on his own accord from the top of the house to the bottom. He closely questioned the servants, but discovered no more than I had done, and it was evident that our mysterious visitor had come and gone, without leaving any sign of his visit.

For several days I felt very uncomfortable about it, but then the feeling wore off, and I decided to use the room again, but took the precaution of keeping the door locked, and carrying the key in my pocket.

I think it must have been quite three weeks since my fright, when, coming home from a walk, I went to the uncanny room to leave my bonnet, which I was accustomed to lay on the unused bed covered with a cloth.

As I unlocked the door I heard a chair moved, and the sound of a footstep on the

floor; but there was nothing to be seen except that the white coverlet of the bed was drawn right off the pillow on the side farthest from the door, and I felt perfectly certain that when I last left the room it had been laid smooth and straight all over the bed.

I put my bonnet on the bed as usual, however, placed the cloth over it, and left the room, locking the door behind me, and putting the key in my pocket.

We heard no disturbance during the remainder of the day or night, and the next morning I went into the spare room to dress for a drive. As soon as I opened the door I saw something was wrong, so flew for my husband, and we entered together. It seemed as though the very devil himself had been there. The bedclothes were stripped off the bed, the hearth-rug was in a heap on the fender, the chairs were thrown about in all directions, and my lovely new bonnet—where was it? Torn to atoms! The feathers strewn over the floor in little bits, the ribbons served likewise, and the straw shape crushed into an indistinguishable mass.

My husband and I were completely upset. I felt so ill and worried that I went to bed.

We hid it as much as possible from the servants, but it is difficult to keep a secret like this, and we soon saw from their manner that they were frightened. As for me, as I said before, I retired bonnetless to bed.

About four in the afternoon, however, I was informed two ladies were in the drawing-room to see me, and I rose and went down to receive them.

Of course they had soon heard the story of my unfortunate bonnet. They were rather incredulous—the elder lady, a remarkably strong-minded matter-of-fact person—at once declaring that someone must be playing tricks upon me, and ought to be severely punished when found out. But as I went on to tell her of my first experience, and to describe the man whom I had seen in the spare room, her face considerably altered, and she turned to her daughter, saying :

“Why, Edith, Mrs. Davies is describing the man that was taken up for the murder of his wife, but acquitted on the strength of

an *alibi*, and I do declare this is the very house where the affair took place! But the man is alive at this moment, and was living close by, in M—— Square, a few weeks ago. How very curious!”

Upon our making inquiries my friend's information proved to be true.

The house we lived in had been occupied by a Mr. and Mrs. —, a childless couple, who had lived most unhappily together, until at last they separated, and lived in different parts of the town—the wife remaining in our present abode. She became a fearful drunkard, and late one night some strangers, passing the premises, saw they were afire, and on the door being forced open the poor creature was discovered burned to death.

On the place being searched, the bedroom behind the drawing-room was found to have been the only one used, and the bed was still warm from occupation. But the poor woman was found in the hall below, and it was presumed she had been to the front door to let some one out. It was said the husband had been seen that night in the town by several people; but this he denied, and produced an

alibi at the coroner's inquest, which was the cause of an open verdict being returned.

As soon as we could get away from the uncanny house we did so, and though I have had similar experiences since none have made me feel so ill as this did.

CHAPTER XVI.

EXPLANATORY.

"If circumstances lead me, I will find
Where truth is hid."

—SHAKESPEARE.

MR. W. T. STEAD, in his *More Ghost Stories*, gives an account of my mediumship ; but there are many discrepancies, owing to the fact that the article was prepared in a great hurry—only a day or two before the book was published ; and I feel that I should much like to take this opportunity to correct the little mistakes, because so many friends who knew me in the long ago have read *More Ghost Stories*, and written me concerning them.

Mr. Stead says, "I have at least three attendant spirit guides who look upon me. . . .

The first and most curious is a spirit we call Ned."

Here is the first mistake. Ned, instead of being the first, is the last and most undeveloped of my spirit friends. It is Ned upon whom I depend for my physical manifestations, for he being nearer to earth in his present condition is more at home in the manipulation of physical forces than the higher and more advanced spirits, such as "Renée" and the one we call "Goodness." "Ned" came to me in 1874, brought by "Renée," with whom I had been in constant communication for, at the very least, three years previously, or almost as soon as we commenced to hold seances at home.

Mr. Stead's next mistake is when he says (*More Ghost Stories*, p. 54), "Shortly after my marriage I was joined by another spirit, a French lady."

As I have previously said, Renée had been with me some time before that event, and in her communications told me that she had been appointed at, or even before, my birth, to be my guide.

Mr. Stead says "Renée did not remain with me long." Renée is with me to this day, and has never left me; but she never entrances me now, or speaks to anyone other than myself.

Mr. Stead's notes were made hurriedly, and we had no time to correct his proofs. What he should have said was, That after I came and settled in London, Renée ceased to speak through me, as she could not bear my surroundings, and objected very much to the persons with whom I was associated.

"Goodness" did not succeed "Renée." She first showed herself near me through a clairvoyant in Birmingham, but I had had communications with her long before the clairvoyant saw her; she used to rap, and we called her No. 7, because she always announced her presence by knocking seven times, and also her departure in the same way. "Goodness" is a name we gave her, and we could not have given her a better. I know her earthly name and history, but she objects to my giving either.

To say that we love "Renée" and "Good-

ness" is saying *too little*. What they are to me I can only express by saying they are my *guardian angels*, and if, instead of being a wilful, obstinate woman, taking my own way all my life, and in consequence suffering much, I had taken heed of their counsels and wishes, I should never have had a moment's unhappiness, for all the unhappiness of my life has been brought about by my own acts.

Now I come to "Dewdrop." She came to me after I settled in London, in the spring of 1876. Elsewhere I have given a long account of her, and some of her performances. *Some!* I say. It would fill volumes if I gave all, or even part, of her history since she first came to me. No words of mine can tell what she is, or what she is like, her sweetness and her impudence, her loving ways and her out-spokenness, her hatred of shams and lies and humbug in any form, which she takes an absolute delight in dragging forward and laying open before everyone. But her tender, loving help and sympathy for those in trouble, have been proved by

many during the sixteen years she has been with me.

The tales of woe which "Dewdrop" has listened to I could count by hundreds, for there is hardly a day of my life I do not give a seance to some one seeking help in sorrow, in sickness, or in trouble of some kind. I am compelled to decline to see many who write me asking for seances, simply because I object to use my mediumship for the purpose of amusement only.

It may be a mistaken idea on my part ; but, after twenty-five years' experience, I have come to the conclusion that when these mediumistic gifts are used, it should be for some higher purpose than fortune-telling and an hour's entertainment. People have come to me as they would go to a palmist or card-reading fortune-teller. Neither of these amusing and interesting games, in my estimation, have anything in common with spiritual science. I can, and do, both read the palm and the cards. The latter is capital fun ; the first is the practical result of genuine study, useful to know, and ought to be better understood, but

has absolutely nothing whatever to do with clairvoyance (second sight) or mediumship in any form.

There are many mediums who read the cards, and this is why a number of people have proved the cards to tell so true. The reader of them has used the cards as some seers use a crystal or a glass of water.

I have constantly told the fortunes of friends by the cards who would not for a moment believe in clairvoyance, inspiration, or mediumship, and who have exclaimed, "Oh, how true! How can you do it? Do show me!" and so on. I simply spread out the cards, and wait for some of my friends' own surrounding spirits to give me the desired information.

I have wandered far from the "Dewdrop," but having explained when she came to me, I refer my readers to other parts of my book where she is spoken of.

I have many other spirit friends besides those named; but it is not necessary to speak of them here, further than that two of them claim to be doctors, and they always diagnose through me persons who come to me in illness;

and this is really my favourite phase of mediumship, and one which I consider should be developed and practised more by our public mediums, although I know how very soon the medical societies would be down upon them. For the doctors object very much to having their toes trodden upon, no matter how right and successful the treader, or how wrong the toes may be.

Some day the medical fraternity will find out there is something in Clairvoyance, just as they have discovered the something (a very dangerous force indeed, according to them) in Hypnotism or Mesmerism, and then they will try to pass a law that Clairvoyance shall only be used by properly qualified medical men. But the Spiritualist mediums and clairvoyants should get ahead of them. Take some of the clairvoyant children, educate them highly, and so take the wind out of the sails of some of these narrow-minded and bigoted, so-called scientists, who are fond of talking about the hidden forces in nature; but, when some of these hidden forces are made plain to them, declare them to be all humbug and charlatanism.

True spiritual phenomena will bear any amount of investigation and testing. It is that mediumship which refuses to be tested which is the one open to doubt, and the worst day's work the spiritualists ever did was when they wrote down that tests ought to be abolished.

CHAPTER XVII.

*WITCH-HUNTING AND PERSECUTING SPIRITS.**

"Thus the Seer, with vision clear,
Sees forms appear, and disappear."

—LONGFELLOW.

"DEAR MR. BURNS,—As you are always interested in everything which concerns seances, and conditions connected with them, I thought it worth while to send this account of a recent experience of my own. You know that I have quite recently recovered from another of my frequent illnesses, and lately accepted an invitation to spend a short time at the beautiful home of Sir H—— H——, which is situated not very far from London, in a lovely country, and surrounded by a very large park. The house and surroundings are well known, and are historical

* From *Medium and Daybreak*.

places full of interest. Kings and queens, and men famous as statesmen, have lived, laboured, and intrigued there, so that personally I felt more or less prepared for interesting experiences; and when Lady H—— proposed a seance, the third evening after my arrival, and that we should try to get physical phenomena, I felt quite excited at the prospect.

“During dinner it was decided we should hold our seance in Lady H——’s boudoir, a charming room, lofty and well-ventilated, therefore well adapted for the development of spirit power, which a close vitiated atmosphere renders uncertain, while it is bad for the sitters.

“Besides myself there were no spiritualists present, although Lady H—— is an interested investigator into the subject called spiritualism. At ten p.m. we sat round the table. Lady H——, Mrs. B——d, Miss Rosa ——, Mrs. A——, Mr. Fitzroy L——, and myself. In a very few minutes I felt there was strong physical power present, particularly through Lady H——, who sat opposite, and Mr. Fitzroy L——, who sat next to me. We

decided to join hands all round, and soon there were loud knocks on the table, and from various parts of the room. But I felt that a peculiar and disagreeable influence was present; the table, a large octagon with four legs and shelf underneath, rose high above our heads, and I, being only one of the little people, had to let go, all the others standing even on their toes. Hands were felt stroking the shoulders, hands, and faces of all of us, and at last a strong hand grasped the lace of Lady H——'s dress, dragging her about. She screamed loudly, and the lace was dropped at once. Then Mrs. A——'s chair was violently agitated, until she was almost thrown out of it. I was lifted bodily into a large arm chair. We had the name of 'Cotton' spelled out by loud knocks, and orders to leave the room, as the spirit 'Cotton' objected to us. We took no notice of this order, and once more drew our chairs round the table. I suddenly felt a large hand on the table moving about and giving knocks, which seemed as though made with a hammer. Then I felt it on my shoulder, and all at once some terrific blows on my knees; they

did not hurt, although very heavy. But now comes the peculiar part.

