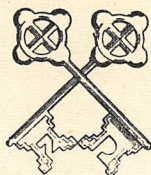


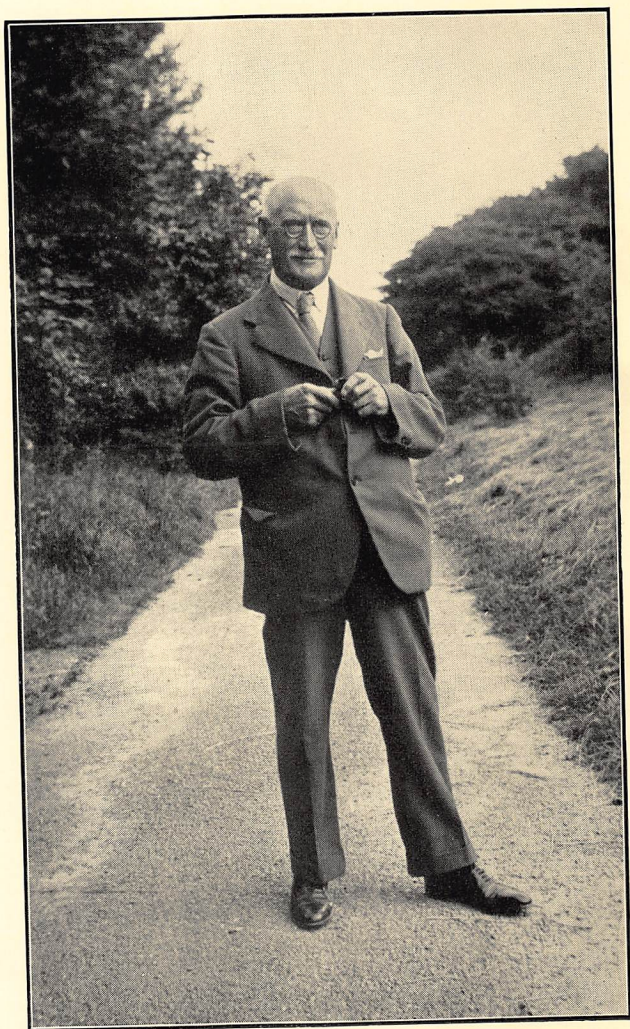
Psychic Experiences  
and  
Memoirs of My Life  
by  
PERCY JOHNSON



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The Author



## PREFACE

*In April, 1933, there came from the hand of Ernest Child Meads a book published by the Unicorn Press entitled THE WHITE LOTUS.*

*This book contained some of the experiences which the Author and I shared during many years of friendship and in the investigation of Spiritualism, but one can easily understand that a period of over thirty years brings with it more than can be told in one book.*

*On several occasions I suggested he should continue the subject in a further book, as there was so much left unsaid that could be told, and he was so well qualified for the task. I feel he would have done so had his life been spared, but he was suddenly called to the Higher Life on the 25th January, 1937.*

*At the time, I felt that a great many incidents that could be helpful to many would be lost, and more than one medium told me to pick up the threads of his life, and to carry on with the work, but in view of my limited experience I thought it might be more than I could accomplish.*

*However, asking for help from the many unseen friends, I took up my pen and wrote a little booklet entitled LOOKING BACK; in which I gave many experiences that I had had with Ernest Meads and which I knew he would have liked to have given to the world had he lived.*

*LOOKING BACK was published in October 1938 by the Hillside Press, and soon after its publication it was suggested by many kind friends that I should put on record my own private spiritual experiences, so now I endeavour to give a brief outline of my life, showing some of the psychic and spiritual events that have come by the wayside.*

P.J.



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## MY EARLY LIFE

If anyone had been walking down London's Piccadilly on the 14th June, 1864, and had stood for a moment at the corner of Sackville Street, he would have heard a child screaming a proclamation of its arrival on this earthly plane. On the next day he might have seen an announcement in *THE TIMES* that at 1, Sackville Street, William and Sarah Johnson had been presented with a son.

I should have liked very much to say here a little about my mother, but am unable to do so, owing to the fact that from the time of my birth she was a confirmed invalid and was only able to leave her bed on very rare occasions. I, being so delicate and frail, had to be left mostly to the care of others, and so I never knew the love and remembrance of an earthly mother, as she passed away on the 3rd July, 1869.

My earliest recollection is of being at a Dame School on Brixton Hill, under the care of a Mrs. Marriot, who was, I believe, the widow of a Wesleyan minister. I remember more clearly the day when my stepmother came to fetch me to the new home at Ulster Place, Regents Park. (I believe the year was that of my father's second marriage, 1870.)

These recollections all belong to a far-away past, and the year 1940 finds me 76 years of age and still able to do a bit of shouting of another kind when the occasion arises!

There is no need to say much about my early boyhood. Being delicate, I contracted more than my share of infantile complaints and fevers, thus causing a lot of interruption to my education. During some terms I was unable to attend school at all, while others were interrupted by



many weeks at home.

To help me to a better state of health, my father sent me to a Wesleyan boarding school at Richmond, and here I had the misfortune to meet a master lacking in self-control and with a great belief in the use of the cane and the boxing of ears.

Three years later, at the age of sixteen, I left school, to face the world ignorant and unnerved, and served for another three years as office boy in an accountant's firm. During this time my health greatly improved and I was able to pick up a little of the education I had lost.

The age of twenty-one found me a private in the 19th Middlesex Volunteer Corps, and an energetic worker in the Sunday School at Hinde Street Wesleyan Chapel, Manchester Square, W.

I look back with no small joy to the influence of a Christian home. My father was a fine personality, born in the strict school of old-fashioned Methodism—a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief—but with all his troubles, which were many, he trusted God to see him through, and He did. He passed away on June 10th, 1889, aged sixty-eight years, loved and honoured by everyone who knew him. During the last day of his earthly life he was heard to repeat the second verse of the hymn “Jesu, Lover of my Soul”:

*Other refuge have I none,  
Hangs my helpless soul on Thee.  
Leave, ah, leave me not alone,  
Still support and comfort me!  
All my trust on Thee is stayed,  
All my help from Thee I bring,  
Cover my defenceless head  
With the Shadow of Thy Wing.*

So falls the curtain on my boyhood. It is only a brief outline, but I feel the intermediate details are not needed, nor are they of much consequence. Those who



might have been kinder to me I forgive, and to those who stood by me in times of misunderstanding I am grateful for their protection and love. If I have failed to thank them in their earthly life, may God bless them in the spiritual life, and remind them of His own words : " Inasmuch as ye have done it to the least of these My brethren, ye have done it unto Me ! "

During the year that my father died, I married a fellow teacher in the Sunday School, Miss Florence Emma Fussell. The ceremony took place in the Hinde Street Wesleyan Chapel, Manchester Square, where we worked side by side for so many years, and the service was conducted by the Reverend John Telford, B.A. The choir, of which we both were members, sang an anthem and led hymns. Mr. Barlow presided at the organ, and with the pealing out of the Wedding March we left the place of prayer we loved so much to start our new life. After our honeymoon, spent in Hastings, we settled down in our new home, No. 33, Lavender Sweep, Battersea, and there my son Leonard was born on the 5th December, 1894.

I have given this short account of my early life, not only for the sake of keeping a record, but also to show the ground-work upon which it was built. The surveyor, when called upon to inspect and give judgment on a structure, must carefully study the foundation before reporting on the edifice. I leave the inspection of my early life to the reader. I know not what his judgment on subsequent events will be : I only ask him to bring to his reading an open mind.

The only psychic experience that I remember during my boyhood is that incident recorded in my book *LOOKING BACK*, when, at the age of nine, I saw a spirit form in Marylebone Burial Ground in Paddington Street. I have not said much about the influence of that incident on my young mind, but at that time my desire lay in the direction of becoming a Wesleyan Minister, and there is little doubt that, with some kindly leading and training, I should have endeavoured to enter the Ministry if the foregoing incident

had not occurred. Seeing a ghost, of course, not only upset the teaching of my Church, but also the Theology taught in those Victorian days, or so it appeared to me.

Nevertheless, I feel deeply indebted to the teachings of Methodism and their influence on me. Later on, my wife and I were members of the Methodist Church for the whole thirty-nine years of our married life, and for a period of three years I was Society Steward at Broomwood Wesleyan Church, Clapham Common.



## “THOUGHT READING” A PASSING STAGE OF MY MEDIUMSHIP

My psychic powers developed in the early years of my married life and came as much of a surprise to myself as to others, as I knew nothing of Spiritualism, nor did I expect to do so, as my teaching had been against it.

At the time of which I am writing, there was a man gaining much notoriety on the music hall stage with a show he called “Thought Reading.” Whilst standing blindfolded on the stage, he would do things suggested by the thoughts of people in the audience, such as finding articles or quoting the page-number of an open book, leaving the method adopted shrouded in mystery. One felt that doubtless there was a trick employed, or a code passed on to him, but whatever it was, his performance gave plenty of scope for conversation in many homes.

Whilst spending the evening with some old friends around their fire, we started a conversation on the subject. We all had been giving our opinions without coming to any definite conclusion, when one of the company thought it would be interesting to try it ourselves, and I was chosen to make the first attempt.

I was shut outside the door whilst those within thought of an article for me to find. On being brought into the room and having given my word that I had not listened or looked through the keyhole, I was blindfolded and turned round three times. The gas being turned low (for what reason I do not know, as it was impossible for me to see anything with my eyes bandaged) complete silence was called for. I am unable to recall now just what was found, but I remember its whereabouts came as clearly to me as



if I had been told, and the result gave great satisfaction to those present. Of course, the first question was "how did I do it?" And I had to say that I did not know.

On another occasion I was again in the house of some friends, but with one or two strangers present, and they suggested I should give them an exhibition of my thought-reading, to which I consented. They also said that if I had no objection they would like it to be a test case, and I readily agreed, as it was quite immaterial to me whether success was achieved or not. It was then decided that I should be locked in a room on the ground floor of the three-storey house, while the company remained in the drawing room on the first floor. After a decision had been come to, I was brought upstairs and once more put through the performance of being blindfolded and turned round three times while the lights were turned low.

I first requested that the door should be opened, as I felt it was shut, my reason being, as I explained to them, that I had a feeling that whatever it was I had to do had nothing to do with that particular room. I also asked for a body-guard to act as guide to enable me to roam the house. I soon felt an inclination to go upstairs, and not being satisfied with the second floor, made for the top one, which was the servants' quarters and in total darkness. In the bedroom of one of the maids I found a pin-cushion, and amongst several pins a bent one, which I felt satisfied was the required article. This I brought downstairs to my host, to the great surprise of all present, for I had succeeded in finding the hidden object. That was all that took place on that occasion, as, for some reason, I felt tired and begged to be excused from any more attempts.

The evening continued with music and recitation, and I think it was while the refreshments were being handed round that one of the strangers present asked me if he could speak to me alone for a moment, so we went down to the hall. "I want to ask you," he said, "how you found that pin?" All I could tell him was that I made myself passive and followed my inclination, at the same



time knowing I was on the right track. "It creates a little fun," I said, "and at the same time causes no harm." "I am not so sure on that point," he remarked; "do you know anything about Spiritualism?" "No, I do not," I replied, "and I have no wish to do so, as I understand it is very wicked."

"Will you take a little advice from me?" he said, "and that is, don't attempt to do this again until you know the laws that govern it."

I never tried it again after that until some years later, when I wanted to give a little amusement at a Christmas Party. I then found the power had gone and finished up by making myself look rather foolish. I have often wondered why such a power should have crossed my pathway, and the only reason that presents itself to me is that it was sent to lift me up out of the narrow groove into which I was getting at that time. I was working long hours in a factory, suffering from the monotonous routine of the job and from lack of fresh air, surrounded by the same people day after day, and with no inclination to read and expand my mind. I can see now that my spiritual faculties had to be aroused—something had to be done to save a wasted life, and so a manifestation of psychic power showed itself like a flash from a lighthouse on the headland of a dangerous coast, showing the mariner which way to steer. But although this caused me much thought, I did not at the time realise its import.

The next few years passed without any spiritual development taking place, to my knowledge. My life consisted of the same factory routine, the same long hours, and returning home tired and worn out. I was very fond of the violin and piano, and my sole recreation at this time was music. I was at times able to join other instrumentalists and attend local concerts at Churches and Chapels in the neighbourhood, also to play at the Crystal Palace Festivals.

At this time I was interested in running a band in connection with a "Pleasant Sunday Afternoon" at Queens



Road Wesleyan Chapel, Battersea. It was at one of these meetings that I was asked to go as organist to a little mission connected with the Chapel. This mission in Broomwood Road, Clapham Common, was only a little iron building then, but developed later into a large Wesleyan Chapel attached to the Clapham Circuit. My post as organist did not last long, but long enough for my wife and myself to make many friends and to become interested in the work. So we settled down and worked side by side for many years, and during that time I was elected Society Steward, a post I held for three years. I look back now on many happy years spent in connection with this place of worship.



## THE ANSWER TO A MOTHER'S PRAYER

An incident happened during my stewardship which again made me think on spiritual things, and I should like to record it here.

My office, as can be easily understood, brought me into touch with all the workings of the Church, and a feeling that too much stress was being laid on the social side was often on my mind. This, of course, is a controversial subject which need not be gone into here, but I often felt that God was not the Personal Presence He should be, also that He was sometimes a long way off, and I think others were of the same opinion.

With thoughts such as these I found the holiday season had arrived. I had had a trying time in business and, with my wife and two children, made my way to Bognor for a fortnight's rest.

The first few days were devoted to the construction of many a wonderful castle, surrounded by trenches and fortifications intended to keep the sea back, but without success, and the castles, like many others built in the air, soon fell to the ground. It is not surprising that after a day or two spent in this way I felt I needed a change, and one bright morning I left my wife to see if she could achieve greater success with the castles than I had been able to do, and went to Portsmouth for a few hours.

For some while I sat on the pier, watching the many activities that may be seen from there, and then made an inspection of the Docks, which impressed me as being worthy of Britain. Having satisfied my curiosity, I went back to the Pier Station to catch the train to Brighton, where I had to change for Bognor.



It was then that the incident that I wish to record happened.

The train was on the move when the door was flung open and a seafaring man, whom I judged to be about fifty years of age, jumped into the carriage.

"That was a narrow shave," he said; "another half-minute and I should have lost the train." After pausing to recover his breath, he turned to me and said: "Some few years ago I caught this very train under very different circumstances." Then, with his face brightening with a smile, he asked me if I would like to hear an old sailor's yarn. Upon hearing that I should be delighted to listen, he began:

"Well, when I caught this train to Brighton some years ago, I was a very different man from what I am to-day, and I doubt very much if you would have cared to occupy the carriage with me, as you are doing now. At that time I was like many another Skipper—a drunken, swearing man, not to mention being a bully and a fighter. You can quite understand that I was not loved by my crew, nor by anyone else. I gloried in being looked upon as a strong devil-don't-care, and anyone who contradicted me soon felt the force of my fist—there was no argument with me. As for feeling and sympathy, I knew not what they were. I cared for no-one and no-one cared for me.

"At the time of which I am speaking, I had just brought a vessel home from India with a valuable cargo. During the greater part of the early voyage I had been drinking very hard, and if it had not been for a most excellent first mate I doubt if I should have been talking to you now. But a time came when we passed Gibraltar and the corner of Spain into the Bay of Biscay. I was sensible enough to know that the most dangerous part of the voyage lay before me, and that soon I should need any skill I possessed to go up the English Channel safely. You may think, Sir, as you stand on the beach of the South Coast and see the vast stretch of sea, that it's all deep water out there, but you are mistaken. In many places, large



stretches of sand come to within a few feet of the surface, and it needs a clear head to find the channels through which you can go. The Goodwin Sands are a nightmare to most of us.

“ It so happened that after a day or two of sobriety and much tea-drinking, we rounded the French Coast and entered the English Channel. I was walking the deck at the time while my mate was on the bridge, and for some unaccountable reason I began to think of my Mother. The thought was not a pleasant one to me, as I had broken the old woman's heart with my reckless life.”

Then, with tears coming into his eyes, he told me that with all his bad qualities, there always lingered with him his love for his Mother. So the thought of her coming to him then brought with it many sad reflections.

“ My thoughts went back to the old home in Brighton and the bedroom in which I slept. I remembered how in that room Mother would take me on her knee and, placing my hands together, would say with me :

*Gentle Jesus, meek and mild,  
Look upon a little child.  
Pity my simplicity,  
Teach me, Lord, to come to Thee.*

Then also came the remembrance of how, after placing her own hands together, she would say : ‘ Oh, God, make Tom a good boy.’ You can understand, Sir, that with thoughts such as these, and the remembrance of the wicked life I had been leading, there came over me a depression almost unbearable.

“ ‘ If I could only make a fresh start and wipe out the past, what would I give !’ I said to myself. So I walked the deck with a feeling more awful than I can describe, and was suddenly aroused from my day-dream by my mate calling from the bridge : ‘ Captain, look !’ and at the same time pointing astern, where I saw a very severe storm coming from the West.



“As I have said before, my cargo was a valuable one, and being in the most dangerous stage of the voyage, I had to make a quick decision, remembering various sandbanks and finally the Goodwins. I felt disinclined to take any unnecessary risks, so went up on the bridge and decided to make for shelter. Calling for more steam, I headed for Southampton, before what I knew was going to be a dreadful storm. Just off the Isle of Wight the storm overtook us, and being unable to enter Southampton, I did the next best thing and got into Portsmouth, experiencing great relief when we dropped anchor in the river.

“Feeling that I had better send a wire to the Owners, informing them of what I had done, I went ashore with that object in view, and told my mate that I should not return that night. This was no surprise to him, as it was my custom when in port to make for the nearest public house, from which I often had to be helped on board again. But on this occasion I had no desire for drink, as the depression I had already experienced still clung to me, together with a feeling that intoxicants would only make matters worse. Strangely enough, a desire came over me, why I cannot say, to see my Mother’s grave in Brighton, so, after going to the Post Office to send my telegram, I made my way to the station and caught this identical 6 o’clock train. I have often wondered why such an impulse came over me, but I have since learned that ‘God moves in a mysterious way His wonders to perform.’

“How well I remember that night! On my arrival in Brighton the storm was at its worst. It rained in torrents, with thunder and lightning—one of the worst nights I have ever known. I knew a small public house close to the station, one I had often used, and there I went. The landlord knew me and was surprised to see me, thinking I was abroad.

“Owing to my wet condition, and excusing myself by saying that I was tired, I asked for a bedroom, to which I was shown. I don’t remember much about the room, apart from the usual large double bed and chest of drawers,



but the things that attracted my attention were an old arm chair and a homely feeling about the place, and I was glad to be alone. I had the opportunity to think without being disturbed, and mostly about my Mother, whose own life had ended in sorrow through my reckless one. I seemed to hear again her gentle voice saying her prayer once more: 'Oh, God, make Tom a good boy.' What would I have given at that moment to wipe out the past! The storm outside was nothing to the storm within myself.

"Sinking on my knees, I knelt down by the old arm-chair. I wanted to pray, but knew not what to say, and then there came to me my Mother's voice: 'Oh, God, make Tom a good boy.' I tried to say something, but no words would come, and placing my hands together I repeated the prayer that Mother had taught me years ago:

*Gentle Jesus, meek and mild,  
Look upon a little child.  
Pity my simplicity,  
Teach me, Lord, to come to Thee.*

"Then, Sir," he said, "a very strange thing happened, which I am afraid you will not believe. While I was saying my simple prayer, a mist came over the back of the old armchair, and in that mist I saw the form of my Mother. 'Oh, Mother,' I cried, 'forgive me!' Then a change seemed to take place, and I saw Christ as plainly as I see you. I know you won't believe it, Sir, but it is true."

"Yes, I do, Tom," I replied.

He remembered no more, he told me, until he found himself lying on the floor beside the chair. The night had passed with the storm, and the sun was just beginning to peep through the blinds. "I little thought then," he said, "that a day was dawning which was to reveal to me a new life. It's hard to describe my feelings just then, but there came to me that peace of God which passeth all understanding, and I felt my burden gone. Like Peter,



who heard a voice from the shore saying 'Follow thou Me,' I likewise got up and followed Him. As the candle I had brought with me had burnt itself out, so my old life was dead and gone.

"After I had ruffled the bed up and washed myself, I crept quietly downstairs and made for the cemetery. I soon found Mother's grave, and kneeling down on the sodden grass, I offered up my first prayer to God, asking for help and strength, and at the same time holding up my hands and saying: 'Mother, by whose grave I stand, thou who hast held my hands in prayer, hold thou my hand in weakness and temptation.' Then, Sir, it might have been a fallen leaf from a tree, but I certainly did feel something touch me.

"I had to make all speed back to Portsmouth to pick up my ship. You should have seen the expressions on the faces of my crew, who were waiting to help me on board and see me safely in my cabin, as was their custom! 'It's alright, mates,' I said, and jumped on the bridge. An hour afterwards, with full steam up, we were making for the open sea and home.

"During all the time of weighing anchor and casting off, not one oath had passed my lips, much to the surprise of all. After we had rounded Selsey Bill and all was clear-sailing for a bit, I went down on deck and shook hands with all my men, expressing my regret that I had been such a bully, and explaining how I had made up my mind, with God's help, to lead a new life. 'Three cheers for the Captain,' someone cried, and, Sir, it *was* a cheer!

"That night we made fast in the London Docks, and the next day brought with it many tasks to be attended to, but the time came when I was free and the crew paid off. The next thing was for me to report to the Owners in the City. They were pleased to see me and trusted the voyage had been a pleasant one, expressing their gratification at my forethought in putting into Portsmouth during the storm. They then asked what I thought about signing on for another voyage.



“ ‘Not at present,’ was my reply.