"Next morning I found myself black and blue with bruises, and now, when writing this, eight days afterwards, my limbs are still very much discoloured, and covered with marks left by 'Cotton,' Esq., who had it all his own way for at least an hour, and then was expelled by my friend 'Ned,' who took charge of the remainder of the seance, which gave every satisfaction. At the same time I do not think some members of the circle will wish to sit for physical manifestations again for some time.

"Mr. Fitzroy L——'s chair was taken away whilst we were standing up, and found, when a light was procured, standing on the table, where it had been placed without a sound; but Mr. F. L—— remembered feeling something on his shoulder some time before, and was so upset and alarmed that he, after pronouncing it all very much too uncanny for him, retired from the room.

"And now here is the queer or rather interesting part of the matter. On my return home I was telling the story, when my

daughter Mabel said, 'Oh! it was some of the old witch-hunters, mamma. Don't you remember that James I., who passed the laws against witchcraft, resided at — Park? And a man named Cotton Mather, but always called Cotton, was a famous witch persecutor, and was the means of torturing to death hundreds of so-called witches. He died at Salem, and was buried in Boston, Mass., U.S.A.'

"From this I have come to the conclusion that at our seance at — Park several spirits had returned, who, owing to their villanies whilst on earth, are still more or less earth-bound, and in the low condition they were in on leaving the body so many long years ago, and are still pursuing their old course of persecution.

"Although I have felt no inconvenience or hurt, yet I have the bruises on my body, which many people have seen, to prove that 'Cotton' still is inclined to torture, and that sensitives and mediums cannot be too careful as to conditions attending seances. This is my first experience of this sort in thirty years.

I do not regret it in the least, but it points a moral and may adorn a tale.

"Yours,

"BESSIE RUSSELL DAVIES.

"SUNNYSIDE, LEDRINGTON ROAD,

"UPPER NORWOOD, *Sept. 12th, 1893.*"

I had been very seriously ill for some weeks, and when convalescent received an invitation to accompany my friend Madame Giulia Valda, on a visit for a few days to the country house of Lady H——, which is situated in the heart of a lovely part of the country not a hundred miles from London.

It was on July 27th, 1893, when Madame Valda and myself left London, and in a little less than a couple of hours found ourselves under the hospitable roof of Lady H——. I was charmed with the beauty of the place, and could fully understand the great love Lady H—— has for her beautiful home. The name, however, I must suppress for special reasons, and allude to it in future as Baldwin Park.

After a short rest and a most refreshing

cup of tea, we strolled into the grounds, and presently found ourselves near the stables.

I had been told how greatly Lady H—— was interested in and loved her horses, but was quite unprepared for the surprise I received, when I first saw her stables, boxes, and paddocks. Several acres of ground were taken up by them, and there seemed to me quite a regiment of grooms and men about. I felt a little bewildered, and more than a trifle anxious to go away, for all my life I have had a peculiar dread of animals, and really dislike horses, which I never can bear to approach, and if I could help it would not touch one upon any consideration. This fact makes it all the more strange that I should have as one of my dearest spirit friends one who is a passionate lover of all animals, and one of the "horsiest of the horsy." I allude to Ned, and I am now writing of an experience with him, whose presence was soon made known to me now that we were in what I knew would be his element.

Lady H—— turned smilingly to me, saying, "Let me see, Mrs. Russell-Davies, you have a spirit who knows something of horses ;

come and see some of my mares, with their foals."

I would not refuse, as it was plain her ladyship thought she was giving me pleasure ; but my heart beat, and with a sickly smile we started on what was to me a terrible expedition. Mentally I begged "Ned" to come to my rescue, at the same time knowing that as the stud groom and another were attending us, he would not take control of me. But I felt him near all the same, prompting me what to say in reply to the questions put to me by Lady H—— as to what I thought of the dams and their foals. At my answers I could see that she was pleased, and saw the grooms looked surprised, but was devoutly thankful when we came to the last box. This one contained what even I myself could not help knowing to be one of the most beautifully formed horses I had ever seen. "Ned" again impressed me what to say ; but, oh, how glad I was to get out of that box, and prepare to leave the stables!

We were not many paces away when I was stopped, and Ned said, "Say there is a mare going to die soon ; she is ill." Now I gave this

message, and Lady H—— said, "For heaven's sake don't say that one of my lovely mares is going to die. Don't tell me that, for I shall never forgive you. Do you know that each one represents a large sum of money? and besides that, I love them so."

I replied, "I cannot help it; I have given you the message."

I could see she was very much distressed, and she turned back and spoke to the stud groom. I walked slowly on towards the house, and when Lady H—— joined me she said—

"This is most strange; there is a mare here which you have not seen; it belongs to a friend who has left it in my charge, and the groom tells me she is not well, so I have sent for the 'vet.,' and hope she will be better, and you proved wrong, as it is so unpleasant having a death among the horses."

I had nothing further to say, and on reaching the house we separated, each going to our rooms to dress for dinner.

Madame Valda had not accompanied Lady H—— and myself to the stable, but as she is interested in and fond of my "Ned" she was

anxious to hear all about the visit, and what he thought of the stud.

After dinner this gentleman took control of me, and held a long conversation with the ladies, remaining talking so long that it was quite late when we retired for the night.

Separate rooms had been prepared for us, but as I was feeling very ill again Madame Valda insisted upon my sharing her room, which I was very glad to do, as I am always nervous when in the dark alone.

We slept well, and awoke to find a most lovely day. Had breakfast in our room, and on going downstairs received a message from a footman that Lady H—— had gone into the park, and would be pleased if we would join her there.

I am not going to attempt to describe Baldwin Court—the task is too great for me ; but if I thought it beautiful the evening before, now, bathed in rich sunshine, it seemed to me an earthly paradise. The house is built of red bricks, with a high square tower at one end. It is well known in history. Kings and queens have held court and high revel there,

and through the deep shade cast by the stately old trees in the park a fair queen wandered many and many a year ago. But fair as she might be, the present lady and reigning queen of Baldwin Court can hold her own against her, both for beauty and grace, for kindness of heart, and noble generosity to both friends and foes. If she has any of the latter, I should add.

I very quickly perceived that Lady H—— was possessed of great mediumistic powers in a large degree, and full of that peculiar force which we spiritualists term healing magnetism. I felt it act most powerfully on myself directly she came near to or touched me, and when her hand was laid in mine it seemed as though a current of electricity was passing up to my shoulders; and this morning when we found her in the park, to my clairvoyant eyes she was enveloped in what seemed to me a thick white cloud, and, to my surprise, many spirit faces appeared through it. I did not mention this, for I am afraid of making people nervous as a rule.

There was another lady visiting at Baldwin Court beside Madam and myself, and she was

with Lady H—— when we joined her in the park.

In a few minutes Madame Valda and Miss B—— rambled away, leaving Lady H—— and myself alone, and the latter at once began to tell me that since the previous evening she had been thinking much of the things I had told her, that she had been down to the stables and had a long talk with her stud groom, an extremely bright and intelligent man. She had found the sick mare worse, and after a little talk had discovered that the silent groom was also somewhat of a dabbler in mysteries and horoscopes. She added, "Now, dear Mrs. Davies, you know I am a novice in these occult matters, and you must forgive me if I seem to doubt you, but I want to put you and your 'Ned' to further proof, and do you object to asking 'Ned' to come himself and speak to W—— (the stud groom) personally?"

I smiled, and said, "Not at all, I have no objection; but what about the groom when he hears the broad Lancashire dialect, the horsey terms, and the not too particularly refined language of 'Ned,' who is not, as he says,

a proud chap, or above using a big, big d—— coming through my lips. The man has heard me speak, and may be astonished."

"Oh, never mind that, I have told him you are a witch!"

I laughed, because I am rather proud of my witchcraft, and said, "Very well, so be it, and you must take the consequences."

Lady H—— then said, "Before W—— comes I want you as a test to myself, and, whilst you are still in your normal condition, to see if amongst all these foals you can select those you saw in the boxes last night, and which you said were the best, and I must tell you that in your selection last evening you were perfectly correct, and selected those which my groom mostly fancies."

I picked out all the foals correctly, and then Lady H—— said, "Here comes W——. Now before he speaks tell him which are his own favourites."

This I also did, much to his astonishment, and when he left us it was arranged that at 7 p.m. I was to go down to the stables for "Ned" to personally go through the stud.

We kept our appointment, and the result

of our tour I must tell in Lady H——'s words, for from the moment "Ned" takes control of me I lose all count of time and life.

"We went, Mrs. Davies, through the boxes, and in one of them 'Ned' recognised a mare as an old acquaintance, giving the name of her former owner^p as Count B——y, which I assure you was perfectly correct. Another mare, a yearling, he declared to be the daughter of P——'s. In this also he was correct, and I now proposed taking him to see the sick mare.

"As soon as the door of the box was opened, wherein she was lying 'Ned' walked in and laid *his* (?) hand on her side, and looking at the groom said, "Oh, poor thing, she is dying. There is a dead foal and a ruptured uterus. You have been giving her chloric ether to ease her pain. She will be dead in the morning. Oh! poor creature!"

"We left the box, as I (Lady H——) could not bear to see the poor thing lying there, but made up my mind there and then to remember Mr. Ned's words, and have the mare, as soon as dead, opened and examined.

"She died early next morning, and the veterinary opened and made a careful examination of her, proving beyond question that *Ned* was perfectly right, and must have, as *he* described it, 'seen slap through her.'"

The above is the account given me by Lady H——. For myself I know nothing of horses, have never associated with people connected with or owning them, and, above all things, detest personally having anything to do with them.

The same night of my, or rather *Ned's* visit to the stables, while we were at dinner there were frequently loud knocks on the table, and I particularly asked the spirit friends to be quiet until the men-servants had left the room, and we should be alone. The knockings subsided somewhat, but did not entirely cease, being renewed with greater force the moment the servants closed the door behind them.

We now commenced to ask questions, and the communications of our spiritual visitors proving to be of a very private nature, connected with family affairs, of course I cannot speak of them.

I began to feel a little exhausted when Lady H—— took both my hands in hers, saying, "*I feel I can give you strength.*"

And indeed she did, for the noises now became louder than ever. Instead of knocks and taps on the table, we had great bangs, as though the table was struck with a heavy hammer. The candelabra in the centre moved up and down, our chairs were rapped on, and the floor all round us. This went on for more than an hour, and then we were told the power was used up, and we must adjourn the meeting.

We four ladies then went to the drawing-room where Madam Valda sang for us, as only Guila Valda can sing. We all thought, for this evening at least, all spiritual manifestations were over, but at twenty minutes to twelve "Dewdrop" came and said if her ladyship would cause all the lights to be turned off (the room was lighted by electricity) she wanted to show them something to crown our evening seance.

We all sat quietly down in total darkness, when suddenly "Dewdrop" spoke and said, "Look!"