“ ‘You feel you want a little holiday, Captain? Well, come back soon and we will give you the first vessel going.’

“ So I left the Merchant Service, never to return.

“ Making my way to Trinity Square, I entered the office of the Mission to Deep Sea Fisheries, and told them of my experience in Brighton and of my desire to devote my life to the Master’s service.

“ ‘It’s strange,’ they said, ‘that you should have come here to-day! We want a man like you at once. Would you be prepared to take our Mission Boat to the North Sea in a few hours’ time?’ ‘I am ready at once,’ I replied.

“ So it happened that a space of a few hours found me making for the open sea again. It felt strange having such a small craft in my charge, but I never felt more happy. How often I read that story of the Master asleep on board with His disciples. I felt, as I went down the Thames that time, that He was very near me.

“ I shall never forget that night when we dropped anchor in the midst of the North Sea Fishing Fleet. It was a lovely evening, with a calm sea, and the moon just breaking through the clouds and making its silver pathway far away to the great unknown horizon. I soon put up a signal that we would have a ‘sing-song’ for all those who cared to come aboard, with the object of getting to know those amongst whom I was working. They were on their part anxious to see the new Skipper, so a goodly number arrived and filled our foredeck. The evening was very enjoyable—first one sang, then another. This had been going on for some time, when a request was made that the new Skipper should give a turn. You can imagine that this was something quite out of *my* line! I knew no song, neither could I recite, and the request was quite unexpected, but as they kept on calling, I had to do something. Jumping on an upturned tub, I explained my



dilemma. 'You are asking me to do something I am quite unable to accomplish,' I said, 'but as you insist, how would you like if I were to tell you a tale?'

"And so, Sir, I told them the story I have just told you—The Answer to a Mother's Prayer. As I have said before, I shall never forget that night. Above us was no towering Church spire, neither pealing organ nor surpliced choir, but in the still calm of an open sea with only the sound of the ripple on our bows, two of those fishermen gave their hearts to God. Then the silence was broken by someone starting the Glory Song, with its rousing refrain, 'And that will be Glory for me.' You should have heard it, Sir. I find it hard to describe, but over and over again it rolled out on that starlit sea. My heart was too full to say another word; my thoughts were checked with tears. Lifting up my eyes to Heaven I said: 'Mother, can you hear it?'—and, Sir, I believe she did! As the boats returned to their smacks, again and again to the beat of the oars there rose the refrain 'And that will be Glory for me.'

"Sir, I hope I have not tired you with my sailor's yarn?"

"No, Tom, no! You have done my heart good. God bless you!" And I took his hand.

"It may be, Sir, that you have a Mother who has prayed for you."

"I have never known a Mother's love, Tom," I said. "She died in my infancy, but I do know she was a Christian, and I am sure of one thing—that she would ask God to take care of the boy she was leaving behind. And He has, Tom."

So we parted at Ford Junction.

I thank God that such an experience should have come to me. When the work of an earthly life is ended, when its storms and tumults are over and I enter the Harbour of the Eternal Life, I trust that amongst those whom I have "loved long since and lost awhile" there will be a sailor



named Tom.

That night, when the children were in bed, my wife and I strolled down the Bognor Parade. It was a lovely summer night, and again the moon touched the silver way, filling one's soul with peace.

"You are very quiet to-night," said my wife. "Has your outing tired you?"

"It is not that," I replied, "but I have had an extraordinary experience," and I told the Skipper's story.

That night on Bognor Parade, as we talked together of God's love, stands out as one of the pleasantest in my memory. Years afterwards, I visited the same spot again, but alone. As I sat on the old seat, with my mind wandering back to the past, Tennyson's lovely little poem came to me :

*Break, break, break,  
On thy cold grey stones, O sea!  
And I would that my tongue could utter  
The thoughts that arise in me!*

*O well for the fisherman's boy  
That he shouts with his sister at play.  
O well for the sailor lad,  
That he sings in his boat in the bay!*

*And the stately ships go on  
To their haven under the hill,  
But O for the touch of a vanished hand,  
And the sound of a voice that is still!*

*Break, break, break,  
At the foot of thy crags, O sea!  
But the tender grace of a day that is dead,  
Will never come back to me.*



## A TURNING POINT OF MY LIFE

I must now say something about a man who passed through my life and with whom I became acquainted in a very strange manner.

On a Saturday evening during the summer, I felt tired after a week's work in a stuffy factory, and I strolled with my wife on Clapham Common, seeking rest and fresh air. The sun was about to set, and we sat down on one of the wooden benches to watch the ever-changing colours and glory of the sky. I remember it as one of the most wonderful sunsets I have ever seen.

While we were seated thus, an old man, deformed and crippled, sat down at the other end of our seat. He was not a pleasant spectacle, as apart from his deformity he was very ugly, and by his ragged appearance we took him for a beggar. Whilst I was calling the attention of my wife to some changing beauty in the sky, he turned to us and said how he, too, was enjoying the sunset, making a remark that somewhat startled both of us. He said that "a sunset made him feel nearer to God." I was lost for a reply for the moment, but further conversation followed which revealed the fact that he was an educated man, and, what was more, a Christian. We talked on in the twilight for some time, and my wife was as interested in his conversation as I was. Upon leaving him I offered him a coin, which he kindly refused. This surprised me.

"But surely you are poor," I said.

"Yes, Sir," he replied, "I am very poor. I live mostly on bread and water with a little fruit, which is bought from an allowance sent to me by an old school-fellow."



I learned that his name was Francis and that he was the son of a solicitor. He had had a public school education, too, but his brother, who was his trustee, had robbed him of everything.

"It was the fault of a surgeon that I am crippled as you see me now," he said. "During an operation, something was cut that should not have been. So here I am! The world has treated me badly, but for all that, God has been good." He then went on to tell us that he lived in a garret in a slummy part of Stockwell.

On leaving him, we told him how much we had enjoyed our little chat, and hoped we should meet him again. When he said "good-bye," he took my hand, and looking into my face asked if I was a Spiritualist.

"No!" I replied. "Are you?"

"Yes. I have made it a study for years."

"Then how can you be a Christian?"

"For the simple reason that I cannot be a Christian without it."

"You surprise me," I said, and we passed on our way home, thinking harder than we had done for some time. In fact, it rather disturbed me, and I found myself asking what had Spiritualism to do with religion?

Some time elapsed before I met this man again, as, soon after the incident described, I had the misfortune to lose my employment. But one day whilst I was seeking work, I chanced to be walking down Clapham Park Road, and, casting my eyes down a side street, I saw Francis shuffling along on his crutches. Hurrying towards him, I found him as pleased to see me as I was to meet him, and for a long time we stood talking on the pavement.

We recalled our meeting on Clapham Common, and I told him how I had thought about his remark that the Christian life was helped by Spiritualism, expressing the desire to go a little further into the question. So we stood in that street for an hour, but it was an hour that left its



mark upon me for the rest of my life, for he proved to me that Spiritualism was not the work of the Devil, but the very essence of the Christian life.

Each one of us has some pleasant recollections upon which we look back with joy, occasions when things have occurred to bring us a little nearer the Divine. It may be that some who read this will recall times similar to the occasion I have described. Clouds were hanging thickly over my life, and everything seemed black. I looked up to Heaven to ask "Why?" and no answer came. How often when we think God has forgotten us do we find Him nearer! So it happened that on that morning, standing in the street, the conversation turned on prayer.

"What is prayer, friend?" asked Francis. "Is it some form of words spoken to a Christ Who is far away beyond the sky? What is the blue sky but space that no man can measure! The nearest star is thousands and thousands of miles away, and is it there that we would place our Christ?"

As I write these records, I can still see poor Francis' distorted face light up, and the torn clothes shake with emotion, as, with eyes sparkling, he said: "No, friend, no! I don't want a Christ who has gone and left me in my trouble. I don't want to be told of unlimited space. I want a Christ Who is with me in my garret, One Who will stand by me and listen to my faintest whisper." Then, turning and pointing upwards towards Clapham Church spire, he said: "Is that an emblem pointing to Heaven?" He lowered his voice, and placed his hand on my arm. "The thought, however beautiful to some, is wrong! The Church has yet to find a Christ Who is near us when we pray, One Who will enter a garret as He does mine."

I think that talk with Francis was one of the turning points in my life, and I could not help feeling that he was inspired to give me a message. Out of the clouds of earthly darkness, I turned my face to Him Who said "I am with thee to the end," and understood more fully the



words of the Psalmist : " He is a present Help in the day of trouble."

I saw a good deal of Francis after this. At times we would meet on Clapham Common, at others I would go to his little room, and there, on an old tea-chest turned upside down, we would read and study the Bible together by the light of a candle. I remember that one night the candle burned right away, and being the last one and the hour too late to buy more, I had to leave him, but I took good care that a liberal supply was taken to him next day.

I should like to mention here that a tradesman in the neighbourhood took an interest in poor Francis, and made life a little happier and more comfortable for him. Not only did he surround him with odds and ends of old furniture, but also went to a lot of trouble and expense to find his wife, who had left him, and persuade her to come back. He had two daughters, too. One was never heard of again, but the younger one was located with a Ballet and Chorus Company in Spain. About this time the theatre at which they were performing was burnt out, and as they had lost all their possessions, the British Consul sent them home. So it came to pass that I was able to sit round the fire with Francis, together with his wife and daughter, under happier conditions.

Soon after this I had to leave home; then the Great War commenced, and so I lost sight of them. On making enquiries some time later, I heard that Mrs. Francis had died of consumption in the infirmary, and had passed on whilst holding her husband's hand. So the curtain fell on an interesting friendship, and one that left its mark upon my life.



## HOW MY TRANCE MEDIUMSHIP WAS DEVELOPED

I must now retrace my steps and fill in some details concerning the outcome of this new knowledge that came to me. As can be imagined, it made me somewhat excited. Moreover, I was anxious to tell my brother about it, as there was never much in life that he did not know, and he was always the first to join in my joys and sorrows. So one Saturday evening I went to his home to tell him of the strange events that had happened, and of my discovery concerning Spiritualism. This was no easy matter, as my brother was a far more intellectual man than myself, having been an interested reader of classics and ancient history. Consequently my courage failed me, as I doubted my ability to put a subject like this before him, and I felt he would laugh and tell me not to listen to such nonsense. I tried several times to make a start, but to no avail, and eventually made up my mind to lock my secret away and keep quiet.

By the time supper was over, I had almost forgotten the original intention of my visit, and was somewhat taken by surprise when my brother rose from the table, and placing his hand on my shoulder, said he would like a little talk with me in his private writing room. Wondering what he wished to say, I followed him, and was made rather uneasy when I saw him securely fasten the door. He asked me to be seated, and took a chair beside me. He said he wished to discuss a subject with me, and was not sure how I should react to it. A subject, he said, that had been brought to his notice both by his reading and by his association with men of thought and intellect. The subject, in short, was Spiritualism !



"Why, Bert.!" I exclaimed. "How strange! That is the very subject I myself have been wanting to broach to you all the evening, but have not had the pluck. I have had some strange experiences."

"Not more strange than *I have had*," he replied; "now, Percy, listen to what I have to tell you. For some time past, unknown to you, I have been investigating the subject, and to prove the truth of it I have visited several mediums, who have convinced me beyond a doubt. But the chief thing I wish to say is this—more than one medium whilst under control has spoken of a younger brother of mine who must be brought into the knowledge and truth of Spiritualism. So I want you to come with me and visit a certain Mr. J. Vango."

This seemed all very strange to me, as, to my knowledge, I had never met a medium, and imagined such a person must be most uncanny—one seeming more dead than alive! Imagine my surprise when, in the course of a few days, I was brought face to face with Vango, and found him a man with as much vitality as myself, strong and healthy. This meeting took place on the 28th June, 1907. There were only three people present with Vango—my brother, his wife, and myself.

We sat in a circle with Mr. Vango facing us, and talked in the ordinary way. I was rather silent, as I was wondering what was going to happen, and presently I noticed that Vango appeared to have gone to sleep. After a minute or two, apparently still asleep, he commenced to talk in broken English like a foreigner, and expressed his pleasure at seeing us, shaking hands all round as if we had just come in. I thought this very strange, but soon discovered that Vango had gone, and that an Indian boy or girl was controlling him.

This first experience of sitting with a medium brought quite a new light into my life, and I found it very interesting. The thing by which I was most impressed was an exact description of my Father, who was mentioned as standing by me. The medium not only gave his correct



age, but also said that he had a cataract in one eye and that his death was caused by a sudden chill, which developed into something like pneumonia before the end. He then went on to say that my brother owned a gold watch that had been given him by Father, and told me that the gold signet ring on my finger had belonged to him.

It can be easily understood that I was very much taken aback at this information, as I knew nothing of Spiritualism. My Father then controlled the medium and, turning to me, said how much he liked to hear me play the organ. It so happened that at that time I was playing the American organ at a mission, and I often felt that I should like him to know that I was trying to carry on in his footsteps, so this message confirmed that he did know. A very good description of my Mother was also given, and then the medium said that the present time was a very important period in my life. Instructions were given that I was to sit in a harmonious circle, and that if this were done I should develop into a trance medium and also become clairvoyant.

My brother and his wife had already commenced a family circle, but up to this time no results had been obtained. At this meeting with Vango it was said that I was to be taken into this circle and developed, and although it would delay the progress of the circle for a time, power would come presently.

I find notes to the effect that on July 15th, after some weeks of apparently fruitless sitting, there was a slight movement of the table around which we were placing our hands, and it was noticed that much power was present. This was encouraging, because for months there had been no phenomena, only the feeling that many spirit friends were present in the circle. Another note in my brother's records mentions that I was partially controlled three times on April 14th, 1908, and on this occasion the table tilted and we were able to get our Father's name by calling over the letters of the alphabet. The tilting of the table went on every week after this, with some very interesting evi-



dence, of which records have been kept.

One evening during the autumn of 1908, whilst sitting as usual waiting for the table to tilt, there seemed some delay as the movement we expected did not come, and then I was suddenly seized with what I thought was faintness. I jumped up from my chair, begging to be excused and saying that I felt a little queer, and so the sitting was closed with prayer, in accordance with our usual custom. My brother was anxious to know the cause of my faintness, and the only thing to which I could attribute it was a slight digestive disturbance. I promised to eat more carefully and give better attention to my diet on a Tuesday, the day when we held our circle. As I left the house that night, my brother expressed the hope that I was feeling better, also surprise that I was able to enjoy my supper whilst suffering from an attack of biliousness. I told him I felt better and was very sorry that I had spoilt the sitting. "But I really did feel funny at the time," I said; "it was as if I was falling under the table. I will see it never happens again."

"I should like to suggest," said my brother, "that should such an attack come on again at any time, that you just let yourself faint. You are surrounded by those who will take care of you and give you every attention."

"Don't let it worry you," I replied. "It's not going to happen again. I will watch that!"

The next Tuesday came round again, and after careful preparation I sat with the others round the table. Prayer had been offered, and we were waiting for the table to tilt, when, much to my surprise, the same strange feeling came over me. "Oh, I feel faint," I said, and for a moment or so all went blank. When I opened my eyes again I expected to find myself in someone's arms or on the couch being carefully looked after, but to the contrary, no-one seemed to be taking any notice—in fact, they seemed rather pleased.

I was unable to understand it, and asked what had happened. "Are you alright?" my brother asked.



“ Yes,” I replied, “ I am quite alright.” “ Well,” said my brother, “ our Father has controlled you and spoken through your body. It was only a word or two, but there it is. You have entered into trance mediumship. Let us close the circle with prayer and thanksgiving !”

I am quite unable to describe the feelings I experienced at this time, but I did realise that a great gift had been given to me by God, that it was my responsibility, and that some day it would have to be accounted for. So with these thoughts I started on the road of mediumship, clinging to the Hand of the Master, and trusting Him at all times. As I write these lines, I can look back upon many years of mediumship, during which I found many dangerous places, many obstacles, and had much criticism and doubt thrown at me. And then the words of the Psalmist would come to me : “ I will lift up mine eyes to the hills, from whence cometh my help,” and a still small voice would say : “ As the hills are round about Jerusalem, so am I around those that love Me.”



## MY FIRST THREE GUIDES

During my early mediumship the constant care and frequently the sole control of my Father, came to me as a surprise. For some time he was my keeper, and I was very thankful for this, as it gave me not only an assurance of safety, but added confidence. As in my early years he would often put out a hand whilst I was trying to walk, to steady me and help me over difficult places, so he seemed to be doing now in my early days of mediumship. The thing that surprised me most was the fact that during his earthly life he was the last man who would have entertained the idea of spirit return, having been bred and born in old-fashioned Methodism. There were only two places after death, according to his idea—Heaven and Hell. Heaven was for those who were saved, Hell and everlasting torment for those who were not! Then he also believed, as we all did at that time, that the earthly body rested in the grave until the day of resurrection, and that on that day the trump would sound, the graves open, and our bodies rise to meet their judgment. I have frequently heard him say, whilst standing by the graveside of a friend: "Good-bye, friend, until the Resurrection Day." Knowing what I did, then, of his life, the reader will readily understand how surprised I was to find that he should at once come forward to help me in this new experience, and I again emphasise the great confidence it gave me.

I should like to add here that in after-years I had many spirits come to me who, during the earth life, had absolutely refused to recognise the truth of spirit return. For instance, many a time during a prayer or an address, I



have been controlled by Roman Catholic Priests and Sisters and Mother Superiors of various orders, all of whom during their earthly experience, condemned such a practice, apart from the Catholic doctrine of Intercession. It may be of interest to the reader to know that during the whole of my experience with mediums, and I have known a great many, only once have I met with one who came out of the Catholic faith. The greater number of our finest and most spiritually-minded mediums have come from the Nonconformist Churches with their environment of Methodist meetings and Prayer Circles. If I were to be asked what I considered had done more than anything else to bring Spiritualism to our modern world, I should say without hesitation that it was the simple trusting faith of those who believed in the near presence of the Master and who made many a chapel ring with the strains of "Nearer, my God, to Thee."

The fact that many who were Catholics are so active on the spirit plane rather goes to prove that they are now anxious to help us to spread the Truth of Spirit Communion.

For some two years my Father took sole control of me, and then a strange thing happened.

One of the great interests of my life had been painting and drawing, and whilst my lack of training and instruction has prevented me enjoying the success I might have had, yet my amateur efforts have brought me much pleasure and happiness. I was painting one day in an empty bedroom that we used as a kind of study, and my little daughter, then about five or six years of age, was recovering from a cold in a room below. My wife wanted to go out for a short while, and she asked me to bring my easel down and work in the child's room. This I did, and as she was busy with her toys and doll, there was little need for conversation or attention.

I continued with my painting while she was engrossed with her playthings, and a state of peace and quietness



had reigned for some time when I heard her soft voice coming from the cot and saying : "Daddy ! Daddy !" I looked round and saw that to all appearances she was asleep, so seeing no cause to reply, I remained quiet. After a minute she again called out : "Daddy ! Daddy !"

"Yes, dear," I replied very softly, "is there anything you want?"

"There is a little Indian boy standing behind you."

It is difficult to explain how surprised I was, and did not know for a moment what to reply to her. Consequently, it was no small joy to me to see her open her eyes and continue playing with her toys. I went over to the cot and asked her if she was alright, and whether she had been to sleep, but she informed me she had not, and I was satisfied that she was quite ignorant of what had happened.

I did not know what to make of all this, and after considering the matter for some time, I decided to see a medium whom I knew, living close at hand, and tell him of the incident in the hope that he might throw some light on the subject. That evening I called on him, and had hardly spoken when he suddenly went under control and my Father spoke through him. He said how he had looked after me and had stood by the door of my mediumship. "Now a time has come," he said, "when I must hand over that duty to another whose experience is wider than mine, and one who is more able to guide you in your further development. If I had known more of this Truth in the earth life I might have been able to continue longer, but as things are it is better to stand on one side and learn. The one who is to take my place is a Red Indian named Black Hawk, a lover of the Great White Spirit Whom we know as God ; he is also a man of great magnetic force."

I asked him if the incident of that afternoon had anything to do with what he had just told me. "Yes," he said, "it had ! It was done to draw your attention, and a boy was shown to the child so as not to cause unnecessary fear."



Soon after this, Black Hawk showed himself to me.

He appeared to be a tall man of about 6 feet 4 inches in height, and wearing all his feathered head-gear. He was, as he explained, the chief of a North American tribe. I subsequently executed an impressional painting of him, which now hangs in my brother's house, and I then saw the wisdom of showing my daughter the picture of a Red Indian boy, to save her from being frightened.

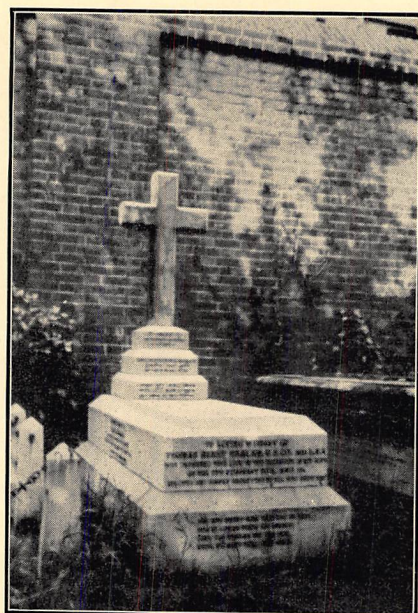
My daughter clearly possessed strong mediumistic power at this time, which I have since discovered is not unusual in a child. I could give many instances of this, but one must suffice.

One day in summer I had just returned home and was standing on a small grass plot in the garden. She was dancing around in a playful manner, and came and told me that Doctor C. had arrived. I was rather surprised, as no Doctor was on the premises, but afterwards traced the Doctor referred to, and learned that previous to his death, which took place a year or two before the incident described, he had practised in a surgery which I had passed on my way home that day. At our next meeting he came to us in great trouble, and confessed that he had failed to give proper attention to a patient in whose will he was interested.

This was only one incident in which her mediumship was displayed, but as she grew up she became nervous, and her clairvoyance left her. Afterwards, her education, and later on the charge of her children, filled her life.

Soon after Black Hawk had taken control of my mediumship, a further development took place. I have already mentioned that Black Hawk had great magnetic force. Now another control came, who spoke at several of our meetings on somewhat medical lines, so much so that my brother asked him if he had been a doctor. He replied "Yes," but at the same time withheld his identity, his explanation being that the time had not yet come for him to reveal it. Many weeks went by, during which time





Dr. Thomas Henry Haslem's grave  
in Brompton Cemetery



we only knew him as " Doctor," but he soon gained our love and confidence.

One day my friend Ernest Meads and myself were strongly impressed to go to Brompton Cemetery, and during that visit I was controlled several times by various spirits. Then, taking my friend's hand, I led him to the northern part of the ground, and there on a side path a very strong control took me. He spoke to my friend and told him that for some time he had watched me and had been interested in my work, and that now the time had come for him to reveal his identity—that of the strange Doctor at our sittings. With this he pointed to a headstone on a grave near which we were standing. The stone told of a Doctor Haslem, M.R.C.S., late of Harley Street, the son of another Doctor Haslem of the same address. We learned that he died quite young, as the result of poisoning contracted at a post mortem operation. The inscription on the stone read as follows :

IN LOVING MEMORY  
OF  
THOMAS HENRY HASLEM, M.R.C.S., L.S.A.,  
WHO DEPARTED THIS LIFE IN THE DISCHARGE  
OF HIS DUTY  
ON THE 27TH FEBRUARY, 1878, AGED 28,  
BELOVED AND DEEPLY REGRETTE BY ALL WHO  
KNEW HIM.

So the two great guiding spirits, Doctor Haslem and Black Hawk, took possession of my mediumship.



## MY PROFESSION PLANNED BY SPIRIT FRIENDS

From this time onwards all my mediumship was under the guidance of either Black Hawk or Doctor Haslem. It was explained to us that Black Hawk administered the magnetic force that kept me in trance, while Dr. Haslem looked after other things, such as medical advice and clairvoyance.

Their method of using me seemed very strange to us, and I have never found an explanation for it. At our own private family sittings on Tuesday evenings, after my brother's prayer for protection, during which I generally went into trance, Black Hawk would come with salutations and kindly wishes, shaking hands all round, and then nothing more was heard from him until the close, when he wished us "Good Night." Dr. Haslem took sole control during the intervening time. But as time went on, and I was able to give private sittings apart from my own family circle, it was Black Hawk who took sole control, and the Doctor was seldom heard unless it was a matter of health. This may be of interest to any reader who has noticed a similar puzzling condition in the lives of other mediums.

I must now go back to the time when Dr. Haslem first took charge of me.

Soon after the new joint control there came a request that fell like a bombshell in our midst. We were told that as Healing would be a special feature of my mediumship, it was essential that I should be protected against the law, and that some certificate must be gained in order that I should not be accused of quackery. To myself and all who knew me the problem seemed insoluble, as I had seen little else than the inside of an office and factory all my life.



With such a lack of knowledge and experience, I felt that I had been brought up against a blank wall, and my thoughts were very occupied in wondering how I was to comply with the Doctor's request.

With this matter upon my mind, I went one day to pay a visit to Vango. He and I had become quite friendly since our first meeting, and I felt I should like to see him. I intended to keep my anxiety to myself, however, being unemployed at the time and unable to afford a fee to consult him. I had no wish to impose upon Vango, whose mediumship was his means of livelihood. Consequently, I was much surprised when, shortly after my arrival, he suddenly went under control and began to rub his arms and legs.

"What are you trying to tell me, friend?," I asked.

"You must learn to do it," replied the control. "Rub!" and without another word he left the medium.

I said nothing to Vango of what had occurred and returned home even more perplexed than before, but praying that if I had sufficient faith, some way out would present itself.

Earlier in these records I have mentioned my interest in Church work, and at the time of which I am writing I was acting as secretary for the Magazine of the Church I attended. On publishing day, which fell a day or two after my visit to Vango, I attended the distributing committee, and was very taken aback when one of my principal workers and best helpers handed in her resignation.

I made every effort to persuade her to reconsider her decision, but she told me that, much as she regretted the fact that she must resign, it was necessary, as she had before her twelve months of very close study. She had entered a Medical School at Charing Cross Hospital to enable her to take a certificate for massage. "You must understand," she said, "that the science of massage is now taken over by the medical profession, and only those who hold a certificate are allowed to practise it. The



examination is a difficult one."

This conversation gave me food for thought, as it seemed to show me a way out of my difficulty, but the prospect of so much concentration and mental effort to one who had had so little opportunity in life was decidedly disturbing. I remembered how ill-health in my youth had robbed me of so much of the education that was needed as a foundation to a course of study such as I contemplated. Then, too, I had to consider the requisite fees, as I was unemployed and my wife and two children required the little money that I had. Nevertheless, if only it could be accomplished, this appeared to be the way to comply with the Doctor's wishes.

Considering every side of the question, I decided that there was only one way open to me—to have a chat with someone who had taken the Massage Certificate and was able to advise me.

Following up this idea, I made due enquiries, and eventually heard of a medium who was a qualified masseuse and in charge of some Medical Baths in Great Portland Street. Wishing to leave no stone unturned, I decided to see her, and one day found myself in a waiting room at the Baths. After a few minutes, someone, whom I supposed to be a nurse, came into the room. She wore white with a white veil, somewhat resembling the habit of a nun, and without waiting for me to introduce myself, she took my hand and said: "We don't mention the subject here. At the top of the street you will find the London School of Massage, and the Principal is a Dr. Fletcher Little." She said good-bye, and left me to be shown out. In view of the fact that we were complete strangers and that during this very brief interview I had not spoken a word, I was naturally overcome with astonishment. I have never met her since and have never discovered how she knew either my identity or my mission.

Deep in thought, I strolled up the street and presently



found myself facing a large brass plate bearing the inscription :

THE LONDON SCHOOL OF MASSAGE.  
PRINCIPAL—DR. FLETCHER LITTLE.

Those who know me best can bear witness to a certain impulsiveness in my nature, which quality probably manifested itself now. Without thinking twice, I knocked at the door, which was opened by Dr. Little himself, who happened to be in the hall at that moment. It is strange how we sometimes meet people to whom we are instantly drawn. This was the case with me on this occasion, and when, after a little chat, the Doctor put his arm through mine and led me into an adjoining class-room, I knew I had found a friend.

So within an hour of seeing my advisor at the Baths, I was seated in the class-room of a medical school with an opened book of anatomy before me ! Had anyone told me when I rose that morning what that day would bring forth, I should not have believed him.

As I had been informed, I found it very hard work. Without any educational advantages on which to rely, the Latin and Greek names presented insuperable difficulties, and I could not see how I was going to manage it. Here was I—a man who had worked in a factory for years and been restricted to the same routine day after day—sitting in a medical school and confronted by a great subject like Anatomy !

As I write these lines, I recall the many occasions on which I used to return home tired out from the Hospital and Classes, and when the whole outlook seemed hopeless, but still I determined to fight to the end. The chief reason for my determination was the fact that my fees had been paid for me, and consequently I felt I must try my hardest, but at the same time I feared the prospect of failure. The fact that I had passed my intermediate examination kept my spirits from failing completely, and I felt that if I could get my "leaving medical school" certificate, it would be all that I could hope for. That was



the very lowest qualification that would enable me to practise, but not of much avail to compete with other people holding higher honours.

At last there came a day, about the Christmas time of my second year, when I entered the class-room as usual after returning from the London Temperance Hospital, where I had to attend four hours a day as a working student, and received a surprise almost amounting to a shock. It was caused by Dr. Little coming towards me at the close of the lecture and placing his hand on my own, whilst he said: "I want you to sit for your L.S.M. (London School of Massage) next Easter." This was the highest examination at that time and recognised by the Royal College of Surgeons. Dr. Little gave me no time to dispute his decision, but walked away, saying it was settled.

I think the intervening time before Easter was the most trying period I have known. I isolated myself from all society in order to face the hardest task of my life. The time flew only too fast, and in the first week of March, 1912, I sat down, feeling a mass of nerves and thoroughly out of place, with many others from various parts of the country, to face the L.S.M. examination, which lasted for five and a half days.

The marks were read out every night, to enable those who had failed to fall out of the ranks and return home. The subject for the first two days was Anatomy, for which, to my surprise, I obtained highest marks. The third day was Physiology, for which I once more came top, and the fourth day Electrical Treatment, when again I got through. I pulled through again on the fifth day, when we were examined in Deformities and Injuries with diagnoses; and the Nursing Examination, which came on the last half-day, I found easy, and finished my course with honours.

On the 12th March, 1912, I received my Diploma, marked by Dr. Fletcher Little "Highly Satisfactory," and at the present time it hangs on my wall to remind me of one of the hardest battles of my life, but one in which I know Dr. Haslem played a big part—if not the greater part!



## A MOTHER'S GREAT FAITH REWARDED

It is difficult to describe my feelings when I visited the School the next morning to collect my belongings and say "good-bye" to many friends. I hoped to be able to keep in touch with some of the people with whom I had formed friendships, but while a few remained in London, several went out to the Colonies, and many settled in America, where massage was in more general use and appreciated more than it was in England. So in time they all vanished.

The thing that stands out in my memory before anything else was my interview with Dr. Fletcher Little. As I write, I can see him now, with his white hair and kindly smile, coming forward and placing one hand on my shoulder whilst he shook mine with the other. "Good-bye, Johnson," he said, "I wish you every success, and if at any time you would like to come to me in any perplexity, remember that my door is always open to you. I must say I am pleased that you came through the examination in the way you did, because I know it was a great strain on you." He again wished me good-bye, and so I left a man whose memory I cherish to this day—one full of sympathy and kindness. If only I had met with such a teacher in my school-days, what a difference it would have made in my life! Some three years later I followed Dr. Little's body into Golders Green Crematorium, and saw the iron doors close on one of my best friends and one to whom I owed much.

With my new mode of life came many perplexities. First of all, the Medical Profession made me sign an agreement to the effect that I would not work without the sanction of a doctor. There were also so many various



restrictions placed upon me, and my hands tied to such an extent, that my healing powers were severely handicapped. This left me to solve the puzzle of how to find work and give full vent to my mediumship. Needless to say, I have at times been in trouble with doctors, been told to mind my own business, and once threatened with breach of contract and disqualification, but at the time of writing, over twenty years later, I still hold my certificate, and hope to do so until the end.

I now wish to say something about my first case, which gave me some amusement and an insight that I never expected into Journalism.

The case was a man who had been secretary to a Bishop and had retired. On entering his study, I saw the bookshelves full of Continental Guides, time-tables, and prospectuses of hotels, mostly of Switzerland, but also of other countries, including Norway and Sweden. On one occasion I made the remark that I could see he had been a great traveller. "What makes you think so?" he said. "Why," I replied, "the many continental guide-books that you have in your study show me that you have travelled a lot and have been amongst most beautiful scenery." "That is not so," he said. "It may surprise you to learn that I have never been out of England in my life. But I have added to my income by writing for magazines, and working up holiday trips as if I were a great traveller. I plan a route, giving times of trains and fares, and also hotels at which to stay, together with the cost per day. Then I give a description of the scenery, which knowledge I obtain in various ways, and add to it a little imagination. In this way I increase my income."

This information amused me, and the reader may be interested to learn that I heard later that the writer and his articles met their end owing to a fall from a train whilst it was in motion.

At this time I was getting a few minor cases, but one which I found very interesting and helpful is worth



recording.

One Saturday, when I returned home for lunch, my wife informed me that a man had called. He seemed anxious to see me, and left word that he would call again, which he did before long. He wanted me to go and see his little daughter at his home, about a mile away, and I naturally enquired what the trouble was.

"I know, from what I have been told by a friend, that you are a Spiritualist," he said, "so, if you will excuse me, I would prefer that your guides advised me, without saying anything more myself. My wife would like you to come and have a cup of tea with us, if convenient to you, when you can see the child and give us some advice."

At the appointed time I arrived at his house, and had a very kindly welcome from the wife. As tea was awaiting me, I just made a few casual remarks about the weather and other trivialities, and sat down. I noticed that no reference was made to the case all through the meal, but at the close my host rang a bell, and a maid came into the room, holding by the hand a small child of about five years of age.

I saw immediately what the trouble was—a very bad case of adenoids, which I explained to the parents after the child had left us, at the same time expressing my regret that I was unable to do anything to help, it being a case for a surgical operation. Since the time of which I write, other methods of dealing with adenoids have been discovered, but at that time the only cure was by an operation.

"But can't you do anything? Surely there is *something* you can do!" they said.

"No," I replied, "I'm sorry, because I quite understand how anxious you must be. I should feel the same in your position, but there is only one cure for adenoids—they must be cut away."

I gave them some details of the operation in question,



telling them that it was a daily occurrence in a hospital and that fatal cases were very rare. Having nothing more to say, I prepared to leave, when my host and hostess asked me not to go until I had seen their garden. After I had walked round and admired their flowers, they again asked me if there was anything I could do, and once more I had to tell them how helpless I was to deal with such a case, and that if there had been any other remedy, nothing would have prevented me using it.

I knew that no useful purpose could be served by prolonging the interview, so again I wished them good-bye and picked up my hat with a view to leaving, but whilst passing along their hall to the front door, I was taken by the arm and drawn into their front room. They closed the door, and then my host said: "Mr. Johnson, may we enquire what is your religion, or should I say, to which sect you belong?" "I am a Wesleyan," I replied. "We are Roman Catholics, so it seems we are the two extremes, but we both kneel to God in prayer, and does it matter *how* we commune with Him?" "Not in the least," I said. "Then we take it that you believe in prayer, whatever the creed or denomination may be?" "Most certainly I do!"

"Well then," said the mother, placing her hand on my arm, "I have no doubt in the efficacy of our prayers if we ask God to help us in our desire to relieve our child. With that thought in my mind, I ask you to massage my child three times, and ask your earnest prayer on her behalf."

After considering the matter for a few moments, I agreed. "The treatment," I said, "will certainly be of benefit to her and strengthen her for any strain she will have to undergo in the event of an operation. At the same time, I am taking upon myself a great responsibility, because, apparently you are expecting a miracle to happen, and should I fail, your faith will be injured."

"There will be no failure, Mr. Johnson," she said. "God is a living personality to me, One Who is near, and



a Friend Who has promised to help all who trust in Him at times of need and trouble. And I do trust! Mr. Johnson, will you come in His Name and help me?"

"Yes," I replied, "I will come."

If I were asked to describe my feelings as I left that home, it would be difficult. Are there not times in the lives of all of us when the inner feelings and aspirations of our souls are beyond all explanation or expression? Like Samuel of old, I heard a voice calling me to service and I answered: "Speak, Lord, for Thy servant heareth!"

The first massage treatment took place the next morning, with no result, and a second occasion also appeared to be fruitless. I expressed the hope that the mother's faith would not be shaken if I had no success.

"Oh, Mr. Johnson," she cried, "where is your faith? I know that my Redeemer liveth!"

It was with very mixed feelings that I stood upon the doorstep of that house on the occasion of my third visit. Upon entering, I was informed that there was no alteration in the child's condition. How that morning stands out in my memory! I see again the dimly-lit room with the blinds drawn, the child lying with closed eyes, and the mother placing her crucifix upon the child's breast before kneeling in prayer. A coldness came over me as I placed my hands on the child's body to begin the treatment. Presently the silence was broken by the mother's voice: "See, Mr. Johnson, my prayer is answered!" Running from the child's nostrils and over the cheek, was a yellow mattery substance tinged with blood. What I discovered later to be a very rare occurrence had happened—the adenoids had burst!

It was no time for conversation—my mind and heart were too full—so I left without a word.

Later in the day I called to see how the child was. "Come," said the mother, and she led me into the garden. There, dancing on the lawn and perfectly happy, was my little patient. Upon examination, I found the air



passages free, and feeling there was nothing else for me to do, recommended a visit to the sea, which advice was taken.

Years later, as I write these records, my little patient is the mother of two children, after a brilliant career at school and some years as clerk in an Insurance Office.



## MANIFESTATIONS IN A MIDLAND VILLAGE

For some time I had been listening to much concerning the haunted condition of our villages and countryside, and whilst I did not doubt that many of these ghost stories, as told by the village folk, had been exaggerated by the simple and uneducated, I felt that some of them were not without foundation. At that time, although interested in what I was told, I had no desire to delve into this aspect of Spiritualism. I suppose the real reason was that I had very little knowledge or experience of village life, as my holidays were always spent at some large seaside town. The beauty of those more remote spots appealed to the artistic side of my nature, but apart from that, I regarded them as dull, lonely and quiet, until the day came when I was to make a professional visit to a country village.

Whilst I was a student at the School of Massage, a doctor in Wimpole Street obtained my name with a recommendation from Dr. Little, and asked me to go to a Midland village to give a five-weeks' course of treatment to the Rector. So I arrived in a very lovely little village of some three hundred inhabitants. It was three miles away from a station, with one shop, which acted as post office and general store, and a few cottages clustered around the village green, at the end of which was the church.

I discovered that some of the stories I had heard concerning the haunted condition of villages were perfectly true, and the Rector, whom I found to be a most lovable and sympathetic man, was interested in Spiritualism. This enabled me to confide in him and tell my experiences. During my visit he made notes of what I told him, and has since kindly written a few for me to reproduce in this book. I wish he had supplied more, but old-age and failing sight



(he is almost blind) have made it difficult for him. This is his report, written years later.

“ Mr. Percy Johnson, who came to give me a course of massage on two occasions, in 1911 and 1912, and stayed in my village whilst doing so, has asked me to give some account of the remarkable experiences he had whilst there.

“ I was at that time Rector of a Midland Parish, and it may be well to state that I had had no previous experience of spirit manifestation, and merely relate what he told me. For obvious reasons I withhold all names, my own and others.

“ Mr. Johnson related to me a very large number of spiritual manifestations which he saw whilst he was with me in my village—so many that I can only give a few of them. He told me he saw at least fifty or sixty spirits at a Harvest Festival on Sunday, October 15th, 1911, while I was preaching in the pulpit. He also saw behind me a clergyman whose appearance exactly answered to that of a former incumbent, and who was clearly encouraging me in my work. He was seen more than once, and as described was at once recognised by those who had known him in life. I had never seen him. On another occasion, during my nightly massage treatment, Johnson described an old man with a muffler round his throat, a short stout figure with Roman nose, whom I recognised as my father. Later he described a grave near a church porch, and inside a church a brass tablet to my father's memory, also an organ in a church similar to that in which my father ministered, all known to me, but which Johnson had never seen.

“ A former incumbent of this village was correctly described; also the son of another Rector, earlier still, was seen in the uniform of a midshipman, in the upper part of the Rectory, where he was known to have died young of consumption. At another time, an elderly lady was seen in the church, sitting in the choir with a book, which had some connection with myself, in her hand. I recognised her as a lady who had taught in the Sunday School



for years, and the book was one given to me after her death, just before Johnson's last visit to me.

"A man had committed suicide in the village, of which Johnson knew nothing, but on walking down the village street after his arrival, Johnson passed by the village public house, and saw a man with head and hair dripping wet, and a look of despair on his face. The man had drowned himself in a tub of water, and the inquest was held at the public house mentioned above. Johnson also saw him in the church during a service.

"One morning during my early massage, Johnson described a man who had been in the Navy, of fine big appearance and who used to limp. He also saw the medals he wore, for he had taken part in the Chinese War, and he gave the name of his ship as *Albatross*. In private life he had one big trouble. He lived a straight life with not much to regret, and was fond of a special dog. This all referred clearly to my grandfather, an old sea captain.

"Towards the end of his stay with me, Johnson saw many spirits gathered around his bed (he slept in a room next to the Churchyard), and at the last service at which he was present in the church, there was a large number, including an elderly figure of a sacred character, lifting his hands in a blessing as a closing mission among them.

"These are only a few instances of all the manifestations of which Mr. Johnson told me, but sufficient to prove the interesting experiences we had when he was with me. I am an old man, and I write with difficulty, or I would add much more, but have said enough, I think, to prove the reality of the Unseen World to which we shall all soon pass."

#### THE RECTOR OF A MIDLAND PARISH.

As the Rector has said, these are only a few of the manifestations, and I know that many interesting facts have been omitted, perhaps because the notes have been lost, but more probably because he felt the strain of writing to be too much for him. Whatever the reason may



be, I know it has been an effort, prompted by love and enthusiasm. As I write these words, my thoughts go back to the old village church with its ivy-covered walls, and again I seem to hear the bells calling the people to prayer. But more distinctly stands out the figure of the Rector with his white hair, standing in the pulpit with outstretched hands, saying: "Come to Me all ye that are weary, and I will give you rest!" That voice is silent now, but its echo still rolls on, and who can tell its limits? Ring on, oh village bells, over the graves of many who were sad and weary! Remind us once again of the hour of prayer, and that "unto us is born in the City of David a Saviour Who is Christ the Lord."

During my absence from home, I tried to furnish my brother with details of the phenomena that were taking place. It appears that, unknown to me, he kept this correspondence, and has now handed it back to assist me to compile these records. These letters not only confirm the Rector's report but bring to light further details that I had forgotten.

I quote from some of my letters to my brother :

OCTOBER 1ST, 1911.

As I told you, this is a lovely spot, and very old. The cottages are most interesting, and, from the point of view of a painter, perfection. It would be hard to find any spot that could not tell a tale of long ago. Generations have come and gone, and as I walk about, many strange pictures present themselves.