There high up above our heads was a small star which moved slowly higher towards the ceiling, fading almost away at times until we could scarcely see it. Then others appeared, until we counted six lights, some near the floor, and one large one appeared suddenly on my breast. They were to be seen for fully ten minutes, when they all collected together in one mass and disappeared through the floor. "Good-night ; go to bed," was then called out, and we felt such an influence on us that almost in silence we parted, each going to our own rooms.

I think I have mentioned previously that, being weak and nervous, I did not like sleeping alone, and was sharing Madame Valda's room. We were ready for bed, and just putting out the light, when we heard Lady H—— at our door calling out our names. "Where are you ? can you come to me ? I want you." Madame Valda ran out, but I remained to put on my dressing-gown. When I joined them Lady H—— told me that after we had said "Good-night" she, with Miss B——, had gone to her room, which was on the floor immediately over that occupied by Madame Valda and myself.

Lady H—— had been wearing some magnificent diamonds that evening, and after removing them from her neck, etc., had come down to her bath-room, which was on our floor. She was half-way down the flight of stairs, when she saw a woman walk quietly out of the bath-room, go along the corridor, and disappear in the darkness at the other end.

She saw the figure distinctly, but the face was hidden; she described it to us, and spoke of the remarkable height of the woman, which, she said, must have been quite five feet eight inches. A black trailing gown with either white bodice or a large white wrap round the shoulders.

Knowing there was no one in the house nearly so tall, either amongst the visitors or servants, her ladyship's first thought was that burglars were in the place, and being possessed of remarkable presence of mind, keeping calm and cool under all circumstances, she immediately called out, "Diana, there is some one here, do not leave my room and the jewels," she then ran along the corridor after the figure, which by this time had quite disappeared.

She then came on to our room, and although excited was perfectly self-possessed, and together we searched the rooms, but no trace had the midnight visitor left of her presence—nothing being disturbed. Silently she had come and gone, and the ghost of Baldwin Court remains a mystery which we yet hope to unravel.

This letter gives evidence that another person besides Lady H—— had a strange experience. She was totally ignorant even of my presence in the house, and told the tale she has written to a young lady, a day or two after the occurrence, without being asked any questions.

“On July 28th I went to bed about ten o'clock. I am generally a very light sleeper; but that night I was fast asleep. About half-past eleven I heard just as if somebody was coming very softly through the passage towards my door. Then I heard two knocks, very softly, but very distinctly. At that moment I was quite awake, not suddenly, but very slowly. Then I heard directly again (twice) the same soft knock at my door, and somebody saying twice, in a mysterious

voice, but with a very good German accent, 'Fräulein! Fräulein!' I was so frightened that I could not move, and dare not ask who it was. The most singular thing of all was the way which I woke up."

The above was written by the German governess living with Lady H—— at the Court. The young lady will sign it.

CHAPTER XVIII.

CLAIRVOYANCE.

"The stranger at my fireside cannot see
The forms I see, nor hear the sounds I hear."

"Haunted Houses."—LONGFELLOW.

I HAVE hitherto spoken more concerning controls and psychical manifestations than clairvoyance, but it seemed to me that the account of my early experiences led up to it, and I hope now to show my readers that I have some claim to the name of clairvoyante.

As a child I was terribly afraid of the dark, and am not ashamed to confess that up to this day I have not got over my dislike to it, and if it can possibly be avoided never allow myself to be in darkness. I sleep with a light in my room always, and when travelling or visiting from home, amongst my luggage there is always to be found a good supply of night-lights. Sometimes I think this fear of the

dark had a pre-natal cause, for one of my brothers had the same fear, and my own boy has a perfect horror of it.

In my young days we were never permitted a light in our bedrooms, and after being put to bed we were left in darkness, and what I suffered from this practice no one can imagine. Sometimes I was nearly mad with terror, and my spirit guides have told me since how hard they used to work to prevent me seeing clairvoyantly themselves or other spirits about me.

I was too young to know anything about spirits or manifestations, but I distinctly remember one of my sisters once sending me downstairs to fetch something she required in our bed-room, and when I reached the staircase, to my horror, found all was darkness. I started to run down the long passage, but close to my side ran what I now know to have been a little spirit child. I could see it plainly in the dark, a child smaller than myself, smiling as though delighted to run a race, while poor little I was nearly wild with fright. I have woken in the night to see plainly fair sweet faces smiling down upon me, but which quickly passed away as soon as they saw me looking

at them. I saw them then as I see them now, and recognize them as old familiar friends, though they were never known to me in the flesh. I see in the dark whether I desire it or not, although in light I have to induce the condition of clairvoyance, and that is my reason, more than the fear of darkness now, which makes me always sleep with a good light.

When I was nine years old I used to hear my father (who was fond of reading aloud) read from the newspapers many accounts of a wonderful mesmerist, whose name I forget now, who was devoting his time to experiments with clairvoyants; and, young as I was, how earnestly I desired to be able to see all the wonderful things spoken of, little dreaming then that I was actually possessed of, and was all unknowingly using, my gift.

Years passed by, and at school, and amongst many friends, I began to forget the queer pictures and people I used to see, when lying sleepless and frightened in my bed so long ago.

When I was eleven years old we lived in Chester, in a very large house, close to where

now the "Grosvenor" Hotel stands. We had staying with us a relative who was unfortunately in the habit of having terrible attacks—one can call it nothing else—of drunkenness.

One night I was reading in bed, when all at once the page before my eyes seemed to fade away, and I saw distinctly the hall of our house plainly before me. I seemed to be looking down into it; I saw the front door open, and our drunken friend come quietly in. I saw him walk softly to the foot of the stairs, slip off his boots, and start to walk upstairs. When half-way up he stopped, turned back, and walked down again, crossed the hall, and passed out of the back door into the yard. I seemed to wait, knowing that he would return, and very soon saw him come in again and creep stealthily upstairs, but this time he carried a terribly formidable weapon; it was a coal-pick and hammer made (handle included) of iron. I saw him climb the stairs, go to my mother's room, and enter it. I seemed quite able to see all that he was doing, and I saw him try the lids of two large chests, which were, I knew, packed full of very valuable old family china and glass.

Finding the boxes were fastened, I saw him take the sharp point of the hammer, force open one and then the other lid, and, going down on his knees, throw out all the lovely treasures within.

He seemed to be searching for something else, and at last I knew what it was ; it was a large sum of money my mother had lately received as a legacy, and which, child as I was, I knew was in the house, and I also knew where it was.

Oh, the fear and horror of that time ! I was sitting up in bed, clutching the clothes, and bathed in perspiration. At last the searcher realized that which he sought was not there, and then in mad fury began to smash the china and glass. I saw him beat some to powder, and scarcely an article was left whole. He at last seemed to be startled, for he stood still as though listening, then seizing the hammer ran quickly upstairs to the floor upon which my bedroom was. There were on this floor four rooms, and a small one used for lumber. He entered the latter, hid the large hammer behind a broken marble pedestal, stole quietly downstairs, and passed out of the front door.

When my elder sister, who slept with me, came to bed I was crying, and told her I had had an awful dream. She laughed, and told me to go to sleep.

Next day I told my mother, and she was so much impressed that that very day she placed the money in a secure box and sent me, accompanied by an old and faithful servant, to deposit it in safe keeping. The boxes of china, etc., were carried up to my brothers' bedroom, and a search made for the coal hammer, which was reported by the servant to be missing. It was found where I had seen it put, and unfortunately returned to the cellar. But our relative not having been seen since the previous day, my mother had search made for him about the town, but without avail.

Two days passed, and on the morning of the third the man employed to find the missing person was standing in the hall talking to mamma. I was standing quite near, when suddenly a fearful sound of blows and smashing was heard upstairs. I seemed to know at once what it was, and as the man went upstairs I went after him, but it was too late. There, mad drunk, with the awful hammer raised in his

two hands, our relative stood; he had found the boxes, everything was broken, and having searched my mother's room in vain, he had gone to the one occupied by myself and sister, and finding the door locked he had smashed in the panels. And now came my first control. I felt myself suddenly stiffen, and, child though I was, they told me afterwards I threw myself upon this maniac, twisted the hammer out of his hands, and before anyone could interfere he was sprawling head first downstairs. When I recovered I was lying on a couch, my mother helpless in a chair, a policeman and the detective tying the madman's feet together.

The next day some gentlemen called, and, after an interview with my mother, asked to see me, and when they did so declared that I must have been possessed. There were marks across both palms where my nails had cut my flesh when I became rigid. So ended my first bad experience.

I come next to that period spoken of in my early chapters, wherein I had discovered my peculiar powers and begun to exercise them. As usual, with a new toy one never tires, and it seemed to me I never could use my gift

enough. We—my sister Fanny and myself—used to spend hours every day with our experiments, and oh, what a delight it was! We were orphans—three brothers, my sister, and self living together, with very few friends, and not a relative we knew of in the world, unless I may mention one, a purse-proud snob whom we had never seen or cared to see in those days.

CHAPTER XIX.

CUI BONO.

"What do we know of spirits, good or ill, or of their power to help us or to harm?"

—LONGFELLOW.

THE query one often meets with when discussing spiritualism is, What is the use of it all? I do not propose now entering upon a long explanation as to its uses, but will give a short account of one instance at least where it was found very useful indeed.

We lived, at the time spoken of in my previous chapter (I allude to the period of my life when my gifts were being developed or unfolded), in Handsworth. Our house was semi-detached, and our landlady, with her son and daughter, occupied the adjoining house. Our neighbour, Mrs. Collins, was a good-natured, ignorant, helpless sort of woman, who had been left a widow many years previously,

and while her children were very young. She was her husband's second wife, and he left a grown-up son and daughter by his first one. As is so often the case, the second family came in for all the benefits the father could bestow, whilst the first (as usual) went to the wall, with the spirit of bitterness strongly raging in the family bosom. Mrs. Collins had nothing left to her personally, all the property being settled on George and Annie in trust until they became of age, the mother receiving only an allowance during the minority of the children. George was the elder, and came of age in August, 1873, and it is concerning this event that I now write.

On the evening of his 21st birthday my eldest brother came to me and said, "Mrs. Collins wants you; George is very bad." I laughed, for I at once concluded George had been celebrating the day not wisely but too well. I went in, however, and found him lying limp and helpless on a couch, and to my surprise saw (clairvoyantly) that he was surrounded by a dense black cloud. I was only a very young girl in those days, with very little experience of illness, but I knew enough

by this time of my second sight to use it and profit by its use. As I have said, I was surprised to see the heavy cloud surrounding George, and I asked him what he had been doing?

"Nothing," was the reply, "but taking a long country walk, and that is the cause of this."

"What do you mean? You are strong, and not easily tired," I observed, for poor George was famous for his health and strength.

"Oh! it was not the walk; it was the fearful smell in the field, which was dressed with sewage and decayed fish refuse, and it has made me feel very ill."

I had some talk with his mother, and left the house.

Next morning I went in to enquire, and found Mrs. Collins crying. She had been up all night, and George was worse. She asked me to go up with her to see him, and I was shocked at his appearance.