The old church looks down on a village fast going to decay, and the history of the church has long been lost. Some of the stones date back to 1700, and others have decayed and gone. The Rector tells me that often, when they dig a new grave, they find they have opened an old one. You will understand that from a church like this I feel a mighty influence. The Rector has promised to show me all the records that he has, so I shall be able to



tell you more at some other time.

A strange thing has happened, of which I must tell you. I have taken very great care not to say a word to the Rector about the subject so dear to us; yet, strange to say, the first sermon this morning had "Life after Death" as its subject. He pointed out how our friends come back to work and help, and that if our eyes were only opened we should see them close to us, and so on. It showed me how he had been reading on the same lines as we have, and that he is a believer in spirit return. Another strange thing is that he has sent me an invitation to supper for to-night, after church, so it looks as if the friends have some work for me to do.

OCTOBER 8TH, 1911.

Whilst attending service at South X. Church, the spirit form of an old man was seen standing in the chancel close to the Rev. B., and seemed to be taking great interest in the service. I took a careful note of the description, and then saw a tomb-stone rather worn and old. This I felt had to do with the spirit form of the old man.

The next day I placed the matter before the Rector, giving him full description of the form, which turned out to be correct and without doubt that of the former Rector of the Parish. I then spoke to him about the tomb-stone I had seen, and, whilst talking, I saw the place and position in which the grave stood, and also the kind of tree which grew by it. This turned out correct in every detail, being the grave of the old Rector. Later on, the Rev. B. took me to see it.

OCTOBER 9TH, 1911.

During the night I awoke to find the spirit form of a young man, a soldier in a red coat, standing at the foot of my bed. He pointed in the direction of the churchyard and went away. The Rector was always anxious, when I went to give him treatment in the morning, to know what my experiences had been during the previous night. So



I told him of having seen this soldier, as I had done in other cases.

"What was the description of this soldier?" asked the Rector. "I don't know of any military connections with this village!"

"He was a smart, fever-stricken sort of chap," I replied.

"A *what*?" asked the Rector.

"A smart, fever-stricken sort of chap," I said again.

This time the Rector started to roar with laughter. "Well," he said, "I never heard of a man being smart and fever-stricken before." Not being able to see the joke myself, I said that was what he was—a smart, fever-stricken sort of chap.

"Well, we will leave it at that," said the Rector, "but it's the most funny description I have ever heard. How a man can be fever-stricken and smart I cannot imagine."

I was very pleased to let the matter drop, and turned the conversation into other channels, as I did not see the cause for laughter.

When I went in the evening to give my usual treatment, I found the Rector standing with a thick parchment book under his arm. "I have something to show you," he said, producing the Burial Register. "Being somewhat amused this morning at your description of a 'smart, fever-stricken sort of chap,' I turned up this register to see what it might lead to. Read this!" And he pointed to an entry:

SMART. LATE OF . . . . REGIMENT.

CAUSE OF DEATH—FEVER CONTRACTED ON

FOREIGN SERVICE IN INDIA.

Then followed the number of the grave.

We went together to try to find his grave, which dated



back about thirty years. There being no stone and the number gone, we could only guess its possible location, over which the Benediction was pronounced.

OCTOBER 22ND, 1911.

I feel I must write and tell you that the Rector's wife sent for me to-night and said she felt she wanted to tell me how very pleased she was at the way her husband had improved under my treatment, and how much brighter he was. I thanked her for her kind remarks and told her I had done my best, to which she replied that the case did me great credit.

Now, you know as well as I do that it is not I, but the good friends who have stood by me unseen, and also the prayers on my behalf that I have so often felt from all at home. I think this should be the means of giving us all strength and a greater faith, and as you will not be at home when I return, let me thank you and all at home for the way you have helped me in a lonely struggle.

I will now tell you what has happened nearly every night. Soon after I get into bed I hear three loud raps under the bed, then holding in my hand the cross (which I always carry), I await results. Soon I see blue lights in a corner of the room, then one after another the spirit people show themselves. Some of the faces I have got to know, others have shown me the gravestones in the churchyard, and I have found them that way. In one case I was shown a tree, which I found afterwards in the churchyard over a stone that was worn out with age. I find that in the morning I cannot remember much of what has taken place—one or two things remain faintly.

Mrs. M. (my landlady) tells me I talk in my sleep and sometimes wake them up. On one occasion they heard someone walk about downstairs, and they all got up to look.

The second night I was here I went into the back room to have a talk with Mrs. M.'s father, a very fine old



man. As I sat down in an old arm-chair, I found a very strong power around me, which made me shiver from head to foot. To pass the event off without notice, I remarked what a comfortable chair it was. Mrs. M. then told me that the chair had a history and that her grandfather was found dead in it, sitting just as I was at that moment. You can fancy I went to bed feeling rather cold!

SEPTEMBER 16TH, 1912.

Spent nearly all the morning taking photographs with Mr. B. One broken-down old house, or part of a house, very much took my fancy, thinking it would work into some painting I might do at some future time. So at my request we photographed this old place. During the night I saw in my room a tombstone of rather strange shape. The next morning I told Mr. B., but he knew nothing of such a stone in the churchyard, so the matter was forgotten.

On Thursday I went to the church alone for private prayer, and for some reason I cannot explain, I started to walk amongst the graves. I came to a large bush and found that it covered a stone. In pulling the bush to one side to see the name, I at once recognised the stone—it was the same as the one I saw in my bedroom. The name on the stone was William Pearson. I entered the church and knelt down, not forgetting my new friend, William Pearson.

In the evening I told Mr. B., who said that William Pearson was an old Rector. "He was very fond of astronomy," he said, "and built that place you were so anxious to photograph. Miss Clarke was a great chum of his, and the Clarkes lived in the cottage in which you are staying." I learned that I knelt in the church just under a brass plate to his memory, without knowing it.

SEPTEMBER, 1912.

After attending the Rector, I went for my morning walk. Leaving the village, I made for the hills, and after



about a mile I came to the level crossing, where I stopped just to pass the time of day with the man in charge of the gate. Then, mounting the hill, I enjoyed a good view of the surrounding country and returned home to dinner, having only met the man at the level crossing. In the evening I told Mr. B. about my enjoyable but lonely walk.

During the night, I found a young girl standing by my bed. She was about sixteen to twenty years of age, but her description does not matter. I got the name of Clarke. In the morning I told the Rector what had happened and gave him all details. After a little thinking, he asked me if I knew the name of the man at the level crossing, to which I replied: "No, I know nothing about him." Then he said: "You may be surprised to learn that his name is Clarke." At Mr. B.'s request, I am leaving the matter in his hands to investigate.

*Two letters from the Rev. B. to my brother.*

NOVEMBER, 1913.

Dear Mr. Johnson,

I was very much interested and pleased to receive the contents of your letter. The message of "May," or, more correctly, "Sarah Anne," was perfectly clear and merely confirmed my own opinion at the time. Your brother had already received something similar at South X., although not so definite or personal to myself.

I am glad to have had this message, and hope she may have found the forgiveness she sought, which, so far as I am concerned, she may certainly have.

Dr. Pearson's message was extremely interesting and encouraging as well. Your brother, on his last Sunday at South X., saw an appearance in the church, which I was certain related to him, and this proves it.

You are welcome to see the notes of what your brother has told me from time to time—though they are only more or less in the rough. They are certainly very



remarkable, and as nothing of that nature has come my way before (though I had always believed in such a possibility), they are the more interesting.

Thanking you for your convincing letter,  
I am, etc.

DECEMBER, 1913.

Dear Mr. Johnson,

Thank you very much for your letter and communication and the trouble you have taken. The last communication regarding Mrs. G. is a very interesting one—knowing all the circumstances as I do; she died about the time I wrote to you last, and every particular is correct. Your brother had tried his battery on her fingers when he was here. One would like to repeat the message to her husband, but I fear it would not be understood. Her remark, or rather the medium's remark, that she comes from a place of great ignorance on the spiritual plane, hits the nail on the head—which none know better than I.

The whole series of manifestations during the last three years has been very wonderful and extraordinary. As you say, the part played by the human agency is a puzzling problem and the most difficult part to understand. If you have anything further relating to South X. that is worth recording, I hope you will let me know.

Thanking you for the trouble you have taken,  
Believe me, etc.

And now, before I close this chapter, I should like to relate an incident which, although very amusing, will not, I am afraid, stand much to my credit as a medium.

It happened one Saturday night. Having finished giving my treatment to the Rector, and left him settled for the night, I wished him God's blessing as was my custom, and asked if there was anything I could do for him.

"Thank you, Johnson," he said; "now you mention it, there is something I want, and I cannot very well



ask the maids. Would you mind fetching me a book I left by accident on the vestry table after prayers this morning? They have not brought me the keys yet, so you will find the church open. You don't mind, do you?" "Certainly not," I replied.

I must explain here that to get to the church from the Rectory it was necessary to cross the garden lawn, which was a large one, go through a small door at the further end leading into the churchyard, and to follow a narrow path amongst the tombstones, which led to another small door opening into the chancel of the church.

On this particular night it was very dark, with the wind blowing up for coming rain. Those who have been in the country on such nights will appreciate the difficulty that one who was used to the lights of London streets would have in trying to find his way into a dark churchyard. My first obstacle proved to be a croquet hoop that had been left on the lawn. It not only threw me down, but upset my calculations for finding the Vicar's door, as it was called, in the side wall, and I found myself thinking lovingly of Oxford Street or Piccadilly, and comparing them very favourably with the beauties and quietness of the country! After trampling over sundry flower beds, it was no small joy to me to find the door I was seeking. This I opened, and found myself under a yew tree, the leaves of which were dripping with dew and rustling in the wind. I noticed a little trembling in my legs, and fearing that my clairvoyant faculties might come too forcibly into action, I kept my eyes half closed. With my will-power asserted to the utmost, I went on step by step, realising the path was much longer than I had thought.

I eventually reached the sanctuary door, where an unlucky incident occurred. The latch of the door was of the old-fashioned variety, frequently found in churches, consisting of a large iron ring, which when turned lifted the latch. This particular one was rusty with age and exposure to the weather, and sadly needed oiling. I grasped the ring, eager to enter the church and escape from



the churchyard, when there came a most unearthly squeak, followed by a bang as the latch struck the top bar. I make no excuse for my lack of courage, but the squeak and bang, combined with the rustling leaves and dark stillness of the churchyard, caused me to lose my nerve. I did not pause to reason it out, but ran for my life to get back, stumbling over mounds and colliding with head-stones in an attempt to find the door through which I had come. Whilst doing so, I took an unlucky step on the mound of a newly made grave, lost my balance and came down on a jam-jar full of water, which overturned, leaving me sitting in a pool of very liquid mud, the discomfort of which was not mitigated by the thin trousers I was wearing.

A few minutes later, much to my relief, I again found myself on the lawn of the Rectory, wiping the perspiration, which, unlike that of Longfellow's Blacksmith, was not caused by honest toil, from my brow. Two thoughts were uppermost in my mind, firstly that I had not got the book I went to fetch, and secondly that my reputation as a Spiritualist would suffer if this incident became known. Whilst dwelling on these things, I saw a light in the kitchen window of the Rectory, and it occurred to me that that was what I needed. Why had I not thought of it before? I made for the kitchen entrance and the cook answered my gentle rap with surprise.

"Is that you, Mr. Johnson," she said; "what are you doing here?"

"I came to ask you if you could lend me a light, as the Rector has asked me to fetch a book he has left on the vestry table."

"Certainly," she replied, and asked me in, and the housemaid, entering behind me, caught sight of the unhappy condition I was in.

"Whatever is the matter, Mr. Johnson? You are dripping with mud at the back!"

"Oh," I said, going very red, "I had a little slip coming up the path."



"But there is no mud on the path! It is of concrete."

"Well, it is of no consequence. I will wipe it off when I get back. All I want is a lamp."

"But I must wipe *some* of it off, Mr. Johnson," she said. "You can't go about like that. I'll get a cloth and wipe you down."

This she did, and in the process raised my coat.

"Whatever have you here?" she said, and extracted from beneath my coat a bunch of flowers bearing a label "to darling Mother!"

By this time I was surrounded by the servants, to whom, amid peals of laughter, I had to confess what I had been doing. The gardener, who was fetching fuel for the greenhouse, kindly offered to go for the book, and at my request sent it up to the Rector as coming from me.

So I returned to my lodgings, feeling very thankful and somewhat ashamed of my own weakness. I hoped I should not hear any more of it, but this was not to be. I had a standing invitation to supper at the Rectory after Sunday evening service, and the evening after the incident recorded found me, as usual, seated at the supper table, the Rector at one end, his wife at the other, and myself between them. We were discussing the usual trivialities, and I was helping myself to some potatoes from a dish which was held by that very maid who had wiped me down on the previous evening, when the Rector suddenly said: "Oh, Mr. Johnson, I never thanked you for fetching that book for me last night."

The maid laid the dish down and ran from the room, I suppose to prevent herself from laughing aloud, while my own face went crimson.

"I cannot understand the behaviour of the maid," said the Rector's wife. "Neither can I," said the Rector, gazing at my red perspiring face.

I thought for a moment, and then decided to make an open confession, and when the second course appeared we were all laughing loudly, while from the kitchen there



came a faint and answering echo.

"I am glad you told me of your adventure," said the Rector. "May I ask what you did with the flowers?"

"I understand they were thrown over the churchyard wall, as it was not known from which grave they came," I replied.

He then explained that it was a custom amongst the villagers to place flowers upon the graves of their relations on a Saturday evening.

"So you see, Mr. Johnson, in all probability I shall hear more of this in the morning."

And so he did. A woman came to him in a very distressed state, complaining that someone had upset her water jar and taken the flowers from her mother's grave. "You can see his footprints where he trampled on the very top," she said.

The Rector thought it best that I called on her and explained matters, which I did, and finished the interview with a nice little chat and a cup of tea by the fire of a cottage home.



## WAR WORK AT THE QUEEN ALEXANDRA MILITARY HOSPITAL

I now come to that unforgettable year in English history, 1914, when England was plunged into war with Germany. Apart, however, from the influence the war had upon my own life, I do not intend to dwell much upon that anxious and trying time.

Just before the outbreak of war I had two dreams. One Sunday night, in May, 1914, I had the strange experience of finding my spirit leaving my body and of standing beside my bed and seeing myself asleep. I next sensed that I was being called, as it were, to go on a journey, and found myself upon a seashore. The shingle on the beach appeared to sparkle and glow with many colours, and the sea which rippled on the shore was of a crystal-blue that I find difficult to describe. I was conscious of a wonderful peace and calm, and realised I had been led to this place by an unseen hand. Whilst standing there I became aware of a small group of people sitting in a circle on the beach, found myself being led towards them, and discovered they were my own family. They were my father and mother, my brother and sister who had passed over before I was born, and several other members of the family who had died many years previously. My mother was the first to speak, and in a cheerful voice said: "Now we are all complete." I told her I realised the trial it must have been to her to leave a child behind, but to this she only gave a gentle smile. Then I said how much I had longed for her love and sympathy during my life, and approached to kiss her, but she said: "Not yet! Your work is not finished." Then this wonderful dream began to fade and the unseen power that had brought me seemed to draw me



back. I longed to stay, but could not. A kind of fog closed the whole scene out, and the last thing I saw was my mother's smiling face.

It is not easy to give an account of a dream such as this, but the fact that I wrote it down at the time has helped me. The thing that struck me most then was my mother's remark that my work was not finished. As I had qualified as a masseur eighteen months previously, I had a feeling that some new development was to take place.

A few weeks later I had another dream. This time I stood upon an open space, watching the movement of troops, and amongst them was the Brigade of Guards with the commanding officer leading on horse-back. As I watched, something, I knew not what, seemed to hit this officer, and he fell to the ground. Then a voice said: "Come on, Johnson! Run and pick him up!"

I often thought of these dreams later, and I did not doubt they heralded, and were sent to prepare me for, the great work of my life that soon followed. The war commenced, and I, like many others, was called upon to report to Headquarters. My notice came from the Medical Staff at the War Office, saying I was to interview the commander of the Guards Hospital, Millbank (the Queen Alexandra Military Hospital and the Headquarters of the R.A.M.C.). At that interview I found I had to undergo a Government test at the nearby R.A.M.C. College. I passed the examination and was enrolled at the Hospital on a month's probation. This, as I have mentioned, was the Guards Hospital, and although I was intended for transfer to other places, strange to say I never left it for seven and a half years.

During my month's probation, I had the misfortune of contracting fever, which left me with deafness, from which I have suffered all the rest of my life.

The dream I had came to pass, for I had the Commanding Officer as a patient for some months.

I was, of course, kept very busy with very little spare



time, but through it all I tried to keep my Tuesday nights free for the weekly sitting at my brother's house. I was only absent at those times—which were frequent—when epidemics broke out in the hospital, and I feared to carry infection to my family. In spite of the various contagious diseases I encountered, not one member of my family ever caught them, and in the whole time subsequent to my period of probation, during which I myself had fever, I was only absent from my post two days and a half with colds.

During my second year I was promoted, and became head of the massage staff with an honorary rank and a staff of fifteen assistants.

I was demobilised in June, 1921, only to be called up again on the reserve three days later, and sent for night work to Tooting Neurotic Clinic. This gave me an opportunity to study nervous diseases, in which I was very interested at the time, also Mesmerism and hypnotic suggestion. After eighteen months at Tooting, I was discharged right out of the Army and Reserve, having served for about ten years altogether.

My spiritual experiences during this time are too numerous to describe here—a volume could not contain them—but I will mention one or two, which I feel will be of interest. One of these cases concerns a Private who came to me with a paper marked Infantile Paralysis. I found lack of sensation in the legs and difficulty in walking on the left side, but from the commencement I was sure there was a mistake in the Doctor's diagnosis. Nevertheless, I carried out the instructions, but without success. In my perplexity I asked Haslem to help me and distinctly heard the word "head." When the doctor inspected my work a few days later I had to say there was no improvement, and asked if the trouble might not be in the nerve centre of the brain. "Nothing of the kind," he replied. "It is Infantile Paralysis!"

As time went by and still brought no successful results, I again asked the Doctor the same question, and this time he was very annoyed and suggested my own brain



needed attention ! This time I heard Haslem say "brain."

When the patient came for treatment next day I asked him to sit down as I wanted to ask him a few questions. "Have you ever had a fall?" I said. "Not that I remember," he replied. "Have you at any time had a blow on the head or knocked it?" "Not that I remember," he said again. "The only thing I do remember, and that was a mere nothing, was while I was in the trenches. A shell burst some distance from me and a lot of stones were thrown into the air, one of them hitting me and cutting my head very slightly. It was dressed and was soon alright again." I thanked him for this information. "Now," I said, "I have something on which to work!"

I obtained an order for his head to be X-rayed, and received a report next day that a splinter of shrapnel had been found just beneath the scalp and that the patient was to be retained for an operation. This, with a few days' massage treatment, put matters right, and he returned to his home in Glasgow, cured. The Doctor and I had a laugh over our little difference of opinion, and all ended well.

This was one of many incidents where Haslem helped me, but I had other cases where the spirit friends did all the work without any action on my part. One day I was giving out some work to an assistant in a ward of thirty beds, when the Captain in charge requested a little talk with me. He pointed to a bed in the far corner and told me that in it lay a man who had lost the use of his legs. "It is supposed to be shell-shock," he said, "but there is a difference of opinion on it. It has been suggested, upon consultation, that by rest and quiet things might right themselves, but the outcome of that has been that for six weeks he has lain there without any sign of action or return of nerve power. I feel that the time has now come for something to be done, but I don't know what steps to take. You go and look at him, and see what suggestions you have to make."

Upon interviewing the patient, a bank clerk from Mel-



bourne, I found him a very nice, well-educated young fellow. My sympathy was aroused and I felt a strong desire to try to do something for him. When I saw the Doctor again I expressed a wish to do what I could if he would put the patient in my hands. This he agreed to, but naturally wanted to know what I proposed to do. "To apply Radiant Heat," I said, "for a start, but I have not the convenience to apply it in the ward. He will have to be carried to the electrical room."

I made an appointment for that afternoon, and a stretcher party brought him to me. I was busy at the time, and asked them to lay him on a bed until I could give him my attention. A moment later he gave a tremendous scream and kicked his legs in the air. This not only frightened me, but everyone else present, and the room was full at the time. Fearing some mental derangement, I hurried to him, demanding an explanation of his conduct. Very quickly he replied: "I'm very sorry, Sir, but I really could not help it!" "You don't expect me to believe that?" I said. "I assure you it is true. I could not control myself." "Well then, after frightening the life out of us all, let me see how much damage has been done."

I pulled his legs over the side of the bed to test the muscles and look for any dislocation. To my very great surprise, he placed his feet upon the ground, stood up and walked across the room!

"How long is it since you did that?" I asked. "I don't quite know, Sir. It seems years, but I suppose about three months. I was brought to England from France on a stretcher." "Well," I said, "cheer up! You will soon be on the sea again, on your way home. I will ask the Captain for your discharge." When the stretcher bearers came for him, I told them to walk slowly back to the ward while the patient followed on foot!

It was not long before the Doctor came bouncing into my room, saying excitedly: "Johnson, what is this you have done?" "Well, Doctor," I replied, "are you satis-



fied?" "Why, of course, I am. I thank you very much." "There are no thanks due to me, Sir. I have not touched him!" "Then how has it happened?" he asked. I took the Doctor's hand and, looking him straight in the face, replied: "Doctor, I cannot say!"

Without another word we parted, and the patient left for home a week later, discharged from further service. I have since thought there may have been a mother's prayer at the back of it all, and I feel that this is the explanation.