Whilst standing near his bedside I heard my mother's voice say, "Stand back, he will die, and is really dying now."

I was so startled that I said, "Oh, Mrs. Collins, send for a doctor at once! I'll go myself," and in a short time returned with their own medical man, who visited the house twice during that afternoon and evening.

On Sunday, as I was engaged teaching, there was no time for me to look in either morning or afternoon; but about five o'clock Mrs. Collins came in through the garden, and, crying bitterly, said, "Bessie, George is asking for you, he is dying."

Of course I went at once, and saw the poor fellow was going. The room was full of relations, all sitting dazed and helpless. I will not describe how my friend looked, it was too awful a sight; but directly I entered the room he knew I was there, and tried to hold out his poor hand, which I held in mine. He said, "I am blind, perfectly blind, and hell itself is consuming my inside. I am dying, dying."

I could not speak, until all at once I felt a spirit hand on my shoulder, and a man's agitated voice say, "For the love of God, be strong and help us. Ask if he has made his will."

With an effort I said, "George, have you made your will?"

He only moaned, "Oh, my mother, my poor mother, what will she do?" and then he asked for drink. He was given water, which he drank greedily, and then tried to rise or to sit up, moving his hand as though to write.

I seemed to understand, and telling his mother to lift him up I ran into my own home to my brother, and said, "Go like lightning. George Collins is dying, and has made no will. Fetch someone who can do it!"

I never knew where my brother went to; but he came back directly with a gentleman, and was brought up to the bedroom, to which I had returned. I stood at the foot of that deathbed, and word for word dictated the terms of that will which was to save a helpless woman from poverty. Slowly, plainly the gentleman read out all he had written; and to this day I see my dying friend raise himself in bed, and with a firm strong hand sign the paper and fall back dead.

The next morning his step-brother arrived, accompanied by a solicitor's clerk, who pro-

ceeded to make an inventory of the contents of the house, and even of the clothing of his dead brother. The mother was helpless as usual, but under the control of one of my own guides I followed these men from room to room all over the house, and heard Mr. Collins say, that as soon as it was all over Mrs. Collins should pack up her traps and depart.

I began to understand now about the spirit's anxiety to have a will, but held my tongue, and saw Mrs. Collins off in a cab with a friend of her late son to see a solicitor, and then we waited the course of events.

Four doctors held a post-mortem, and found George died from blood-poisoning, caused by the abominable practice of manuring the fields with fish offal.

The funeral over (at which the brother had appeared as chief mourner), my brother, sister, and myself were invited in to hear Mr. Collins' solicitor explain matters, and to this day, in spite of all the horrors of that time, I cannot help laughing when I call to mind that scene.

This is no romance, it is the living truth.

There was the mother with her daughter, aged fifteen, a young gentleman who had been her son's chum, several relatives on the mother's side, and the head of the family (Mr. Collins), and his solicitor. The latter began to explain the will of the late Mr. Collins (senior), and how he had left the property, and that in case of the death of either of the children their share of the property would go to the eldest brother (who was already very well off); and that brother was there now to claim his own, and would require the home for his own use as soon as Mrs. Collins could conveniently vacate it.

Now again was my shoulder grasped, and the agitated voice whispered, "Are you ready? Oh! is it safe?"

My brother now stood up and said, "Wait a little time, there will be a gentleman here to explain matters."

"All matters are explained," was the answer; "there is no more to be said. This gentleman is the heir-at-law, and Mr. George died intestate."

"Oh, no, he did not!" I said, "and here is his solicitor."

Oh, was not there a pretty scene and row! Human nature came very much to the front; but the will was proved, the mother and daughter remained in their home, and the query, What use is there in spiritualism? was in their case satisfactorily answered, and a so-called dead man protected his wife and child.

I saw the spirit, I heard the voice, I did its behest, and added two more to my list of spirit friends, and several more to my list of earthly enemies. No matter, I survive to tell the tale.

Another instance. I had a dear girl friend, an only child. Her mother, Mrs. F. Wilson, of Lodge Road, Birmingham, was ill, but not considered dangerously so, and I was in the habit of going to read or talk to her frequently, and to relieve the constant strain upon the daughter.

Just before Christmas, 1874, I left home to visit an elder sister living some miles away. I had only been there a few days, when one night I was suddenly awakened in a manner I knew indicated spirit influence. I was wide awake and fully conscious at once of a dim

figure quite near me. I said, "Who is it? What is the matter?" No answer, but what had been merely a cloud was now distinctly the form of my friend Mrs. Wilson. I knew somehow what it meant; she had passed away, and had come to tell me so.

I did not see or notice any movement of the lips or face, but the words seemed breathed into my ears, "Go to Julie; she is helpless and alone." It was all so sudden. And oh! be good to her; she needs it." My friend faded away.

As soon as I could pull myself sufficiently together—for I admit that I was terribly frightened—I dressed, and, going to my sister, told her that I should go by the first train to Julie, and arrived in Lodge Road by 12 a.m. that same day. My friend was in a terrible state of mind, but seemed to expect me. She told me that while her mother was dying she constantly repeated the words. "Send for Bess! Oh! if Bess were only here to be with you."

Together we went upstairs to see the dear friend and mother, and the moment we entered the room loud knocks came in a perfect shower all over the room, even on the bed and under

it. I remained with my friend, and she being, like myself, a medium, we were constantly receiving messages and orders concerning the wishes and desires of her mother.

My friend afterwards soon came to need the help her mother told me of. Though I am unable to here explain the nature of the trouble, I can say my Julie was saved from a sad fate, and at last came to my house, where she remained until her marriage.

CHAPTER XX.

OF WHAT USE IS SPIRITUALISM?

"The laws which govern the spiritual world prevent our seeing things palpable and visible to her."

—LONGFELLOW.

MY clairvoyance was increasing daily, and I was learning to look upon it in a very matter-of-fact way indeed. Certainly it was encouraged and exercised whenever occasion offered. But presently I began to perceive it was not to be all honey—there were the bitters to be partaken of in this gift as in all others. I found that wherever I was—in the street, in a shop, in a railway carriage, or any place where there were others beside myself—quite or almost absently I would begin to investigate them clairvoyantly, and have many times not only astonished my neighbours but myself too by bursting into a hearty fit of laughter; or while looking my

subject earnestly in the face, begin to cry, while the tears streamed down my cheeks. These outbursts being caused either by the spiritual surroundings of the people, or by the thoughts in their minds, which to me became distinct forms and pictures. I knew it was time to pull myself together, or else some fine day I should hear myself being charged as a lunatic, and so set myself to work to bring this second-sight of mine into something like control. This was hard work, for being what is termed a normal clairvoyante, that is, a natural clear-seer, I never required to be thrown into a mesmeric sleep or trance to obtain my visions—they were there at all times and seasons, whether I desired it or not, and at times made things awkward for me. In the streets I never seemed to meet a strange face. If my attention in passing was called to anyone, it was only to look upon a face and form with which I was perfectly familiar. I have bowed and stopped to speak to people who would look at me with astonishment, and all I could do was to murmur an apology when the fact became clear that I was speaking to perfect strangers. This became quite

a trouble to me at last, and I declared that I would never walk out alone, for, from fear of speaking to the wrong person, I had begun to refuse to notice people with whom we were only slightly acquainted, in case they should turn out to be one of my clairvoyante friends only.

It was quite time something should be done, but what was that something, and how was I to start? After thinking much, and after many long talks with my sister Frances, we came to the conclusion we had better ask the spirits.

The answers to our questions came. "It is entirely her own fault; she has been using and developing this spiritual faculty both in and out of season, until she has let it run away with her. Let her drop for a time all premeditated use of the faculty. If it obtrudes itself she must immediately change her condition of mind or thought; and if she carefully follows our instructions she will soon find the management of this power entirely in her own hands."

It must be understood this was to me a difficult task, for had I not been for several

years doing all in my power to develop this, to me, seemingly delightful gift of clairvoyance, and now here it was likely to run away with me!

But I had received orders, and I must obey, or take the consequences; and after six or seven months found that actually the power was at my command, and I do not hesitate to assert that there are not hundreds but thousands of people in every part of this globe both ready and willing to testify that I am what Mr. Stead declares me to be—a trustworthy clairvoyante.

I must speak of another gift I have, that of clairauidience. I hear voices, for twenty-five years I have heard them; and although one very clever correspondent, when writing to *The Morning*, kindly said he had always understood this was a sign of madness, nevertheless if I get mad no quicker than I have done during the time above mentioned, I have a ~~very~~ fair chance of ending my days outside a lunatic asylum, and quietly in the bosom of my family.

The voices are those of my own loved ones, the same now as they were when used

by my dear ones on earth, and perhaps it will surprise some to hear they actually are useful at times.

I have a son in spirit life, and he speaks to me. One night, only a few weeks ago, I was awakened by hearing myself called "mamma." I am a very light sleeper, and wake at the slightest sound. "Mamma," again was whispered.

"Yes. What is it?" I said, sitting up; but there was no one there, and I saw no one.

I laid down again, but shortly heard the voice whisper "Mamma, mamma," then came a soft rustling at my bedroom door. I jumped out of bed and unlocked the door, but there was no one or any further sound. I turned into my room, put on my dressing-gown and slippers, and went upstairs to see the children, because I knew from old experience that no trick was being played upon me.

I saw my little girl was sleeping quietly and comfortably, and then went into the next room to my little boy, and there was the poor child nearly mad with toothache. He was delighted to see me, and said, "Oh, mamma,

I am so glad you have come, I wanted you so badly!"

I said, "Did you come to my door and call?"

"Oh no, mamma. How could I? It is all dark!"

My readers may remember I have said that my little boy has a perfect horror of darkness, and is sometimes so terrified he is afraid to move in bed.

Now here was a sign of incipient madness which proved of some service. I have these signs very frequently, in fact there is not a day of my life that I do not have them, and always when holding a seance much of my information is given me by them.

On the evening of January 20th, 1893, two gentlemen called on me. They were investigating what is called spiritualism, and both were comparative strangers to me. Our two callers, my husband, and self sat in my small sitting-room, and in a very few seconds the voices began to speak to me.

"Tell Mr. B—— that his father greets him, and please give my name, which is

W. B——y. I passed away; then came number of years; death caused by asthma."

Mr. B—— declared this to be correct, and then the voices, changing quickly from one to another, each in turn gave full name, period of passing away, relationship, nature of disease, and very many loving messages, all showing that though many of them had been long gone, and many almost forgotten, they had never lost sight of interest in their dear ones left on earth.

I know these pages will be read by unbelievers, and scoffed at by many; but it is a comfort to know that the principal scoffers are only amongst the ignorant, or those who dare not believe, and it is the "fool" alone that "hath said in his heart, There is no God."

I have seen also, over and over again, mothers weeping for their children—children weeping for their parents who have left them to enter that bourne from whence they have been told no traveller returns. And I have seen the very child wept for as lost—the mother, the father, stand by the side of the weeping mortal, themselves bowed down with grief

because they can find no means of conveying to the mind of the mourner the fact that there is no death, and that they live and love as strongly in the spirit world as they did on earth; and that when God the Creator gave us the power to live and love, He gave us an everlasting gift, which so-called death cannot sever, neither is it intended to do so.

Many years ago I went to spend an evening with some friends, and while talking I clairvoyantly saw two little lads walk into the room hand in hand, and they went round from one mortal to another, scanning each face most anxiously until at last they came to me; their little faces seemed to light up with recognition, although I felt certain they were absolute strangers to me. The younger of the two put out his little hand to take mine, and of course my responding to his action attracted the attention of the friends with whom I was sitting.

"What is it? What do you see? Oh, do tell us!"

I answered, "There are two little boys here; they tell me they are waiting for their mother."

My hostess looked puzzled, and said they could not be for anyone present. The little ones seemed to read from my face what was being said; they did not look as if they heard, for the elder one said, "No, mother is coming. "Goodness" sent us here to see her, and you are to help us."

I told aloud what he had said, and I had scarcely spoken when Mrs. Evans was announced, and a lady, a stranger to me, entered the room, dressed in deep mourning. I saw my host and hostess and the rest of the family look meaningly at each other, and the little spirit children clung lovingly to her dress. The poor creature looked the picture of sadness, and I knew for a certainty that we were to go through one of the trying scenes which, owing to my own sympathetic nature, tried me most terribly, and often laid me up for days. Mrs. Perks, my hostess, I perceived, felt likewise, and a sort of ominous silence fell round us. The little children seemed wild with delight, caressing their mother, seemingly quite unconscious of her not returning their demonstrations of affection for some time. But at

last it dawned on them, and one, the elder, turned to me and said—

“Isn't mother still! Why doesn't she speak? It's like as if she was blind, and can't see us.”

I said, “My dear, she cannot see you; you are two little angels now, and she is still on earth. Tell me your name, and I will tell her you are here.”

“My name is Johnny, and my brother is Willie; tell her quickly.”

I turned to Mrs. Evans, and after a little conversation led her carefully to the subject of her mourning dress. With tears she told me she had had a severe loss.

“Have you ever heard of spiritualism?” I said quietly.

“Oh, yes, and I have thought of going to see a medium, but do not know how to set about it to find them out; and then, again, I am afraid it is wicked to disturb the dead.”

I saw at once that this poor soul was full of the usual idea, that her dead darlings were lying in their cold graves, waiting there for the last trump to quicken them into life; and that

if she summoned them or sought communion, they would have to come from their graves to her.

I said, "Are you a Christian?"

"Of course I am."

"Then," I said, "what about your belief in the Communion of Saints? They were only mortals, you know, and must lie in their graves, like the rest of us, until the judgment-day; and if that be true what about the communion with them? And what does it mean when we are told that we all have our good and bad angels near us, and that we are to try the spirits, holding only to those whom we prove to be good and true?"

In this way at last I led her on until she seemed easier in her mind on the question of seeking communion with her saints, and then, holding her hand tightly, I said—

"I constantly see spirits; I hear them speak; I have seen some here to-night."

She said, "Is it possible? Oh, tell me, can you see anyone here to-night for me?"

"Yes, there are two little boys."

The poor woman looked like a lunatic.

She seized my shoulder, and, holding me tightly, said—

“Tell me what they are like. Tell me their names.”

“Their names are John and Willie Evans. Their ages are seven and five years. They passed away nearly two years ago of small-pox.”

Never, never shall I forget that woman's face. She threw herself into my arms, literally screaming, “Thank God! Oh, thank God for this mercy! My children have saved me, for this night I had intended to kill myself, and came here to say good-bye.”

She drew from her hand-bag a bottle full of laudanum. This woman's life had been saved by the spirits and no other means. She lives to this day, and holds communion with her angels Johnny and Willie.

Will anyone kindly here explain where the wickedness of holding spirit communion comes in? I shall be much obliged if they can.

To go from the above to a more mundane subject, I will tell another little clairvoyant vision I had.

A friend was going to America by steamer. He had a large sum of money in his possession, mostly in notes, but there was a good deal in gold. The night before he sailed, at a seance I saw him on board the steamer. I described his surroundings at sea, and said—

“I think you have been two nights out, this is the third. You are in your berth asleep. I see a man creep in and cross to your side and look earnestly into your face. You have your waistcoat under your pillow. He takes up your coat and trousers and searches the pockets. He takes something out and looks disappointed. He catches sight of your waistcoat, draws it from under your head, and empties the pockets, but again seems to look for something more. You turn over. He stoops on his hands and knees, and then, lying flat down, crawls out of the door. I lose him now. He wears a beard and moustache, but it looks like a false one.”

My friend was impressed, and remembering that forewarned is forearmed, bade me good-bye. In three weeks I heard from him, and now quote from his letter :

" You remember telling me that I should be robbed. When I reached Liverpool I made it my business to deposit the £600 in safe keeping, taking only the gold with me on board, and this, all but £3, I stowed away. The third night I put a lot of coppers into my trousers' pocket, some shillings into my waistcoat, but quite forgot to remove the £3. In the morning all was gone. There is no man on board answering your description, but a woman was seen to throw a little bundle overboard very early. Could this have been the false whiskers, and she the culprit? "

I never found out, but wished my friend had not forgotten his three sovereigns. But my vision saved him close upon a thousand pounds.

It is pretty generally known that I use the gifts that God has given me, and I have an enormous correspondence with people desiring my help, and many a hearty laugh I get out of their letters; but there is oftener a tear than a smile, for the woes of many a weary heart and life are poured into my mind. Sometimes I sit in my room listening to a tale which makes me wish I had the power given

me to torture some devil in human form, just as he has tortured the poor soul near me.

There is many a sweet-faced smiling man amongst us, whom, if I cared to speak, would hide his contemptible head for ever from the sight of all honest, decent men and women. And there are in this world men and women, saints and angels of goodness, who are unknown, and who seek no notoriety or praise.

Amongst some of the letters I have had—there have been one or two very funny ones. One young lady says, "I want to be a spiritualist, and have my fortune told. Shall I get married soon, and which of the two men whose hair I enclose had I better marry. Both are well off, but I do prefer being a clergyman's wife if it can be managed by the spirits."

Another says, "I am a spiritualist. I am much interested in horse racing, and bet a little ; enclosed is a list of horses likely to run in the next-named races, please put a cross to the winning horse. If you have a fee, I'll pay

it, but it must not be more than 10s., I prefer to pay 5s."

Another letter, this time from America, says, "I hear all things are possible to you. Please come through Miss M——, living in Washington. Tell me my real name from these initials. Which is in spirit world, father or mother? What is my future, and why don't my friends in England write to me, and oblige yours truly——"

Another one, a gentleman, enclosed a list of initials. "Kindly tell me which of these in the first column will pay me what he owes me. Which in the second shall I call on for orders? Which in the third are my friends? If you can do this I shall believe in spiritualism." Now this was good of him, and I felt somewhat overpowered, but did not see why I should trouble to convince him.

It seems to me, that from some unknown reason the general public has got hold of a very wrong idea concerning these spiritual gifts. But let me here distinctly say that if the people who read my pages are impressed to write to me, let them understand that this matter to me is *holy ground*, and I do not

degrade either my spirits or my powers to fortune-telling.

I do not look upon the spirits as servants of all work, neither do they return to take the legitimate cares of earth-life on to their shoulders, that their friends may make a fortune easily and quickly. They come as messengers of peace and of hope; they come to comfort the sorrowful and weak; to develop the hearts and minds of their loved ones; to prove that which all the religions in the world have failed to prove, namely, that there is no death. But that they help and assist us materially is a positive fact; it has been proved conclusively over and over again.

Miss Marryat's (Mrs. Lean) spirit-daughter Florence came to me the other day and said, "Mother is worried fearfully, I do wish you would go to her."

"Is she ill, Florence?"

"No, dear."

"Is it important that I should go to-day?"

"No; but you know how easily she is worried now whilst engaged on her new book, and if you will go, your 'Ned' will tell her something to comfort her."

I could not go that night, but wrote, and went the next. I found Miss Marryat at home.

"What is the matter now?"

"Oh, dear, you know how much I love my little horse, and he cost an enormous sum, now they tell me I must sell him, and oh, such a lot of bother, I'm worried to death!"

I felt "Ned" round, and here I must remark, he is great on horses and dogs, whilst I myself am the most ignorant creature in the world on all matters pertaining to these noble animals. "Ned" controlled me, went into the subject thoroughly with Florence Marryat, and when I returned to consciousness found her all smiles. The horse was not sold, she has been offered large sums for the lovely fellow, and he, under "Ned's" careful supervision, underwent special treatment, and now gives every satisfaction.

Miss Marryat and myself were going to a ball together. Just before I started to join her I received a telegram—"Can't go, am prevented." I felt much disappointed, and questioned whether or not I should go.

"Dewdrop" insisted upon my going, and off I started in rather a depressed state of mind, as I am afflicted with a certain amount of shyness.

I had very nearly reached the end of my journey when "Dewdrop" and Florence both appeared, and in answer to my enquiry as to what now, told me with great glee that I should find Miss Marryat there before me. I was surprised, and immediately on entering the house, asked the man-servant if Miss Marryat had arrived.

"Oh, yes, ten minutes ago, and is now in her room." There I found her, and she explained that directly after sending her telegram, her difficulty had been removed, and she had started expecting to see me at Victoria, but my train was late.

These may seem trivial matters, but are only intended to show how real and perfectly natural are these spirit friends of ours.

I have many friends in Ireland, one or two special ones, and through "Dewdrop" I am kept pretty well informed as to their movements.

I had not heard from one, a Mrs. A—,

and knowing she was not strong, sent "Dewdrop" at Christmas time to see what was the reason I had not heard.

This is the report.

"How is Mrs. A——? Is she ill?"

"Not ill. 'Dewdrop' look all round. No ill at all; work, work very hard."

"What at?"

"Party; big one, much people, many papoose."

"A ball?"

"No, party. Lots drink tea, papoose and squaws, big tree, much toys, and big star top, big lights many, squaw A—— make much talk, other squaws listen."

"What else?" I asked.

"Want Ned go stable; mustang's leg bad; cost much money."

"Well, shall I hear?"

"No hear yet, no write; surprise you."

Well, I did not hear for three weeks, and then had my surprise. Mrs. A—— was coming on a flying visit to London, and wished to see me. On her visit I told her what "Dewdrop" had said, and she said, "Oh, yes, I gave a Christmas-tree party to the women

and children. 'Dewdrop' must have heard me address them. The tree was lighted by electricity, and there was a big star on the top."

"What about the horse?"

"Oh, dear, yes! A very valuable mare has hurt her leg mysteriously, but the stud groom says she is getting all right now, although it seemed serious at first."

I have another friend living near Dublin, and another in County Tipperary. In January of last year Mrs. Francis called on me, and during her visit said:

"When I get home to Tipperary I will send you a big box of plants as soon as the weather permits. I will send polyanthuses and primroses."