The next case I wish to relate was also a leg trouble. It must not be supposed that all my cases were confined to the limbs. I had many medical cases, also surgical ones, and a few mental patients, but I think I liked dealing with the surgical cases best.

This case was a sergeant who had been blown up by a shell. Several operations, which had left adhesion and stiffness in the tendons and sinews, had been performed to extract pieces of shell from both legs. I had been treating him for some time with massage when, one morning, I found on my desk a complaint from the ward sister to the effect that he had disturbed the other patients during the night by shouting and kicking his legs in the air. I could not help feeling there must be some exaggeration, as I knew his inability to move his limbs. However, I went to see him, and told him it must not occur again or I should be obliged to punish him, although I felt inwardly that he had been punished quite sufficiently by his long period of suffering. He apologised, and said he was quite unable to control himself. On treating him a few hours later, I found the leg much better, and regarded the incident as closed.

The next day the Captain of the ward came to me, saying: "I believe you had a complaint about Sergeant A. What have you done in the matter, because he has done the same thing again." I told him that as the patient was unable to move his legs, he was unlikely to kick during the night, and that I thought there was some mistake in the report of the sister. "Come with me," he said; "we



will go and see the Sergeant together." This we did, and the Captain severely reprimanded him and ordered twenty-four hours without smoking or reading.

"I think, while I'm here," said the Captain, "we will just examine your legs to see how they are getting on." This we did, together, and much to our surprise found all joints free and muscular stiffness gone. Upon the Captain asking him to get out of bed in order to see if he could walk a little, he did so, and walked the whole length of the room. "Well," said my superior turning to me, "I don't know what has happened, but the patient is cured. I shall discharge him!" It was no small joy to me to see him walk to a taxi on his wife's arm, a few hours later.

A month or two after this incident, I was told that a gentleman wished to see me, and upon going into my little cubicle, I found that my visitor was my old patient the Sergeant, dressed in civilian clothes.

"Excuse me taking this liberty, Sir," he said, "but I am a civilian now, and as such thought I might have the pleasure of your company to dinner."

Needless to say, I went, and in a restaurant near Victoria we talked over our old troubles. Whilst we were taking our coffee he leant across and said: "Now tell me how I was cured!" "Friend," I replied, "there are many questions in this world that must go unanswered. Yours is one!" In this particular case I felt impressed not to broach the subject of psychic matters.

How many incidents connected with those years spent in the Queen Alexandra Hospital come to my mind, some of them humorous, but most of them sad! There was that six-foot Australian who, in delirium, struck me down in the ward, mistaking me for a German. Even now I can smile when I think of the Doctor and two nurses fishing me out from under a bed. But, strange to relate, I never felt the blow, nor was there a bruise! Having been given leave for the remainder of the day to rest my nerves (which were not affected), I sat in a cinema, rubbing my jaw to



make sure it was all there. A little stiffness for a few days whilst eating was all I noticed from the blow.

Then, again, I remember the officer who blew his brains out on the staircase, just as I was passing him, the bullet missing me by a few inches.

The padded room comes to my recollection, where a Tommy confessed to me the murder of a baby, which he left in a brown paper parcel in a station. He was handed over to the police, and I heard he died in an asylum a short time afterwards, but whether or not his story was true, I cannot say.

Then, last but not least, I remember the three men who died in my arms.

So we will let the curtain drop at the end of the play, and I find myself wondering what has become of all those who played their little part. Let us trust they have all reached home!

It was in July, 1921, when I saluted my commanding officer for the last time and said "good-bye." "I thank you," he said, "on behalf of the Army and myself, for the work you have done here." He presented me with a travelling clock, subscribed for by the staff of which I had command. I tried to express my gratitude for the kindness and sympathy I had received, not only from him but from those who had stood by me in many trying times. When leaving him he called me back: "Johnson," he said, "just a moment! I will write you a letter, which I trust will be a help to you in your civilian practice upon which you are now entering."

His letter read: "Mr. Percival H. Johnson has been doing duty as masseur and electro-therapist at the Queen Alexandra Military Hospital since September, 1914, and I have much pleasure in bearing testimony to his zeal, skill and indefatigable attention to his duties. He has only lost two and a half days during the whole of the war and post-war periods, and has gained the confidence and affection of all his fellow workers and patients. I wish



the King many such servants."

(Signed) G. M. PILCHER, Colonel,

July 9th, 1921.

Consulting Surgeon to the Army.

Having been demobilised on 21st September, 1921, I was, as I have said, called up again within a week, to serve on the Pensions, and was sent to the Tooting Neurotic Hospital. This was, unfortunately for me, night work, and meant that I had to rest during the day and was cut off from my family sitting on Tuesday evenings.

In the Spring of 1924 I obtained my final discharge from the Army. Thereafter private work was fairly plentiful and kept me employed, and I was able to return to my circle, which delighted me after so much interruption.



## OUR HOME CIRCLE

In this chapter I want to speak about the home circle. It must be remembered that in any work that was done, both in the rescuing of patients and in medical diagnosis, the home circle was the source and pivot of the strength supplied. At times it became a confessional, where many sad stories of wasted lives were unfolded; at others it was a platform from which many an eloquent address was delivered, or yet again, a surgery where medical matters were discussed.

It is true that I was the medium, but where should I have been without the support and strength of those who surrounded me from week to week? My brother was not only the Chairman and founder of the circle, but through his love, sympathy and desire to help us all, the main-spring of all the work. The notes and record of every sitting over a period of years will alone stand as a memorial to his energy and zeal. He developed my mediumship, and I owe him much.

It is not my intention to say a great deal about my friend Ernest Meads, as I have already written about our work together in my book *LOOKING BACK*, and his own book, *THE WHITE LOTUS*, contains much more. Those of my readers who are acquainted with these two books will know and understand what his friendship meant to me. Much of the work I have been able to do has been accomplished under his protection and care. Time after time, when I have been controlled in the street and in public buildings, he has stood by me and protected me from the public gaze, thereby saving me from the indignity of being considered intoxicated. I could give many instances when I might have been in sad trouble caused by



violent controls had it not been for my friend, and for many years he sat at my side in our family circle.

Our circle consisted of my brother and his wife, my own wife and myself, Ernest Meads, my niece, who made the notes, and my nephew. In after years, a vacant seat was caused by the passing of my wife, and later still, the transition of my sister-in-law caused another. These seats, even to the present day, have never been filled.

One Sunday evening, during the service at a Wesleyan Church, I saw John Wesley standing near the front. This was in the early stages of my mediumship, and I wondered at the time why he should have shown himself to me, and later, when he made his presence known in our circle. We were the fourth generation of our family to be associated with Methodism, and this fact may have contributed towards it, but whatever the reason may have been, John Wesley's offices in connection with the circle have been entirely connected with the spiritual side of the work. For some time he only spoke briefly at the close of a meeting, before pronouncing the Benediction, but in more recent years he has given long addresses and sermons.

Black Hawk, my Indian guide of whom I have spoken, acted as protector or doorkeeper, no-one entering the circle without his sanction, and Doctor Haslem was always the principal speaker. It would be impossible to speak with too much gratitude of the help rendered by the Doctor, by whom so many sufferers have been aided.

The reader will understand why I withhold names when mentioning visitors to our circle. Many came with sad stories of misspent lives, others with a desire to rectify their mistakes.

My own father, who had faithfully protected me during the early stages of my development, was the first to speak through me whilst I was in trance. This was an expression of gratitude for the united love and service of the family.

It is surprising to see what love and prayer can do to help the many in the Spirit World who are in trouble, but



the circle must be conducted on spiritual lines. One often has cause for regret, when seeing how frequently those who might be the means of helping and comforting many in distress, are seeking after material things. I have often returned home after a meeting, feeling sad about things that I have heard said on the platform, and thinking "If only they could realise how many thousands are calling out: 'Oh, that I knew where I might find Him!'"

One evening, whilst we were sitting in circle, a spirit came through, saying: "I ask you to pray for one who needs to find that which he knew not when on earth . . . I have sought it and now come through this medium to plead forgiveness for the destruction of the temple of my earthly body." After the circle had prayed, a woman came, who said: "I come to thank you for your help to one whom I love—my husband. The trial has taught me much, and above all, the realisation of the nearness of the Master in the day of trouble."

On another occasion, we had a man come who said: "I am an Egyptian, and my earthly life was stained with blood. I have sent many innocent people out of the body. I would now kneel and ask for pardon, that I may find that which is higher. Pray, not only for me, but for all who have the ruling and control of hundreds."

It appears from this and many similar experiences that we have had, that confession must be made in order that the distressed soul may rise to higher things.

But it must not be thought that our circle was only a confessional. At times, we had some lovely stories told, that uplifted and strengthened us. One of these came from a musician, well known in musical circles, who told us the following:

"I was musical, and my father and mother, deeming it God's Will that such talent as I had should be developed to its greatest capacity, spent all the money that could be spared upon my education and musical training. I had the best that my parents could afford.

"We lived in a small house in a northern suburb of



London, and after the day's work was done, my mother would take her Bible and sit by the window, to catch the last gleam of light by which to read. At her request I closed the day by playing her favourite hymn, 'When I survey the Wondrous Cross.' I often returned home tired after my studies, but never too tired to play when she asked me.

"With the passing of the years, I saw that she whom I loved most on earth would soon be called away from me, but I tried to close my eyes to the fact. At this time I was organist at a college, and also gave lessons, and at last the day came when I received the message 'Come at once—Mother dying.' I hastened home, and as I entered her room, she held out her hand and in a feeble voice requested me to play the old hymn she loved so much.

"After we had laid her earthly remains in the grave, I turned my face towards a world that seemed empty and void. Unable to face the old home, I made my way to the college. The sun was setting at the close of a beautiful day, and as I opened the chapel door to enter, I saw a boy passing, and asked him to blow the organ for me. 'Yes, sir,' he replied, 'but the light is poor.' 'Never mind the light,' I said, and went up the stairs to the old organ seat. I placed my hands on the keys with only one thought—of the one I had loved and thought lost. Presently there came the old melody—'When I survey the Wondrous Cross,' but it was not I that played it, but mother, through me!"

The communicating spirit gave his name as "Farmer," and it is interesting to note that a John Farmer was organist at Harrow School, and whilst there wrote an oratorio entitled "Christ and His Soldiers." All who have heard this work will remember the beautiful setting of the hymn "When I survey the Wondrous Cross" as a tenor solo.

In my early musical days, I played in the Farmer Festival at the Crystal Palace. We rendered this oratorio in the afternoon and his "Hymn of Praise" in the evening, with a choir from Nottingham. At a later date we



repeated "Christ and His Soldiers" at the Alexandra Palace, and on that occasion I played the viola, which placed me in the centre of the orchestra. At one time during the performance I was so carried away with emotion that the conductor leaned forward and asked me which of us was conducting. It occurred to me afterwards that Farmer had probably taken hold of me.



## RESCUE WORK IN THE STREETS OF THE CITY OF LONDON

As I have already stated, the keys to all spiritual contact are love and sympathy, and no work can be done without them. Love governs all, and there are many who have that love only where they have left it. 'For where a man's treasure is, there will his heart be also.' A man who passes on with a strong earthly love or passion is blind to all else, and the work of the circle lies in attracting that man with sympathetic feeling, and prevailing upon him to look higher.

Let us take the case of one who has a love for drink when on the earth plane. He returns to the place where he built up his intemperate habits, to see others do likewise, and he experiences pleasure thereby. It can be readily understood that a mediumistic person takes great risks when he or she enters a public house!

There are many ways by which men and women build up earthly loves and become 'earth-bound,' as that state is called when, after death, they return in order to enjoy through others those things they did whilst here. Take for example the accumulation of money. When this is done with a pure motive—to care for those who are dependent upon us, or to provide for them when we ourselves pass on—then there is nothing un-Christian in so doing. This is not love of money, but love for those to whom we wish to bring comfort and security, and frequently entails much self-sacrifice. But those who hoard money with miserly or selfish motives, frequently become earth-bound after passing out of the body, and spirits of this type can cause much trouble by haunting the offices and warehouses of our big cities, or the place where that money was accumulated or hoarded.



I will give an example of this by relating an incident that happened in our family circle. We often received instructions to go to various places, and one night I was told to go into the City of London with Mr. Meads. All who know the City with its high-ways and bye-ways crowded with those who sell and buy, will understand how much courage I had to muster in order to go there with a view to giving myself up to control in such surroundings. I must confess that I did not like the idea at all and would have avoided the task had I been able. Nevertheless, the experience gave me an insight that few are privileged to have into certain conditions in the Spirit World.

A day and time were fixed for our visit, and knowing the risk I was running, I expressed a wish that we should first of all go to St. Paul's Cathedral to ask for Divine help and protection. After a short time spent in this way, we crossed the road to Cheapside. In this crowded street it was not easy to put myself into the necessary passive condition, and we had reached the corner of Wood Street before a spirit controlled me. It must be remembered that Wood Street is the great market for the drapery trade, and its warehouses receive merchandise from all parts of England. At the corner of the street I was seized by a very strong control, and my friend pushed me into a doorway and enquired his identity.

"Do you want a parcel of gloves?" said the control. "I have a line that is not only good but cheap." "But, friend," said Meads, "you are surely not thinking about gloves now? Do you realise that you are in the Spirit World, and speaking through the body of an earthly man?"

"I know what I am doing," said the control, "and it may surprise you to know that I find I can still control my business, to some extent, through the mediumship of a member of my staff, who will buy what I impress him to."

Meads talked to him at some length, directing him to higher things. The control gave the name of a well-



known glove firm, and said he was the founder. My friend checked up on this information, and learned that he had passed on some forty years previously. After all this time, he was still following his earthly love, and trying to do business in Wood Street, Cheapside !

We passed up the street, and every few yards I was controlled by first one and then another, the details of which would merely weary the reader, but it is interesting to note that in every case the desire of the spirit was to carry on, or help in, the making of money, or to influence in some way the firm that had employed or been owned by him.

There was one case, however, that differed from the others. At the end of the street, just as we turned into Gresham Street, we passed a large depot of Carter Paterson, and I was controlled by a spirit who seemed anxious to know what had become of his horses. We took him to be one who had in earth life been foreman or overseer to the stables of Messrs. Carter Paterson. My friend talked to him and explained that conditions had changed, and that motors were now used instead of horses. He must have been a man well suited to his work, with a love of horses that had been the ruling passion of his life and had caused him to haunt the stables after passing into spirit.

This new phase of our missionary work gave us both food for thought. We had had many examples during our work in so-called "haunted" houses of how love-ties held spirits to their old haunts, and how the home-lover or enthusiastic house-wife would revisit the home, or a mother still try to help her children. But the knowledge that those on the spirit plane will still endeavour to carry on business and make money came to us as a shock. Yet, after a little consideration, is it really so strange? We each build our own little temple of love. How many of us have at some time changed our home and found our minds drifting back to old conditions? Perhaps we thought of the old garden, and wondered if the plants we left behind



were receiving the care that we ourselves bestowed on them. And how often, in a foreign land, has the old refrain been sung: "Think of the old friends at home!" Most of us like to look back into the past, and is it not reasonable to suppose that this desire still exists in the next world? As an artist, upon completing a picture, will place it in a different light for a final examination, so shall we view our earth life when we pass on. And if that life shows a sole desire to make and accumulate money, is it not probable that that desire will survive the change called "death?"

There is another side to the question. Some look back on selfish and wasted lives, and I regret to say I have found thousands of these, not only in the City of London, but wherever else I have gone.

Meads and I visited the City many times, and were surprised and interested at what we found there. I often wondered what the passers-by thought about it! Picture us on a warm summer afternoon standing in front of the Royal Exchange, and myself being controlled by a solicitor who had a sad story to tell. The tears ran down his face, as he confessed to having robbed a widow by a bill of excessive costs. He related how, in the spirit world, he had been led to see the injury he had done, how he had been taken to the very home he had robbed and seen its poverty, and then been shown the large sum total of his own estate. "Friends," he cried, "I am in Hell!" I say again, I wonder what the public thought, seeing my friend praying over a poor soul in front of the Royal Exchange!

This was only one of many such cases. Of course, professional men have many temptations that do not assail ordinary individuals, but when one considers that they usually have University or College educations, an advantage not shared by their less fortunate brothers, one cannot help feeling that they should use that advantage to the best of their ability. Moreover, many have said in confession that their own remorse is not so hard to bear as having to



witness the grief of those they leave behind, and the stigma attached to them. The man who blew out his brains in a cab came with the same tale. He thought the secret of his life had died with him, but his last action made things worse. He saw his home sold up, his children despising him, fleeing to strange lands, trying to hide their identity under false names. He likened his sin of suicide to the act of throwing a stone into a pond, and the ripples ever widening until they reached the bank. "Friends," he said, "the pond is large and the banks far distant!"

Ernest Meads found it difficult to deal with many of these souls. As I have said, many were educated men with University degrees and knew as much, if not more, of the teachings of Orthodox Religion as we did. A number of them came to the family circle, in the quietness of which we were better able to advise them than we had been in the turmoil of a City street.

One fact that impressed us strongly during all these experiences was how frequently those who came, earth-bound and seeking salvation, had been rich or prosperous when on earth. We did not often encounter those who had been poor, and came to the conclusion that in all probability they had found the earth life so little to their liking that they had no desire to approach us. We began to realise the truth of the Master's remark to His disciples concerning the rich young man who came to Him: "It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter into the Kingdom of God."

Before leaving this account of our experiences in the City, I wish to mention two interesting cases.

On one of our journeys, Meads and I were standing at the corner of Cheapside opposite the Mansion House, at about mid-day. Down a side street, against a blank wall, was a bookstall belonging to Messrs. Stonehams. I mentioned to my friend how, in my younger days, I would often stand at that particular stall and read scraps from various books, and so we found ourselves wandering in that direction. I picked up a book as I had so often done



before, and was gradually controlled by one who said he was a solicitor. My friend asked him if he fully realised he was in the Spirit World, and why he was standing about the City streets. "I am not standing about the streets," he replied, "I am working in the Court." It appeared that we were close to the side wall of the Mansion House Police Court, in which, he told us, he had worked for years, prosecuting and defending. He was an eloquent speaker, and his work became the ruling passion of his life, so much so, that after passing over he returned to the Court, and had found a medium through whom he could speak and inspire with as much eloquence as he himself had possessed. He appeared quite happy, and Meads asked him if he thoroughly understood the nature of his medium's cases, as there was the risk of doing a lot of harm. This fact did not seem to worry him—his sole interest was his medium's eloquence.

My friend tried to point him to higher things, but to no avail, and in discussing the matter afterwards we both came to the same conclusion—that this spirit would not progress until his medium had also passed over. We could not help wondering how many thousands there were like him.

There is a very valuable lesson that we both learned during our work in the City that I should like to pass on to others. Some of those who tried to help showed a friendly spirit and often gave us financial advice. We were told to buy this, that and the other, and whilst we did not doubt that the advice was well-meant and given as a return for the help we tried to render, we never took advantage if it, as we had no money we could afford to play with and, most probably, lose. We wondered why they should do this, and recalled cases of people who had been ruined by taking business advice given from the Spirit World. Considering the cases with which we had dealt, we came to the conclusion that the sphere of action of these spirits is limited, much of their experience being confined to the life of the medium, and that it is impossible for them



to keep up-to-date with the ever-changing money market unless the medium has done so. If the spirit is ignorant of essential facts, his advice, though probably given kindly, is unreliable. The following case may explain this more fully.

One afternoon my friend and I went into the neighbourhood of the Stock Exchange, and whilst in Copthall Court I was controlled by a man who said he had been a stockbroker. Upon enquiries, Meads learned that he quite understood he was using the body of another man, had done so before, and hoped to do so again. He said that in the earth life he had so loved the Exchange with its bustle and excitement, that he was always the first in the office in the morning, and regretted having to leave in the evening. Meads spent some time in trying to get him to look to something higher, but he seemed to be enjoying conditions as he found them and, like so many more cases with which we had dealt, was quite contented and had no desire for other things. After prayer had been said and we were leaving him, he turned and said: "You are very decent people—I will put you on to something good." He mentioned some South Wales Mining Shares and told us we could get them at par.

Some months after this incident I became acquainted with a stockbroker's clerk, and mentioned these shares to him. He said his firm did not deal in mining shares, but gave me the name of one that dealt with little else. Feeling that I should like to carry the investigation further, I went one day to the firm in question and was received very kindly by an elderly man, who was head partner. He told me to be very careful in taking advice relating to these things, and said he had a considerable number of the shares mentioned, purchased by his father and left to him. "At that time," he said, "these shares caused considerable attention and stood at a high price, but a day came when the mining concern smashed up. That is many years ago, but I still have the shares, and if you'd like one to light your pipe with, you are welcome! I keep them as a



memento of a time when I lost a lot of money.”

Now, why did this spirit advise us to buy shares in a concern that had been ruined and wound up? I feel that the answer is that he did not know of the failure of the mine, and was merely passing on to us what he knew at the time of his death. It is impossible for these spirits to keep in touch with the financial world and its many activities, hence the risk that so many people on earth run when they trust too implicitly in the business advice given them through mediums.

Having read the foregoing account of some of our experiences with earth-bound spirits, the reader may find the question arising in his mind as to how an earthly medium can help them. This is difficult to explain, but the fact that time and again they came back to thank us for our prayers and intercession proves that they *do* derive help thereby. Much has been written on this subject by writers who are better qualified to deal with it than I, but I may mention that rescue work can be done only by mediums of special aptitude. Sympathy and courage are essential, with absolute faith in one's guides, also the necessary strength of mind and will to throw off conditions afterwards. Then, with God's help, much can be done to make our world a better place and to free many poor souls from bondage and earth ties.



## THE NEED FOR FORGIVENESS EMPHASISED BY AN UNEXPECTED INCIDENT

One evening, after a visit to the City, we joined the home circle and Wesley addressed those spirits who had evidently followed us home.