"Could you send me some gladioli bulbs?"

"Yes; but it will not be for some time."

I waited for my plants till April, and not receiving them, told "Dewdrop" to go and hurry them forward.

In a few days I received an enormous box of flowers and a parcel, the latter containing a very large and beautifully-knitted shawl; but they came from Dublin. I found a note, and it said, "I am sending the flowers and shawl



at 'Dewdrop's' request. Am sorry there are no gladioli; it is much too early, so send daffodils instead. The shawl was knitting for one of the girls, but 'Dewdrop' wrote through my hand that she wanted it for you, so please accept it with my love."

But the note was signed "G. Waters." I could not understand this at all, so interviewed Miss "Dewdrop."

"Did you go to Ireland?"

"Yes."

"Where did you go?"

"To see Miss Waters first."

"What did you do?"

"Used her hand to write, and asked for some flowers and that blanket."

"Oh, you did! But don't you know you must not go begging?"

"No, I don't; I knew that was a warm blanket, and I like you to be warm, Medie."

"But what about the flowers?"

"Oh, I asked for those for fear Mrs. Frances had none!"

"But what about the gladioli? Don't you know that it is late-flowering, that it is much too soon?"

"Oh, that did not matter a bit! I thought you wanted some, for I heard you ask Mrs. Frances long ago, so while I was there asked Mrs. Waters instead."

In a few days another box of flowers arrived, this time from Tipperary. Enclosed was a note saying my friend had been under the impression that I had forgotten or did not want them. So "Dewdrop" made sure that her Medie should not be disappointed; but I have stopped her asking for shawls and blankets.

CHAPTER XXI.

CLAIRVOYANCE IN CHILDREN.

"*Hathorne.* Observe her. She is troubled in her sleep,

"*Mather.* Some fearful vision haunts her."

—LONGFELLOW.

DURING the summer of 1883 I spent a good deal of time at the house of my friend Florence Marryat, and we had grand times. She being such an earnest, devoted spiritualist, naturally did her utmost to convince her friends that the so-called dead were no more dead than we were ourselves, and also that there were hidden forces in Nature waiting ready at hand to be opened up and used for the benefit of mankind. Of course she made many converts, and amongst those who were always very nearly, but *were not quite convinced*, was a Dr. James Lewis. I had met him many times, and had had several long arguments on occult subjects, and of

course amongst them was the subject of clairvoyance.

One afternoon a number of friends were together in Miss Marryat's drawing-room, and that lady said to me, "Bess, I have a small parcel here belonging to Dr. Lewis. He will be here presently, and I particularly wish you to settle him to-day."

I laughed and said, "Very well, I shall be most happy to settle him for you if it is in my power."

We were shortly afterwards joined by Dr. Lewis, and we at once started our usual arguments. He presently asked Mrs. Lean (Miss Marryat) for the small parcel, carefully examined the wrapper and seals to see they were intact and absolutely as he had left them, and, after satisfying himself as to their condition, handed the parcels to me, with the remark, "There, if your clairvoyance can see through that I will be convinced."

I took it in my hands and held it between my two palms, and then began to read.

"I see a boy; he is about sixteen or seventeen years old; he is sitting leaning his head on his two hands by the side of a table, in

what looks like the ward of a hospital; his head aches dreadfully. Now he is in bed in the same ward, he is unconscious, now he is dead.

"I see a room with several gentlemen, some are elderly, some quite young. One elderly man is speaking, and all gather round a table, which looks as though made of some dark stone, such as slate; on this slab is the body of the boy. I see them all stand round, whilst one man seems to be removing the hair as though he will scalp the head. Now I see, oh! it makes me ill, they are sawing off the top of the head and dividing it. The body is turned over, the back part of the head is opened. I see the old gentleman cut something out of the head, hold it on the end of a sharp-pointed instrument, and exhibit it to the others round. Now I see yourself, Dr. Lewis, the 'something' you place on a small strip of glass, and then all fades away.

"Now I see you again, this time alone, seated at a writing-table, in what I suppose is your study. I see you lift something from the table—oh, it is the slip of glass! You lay a similar slip over it. You gum the edges

together, and then lay it wrapped in cotton wool in a small box. You wrap the box in oil silk (green), now in papers (several), and now you seal it and tie it. This is the box in my hand now. Inside this box is a particle of brain taken from the head of the boy I saw in the hospital. Is this true?

“‘It is, word for word,’ was the answer, ‘as true as the fact that God is in heaven.’”

But Dr. James Lewis did not become a spiritualist; and I mind me of a sentence which says, “Neither will they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead.”

I am speaking strictly of my own clairvoyance and experiences, but shall no doubt be forgiven for giving just a little account of an experience we once had through my little boy.

A few years ago we had a house in the country. It stood by the side of the main road to O——d. On the opposite side was a very large common and wood. The house was extremely old, and to the windows were seats, upon which the little ones would kneel and watch for whatever happened to go by.

One morning Geordie was looking out, and all at once called, "Mamma! mamma! come quickly! There goes a circus, and it is all camels with soldiers on them."

I went to the window, and whilst the child jumped and laughed with delight I could see nothing, neither on common or road. I said, "What do you mean? What do you say you saw?"

He answered, "Look, mamma! they keep going by—soldiers on camels."

I knew by the child's manner he must see something. He was only seven years old, and children are not clever humbugs at that age, and besides we had had several samples before of Geordie's clairvoyance.

A few seconds more a servant came into the room to say there were some men at the back door asking for a drink—what should she give them? As ours was a lonely place, and far from any town or place of refreshment, we made it a rule always to give something to eat or drink to those who asked, but I liked to see them and judge for myself.

I went out and found three men. Two of them were soldiers, and they all looked tired

and worn. I asked them to rest, and stopped to speak. They told me the soldiers had just returned from Egypt, were on leave, and were going home to O——d. And imagine my surprise when they told me they belonged to the Camel Corps.

Now these men had not even passed the house when my boy had his vision. They must have been at least five minutes' walk away. Surely coming events had cast their shadows before them, or past shadows foretold coming events. Which was it? There had been nothing to lead my boy up to this—no conversation or any clue of any kind to lead him on; but I carefully examined these men, and drew from them the fact that they had been telling their fellow-traveller (the civilian) all about it as they walked along.

What did Geordie see? I have often wondered.

My three children all have the clairvoyant gift, and seem to consider it quite a matter of course, though sometimes the youngest gets a bit upset, for she is shy, and when alone she sees strangers from the spirit world she will not speak to them, and often hides her face.

She sees them so frequently now (she is only five years old) that we either have to put her to bed leaving a full light, or some one must remain till she is asleep.

I think it the height of cruelty to put a nervous child to bed, leaving it alone in the dark, with the kind of consoling remark, "Go to sleep, dear, and be a good child; for if you are not good God will not love you, and the big bears or the bogey will have you." If ever I heard such a thing said to a child of mine, there would be a scene in our house, and a loud slamming of the front door soon after.

If people would only think how very near a little child is in its innocent childhood to the spirit world, they would treat their little whims and fancies, and objections to darkness, much more tenderly and patiently than is often the case.

There has recently been a discussion in the columns of a small paper called *The Morning*, on the subject of spiritualism, and there have appeared the usual letters "for and against," amongst them being letters from Maskelyne and Stuart Cumberland, both making, as usual,

ignorant assertions, and laying down the law on a subject such men as these are incapable of even faintly comprehending, their time being chiefly occupied in the business of money making.

A Mr. Harrison also held forth, but what he said is not worth noticing, for he also displayed the most complete ignorance of the question he was supposed to answer, and attempted to hide the drivel of his few remarks by attacking (evidently from some personal cause) Mr. Stead, the much respected Editor of the *Review of Reviews*, who had opened the discussion by giving an account of his own experience as a writing medium.

About this time I was interviewed by a gentleman on the staff of *The Morning*, a total stranger to me. He came with an introduction from Mr. Stead. He had not been many moments in the room, when I saw with him a lady and two little girls. My guide told me that they were his wife and daughters. I told him I saw the spirits with him, but he was so nervous that I thought it best not to pursue the subject. But a few

nights later he, with three other representatives of *The Morning*, came to me, and I gave them a seance.

When the paper closed the discussion, the editor gave it as his opinion that there were no spirits in the matter, unless it was the more or less hysterical spirit of the medium. If that is the case, what is the power that saw with him two spirits giving the names of John and Alfred, said they were his cousins, and whom on earth, he SAID, he recognised both by name and description. What was this hallucination which told me that Madam V——, another of the staff, then present, had suffered from bronchitis for eight years, describing exactly symptoms and experiences which she declared were true, and which hallucination finished by describing and giving the name, age, career, and death of a friend of hers.

Can the editor explain this hallucination more clearly? It would have been better if he had owned up honestly that he did not understand, and could not explain, the facts which were placed before him.

A week ago Miss Marryat called to ask me to see a friend of hers, a well-known singer,

Madam Valda. I called on the lady, but, to my surprise, "Dewdrop" immediately wished to speak, calling Madam Valda her friend. They talked together for nearly two hours. In my life I had never seen the lady before, and my pleasure may be imagined when, on returning to consciousness, Madam Valda told me she had known "Dewdrop" more than ten years ago in America.

Now how about these spirits being only that of the medium? "Dewdrop" has been with me for nearly eighteen years, and until quite recently has been in the habit of telling us she had a medium in Chicago whom she was in the habit of controlling and speaking through, but who had recently passed away.

When I met Madam Valda "Dewdrop" recognised her, and on controlling me her first words were, "Oh, Giulia! don't you remember me?" and at once proceeded to establish her identity by reminding Madame of certain events. I have never been out of England. I know not a single person who could tell any of these things to me. Madam Valda has not consulted any medium for ten years, away from Chicago. Now if "Dewdrop" is not

the spirit she professes to be, and this is entirely self-hallucination, then all that I can say is that it is more wonderful even than the fact that we claim the spirits' return to earth, to all intents and purposes the same as when living here as mortals, the only change being that they have thrown off the physical to assume the spiritual form.

To me, who for thirty years have lived in full knowledge that the world of spirits exists here in our very midst, the sight of these people, invisible though they be to ordinary mortal sight, is as perfectly natural as meeting and conversing with my earth friends.

I never know what it means to feel lonely or alone. How fully I can realize the poet Longfellow's lines, which say, "There are more guests at the table than the hosts invited." And again, "All houses wherein men have dwelt are haunted" is to me so real and true.

I enter a room which, so far as mortals are concerned, is empty ; but there, plain to my clear sight, seated in a chair, standing near a table, or to all appearances looking out of the

window, is the form of one, and very often, more than one form of some supposed lost loved friend of the house.

Often these spirit visitors have no connection whatever with the present occupiers, and many a time I have stood and watched them express every sign of disapproval of their privacy being intruded upon by strangers. At other times I have seen them turn with delight to welcome a dear one, and seen the shadow of disappointment steal across their face when they found themselves neither seen or felt their presence unrecognised.

Some years ago we had a house in the west of London. I do not care to locate it more fully than this for obvious reasons. We had only been living in it a few days when one evening, on going upstairs to my bedroom, I saw a tall man walk out of the back room, cross the landing, and enter mine; the form seemed perfectly materialized, and I heard the footsteps, but at the same time felt certain that it was a spirit man. I followed him quickly, but he had gone before I could get into the room. I turned and ran downstairs, and as I reached the foot of them there was my visitor standing

on the mat outside the drawing-room door. I had a good look at him this time, but he turned on me such a diabolical scowl that I felt faint for a second, and had to hold on tightly by the banisters to support myself, and when I looked up he was gone. Whenever I have a disagreeable experience, as a rule I keep it to myself, and in this case did not mention my ugly friend.

He appeared to me so often now that I always looked out for him in going up and downstairs, but never saw him without feeling faint and ill.

When we had settled down in the house my eldest sister Carrie came on a visit, and so that we might have a good long talk we slept together that night.

The next morning at breakfast I remarked that I felt ill and weak.

"I don't wonder at it," said Carrie, "for I believe this house is haunted. Who lived here before you, I wonder?"

"That I cannot tell you; but I know it was empty for a very long time before we took it. But why do you ask? and why do you think it is haunted?"

"I think it is haunted, because I have seen a ghost," was the reply of my sister.

Now I wish it to be distinctly understood that I had not breathed a word to Carrie of my own experience, and excepting from myself she could not have heard anything.

"I saw a man early this morning in your room. It was just getting light, and you were fast asleep, but I was lying awake, when I became aware of this man's presence. I felt too frightened to move or speak. He stood looking down at you, and you turned over on to your side and moaned quite loudly. Still I could not stir a hand. The man seemed suddenly to draw himself upright, turn away, and walk quickly to the fireplace, place his elbow on the mantelpiece, and then rest his head on his hand. He stood in this attitude for a few seconds only, then slowly turned round with the most fiendish expression on his face and looked at you. You began again to moan and struggle, and your movements seemed to break the spell of fear I was under, and you will remember I woke you, saying you were dreaming, and the figure vanished."

"Oh, yes," I said, "I know you woke me, but I don't remember any dream."

"Well, that is what I saw, and I feel sure this fellow will hurt you somehow," was all my sister then said, but she afterwards begged me to leave the house.

My little girl was eighteen months old in the following autumn, and slept in her cot at my bedside. We had a most devoted nurse, who used to put her to bed and then come down to a little sitting-room, which led out into the hall.

One night I and Sarah had been at work there, and, feeling chilly, I said, "I will go down to the kitchen to have a good warm before the other servant comes in."

Sarah and I being alone in the house, I said—

"Put up the chain of the front door before we go down," and this she did.

We had scarcely got to the foot of the kitchen stairs when we both distinctly heard footsteps walk upstairs. I knew whose they were, and so did the nurse also, for I had told her what I had seen.

We both sat down very frightened, and

with trembling lips I said, "What about baby? I wonder if she is safe?"

Directly I spoke we heard a rustling in the hall overhead—nearer it came, until it reached the kitchen stairs, and then step by step seemed to descend. I don't think I shall ever forget our fright. We stood holding tightly one to the other, speechless with terror, but staring helplessly and hopelessly for something to appear. At last it came. We heard a loud sigh, and there on the floor was my baby. Dear little Mab, eighteen months old, and come down three flights of stairs and a long cold passage. We picked her up, and looking at her, she said, "Man! man! Baby ky!"

Oh! how thankful I was when her father came; but never again could we get Mab to go to bed alone, or in that room. Night and day she cried "Man!" and if she heard a strange man's voice it was always a signal for a scream.

I made enquiries at last, and found the house had been empty for three years before we had it; that some queer people had lived there, and were suspected of being baby farmers, for



there were a lot of little children—two had died and inquests had been held on them, for they had died of starvation. There had been a man and two women, and the man was exactly what I described the spirit as being. We gladly shook the dust of that house off our feet, and have never seen “the man,” since.

“We meet them at the doorway, on the stair,
Along the passages they come and go,
Impalpable impressions in the air,
A sense of something moving to and fro.”

—LONGFELLOW.



CHAPTER XXII.

THROUGH THE DARK VALLEY.

"The spirit world around this world of sense
Floats like an atmosphere."

—LONGFELLOW.

ABOUT three years ago it was found necessary for me to undergo a terrible operation, and my husband declared he would never consent or allow me to submit to it. Most of our friends agreed with him, and I myself preferred death caused by the disease itself (an internal tumour) than to suffer such agony and the risk even of death after all. The doctor we consulted, gave us two months to think the matter over, at the same time warning us of the consequences if I were left even for six months longer.

We had a very dear friend in Birmingham, Dr. A. Baldwin, who, having known me since

I was a young girl, took great interest in my case, came up to London to consult with my husband about me, and he plainly told us how anxious and troubled he was when he remembered how very weak and delicate I had always been, and that if I died under the operation he should never forgive himself for having advised it.

I said, "Had we not better consult the guides? They know exactly and better than we do the state of my health, the complaint, and how long I am to live. I can only die once, but prefer it should be naturally. I have no fear of death, but hate suffering any more."

"Dewdrop" controlled me, and had a long discussion. She declared I should not die, that I should get perfectly well, and the only effect, if any, would be to my nerves and perhaps my memory.

From that instant I lost absolutely all fear. I made my preparations and went off to Birmingham, and on the 14th of April was operated on by Dr. Lawson Tait so successfully, that in three weeks I was removed (in fact I could walk well) from his house to that

of my friend Dr. Baldwin, whose wife nursed me back in all tenderness and love to health and strength, and here I am to-day in better health than for the past twenty years, without any suffering or inconvenience, thanks to clever Dr. Lawson Tait.

But "Dewdrop" was perfectly correct; the splendid memory, which had always been one of my most marked characteristics, has entirely gone. I forget the most trifling matter; I forget my friends' names, and am compelled to make notes of the most every-day occurrences, and cannot now even concentrate my mind on a book which requires careful reading and attention.

These spirit friends have never failed me in all my life. I have tried them and proved them good, and everyone else can do the same if they seek them in an honest, truthful way. There is no danger in spirit communion whatever; at the same time there are some people no more fit to have anything to do with the subject than a baby is fit to play with a red-hot poker! Let weak-minded, excitable people leave the subject alone, or it will prove too much for their poor brains—just the same as

the excited preaching of several well-known enthusiastic ministers, evangelists, and tub-thumpers has turned the brain of many poor creatures who have been unfortunate enough to come under their influence.

We hear often of religious mania, but it is not one spiritualist in ten thousand who develops madness either of a religious, suicidal, or homicidal form. Whilst nearly every day we read in the papers of some poor soul who, under the spell of religious depression, brought about by the fear of God and His vengeance, has committed suicide or murder.

What were the prophets of old but mediums for spirits to communicate with mortals? Are we not distinctly told, in 1 Samuel ix. 9—"For he that is now called a Prophet was beforetime called a Seer"? And that Samuel and the other prophets most certainly lived by the use of their gifts is abundantly shown in the same chapter and the eighth verse—"Behold, I have here at hand the fourth part of a shekel of silver: that will I give to the man of God, to tell us our way."

If it was not dangerous in those days to seek advice from spirits through a medium,

why is it so in these, when vice and abomination in all forms is simply rampant in our midst ? And one's ordinary common-sense plainly shows us that some great revolution is required in all religious matters, to save mankind from utter demoralization.

I am not writing of things which I do not understand, and have no hesitation in openly declaring that the teachings of the churches (in spite of all the horrors they picture of a revengeful God and an everlasting torment) have failed in making our great centres of population any better than the Sodom and Gomorrah of old. And I say that the teachings of the spirits are the only kind which ever can, or will reach to the heart and soul of man and woman.

I assert that the spirits of the so-called dead return to this earth, and when the opportunity is given them they speak to and appear to those whom they have loved and left. The mother returns to her darling little ones, the husband to his wife, and friend to friend. I have seen them ; I see them always ; I speak to them. In spirit and as a seer I have visited their homes, and witnessed their lives in the

spirit world. I have seen them happy and unhappy. I have seen the wicked paying the penalty of their misdeeds on earth, and the weary resting ; the good, happy, and joyous thinking of, and loving and helping, their dear mortals who are grieving over them as lost.

Day after day, during the past twenty-five years, my life has been spent in proving, to all enquirers who have sought me out, the positive fact, that between this mortal life and the immortal there is a bridge by which the two worlds can and do communicate. During all these years I have given, I may say, thousands of proofs that the so-called dead are here in our midst, giving such absolute proof of their identity that the greatest sceptics have been convinced. And there are hundreds of other mediums all over the country doing exactly the same thing, and whose work is quietly but surely making itself felt in all directions, undermining the prejudices and opposition of bigotry, fear, and superstition. My opinion, after all my long experience, is, that those people who most strongly oppose the belief in spirit communion are of the class who have

cause to fear its revelations, and the lucid light the spirits have power to turn on their lives.

The spirit world is a place of truth where all things are known, down to the deepest secret of one's mind.

A short time ago a gentleman called on me with an introduction from a friend. He told me he had heard a great deal about me, and wished to see something for himself, although he had doubts as to whether it was not wrong to hold converse with familiar spirits.

"Not half so wrong as living the life of a hypocrite," was the answer I gave.

"What do you mean?" he asked.

"Exactly what I say."

"But I do not understand your allusion."

"Oh! but you do, and maybe this may be a little help.

"Hester G——n is here; came in with you, and wishes to ask if you have remembered the promise you made her concerning your child and hers. She says you promised to provide for it, to care for it, and what did you do? Paid a sum of money, and have never heard of it since. She says you are to go to

So-and-so, and you will find the child Amy ; put her to school, and behave like a man."

I thought I had killed my visitor.

"For God's sake say no more. Tell her I'll do all she says."

I could not let this man off so easily, and so proceeded to tell him all I saw and heard in connection with him. If ever I met a hypocrite it was this fellow, and I am fairly certain that in future he will have stronger opinions even than heretofore, that it is unwise to hold converse with spirits if one wishes to pose as a saintly person, whilst living a life of infamy.

Twelve months ago I received a letter from a lady, asking permission to call on me. Only a few words, but the paper was strongly charged with the magnetic forces of the writer, and which I very quickly sensed. I held the letter in my usual way when psychometrizing, and this is what I read :

"A woman of irritable, flighty disposition, extravagant and thoughtless, the mother of children, living apart from her husband. She is anxious about a lawsuit affecting herself. Oh, I see, it is divorce, she is as much to

blame as the husband, but is posing as an injured woman! The divorce will not be yet, and I am doubtful about her getting it. No, I will not see her. "So with that I wrote, declining an interview on the ground that I did not care to have anything to do with cases like hers or lawsuits.

Last week the public papers were full of the divorce proceedings of this lady and her husband; the evidence proving me perfectly correct in my reading of the lady's letter twelve months ago.

This is only one out of my many experiences, but as most of my mediumship is exercised for others, and most of these others are strangers, it will be easily seen that I cannot publish much of the wonderful communications which I am receiving, without betraying confidence reposed in me.