"It is, as always," he said, "a pleasure to be here. I wonder on what lines I can speak to attract the attention of those around. I find in the Old Book several tales of beauty. There have been blackness and hardship, as well as much unkindness that need to be forgotten in the lives of those who stand unseen around me now.

"One may well be surprised at the artistic quality shown by the authors of the Scriptures, and there are many points that are studied by the writers and novelists of to-day. Many modern themes are taken from those of the Bible—let us look at one!

"The evening is drawing to a close after a hot, sultry Eastern day. The Master, tired after His day of mission work, sits by the wayside of a village and the children come out to play. They are very ordinary children, not unlike your own. There are chasings and the cry of 'You are not playing fair,' and then a tussle and handi-cuffs. There is, of course, the bully—there always is a bully in the gathering. He gets on a mound and cries 'I'm king of the castle,' and another tries to mount, crying 'Come down, you dirty rascal!'

"The day is drawing to a close. Are you not feeling, all you who gather around, feverish and tired with the excitement of the game? Have you noticed there is Someone sitting by the wayside? He has been watching you, men of business, you who have dealt in stocks and shares. Your minds have been concentrated on the game and the



fight for supremacy. Have you forgotten the man sitting under the tree yonder? Listen—He is speaking!—*Come unto Me, all ye that are weary and heavy-laden, and I will give you rest.* Can you hear Him? You who find you are the king of the castle, what has the game cost? Remember, friends, He called the children from their games and, taking them on His knee, He blessed them. The night is now far spent, but remember there is room at His knee for you! Amen.”

Then followed this prayer by Cardinal Newman :

“Lead, kindly Light, lead Thou us on amidst encircling gloom. The road is rough and we are far from home. However rough it may be, and we know it is, lead Thou us on o’er moor and crag to those whom we loved and lost awhile. Help us by Thy Holy Spirit now and for evermore. Amen.”

It is interesting to note how Wesley and Cardinal Newman spoke at the same meeting, being one more proof amongst so many that in the Spirit World there are no conflicting creeds amongst the servants of the Master, but only love for Him.

I should like to record another address given by Wesley at the home circle, after one of our City tramps, on May 8th, 1934.

Addressing the unseen crowd that was evidently around us, he said :

“Now friends, I want to say a few words to you on a recorded incident that occurred after the death of the Master. I speak of the time when the two disciples were joined by the unrecognised Presence during their walk to Emmaus.

“‘Did not our hearts burn within us as He talked to us on the way?’ I have often wished during my earthly life that we had more detail of the words which brought the disciples such joy and comfort, but the fact remains that He made their hearts burn within them. Evidently some marvellous things were said that have since been



lost. Here we find two men who have just passed through the awful experience of losing the bodily presence of their nearest and dearest Friend, and the world is dark and lonely. We can imagine one saying to the other : ' Have we been true friends and disciples ? ' and while they talk a Stranger joins them, to Whom they say : ' Oh, have you heard the news ? ' And they tell Him about Himself ! How at the close of a day He sat under a tree resting, and the children came running about in their play, and some, thinking it would disturb Him, bade the children be quiet and go away, but He said : *No ! Suffer the children to come unto Me*, and He took them up in His arms and blessed them.

" They go on to tell Him how He had healed the sick, restored sight to the blind, and even raised the dead to life. ' Oh, Stranger, we have lost a Friend indeed ! We tried to save Him at the end, but could do nothing but pray. We thought at one time that our prayers would be answered, because Pilate said : " I can find no fault in Him," but the mob cried : " Away with Him, crucify Him, give us Barabbas ! " ' And the Stranger replies : ' Is not the law of life Love ? And don't you think He heard your prayers ? Was not your presence on the edge of the crowd a comfort to Him ? Does not Love numb pain and overrule an angry crowd ? ' And He vanishes from their sight, leaving them with hearts that burn within them.

" Have you noticed, friends, that the first thing the Master did was to come back to His loved ones to soothe them in their agony when the world was at its darkest ? Now, does some empty office chair claim you ? Is there an echo of some old applause—some monument—some biography ? We think that there are many like the disciples of old, who are trying to find their way home to Emmaus at the close of this earthly day, those who find the way hard and stoney, those who are lonely and sad. Oh, friends, leave the attractions of the old earthly life ! Be the stranger to those who are sick and faint, and there



will come to you a voice saying : *Inasmuch as ye have done it unto the least of these My brethren, ye have done it unto Me !*"

\* \* \*

From the beginning of my development, the whole of my mediumship has been on the lines of rescue and missionary work, and such has always been my wish. In my book, *LOOKING BACK*, I have told how I dedicated my powers to the Master's use under the trees in Hyde Park, and that pledge I have always kept. I have never been a popular medium, nor has there been any humorous side to my mediumship. I have met many who have been very entertaining in their mediumistic work, but such has not been the case with me. I have frequently tried hard to be unemotional both on the platform and in the private circle, but have often finished by leaving my company in tears. A woman once said to a friend : " If Johnson is to speak on Sunday, don't forget to bring some handkerchiefs ! " Even when I have been engaged upon a private sitting, the rescue work has been predominant. Things have come to the surface which were neither expected nor liked, and instead of loved ones coming to cheer the sitters, poor souls who had done them injury or unkindness have come along asking for forgiveness, as the remembrance of the incidents was keeping them down. This has happened again and again. Sometimes it has been some legal injustice, but more often some little family misunderstanding that has never been cleared up during the earth life.

However we may try to lead pure and upright lives, there is often some little slip or accident, perhaps unintentional or done in a heated moment, but there comes a time when the slate has to be cleaned. We all know that after a dull, foggy and stormy winter, we have a period of spring cleaning in our homes, in order better to enjoy the beauties of Summer. So it is when we pass into the Spirit World.

One day Ernest Meads received a letter from a woman



quite unknown to him, who lived in a house facing Hampstead Heath. She had heard that he was a lecturer on Spiritualism, and said that she herself knew nothing about it. She told him that facing her house was a pond in which a poor soul had committed suicide, and she was sure that the spirit of this woman was visiting her and walking her house. She asked for Meads's help and guidance in the matter.

My friend showed me the letter, and after a little talk we felt the only thing to be done was to go to the house and find this poor soul. An appointment having been arranged, Meads and I journeyed to the haunted house, where we met our hostess, who was a widow and seemed to be in very comfortable circumstances.

Every effort was made to find the spirit of the poor suicide, but without success, so it was at last suggested that we should all three take hands while I gave myself up to control. After a few minutes a very strong control took me, giving the name of John, with an accurate and detailed description of himself, which, with other data, proved his identity to be that of my hostess's husband. She, of course, was very pleased, and asked him if he was happy.

"Yes," he said, "but I want you, dear, to go to your home."

"Oh, John! How can you ask me to do that when you know how we have suffered?"

After I had come out of trance, our hostess explained to us that her father had been very opposed to their marriage, and one night, in a fit of temper, had turned them both out of the house and slammed the door in their faces, in consequence of which they had been faced with many hardships. "That is only a few years ago," she said, "and since then I have lost my husband. We always agreed we would never go near or see any of my people again. Now he comes back and says 'Go home!'"

"Well," said Meads, "it seems to me that your line of action is quite clear—you must go home. It is your husband's wish."



"No, I never will," she replied. "I will stand alone to the end, and never face any of them again. Oh, how we have suffered!"

We left our hostess in great distress, and went away from the house without having found the poor woman who had committed suicide. When we were well clear of the house, I turned to Meads and asked him what he thought of it all. "I don't know what to think," he said, "but I am sure of one thing—that she wishes she had never seen us. Let's go and have a cup of tea at the nearest tea-shop and forget it all!" This we did, little thinking we had just left one of our most interesting and convincing sittings.

A week or two later we received a letter from our hostess at Hampstead, saying that she had reconsidered her decision and felt she could not rest until she had been home. She went on to say that she had been, and upon reaching there, found her father dying and longing to see her. Before passing, he asked her to forgive him, which she did. A few days later a wreath, marked with his daughter's name and her love, lay on a newly-made grave.

The foregoing incident may be regarded in various ways, but however we view it, there still stands out the emphasis laid on the necessity of forgiving and making peace. John must have suffered much, and was doubtless quite rightly indignant at the treatment he and his wife had received from her father. He probably felt it all even more keenly at the time of his passing, and yet in a comparatively short time he comes back desiring his wife to go home! Why should he have done this? There can be no other answer than that the unfortunate circumstance was holding him down, also his desire to save others from a like condition.

How many, in the course of their lives, have repeated the Lord's Prayer, with the sentence "Forgive us our trespasses as we forgive them that trespass against us," and yet it has become a mere form of words that have lost their meaning by frequent repetition. As the Master hung



on the Cross, He said : *Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do !* How many times, in the investigation of Spiritualism, have I met with hatred and malice, and how many have I seen passing on with slates uncleaned ! To all who may read these lines, I pray you stop and think in the turmoil of life, and let there be written on the walls of every home the word FORGIVE.



## UNFORGETTABLE AND ILLUMINATING EXPERIENCES IN BRIGHTON

The year 1937, when Ernest Meads passed suddenly into the Spirit World, was a time not to be forgotten by the home circle nor myself. It caused a blank which we could not fill. I personally look back on many years of loving companionship and help, and without that friendship these records would never have been written. Meads was the strong man who lived to serve his Master, and it mattered not to him what the surroundings or conditions were. The crowded street or market place were just as sacred to him as the place of prayer, the quiet of the great cathedral, or the lonely country church. He felt the call of the Master—"Go ye into the highways and byways and compel them to come in!"

There comes to my mind the memory of one dark night when we stood side by side on the end of the Palace pier at Brighton. The saloon was brilliantly illuminated and from the distance came the sound of dancing and the shouts of the show-holders around, but in the darkness of the landing stage came the cry of a poor soul: "God be merciful to me, a sinner." It came from a control—a London barmaid, who, one night, had dropped a parcel into the sea containing her newly-born child.

The band still played while the dancers whirled round, and the coloured lights flickered in the evening breeze, when two tired men made their way home to their lodging. "God save the King" came faintly from the distant ball-room, but from our hearts came a prayer: "God save Madge!" The night was dark and the sea rough, but we felt there was rejoicing amongst the angels in Heaven over a repentant sinner, and that poor Madge,



weary and calling for help, would not be refused entry.

Many visitors to Brighton are familiar with the walk along the Eastern Parade where, from the Palace Pier and Aquarium, the ground gradually rises to a cliff. Looking back from the grassy plateau, the whole of Brighton Town lies at one's feet. Black Rock has brought many a tired city worker peace and quiet as he has listened to the voice of the sea which breaks amid the rocks at its base. Meads and I have stood many times at this spot, remembering how those who felt they were unable to face the future have dashed their bodies on the rocks below. The unmarried and expectant mother, perhaps—the deserted lover, the thief, the bankrupt—some of those to whom life had become unbearable. There, among the beauties of Nature, we have found their spirits tied to the place of their passing.

My friend said it was very sad to listen to the various controls, but he could not help feeling that in many cases their condition was not entirely their own fault. It seemed to him that a little kindness and forbearance shown to them during their earth life might have saved much of what we found on Black Rock. Is it possible that some of us, when we pass into spirit, may have to face a charge of murder through neglecting to be kind here? Certainly, my experience in the rescue work has shown me a great possibility of this being so. "I am glad I am not their Judge!" said Ernest Meads.

Upon this occasion Wesley gave one of his finest addresses, lasting about twenty minutes. Notes were taken at the time, but much to the regret of all concerned, many records, amongst which were these, were lost at the time of my friend's death.

We found a great deal of haunting in Brighton—spirits still clinging to their old lustful and intemperate lives. I suppose it is only to be expected in a town that is within easy reach of London, and a popular seaside resort. One cannot shut one's eyes to the danger of such spirits who return to try to enjoy their earthly appetites



through others, as we are all more or less mediumistic. It is a danger that this generation should understand, and shows the great need for a greater insight into Spiritualism.

To illustrate my meaning more fully I will give you an instance. We were leaning on a hand rail, looking out to sea. The light was just beginning to fail when I was controlled by an old Army Captain—an officer of the Bodyguard during the Regency Period when the Court visited the Palace, now known as the Royal Pavilion. He still seemed to be dwelling on the good time he had had whilst in the body, and had much to say concerning women and wine. In conversation with this spirit, who spoke at some length, Ernest Meads gained some valuable information. After urging him to let his thoughts dwell on higher things, he asked him how it was that such attractions of the flesh should still appeal after so many years had elapsed. The Captain told him that alcohol frequently furnished a condition for control, so much so that the spirit of a like nature could not only get the flavour of the drink but also join in the conversation. This may be the explanation of why an intoxicated man will often talk above his own mentality and sometimes give expression to opinions that he would not hold normally. We have all known or heard of cases where a man would be a completely different personality from his normal self whilst under the influence of drink, and it is not unusual for a man, when sober, to deny the things he has said whilst intoxicated, having, we assume, no recollection of having said them. The information that Meads obtained from this control led us to believe that the strange things that may happen when a person is intoxicated can be largely explained by the influence of some controlling entity.

My friend next mentioned the subject of immorality. The control likened it to a partiality for sport. The young, he said, join in various games which they enjoy, but as the body advances in age they can no longer take an active part, although the love of the game continues. So they look on, still enjoying the game and feeling the old thrill



of youth. This information was a great help to us both when, on other occasions, we visited the Royal Pavilion, where we found a very undesirable and distressing state of haunting. The Court went there to have a good time, and they certainly seem to have had it! We found that one of the chief reasons for the trouble was the desire to get into royal favour, which alone brought to us many confessions of blackmail, bribery and forgery. Women of title stood out foremost in this class, and they gave their names with accounts of their deeds. These names must of course be withheld, but at the time many officers of high rank and position were ruined, banishment and sometimes suicide frequently resulting. The distress of some of these spirits would be difficult to describe, and it is not my wish to do so. The servants of these people were frequently little better than their masters, and here we found them, all clustered together, trying by confession to wipe out the past that was holding them down.

One titled lady tried to materialise in my bedroom after one of these visits, but only succeeded in showing her arm and hand—the hand which had written the lie to the ruin of some officer of the Court. This physical phenomenon lasted some thirty seconds, floating over my body in bed, and was one of the very few cases of physical phenomena I have experienced, the others occurring in the early years of my development, probably to strengthen my faith.

Again I have to regret the loss of many notes of addresses and prayers that were given on these occasions.

One early evening we turned our way homeward. It had been a time of very strange experiences, full of interest and bringing us considerable information of value. As we approached the terminus at the top of West Street, Wesley controlled and with outstretched hand pronounced the Benediction. "God bless Brighton," said Ernest Meads, to which I said "Amen."



## FROM DOVER CASTLE TO CANTERBURY CATHEDRAL

To give a detailed account of all the towns and villages which my friend and I visited would take up considerable space, but we had a host of experiences similar to those related in the last chapter.

I look back on a most enjoyable sojourn in Kent, during which we visited many of the surrounding towns and villages. One of our visits was to Dover Castle, where we expected to find many spirits still clinging to their old associations. But we walked about the battlements for some time without feeling anything in the nature of haunting. This was surprising, and I began to wonder if the fault lay with me and that something within myself was preventing it.

We were wandering round the walls when we came to a hole which opened on the slopes outside. And here a control took me, saying: "I am an old soldier and was here in the time of Charles I. They were rougher times then, and we often caroused in the banquet-hall you have visited. But there was little vice, for we were always in a state of warfare here—armed and ready for work in case of an attack. Nor were women allowed here. Whatever vice we indulged in was not associated with this place, but in the town and surrounding villages. But things were different in those castles where the King and his Court lived. Luxury and vice were rampant there. I know, for I was stationed for a time in one of them. This hole was made in case escape should be necessary, and here we threw much of our refuse."

Whilst having tea, however, in a small hotel nearby, I saw clairvoyantly a face in a glass menu-holder, and this



revealed a condition of haunting which took us some little time to deal with.

During our stay in Hythe, we were sitting overlooking the town one day, and close to us was a very fine grove of trees. I was speculating as to how it came there, when I went under control. It was not very clear who the control was, but Meads assumed him to be Dr. Haslem.

"You have been speculating as to how this grove came into existence," he said. "There was a parent tree somewhere in the neighbourhood, perhaps at some little distance, and birds which had fed upon the fruit congregated on this spot and evacuated. In certain cases the vital germ of the seed had not been destroyed by the digestive juices, and passed with the excrement of the birds, falling on a favourable soil and taking root. Nourished by the atmosphere, the seeds grew into saplings, some of which developed into the trees you see now. It would be much the same if human excrement were scattered on the ground. Wild tomatoes, for instance, might result in cases where the vital germ had escaped the destruction of the gastric juices. It is a symbol of the indestructibility of Nature and should be a sign to you of the love that is indestructible that can and will transform and beautify human nature."

On another occasion we went to look at old Saltwood Castle, and whilst sitting on the grassy slopes that surround it, a control took me. "I was a Frenchman," he said, "and came over here as falconer to the Lord of the Castle. I was a spy and in touch with the Pope. At the time of which I am speaking, this was an important Castle, being situated between those of Hastings and Dover. Viewing with dismay the growth of Protestantism, we hoped to land a force here which should come up the valley to the Castle. A tunnel was constructed from the coast to the Castle, and men were smuggled across the sea." He went on to tell us how, apart from reporting regularly to the Pope, there was little for him to do, except to live a somewhat idle and luxurious life. Although



great preparations were made, nothing of importance occurred, and after his time the Castle became a monastery.

During the afternoon another control came, who gave us more details concerning Saltwood Castle. "I was the officer of the Keep," he said, "and the old Keep looked much as it does to-day. Abbot Mercier ruled the Castle and the Monastery attached to it. An effort was made to take the Castles of Hastings and Dover, the intention being to march on into Canterbury and depose the Protestant Archbishop. The men were quartered in this valley and the officers in the Castle, which was strongly protected. Cross-bowmen were at every porthole and men in armour guarded the gates. A battle was fought near Hastings, and efforts were made to take us here, but they failed, for we passed troops through the tunnel and attacked them from behind, so that the greater number of the besiegers were slain."

He told us about the making of the tunnel. It appears it took twenty years to build and cost over three hundred lives. To keep its existence a secret, it was necessary to cover the ends, and the men lost their lives owing to poisonous air. Those who died during its construction were brought out and buried in the valley. The Castle has since gone to ruins and the tunnel has fallen in. Meads and I tried to trace this tunnel, but were unable to do so. We found a mound of earth that might have had something to do with it, but time had overgrown it with shrubs and undergrowth and we had to abandon the search.

One lovely summer evening, we sat on a seat just outside the churchyard wall of the old Hythe Parish Church, watching the sunset. We had had a tiring time in the church, where many souls had come to us, some in sorrow, but others with happy reflections they wished to speak about. We were sitting quietly when I went slowly under control, and the controlling spirit turned out to be an old lady.



“ I am an old woman,” she said, “ and it was a hard climb at times up to the church. When I passed from earth I did not want my name to be remembered, but wished to leave a token of my thoughts for others, so I left the seat on which you are sitting, that others, old and feeble, might sit near God’s altar and the symbol of His Love. I had a life of trouble and hardship, but His Love never failed me—it was with me as a child when I played amongst the flowers and in the grass, and it was with me when, as a woman, I faced trials and troubles. Then, when old age came, He upheld me in my feebleness and sustained me as I grew infirm. Now again I hear through mortal ears those old sweet bells. How I love them ! I have stood in the morning light and listened to their vibrations, and heard their clang in the mid-day sun. I have stood in the twilight when work was over, and listened to their sweet tones, as they raised my soul to God ! Let us kneel and listen to the call which summons us to the loving Presence of Him Who gave us work, peace and rest. Clang on, oh bells, to all eternity !”

At another time we sat on the grassy slopes at the back of the town, watching some sheep under the shadow of the trees. Another unknown control said : “ See, brother ! From the heat of the sun a shade is provided ! Love provides thus for the animal world. Is it not so in human life ? During the conflict of daily routine the Holy Spirit provides a refuge, a calm and peaceful shade. Oh, Lord, let us rest under the shadow of Thy Wings !”

Whilst sitting on the beach one Sunday afternoon, I was controlled by the Reverend Lyte (author of “ Abide with Me ”). “ See !” he said, “ here are stones—some big, some small, some dull and others bright. Oh, what illustration of human life have we here ! These stones in my hand are clean—so clean that they would not soil the purity of even a baby’s hand. The sea ever dashing its waves over them has rendered them no longer foul. Some stones never see the sea, but are dirty and covered with the mud in which they lie. The sea is a great puri-



fier, though sometimes its waves are rough. So let our prayer be that all the Universe may be dashed by the spray and purified ! In some of these there are no rough edges, owing to the friction and tossing of the waves, and mark, too, how they glisten in the sunlight. So, oh Lord, grant that Thy Holy Spirit may wash every soul of man, that all, as these stones on the beach, may be washed clean and rough edges may be made smooth, even though it be by the action of the waves of adversity and trial, thus reflecting the light and the sunshine of Thy Love."

One bright morning we went into Canterbury by coach to spend what proved to be one of the busiest days we had. Soon after leaving the coach we were stopped in front of a shop by a control telling us that in the time of the Reformation some young man set fire to a house on the spot on which we stood. It was the home of a widow and only son, and they had to fly by the back door from destruction. It seemed this control was tied to the spot of his misdeeds, and asked for our prayers that he might be forgiven.

Soon after this we became aware of the presence of Charles Dickens, but our records do not mention that he said anything at this time, although we have had messages from him in our home circle. We entered the Cathedral by the nave, walking along the south aisle to the chancel, then into Trinity Chapel. Here I was controlled by one who termed himself Edward the Black Prince, and who spoke thus :

" Oh, man of the earth, I know thee not, but I feel there is sympathy, and though I am in no way attached to this place, I hasten to respond to love. I lived in very different times from these, hard times, in which everything worth living for had to be fought for. A symbol of the times and of my life may be seen in the armour of my statue. Country, Home, King and Religion had to be fought for, and believe me, Religion is worth fighting for. I have been blessed indeed, for I have seen the Face of the Master !"



Archbishop Tait then greeted us and exhorted us to pray for peace. He was followed by Thomas à Becket, who controlled me whilst I was standing in the north aisle between the tomb of Henry IV and the chantry built to his memory. "Oh, man of the earth," he said, "the chanting of priests availeth little, but the love of a sympathetic heart helpeth much. It is not the singing of masses nor the prayers of priests that can wipe out the sins of life and wrongs done. I know now, and am striving to wipe them out by humble help to others."

Then followed one who may have been the spirit who spoke to us in the town. "I am in trouble," he said. "I helped to burn an old woman's home and am chained to its door. Thanks, thanks, for your love and the help it gives." Then another spirit spoke, and his words would no doubt have been interesting had they not been broken off by some people passing quite close to, if not touching, me. The little he said was this :

"Mark the beauty of the colour, the noble architecture ! Think of the love and labour which brought it into being. Think of the fighting, of the streams of blood which ran down the gutters of the city. I lived in times different from these." We much regretted that this speaker was interrupted. Whoever he was, there is no doubt that he intended to give us some historical information. Some others followed, mostly of the confessional type.

By this time the guides called for a rest, so Meads took me into the garden and we sat down near the War Memorial for some time without speaking, until the bell rang for the service in the Cathedral. In the quiet and peace of this secluded spot there came these words from Latimer :

"Oh bells, ring out that all may hear thee ! You hear the bells calling the people to prayer. One is cracked, but it serves its purpose. The call is heard and many respond. Here is a parable of life which, though warped, may yet be sincere and serves to call people to



the Master and to remind them of the knowledge of love which He brought and bestowed on men. Oh, privileged people, to have such a reminder ! I had no bell, no organ, to tell me, but in solitude and on my knees I found the Love of the Master. May my life, though cracked, be remembered as an effort to point to Him Who loves us all."

Before we left our resting place at the War Memorial, there came to me a strong desire to pray aloud. Someone uttered a prayer for those who were remembered there, and this was followed by the words of Cardinal Newman's hymn, "Lead, kindly Light."

After a light lunch, we again returned to the Cathedral, when two addresses were given, one by Archbishop Tait and the other by Dean Farrar, who will be remembered as the author of *THE LIFE OF CHRIST*, and also as editor of *CHATTERBOX*, the children's paper of Victorian times. Unfortunately, the notes of these two addresses are also lost.

We then went into the Crypt, where an address was given us by Oliver Cromwell, who said :

"I am pleased to speak through the body of a mortal. I have seen some of the early fights and tussles of England. We fought for the Bible, for Religion, and for Christian Faith. Little do the men of to-day realise their privileges and what it cost to gain them. I have fought, and others have fought, bled and laid down their lives, but there come to me His words : 'Inasmuch as ye have done it for the sake of and unto these, my brethren, ye have done it unto the highest and holiest.' Praise the Lord, oh, my soul, and all that is within me, praise His Holy Name ! I would praise the Lord indeed for all His goodness and mercy. A thousand shall fall at thy side, and ten thousand at thy right hand ! Friend, I have seen these thousands fall—some at my right hand and some at my left, not heeding whether they lived or whether death overtook them—so they won the Victory.

"I see to-day that my life, efforts and desires were spent in laying the foundations on which the great



Christian faith is built. So, friend, enjoy the privileges, make rich the harvest which the lives and deaths of the saints have prepared. My desire is that all men should walk and not stumble. It is written: 'He shall give His Angels charge over thee, to keep thee in all thy ways, lest thou dash thy foot against a stone.' So trust, and have all faith to walk the path made for thee with blind, unquestioning self-sacrifice and love, ready in all things."

So the day, with its experiences, ended with Wesley giving a verse of the hymn "When I survey the Wondrous Cross," and so we returned to our hotel in Hythe, tired, but feeling that God had indeed talked to us by the way.



## WITH ERNEST MEADS IN THE ISLE OF WIGHT

One of my most pleasant recollections is an enjoyable holiday I spent with my friend Meads in the Isle of Wight during the year 1932. The previous winter had been a very trying one, not in the sense that it had been severe, for we had had little frost or snow, and with the exception of some easterly gales it might have been called a mild season. But we had had a bad epidemic of influenza. It had swept the country, paralyzing business arrangements generally, and leaving behind it many broken family circles by the number on its death roll. I was fortunate, escaping with only three days in bed, but, like many others, looked and longed for the summer with its warmth and sunshine.

Expecting there would be a rush for the seaside, I made an early start, and the first week in June found me making for the Isle of Wight, and owing to it being so early in the season, alone. I arrived at Shanklin Station, and whilst looking for apartments in High Street, I noticed a cottage with a card in the window. I knocked at the door, and much to my surprise it was opened by a half-caste Indian woman, evidently of North American origin. Her broken English was difficult to understand, but I was able to gather that she was unable to take me just then. I also understood that she was very sorry, as apparently she liked me. I thanked her and left the house, but before I reached the little garden gate, she closed the door, and, coming after me, touched me on the shoulder and said: "Follow me! I see you comfie." Just at this moment, a big black cloud that had been hanging over the town burst, and the rain came down in torrents. I had my macintosh and umbrella and was thus protected, but she, with only a cotton frock and bare arms and legs,



was getting soaked. To make matters worse, she was leading me across some open ground or field to the extreme north-west of the town. I begged her to return, but all I could get was "No! Me no afraid." So she landed me at a charming little private house in the far north-west of the town, where I spent two weeks of comfort and enjoyable rest at a moderate fee. I think I can still see that woman standing at the door of my apartments, with her dark features, high cheek bones, jet black hair and flashing dark eyes, dripping with rain, her soaked skirts clinging to her body, and an artificial gilt bracelet on her wrist. How often I have wished I could produce on canvas a replica of her as she stood there, refusing my tip for her kindness, and raising her hand in prayer or a blessing, which she spoke in her native language. Then she left me, and with bowed head turned back into the storm.

I did hope that during my stay in the town I should see some more of her, but strange to say I never saw her again. Upon making inquiries I was informed that she was a strange individual, greatly loved and respected by those who knew her, but seldom seen about. Being half-caste, she had met with much persecution in her native country, America. It seemed she had wonderful healing powers, and gave her time to restoring those suffering with consumption, meeting with no small success, for which she charged no fee. Her money came from an unknown source, and none knew who her benefactor was. She was, I learned, a student of the occult, also a herbalist, and had knowledge of some of the secret remedies of the Indians. So I came to the conclusion that a very remarkable woman had crossed my path!

I did not hurry to get about the Island, as the house had a nice garden with shady trees, under which one could rest in a deck-chair, but even resting can get monotonous and I began to wish to see something more.

So I started to travel about the Island, and the thing that struck me most forcibly was the haunted conditions I encountered in all parts. At times I was quite alone, and



a nervousness would come over me, making me wonder if I was wise to be without someone with me. Whilst walking round such places as Carisbrooke Castle, Osborne House, and some of the old parts around Ryde, the near presence of haunting spirits was somewhat alarming, so much so that at times I considered packing my bag and going back home. However, I stayed my two weeks, but wrote to Meads and told him all about it.

On my return home no time was lost in giving my experiences to my friend, and at the family circle my guides spoke of the dangerous spots I had visited, and how their constant care had been necessary. Also, some of the spirits I had encountered there came to the circle asking prayers and help. It was very certain that I had found a spot that was sorely in need of rescue work, and we wondered what was the best thing to be done. Mrs. Meads solved the problem by offering to give up her holiday, and suggesting that in the near future Ernest and I should return to the Island and have what she termed "a good time!" I am not so sure about the "good time," but it was certainly a very busy one!

A week or two later, I was sitting in a train at Waterloo, with Meads at my side, returning to the Isle of Wight. By this time it was August. Every place was very full, but we succeeded in securing a double room with breakfast at the back of Shanklin village.

I well remember the first night. We were both very tired after the journey and the search for accommodation. We turned in about ten o'clock, and Meads, who was the first in bed, was soon fast asleep. I followed shortly after, but had no sooner blown out the candle than I saw the spirit form of a woman standing at the end of the bed.

I called gently: "Ernest," but all I got was heavy breathing, denoting he was fast asleep. I called again, but with no result, so, feeling it was a shame to wake him up, I asked the spirit form to come some other time as we were worn out. I wished her God's blessing and was soon asleep myself.



Whilst dressing the next morning, I told my friend about it, and as I was recording the event, the spirit suddenly controlled me. It seemed that in some part of the house were a young couple and a baby. The spirit was the grandmother, who wished us to inform them that she knew all about the child and had kissed it. As we knew nothing about the other inmates of the house, we did not know what to do. The woman was right, however, because as we were going out after breakfast we passed a young mother in the hall tucking her baby up in a pram to take it out. On returning at night we found that they had returned to London that afternoon, so what might have been an interesting experience came to naught.

We were very much struck by what I will call "small controls" that we encountered all over the Island—those who just wished to make themselves known and to say that they were alright. At God's Hill we found an old woman who thought she was still sitting in the porch of her cottage, and we had to listen to details of all her children. In the same village, by the gate of a field, was a man who could not find his cows. "Why trouble about cows now?" said my friend, but from what he told us we gathered that his sole thought during his life had been his cows, practically from the cradle to the grave, and so it was now. All he knew about religion was what he had been told, as he could neither read nor write.

We had several cases like this, with which my friend had great difficulty in dealing. Here again we found a similar state of affairs as we had done in our City experiences, the memory of the material life retarding progress after passing into the Spirit World. Years roll on, but to many of these there is no change. The spirit seems to live in the past as it knew it. Lands may change hands, fields may become streets, villages turn into towns, but there are those who know it not. The reader may find this very strange and hard to understand, as did we. But that is as we found it, and remains one of the many problems that have yet to be answered.



After leaving this poor soul in better hands, we turned to the village main street. Here in the middle of the road we had a control, evidently a local or lay preacher belonging to a little mission hall we were then passing. He spoke for some twenty minutes, but not with the eloquence of a trained speaker, and my friend felt he was a local man, probably rough and uneducated. Nevertheless, he had the real thing in his heart, and in the centre of God's Hill village street there rang out the old words : *Come unto Me all ye that are weary and heavy laden and I will give you rest.* "Oh, how that control did plead," said Meads; "the way he shouted 'Come!' It seemed to echo on the old church itself! God bless you, friend, whoever you are!" So two silent men went home to Shanklin, feeling a blessing had been given to both of them.

We had another busy day at Osborne House. This being the favourite residence of Queen Victoria and the Prince Consort, it brought us into touch with many of the Royal Family and numbers of high officials and retainers of the Court. Although their talks, some long, others short, were taken down at the time, I feel it is wise to refrain from giving them here, owing to the political nature of many of them. One thing that interested us was to discover that the Queen and many more of the Court were interested in Spiritualism. Certain information on this subject was given us, also the name of their medium, but this, too, I feel it better to withhold. The subject was discussed at the family circle on our return home, and it was decided that it would be wise to destroy the notes, which we did. This day, however, will always stand out as one of the most interesting that Meads and I spent together.

On another occasion we went to Ventnor, which, as many know, is a place very much used for the treatment of lung and chest trouble, owing to its mild climate and its situation on the southern coast of the Island. We endeavoured to enter the town with blank minds, but nevertheless could not help feeling that we were walking into exceptionally painful and sad surroundings, and I, person-



ally, could not help remembering some who had come here to regain health but had never returned to their earthly homes.

We first of all walked through the town, and then went into the Invalids' Garden, known to many as a beauty spot, but here nothing of importance occurred, except that a few spirits manifested. Later on we made our way towards the Cemetery, which I consider one of the finest view-points of the Island. I do not suppose many visitors think of going there, but those who can manage the climb will be repaid when they see the view from the Burial Ground on the top of the hills at the North of Ventnor. After leaving the station, which is itself very high, one turns to the right where a path leads up a very steep incline. I had to stop many times before reaching the top, and my friend, while discussing our visit afterwards with some friends, said it was like walking up the side of a house !

The afternoon of our visit was very hot and close, and necessitated a rest on a bank before entering the gates. When we had cooled down, a prayer for protection and guidance was offered and we entered the so-called last resting place of hundreds—those who had fallen victims to the scourge of consumption. It would be monotonous to read a detailed account of all the various controls to whom my friend listened over some two hours, as so many were in the same strain, but there is one incident I should like to record, as it was not only pathetic but in some ways amusing.

We entered the Cemetery just past mid-day, and chose this time as we felt that we should probably have it to ourselves and be free from onlookers and passers-by, who might cause interruption and possibly stop the control. We found we had chosen the right time, as the grounds were empty with the exception of one old woman tending a grave by the side of the path where we were walking. She seemed to be poor, probably one who would get her living by helping in the background of the kitchen in one of the hotels in the town. As we passed her she



was patting and making smooth the surface of a mound, her hands all clogged with clay and mould. Nature's tools, her fingers, seemed to be all she had. She did not appear to notice us and seemed quite engrossed in her work.

Soon after this the controls came along, and my friend listened to many sad tales and confessions. By this time we had reached the far end of the grounds and felt we needed a rest, and whilst so doing, Meads noticed that the poor old woman was making for us as if she wished to speak. Approaching us, she began to tell us how she had been tidying up her brother's grave, and after one or two remarks, we soon found a desire on her part to unburden her heart. "Ah!" she said, "he was a good sort was Tom, one of the very best, a kind and gentle heart, and a smile for everyone. Even the children loved him. I feel so lonely without him." And here the tears ran down her cheeks. "But I did the best I could for him. I nursed him to the very end, and he died in my arms." Here the old lady quite broke down, and for some reason took my hand whilst she wiped her face with a dirty bit of rag.

"I am so sorry for you," said my friend, "that I want to say a word of comfort to you. Have you ever heard about Spiritualism?" The rest of the conversation was lost to me, as, for some minutes, I found myself going into trance. It must have been of short duration, and I came round suddenly to find the old woman gone. "How do you feel?" said my friend. "Quite alright, after a little rest," I replied. Then he went on to tell me how the control was her brother Tom, and how he had convinced her of the truth of his presence. "Moreover," said Meads, "you got hold of her and gave her a good sound kiss!" "No!" I said, "surely not!" "You did," said Meads, "and she kissed you back." "What," I cried, "that dirty old woman kissing me!" "Yes," he replied, "she was convinced without doubt that it was her brother Tom. She left us saying: 'God bless you Tom!'"



I knew you would come to me some day.' And the last I heard was 'God bless you, Tom!' with a wave of the dirty rag, as she went down the path for home."

Amongst other controls who came to us were some who felt they had been hardly dealt with in having to leave this life with its experiences, some of them sweethearts who were looking forward to marriage and the making of a home, and mothers trying to send messages to their children. Some wished us to tell their friends and parents of their visit to us, but of course it was impossible to pass on messages when we knew nothing of the people for whom they were intended, nor where to find them. One control, the husband of one of my own friends, gave me a message for his wife, which I went to some trouble to deliver, only to have it refused and doubted.

My friend explained to them that our object in seeking them was to help them to get away from earthly conditions and so seek a higher life, and with prayer and supplication we left them in the hands of the many spiritual workers—the mission band—who were working with us, carrying out the Master's instructions to "go into the highways and byways and compel them to come in."

It was always a great joy to both of us to feel ourselves surrounded by those who counted life not dear and have carried their enthusiasm into the Spirit World, still trying to help those who find it hard to leave the material things of earth.

As we were leaving Ventnor Cemetery and passing the chapel, an address was given on the chapel steps by the late Reverend W. L. Watkinson, ex-president of the Methodist Conference, whose grave was close by. This address was no doubt intended for the unseen people standing around, and he spoke for some twenty minutes, taking for his text: "As the hills are round about Jerusalem, so am I round those who love Me." After a most earnest appeal, he made a fine point of a thought not generally met with, and that was "that there were no gaps in those hills." "Oh, lift thine eyes to the hills from



whence cometh thy strength," he said, "for He came that ye might have life and have it more abundantly." Then, extending my arms and using all the power that was left, he concluded in a strong voice by saying: "Angels, ever bright and fair, take, O, take us to thy care! Amen."

So ended our visit to Ventnor Cemetery. Tired, we made for the station, casting our eyes on the hills as we left the town and thinking of what Mr. Watkinson had said.

A few days later we returned to London, and as I write these records I can see my friend saying good-bye at Waterloo Station. "Good-bye, old chap," he said. "We have had a most wonderful time!" And indeed we had.



## BLUEBELL TIME AT KEW

There are few people, I expect, particularly Londoners, who have not at some time spent a few hours amid the beauty of Kew Gardens. Their easy access, away from the turmoil of London, has made them a favourite place of rest and quiet, and many of us, now in advanced years, look back on our childhood when we played amongst their bushes and woodlands.

Every season of the year brings its own beauty to Kew, but none more so than the Spring. The new green, blended with the shades of almond blossom, lilac and laburnum, to name only a few of the many flowers to be found there, provide a thrill for the artistic eye, and lift one's soul in thankfulness to the Creator for such a gift of beauty. One is reminded of the words: "Consider the lilies of the field—they toil not, neither do they spin. But I say unto you that even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these!"

For some years, Ernest Meads, my brother and myself made an annual pilgrimage to the Gardens to see the bluebells. In a corner close to the Thames is a space where they are allowed to grow wild, at the request of the late Queen Victoria, and in that allotted space is a cottage which was built for her own use. Apart from one occasion when she inspected the Gardens and took tea in the cottage, it has never been occupied. One Saturday afternoon, known as Bluebell Day, or rather the day on which they are advertised as being at their best, Meads, my brother and I were paying our annual visit. We were walking down the path leading to the cottage with its wonderful carpet of bluebells on either side, when we noticed coming towards us a small company of people. Much to



our surprise, we found as they approached that the party was that of King George V and Queen Mary, who, with their attendants, had been enjoying the beauties of the place as we were doing.

A little further along this path, after the Royal party had passed, I was controlled by one whom we took to be Queen Victoria, and I see no reason why we should doubt that it was she. She started by saying she was pleased to have the opportunity of speaking to us, as she had done so before. (This undoubtedly referred to the incident at Osborne.) Meads took notes at the time, which I reproduce here.

“Some speak of these as my gardens,” said the Queen, “but I say No! They are the people’s gardens. It is a pleasure to me to see my people enjoying the beauties of Nature. I tried to realise my desire to do the best I could for them, but it is not the King or Queen who can raise the people. We are, as it were, on a platform above them—they are frightened of us. Whence came about the present state of things I cannot say, but from the beginning there seems to have been a reverence and obedience to those in position. Some may have enjoyed and liked it, but it was not so in my case. I was keenly anxious that my life should be a means of blessing and help to those below me—the humble and lowly. That was my ambition, but my position made it difficult for me to realise it. I recognised that education was a valuable and primary thing, but I always felt that to bring the people into touch with Nature and Art was to give them spiritual power. Therefore I took great pleasure in throwing everything open to the public, to enable them to appreciate the beauties of Nature around them and to enjoy the charm of colour. I felt that this would bring about a desire to be clean, and I wanted science and education to fill in the background. Pretty flowers and rich colours show us that in order to get perfection there must be no dirt.

“It was a great pleasure to me to throw open my grounds, and I would have done more, but I was pre-



vented from doing so by those around me. There was a strong tendency in my time, as in other times, to discord, to envy those in better conditions. I tried my best to overcome this by showing that what was mine was also theirs. I wanted the people to enjoy England, to enjoy life, and to rise above jealousy.

"I realise also that the uncultured have not the strength, the ambition and the environment to develop in one, or even two generations. Education alone cannot do it. The great emancipation and upliftment is, I believe, to be obtained through the eye rather than through the ear or any other sense. The English people will rise to their highest level through a love of beauty—beauty of flowers, mountains, sunrises and sunsets. As in the past, so is my present desire for this to come about. The raising and uplifting of the people is more important, in my opinion, than whether there is a Conservative or a Liberal return." She then turned her attention to politics, but I feel there is no need to repeat what she said.

It has been my custom when visiting these gardens to take with me a little camera with which to snap anything that arrested my attention, and whilst doing so on this particular afternoon, I had left my brother and Meads, who had walked on, leaving me to catch them up. It seemed that during my absence a conversation had sprung up between them on the subject of "Spiritualism in relation to the Church." I knew nothing of this at the time, but on rejoining them I went under control, and my own guide, Dr. Haslem, joined in the conversation. Notes were taken at the time which enable me to give his remarks fairly accurately.

"I have been listening to your conversation," he said, "and you have stated one of the great fundamental truths in saying that some like and others dislike the subject. This is a law that holds throughout the Universe and is one of the great difficulties which arise in connection with religious subjects. The importance of helping and doing the work all rests on that, and more especially in



the Spirit World. But however anxious and desirous people may be, they cannot all do it—we have to find one who can.

“In earth life you often hear it said—‘You go and speak to him or her; it is of no use for me to do so,’ and this is common in other things. All have each a special line and sphere, and in this work of spiritual development, both in the earth life and in the spirit world, it is a pity to force others to go round a certain path, a path which is not allotted to everyone. Those who could, often will not, and those who cannot, often desire it. This constitutes our perplexity in helping those who are low down. There are many saintly people, both in the flesh and in the Spirit World who would help if they could, but they cannot.

“It may be a question of social position. The rich may wish to do good. They may build churches, schools and institutions, they may feed and educate, but they have not done much—they have not got to the spirit. It is frequently one of his own class who can help a man, as on a stairway, as it were. Those on a level, or nearly so, are the ones who can help.”