CHAPTER XXIII.

A MARVELLOUS STORY OF A RING.

"What will become of me now, wretched lady?
I am the most unhappy woman living."

"Be thou chaste as ice, as pure as snow, thou shalt
not escape calumny."

—SHAKESPEARE.

HOW shall I relate a very wonderful experience which I recently passed through? To many no doubt it will appear strange and incredible; to others, that I have allowed my imagination full sway, unchecked. To each I say that I am relating the *truth* only throughout.

Sitting alone one day, musing, I was suddenly interrupted by the entrance of my little boy, who is known to the readers of *There is no Death* by the name of "dat Geordie," who exclaimed, "Oh, mamma! While I was sitting in the drawing-room I saw a hand come sliding down the banisters."

"A hand, Geordie?" said I.

"Yes, mamma, only a hand—a very white hand—and it had on such a big ring!"

"What was it like, Geordie?"

"Oh, it was such a big ring—a big blue stone, and a lot of little *glass* ones round it." (He meant diamonds.)

I did not recognise this description of a ring as belonging to any of my acquaintances, and after pondering some time as to its meaning, and finding no solution, I dismissed it from my thoughts and memory.

About four months after this we had a visit from Dr. M——, who had been in America. After dinner, among other subjects, I casually mentioned what Geordie had seen. I cannot describe my astonishment when Dr. M—— held out his hand towards me, saying, "Do you think this is the ring?" exhibiting thereon a ring answering exactly to the description given by Geordie.

"Goodness me!" I exclaimed, "it looks exactly like what Geordie saw. I'll call him in. I am much interested now, and we shall hear what he says." I fetched him in at once, and said, "Now, Geordie dear, tell Dr.

M—— all about the hand sliding down the banisters with the big blue ring on it. You remember, do you not?"

"Oh! yes, mamma, I remember quite well." And he told to Dr. M—— the same story he had to myself. The doctor seemed much impressed, and when the child had finished, said, "Would you know the ring again, my lad, if you saw it, do you think?"

"Oh, yes! It was such a nice one."

Thereupon the Doctor handed to the lad three rings, saying, "'T is a very strange story, Geordie. Was the ring you saw anything like either of these?"

Geordie immediately selected one with a sapphire surrounded with diamonds. "It was just like this," said he.

It is needless to say how intensely interested we all were, and we determined to try if possible to find out something further concerning this ring. So when Dr. M—— visited us on the following Sunday, I took the ring into my hands, and tried to psychometrically gain some information respecting it, but in this I failed. This much surprised me, as I have always been enabled to gain some knowledge

both of persons and things by this gift. I, however, placed it on my finger, although it was very large, and held up my hand to keep it on, and presently rested my head on my uplifted hand.

In a very few seconds I passed into a deep trance, or went under control, and what passed then I must relate in my husband's words, as I personally am quite ignorant of the whole thing; for when I am entranced, or, in other words, another individuality takes possession of me, I am quite unconscious of what takes place, or what is spoken through my lips.

As soon as I had passed thoroughly under control of the spirit, who desired to communicate through me, I stood up, and then commenced pacing the room hurriedly, and seemingly in great grief and agitation, several times throwing myself down on my knees before a small table standing in the window recess, and, burying my face in my hands, sobbing violently—my whole frame was shaken with the vehemence of my grief. It was a most trying scene both for the doctor and my husband, and both gentlemen did their best to soothe and quiet the spirit, which soon after

became more calm and composed. My husband then asked the name, and judge of his astonishment to hear—

“My name is Catherine, and I was once Queen of England. *Catherine of Aragon* they called me. This was *my ring*, and inside there is still a piece of my own hair. The ring I gave to my daughter, and by her given to Elizabeth the bastard!”

Here the control became violently agitated once more, and unable to speak for a while; and when she again spoke, it was only to rail against Anne Boleyn, the lady who supplanted her in the affections of Henry VIII., which it appeared preyed greatly on her mind. She however regained calmness, and before she left said that at the back of the ring a motto was engraved. She soon after left us, and I passed from under control; and when the above was related to me I was more astonished than I can express.

We very carefully examined the ring, to find the motto spoken of by Catherine, but found no sign either of hair or motto, but Dr. M—— fancied the front or gold band appeared as though lined or cased.

When he returned to America, he immediately took the mysterious ring to a jeweller, whom he requested to specially examine it, and, if need be, remove the stones, as there was a peculiar interest attached to it. This he carefully performed, and the doctor's surprise and pleasure can only be imagined, not described, when the removal of the stones disclosed at the back a small case, in which was enclosed *a small piece of soft very dark brown hair!* This was an impetus to further search, which brought to light the fact, as before suggested, that the ring was cased. This thin gold casing was removed from the inside, and there was found engraved this motto, on the old band, which, translated, read, "I live, as others live by me." Thus fulfilling the assertions of Catherine of Aragon which she uttered through me.

She has never again visited me, much as I should be pleased to receive her; and although this tale is strange, and may be difficult to believe, yet I vouch for its truth, and can, at any time, refer inquirers to Dr. M——, who would no doubt be happy to answer all queries,

and show this marvellous, and now precious, ring.

And now for the—shall I say sequel? The relating of the above experience reminds me very forcibly of another illustrious and, as I firmly believe, much ill-used lady—the aforementioned Anne Boleyn.

So far back as I can remember my favourite character of English history was this lady, to whom I always felt singularly drawn, and to whom we owe so much, having, by her influence—though short-lived—over Henry VIII., brought about our freedom from the bondage of the Roman Catholic Church; and who, whether merited or not, is to this day most shamefully reviled.

My husband one day, returning from a visit to town, said to me, "I have heard of a book which I think will please you immensely, a new one, by Froude, called *The Divorce of Catherine of Aragon*. It is not yet out, but I have ordered it for you."

I felt much gratified, for I have much pleasure always in reading anything pertaining to history, that of our own country especially.

A few days after this, as I sat sewing, I

quite suddenly heard a voice say (this of course clairaudiently), "What injustice! Will they *never* know the truth? And after all these years the old, shameful lies are retold, and I am called a *harlot*."

I was, of course, rather surprised; but I said, "Who are you? What is this truth of which you speak?"

Can anyone accurately describe my astonishment when the answer came—"I am Anne Boleyn"?

I was amazed, dumbfounded, as may be well imagined; but she continued:

"My trouble is, that *man's injustice* follows me even after centuries have elapsed, and now a book goes forth to the world from the pen of one who never knew me, making my life appear even more hideous than it has already been painted."

She spoke very mournfully, and I need hardly say how very greatly I sympathised with her.

"Tell me what he has said of you, dear lady," said I. "I wish I could give you some comfort, but be assured of my deepest sympathy."

I must now impress on my readers that this book was not yet published. I had not received my promised copy, so was quite ignorant of its contents.

"Said? Why he has laid every vile charge upon my poor soul which man can lay upon a woman. He calls me a *harlot*, a *traitress*, a *wanton*, and finishes with the old charge of incest. To *prove* all his charges, he tells the old story of how all my accomplices in guilt *died without a word of denial or assertion of their innocence*. And his *authority* is that no papers have ever been found in all the State archives, as they would certainly have been, if any statements or confession had been made. So much for Mr. Froude's authority; and now for mine.

"The whole charges were a vile conspiracy. My husband, Henry VIII., had grown weary of me, as he had wearied of many before me, but who, not being his wives, were easily got rid of; but I was his lawful wife, and a good excuse and grave charge would be required, before even Henry could divorce me; and so, with many able and willing assistants, the charges were made, and I, who in my young

life had never known restraint, full of life and energy and gaiety, soon fell an easy victim to the malice of my enemies, and the vile treachery of Henry. So I fell, and with me those brave and true gentlemen, amongst them my own dearly beloved brother, as martyrs to the lusts of a king, and a gang of priests and sycophants. And they—my friends who died—it is said, left no confession behind them. True, for *there was nothing to confess*. But it is false that they left no statement; they *all* left statements of their most *perfect innocence*. *This I positively and solemnly declare*. I, Anne Boleyn, the much maligned wife of Henry VIII.—I, *who know*, thus declare their innocence of the gross charges laid to them and myself. But do you think that Henry and his friends, who had made these accusations, would permit the world to know of their villainy? Not likely! A most minute search was made for any record or letter which would be likely to reach the people, and everything was most carefully destroyed, that Henry might never be accused of having brought about the murder of his wife, and those innocent and noble gentlemen. I have come to tell you

this because you are going to read this book, written by one who knew me not, and because I knew of your sympathy with me."

I could never explain my feelings when I heard this communication. It seemed very singular that it should occur just after this book had been ordered for me, and also after the visit of Catherine of Aragon, her predecessor. Instantly rose to my mind the words of Shakespeare, our grand poet, with which I have headed this chapter, and commenced these my experiences. Truly are we surrounded by unknown and mysterious forces, which, if cultivated and controlled, what might they not give forth?

So much impression it made on me, that I could not erase it from my mind, and last December I related it to Mr. W. T. Stead, who was much interested. Without my knowledge he communicated with Mr. Froude, and that gentleman wrote saying he "was sorry if he had hurt the feelings of a lady"; but declining an offer, which I infer from the tone of his letter Mr. Stead had made, that he (Mr. Froude) should have a seance; on the ground that he would not allow of the inter-

ference of a third party (I conclude this meant myself, as the medium), but that if Anne Boleyn would come to him in his own room *he would be willing—condescending—enough* (italics are my own) to have an interview!

Mr. Stead sent this letter to me, and with it I retired to my own room, and sat mentally wishing Anne would pay me another visit. The spirit came to me, and this is what I heard:

“And so he would see me? Kind. And if I go to him, will he know me? If I stood by his side, would he recognise my face or form? Or, if I spoke, know my voice? Or has he power which will enable me to come? Can he write his books without the medium of pens, ink, and paper? Tell him to give me suitable conditions, and I will come. In the meantime I will give *you* all which after this lapse of time could be recognized—*my autograph.*”

I reached a piece of paper, and through my hand she wrote “Anne Boleyn” several times, and then bade me adieu. This paper I gave to Mr. Stead, and, I regret to say, it has been unfortunately lost; but I have asked

Anne for her signature, which she has kindly given me, saying as she wrote it these words of the great Teacher, "He that is without sin among you, let him cast the first stone at her."

I send out these experiences to my friends, hoping they will interest and instruct, and induce many to investigate the grand and glorious truths our spirit friends will give.

"Concerning spiritual gifts, brethren, I would not have you *ignorant*! Now there are *diversities* of gifts, but the same Spirit. And there are diversities of *operations*, but it is the *same God* who worketh. To one is given *by the Spirit* the word of wisdom; to another the word of knowledge by the same Spirit; to another faith; to another gifts of healing; to another working of miracles; to another prophecy; to another *discerning of spirits* (clairvoyance); to another divers kinds of tongues; to another the interpretation of tongues. But all these from one and the same Spirit." "Behold, I am with you *always*, even unto the end."