A little later on, Dr. Haslem was asked if a spirit could see the beauties of Nature as we do. “Yes,” he replied, “a spirit standing in the aura of a medium can see the natural beauty that is around. A mortal is a spirit, though encased in a material body, and we can talk, see, influence and direct a spirit which reacts upon the body itself.”

The surroundings of these beautiful gardens furnished me with ideal conditions in which to work, probably because my own love of beauty produced an emotion which opened the door to that which was holiest and best. Unfortunately, only a few notes remain of the numerous talks and addresses given within these gardens, as many were destroyed, either by accident or through ignorance of what they contained, in the clearing up that took place after my friend's death.

Before I close this account of our visit to Kew, I



should like to mention an old woman who came. It would have been interesting to know who she was, but we were unable to find out. Perhaps she wished to remain anonymous.

"I am an old woman," she said. "I have seen life from many standpoints, and have experienced many difficulties and reverses, but I come to sit in this garden and my heart is full in an earthly sense. Everything was twisted and crooked in my time, and I see through the medium no straight lines. I see curves and twists; even the paths made by earthly hands are not straight, any more than those made by heavenly hands. No flowers are the same, for I see around me they twist and turn. The skies above are bright, whilst under the branches it is very dark. I see the leaves flutter in the wind in joy for their little lives, and I feel it is a comfort and joy to be here. Life is crooked. Even the prettiest and most beautiful things made by God Himself bend with the wind, which cometh whence it listeth. It blows upon leaves and grass causing them to bend to the earth, but when it is gone they point upward once more. The wind blew upon me and caused me to point to the ground, but I am thankful that at times I was able to lift my eyes to the heavens. I am only an old woman trying to do my best, which I feel is very poor, but I would rather be a blade of grass, bent to the earth by cutting winds, with the opportunity to point up to the sunshine, than be protected by glass. My life was open to the heavens, not spent under glass."

The old woman's talk was the prelude to a very sad confession by a man of title and rank, the subject of which it is impossible to record here. We felt there was a link between him and the old woman, and who knows? He may have been brought by her to confess his sin, and that she was, as we felt, leading him home, not to a castle made by earthly hands, but to one that the Master had gone to prepare.

So as we left Kew Gardens at the close of "Bluebell



Day," the words of T. E. Brown came to our minds—

*A garden is a lovesome thing, Got wot!*

*Rose plot,*

*Fringed pool,*

*Ferned grot—*

*The veriest school of Peace; and yet*

*The fool contends that God is not!*

*Not God in Gardens, when the eve is cool?*

*Nay, but I have a sign—*

*'Tis very sure God walks in mine!*



## A NEW MOVEMENT SPRINGS INTO BEING

During the Summer of 1926, my friend Meads told me that he had heard of some ladies who were holding a family circle in Balham, in a neighbourhood quite close to my home. "Their methods are strictly religious," he said, "and I am told that the results are simply wonderful, the controls being of the very highest." As we ourselves were working along the same lines, we found it interesting to learn of others who were seeing the need for prayer and a religious atmosphere in connection with Spiritualism, which was still regarded by many outside the Movement as Black Magic and quite apart from religion, while to many within its ranks it was to all intents and purposes a thing more for scientific investigation.

There were many who regarded our own family circle unfavourably, for we were all, with the exception of Ernest Meads, Wesleyan Methodists, but it is not my wish to say anything about the criticism we received from others who had not the knowledge that we had—knowledge that we had learned in a hard school and by the graves of many loved ones. It is not everyone who has been blessed by having the veil lifted and by being shown a little of the life beyond, and so we treated any unkind word or thought with sympathy.

When Ernest Meads heard of these ladies in Balham who were striving to serve the Master in the same way as we were, he said: "I mean to find out something more about these people." When Meads said he intended to do something, he generally did it, so I was not surprised to hear later that he had not only been introduced to them, but also had an invitation to the circle. "Don't forget your old pal when you do go," I said. He promised he



would not, and some months later, in 1927, I received an invitation to go with him.

The year 1927 is a very black one in my history, for it was on the 21st January in that year that my wife passed suddenly into the Spirit World, without a moment's warning. This was a blow indeed, and much as I tried to be brave, a sudden loss like this after thirty-nine years of companionship strained me both physically and spiritually.

On looking back upon this time, I see how much I owed both to my brother and to Ernest Meads. My brother was with me at the inquest, and again, with Meads, by the graveside. As the words rang out on the frosty air, "Ashes to ashes, dust to dust," I felt a touch on my arm. I know not from whence it came, but there came to my mind the promise, "I will be with thee in the day of trouble."

It was a few weeks before I could take my place in the family circle again, although my wife frequently manifested her presence to me. It was in St. Albans Cathedral that she spoke for the first time, three weeks after her passing. My friend had asked me to spend a few days with him in his home at Hampstead, feeling that it would help me during this trying time, and one day we took a 'bus ride to St. Albans. That day in February, 1927, will always be remembered by me, for not only did my wife speak for the first time, but The Master revealed Himself to me, standing near one of the altars in a side chapel. This was the second time He had done so, the first being in Westminster Abbey.

I will now draw a veil over this sad experience in my life. As days went by, my wife repeatedly made herself known, not only in our own circle, but through many mediums at meetings which I attended, and when I was sitting alone my dog would often run and spring up at something unseen in the corner of the room, wagging his tail as he did so. Then he would come back to me, seeming a little frightened, and I would pat him on the head and say: "It's alright, Jim—I know all about it!"



A month or two later, my friend Meads came to me, saying : " I have kept my promise, and have an invitation for you to the circle I told you about," and so it happened that I entered the home of Miss Winifred Moyes and shook hands with her for the first time. It was, as he had said, a wonderful circle, and the most harmonious conditions pervaded the whole place. As I write these lines I can again see Miss Moyes standing entranced by her control " Zodiac," and while there have been many times in my life when I have been thrilled by a speaker, yet there came to me that night a peaceful joy that I had not felt before and which I cannot explain.

In the life of Wesley we read how one night, at a meeting in Aldersgate Street, " he felt his heart strangely moved," and my heart was also " strangely moved " as I sat that night in Miss Moyes's home, listening to Zodiac. Not one of us who sat there dreamed or thought that from that room would spring a religious movement that would stretch throughout the world, but it was to be, and to-day the GREATER WORLD CHRISTIAN SPIRITUALIST LEAGUE is known and loved by hundreds all over the world, with Miss Moyes as its leading medium.

It was not long after my visit to the circle that this Movement started, for it was founded on Good Friday, 1928. Little mission halls and rooms sprang up all over the country, and to-day there are more than five hundred branches of the League. I have always felt that this development of Spiritualism should have been taken up by the Christian Church, and cannot understand why they let such an opportunity slip.

I have often wondered from whence John Wesley got the idea of his " Class Meeting." Here we have a gathering that is in every respect a Spiritualist circle, and every member of the Methodist Church is asked to join such a meeting, which generally takes place in a small room or vestry at a given time once a week, on the church premises. It is an hour devoted to prayer, and in which each member is asked to give his or her experiences of a spiritual nature



that have taken place during the past week.

I was once asked to lead in prayer at one of these meetings, before I knew much of what we call the occult, and I did not feel that it was a very successful attempt. My mind seemed to get mixed and bewildered and I stumbled on without really knowing what I was saying, so much so that I felt nervous and ashamed of myself afterwards. The fact that I held an office in the Church at that time did not lessen my discomfort. Upon rising from my knees, I noticed several of the company present wiping their eyes, and at the close of the meeting the Minister of the Church, who was presiding, came to me and thanked me for my lovely prayer. "I did not know you were so gifted at impromptu prayer," he said. "I must remember your gift at some future time." This he did before the whole congregation, for the next Sunday evening he called upon me to close the service with prayer. I remember rising to my feet and going cold all over, and that was all, but afterwards came the reassurance that all was well, for my wife, who was by my side, laid her hand on mine.

All this was a long while ago, and my sole object in giving this incident now is to show how vital a force the Methodist Class Meeting should and could be to-day. A Bishop once said: "I have nothing I can offer to build up the spiritual life and strengthen the Christian better than the Methodist Class Meeting."

Ernest Meads and I were amongst the first to join the new Greater World Christian Spiritualist League, and my friend, with his gift of oratory, never missed a Sunday in addressing one of the new societies. I often joined him, but remained a silent member of the congregation. At one of these meetings a medium singled me out from the congregation, and said that a time was coming when I should stand on the platform of a Spiritualist meeting and address the audience. I remarked to my friend afterwards that whoever it was the medium intended to speak to, it was certainly not I, as I was the least gifted to speak from a



platform. But nevertheless it came true, and in a very short time, for I was taking services and conducting a mission.



## MISSION WORK AT PURLEY AND CATERHAM

In 1929 I sold up my home in Balham and joined my daughter, who had married and taken a house at Purley, in Surrey. I also retired from my profession, with the exception of a few cases that I felt I could not leave, and this left me free to give my mind and time to my spiritual work and healing, in which I found my medical training very useful.

My brother moved to Sutton, too, about this time, and as his house was only about four or five miles away from ours, our family circle was able to continue.

Soon after my removal to Purley, a Mr. and Mrs. Bentley opened a branch mission of the Greater World Movement in the High Street. I soon joined and became an active worker in the healing and diagnosing, under the control of Dr. Haslem. Another very interesting feature of this mission was the after-circle, which was open to all comers. I was often asked to be chairman and take control of this after-circle, and I look back on some very happy times, which were not only helpful to me but were so, I am sure, to others.

One night, while sitting in this circle, there came to me something about "donkeys." I at once thought it was some silly interference, and endeavoured to push the matter on one side, but I still got "donkeys" very clearly. I wondered what it could mean and whence it came, and in looking round the circle of some twenty members, I certainly did not see any who were likely to be interested in or connected with donkeys. Sitting by my side were a very nice young fellow and his lady friend, both clerks in the City. Feeling it might amuse him and at the same time relieve my own mind, I whispered to him: "I'm get-



ting a most silly thing, and I can't throw it off—it's about donkeys!" "Oh, do go on with it," he said, "it's my father, and he kept the donkeys at —— (naming a well-known seaside town). He was one of the best and I've been longing to hear from him!" In a few minutes his father had me under control and spoke to his son. This was naturally a great joy to me, and only one of many interesting things that I could relate about Purley Mission.

On another occasion a medium on the platform described a dog that she saw with me, and described the very dog that I have previously mentioned as having so often brought to my notice the presence of my wife. When I left Balham, I was obliged to give him away to some friends as, owing to the chalky condition of the unmade roads and gardens at our new home, animals brought so much white in on the rugs and carpets. So I found Jim a comfortable home, and I knew that he was well and happy at the time when this medium described him. Thinking it strange, I made inquiries a few days later as to his welfare, and learned that Jim was quite alright, but that the woman who had charge of him had committed suicide. At the next family sitting, this woman came along, pleading for our prayers and help. The strange part about this was that if the medium had not described the dog, I should not have enquired about him, and therefore should not have heard about the suicide. Moreover, it was only through Jim that the poor soul could be identified, as I knew very little about her, and she would probably have been numbered as just one more of the many such cases who came to our family circle.

Another thing that struck me forcibly at the open after-circle was how frequently a spirit belonging to someone in the group would come asking for forgiveness and help. This was often very embarrassing before strangers, and the spirit would remain unclaimed. I have had sitters come to me saying that they did recognise the spirit I described, but for private reasons they felt it better to keep silent.



To illustrate my meaning, I will give one experience. It was one Sunday evening, and having given the address myself during the service, I also took the after-circle. I described to a woman a pawnbroker's sign that I saw with her, *i.e.*, three golden balls on an iron rod. After a little reflection she disowned it. The next Sunday, at the open circle, the same thing happened, and again she disowned it. On another Sunday, it happened yet again, for the third time. "Well," said the woman, "this is the third time that this has happened to me, so I must tell you that I was brought up by a pawnbroker's family, and my early years were not very happy." I pointed out to her that while an experience like that was difficult to forget, yet she could forgive, and it appears that I rose from my seat, and going to the woman, was controlled by the pawnbroker, who came back pleading for forgiveness.

The meeting closed after this, and a beautiful prayer was offered, probably by one of the band of rescue workers.

While I was working with the Purley Mission, an incident occurred which, though not directly connected with the Mission, may be interesting to the reader. For some time I had been working rather hard, and felt that a little break from things and change of thought would do me good. So I decided to go away to Brighton for a week and allow my mind to dwell on other things.

Not having settled where I should stay, I strolled along the front, and a little Private Hotel facing the pier attracted my attention, probably because it was newly painted and looked fresh and clean. I was soon comfortably installed there, and during the evening, whilst having a smoke in the lounge before going to bed, the proprietor came and sat down beside me and entered into conversation. He told me he had only recently taken over the lease, and had been very much handicapped by the fact that his wife had been ill from the start, and for the last six weeks had not left her bed. I said I was very sorry to hear about this, particularly as the season was just beginning and would entail a great strain upon him. "What



is the nature of the complaint, may I ask?" I said. "I think it is the worry of taking over this hotel," replied the proprietor. "Just at present she has lost the use of her left leg. The Doctor calls three times a week, but nothing seems to happen in the way of improvement. I don't know what to do, because I cannot keep this place going without her."

Without thinking twice, I turned to him, and said: "May I see her? I am a qualified Medical Masseur." "What is your fee?" he asked. "Nothing," I replied. "Well, I shall have to mention the matter and talk it over with her. Let it stand until to-morrow."

The next morning I found a letter beside my plate from the proprietor, saying that his wife had consented to see me at 11 o'clock, if I would come in at that time. This I did, and on entering the room I found a much younger woman than I had anticipated. After a few general remarks and also hearing a history of the trouble, I expressed my sympathy at her being so severely handicapped just as they were entering on a new enterprise.

"If convenient to you," I said, "I should like to inspect this troublesome leg."

I had no sooner placed my hand on the limb than I experienced a similar condition to that which I described when relating the case of the child earlier in these records. I went cold all over, with a severe trembling of my whole body. I did not know how to hide this condition from the patient, and I cut the interview short by saying that I would see her again.

I lost no time in making for a deck-chair at the end of the pier, where I fell into a deep sleep, waking just in time to hurry back for lunch. On leaving the dining-room after the meal, I met the proprietor in the hall and expressed the hope that his wife was none the worse for the excitement of an interview with a stranger. "Sir," he said, "you will be surprised, as I was, when I tell you that at the present moment she is in the kitchen preparing the dinner for to-night. You had not left the room many



minutes before she got out of bed, dressed, and came downstairs without aid, giving us all a shock."

The reader will probably expect me to express some opinion upon this extraordinary incident, and to say what I consider happened. I believe that by God's Grace the patient was cured by Divine Power. My diagnosis of the case was Hemiplegia, and I had the impression that the Doctor thought the same, as no massage had been ordered.

That night, while thinking things over, I realised that I was in an awkward position. All masseurs are under an agreement not to touch or interfere with a Doctor's case without his consent or advice. Thinking of this, which in my excitement over the case I had forgotten, I saw clearly I could be called up for breach of agreement. Not wishing to face the Doctor in these circumstances, I packed my bag and made for home as soon as I could, and on paying my account I found it had been reduced to half the amount and initialled by the proprietor.

After some weeks, not having heard anything, I felt it safe to pay another visit to see how things were going on. I found, to my satisfaction, that all was well at the Hotel, and the proprietress, who was the main-spring of the concern, had not suffered the slightest discomfort since her extraordinary recovery.

Christmas time generally brings me a card from them, with their best wishes, although the healing took place some years ago.

To return to the Purley Mission, I look back on some very pleasant friendships formed there. I think of Mrs. Eaton with her wonderful clairvoyance, also of an old Welsh miner named Mr. Pate, who was a trance speaker and gave us some very interesting times.

One friendship which played a big part in my life was the one I formed with Mr. and Mrs. Stanley. In the early days of the Healing Circle Mr. Stanley worked with me, being himself a healer and under the control of a Red Indian named White Feather. For some time we worked



side by side.

At this time Mr. Stanley had a business at Caterham, about five miles away, and although I lived quite close to this town, I had not visited it for some years. It happened that in March, 1931, when spring was beginning to show itself and a little sunshine was trying to wake Nature from her winter's sleep, I went for a walk over the Surrey hills, starting at Riddles Down. I wandered on and on until I found myself in Caterham, and feeling the need of a rest, I stood in the High Street wondering where I could get a cup of tea. Whilst standing there, a strong spirit influence came over me, and had my friend Meads been with me, I should have given myself up to control. As it was, all I could sense was that it was an old Rector. At the same time, I felt that the town was badly haunted, which did not surprise me as it was a military depot. On turning round suddenly, I was surprised to find I was standing outside Stanley's shop, and that he was beckoning me to come in. I did so, and soon found an arm-chair and a cup of tea, which was refreshing after a good five-mile walk over hilly roads.

After a rest, Mr. Stanley asked me down to a stock room in the basement, and told me he intended to make it a little prayer room with an altar and reading desk, for private sittings and meditation, and that the room should be used for no other purpose, with which idea I agreed most heartily.

So it came to pass that this basement was cleaned, dis-tempered, carpeted, and chairs were placed around the walls and an altar made from a table at one end. Some friends gave a brass cross on a stand and others gave two brass candlesticks, and these, together with a white altar cloth, an electric light to shine on the cross, and a gramophone to lead the singing, gave us a perfect little church. A Sunday was fixed for the dedication, and it was requested that I should conduct the service, so it happened that for the first time in my life I stood before a Spiritualist audience and took an evening service.



These meetings, which we held from time to time, were most helpful and encouraging. Once a month, on a Sunday, we had professional mediums to visit us, many of whom gave their services to help us. On Mondays we held a devotional meeting, at which I generally presided. I tried to conduct it on the lines of the Methodist Class Meeting, but instead of experiences being given, Stanley did healing, while we all joined in silent prayer.

I shall never forget the lovely conditions of these Monday night meetings. We opened with a hymn, aided by the gramophone; then prayer was offered by myself, frequently under control. Then came diagnosis by Dr. Haslem of new cases, and during this the light was lowered and complete silence maintained, all being in prayer for the patient. After a hymn I gave clairvoyance, closing the meeting with prayer, and the benediction was always given by a Catholic Priest who controlled me. Our numbers began to increase, and we were very much encouraged by the fact that some came long distances to our little Church, from places such as Sevenoaks, Godstone and Red Hill.

Viewing these gratifying results, we began to think it wise to extend our field of labour, and one night when I attended the Healing Circle I learned that some of the members had been in conference and had decided to start a regular Spiritualist Mission in the town, and, much to my surprise, had nominated me as President. I was very much taken aback at this, as I felt I was not the right man for such a post, and I explained to them that while I was most willing to help in any way that I could, yet I preferred to work in the background. But the Committee turned a deaf ear to this, with the result that I found myself in a position for which I was sure I had not the necessary qualifications. I comforted myself with the thought that as the spirit friends had never failed me yet, I was sure they would not do so on this occasion, and neither did they.

The opening service of our new venture was held on the 24th November, 1935, in a hall facing the Eastbourne



Road, in the centre of Caterham, and conducted by a deputation sent down from the Greater World Association. Having had to go away on that particular Sunday, I was unable to be present, but the Committee arranged for me to take the service on the following Sunday. So the words of the medium who said that I should one day stand on a Spiritualist platform, came true.

This, however, was the part of the work that I did not like, and I must admit I dreaded it, feeling that there would be many who would come to hear the new President speak, and conjecturing in my own mind all kinds of fantastic opinions that would be formed about me! The decision I came to was that I had better set to work at once and write what I had to say, then commit it to memory. I had heard that this was frequently done by speakers.

So I plodded on for a week, altering and adding to the address, giving it my whole attention, and the dreaded Sunday came all too soon. On that Sunday morning, I took my address with me on to Riddles Down, and there in quietude made sure that I had it all by heart. At last the time came when I stood on the platform, facing the newly formed Caterham Spiritualist Society, and I decided at the last moment to *read* what I had written, in case some shorthand writer in the audience felt inclined to put in a report for the local paper. Just as I was about to start, I had occasion to wipe my glasses, and whilst doing so, a draught came from somewhere, with the result that the sheets of paper were blown about all over the platform. Probably as a result of this catastrophe, my memory failed me, and the address that I thought I had learned by heart was forgotten. I could not even remember how it started, but knew I had to say something, which I did. However, what I did say seemed to be a success, if judged from the general verdict, and when I had finished I found myself standing on a mat formed by the paper of my manuscript!

I wrote several addresses after this for other occasions, but none were ever read, and I think they all found their way to my garden to start a bonfire. I carried one in my



pocket for months, in case I was suddenly called upon to take the place of a speaker who failed to arrive, which often happened, but the address never came out of my pocket until, dirty and worn, it joined its fellows in the fire. When the time came for me to speak, I always found something to say, and this is a striking illustration of how the spirit friends can help us when we need them.

The Mission had not been long started before we found several coming to us from the Anglican Church, also a few Roman Catholics, who were doubtless worried about the views of their own Church concerning the after-life. A Mrs. Halsey from Godstone Church very kindly played the harmonium for us, and not only became organist but also a member of the Committee. There were also a man and his wife who were Roman Catholics. We had been the means of saving the wife from an operation, and she soon developed mediumship and frequently gave clairvoyance after my address. One night her husband took the place of the speaker and gave the story of his own conversion to Spiritualism.

One of our members presented us with a white cloth with embroidered edging for the table we used as an altar, and another brought two brass candlesticks to be placed at each side of the reading desk. A third friend gave us a large brass cross to hang on the wall at the back of the speaker, and an incident occurred in connection with this that I should like to mention. One Monday evening before the healing service commenced, I was talking to a friend when the cross arrived and was shown to me. Taking it in my hand for a closer inspection, I was instantly controlled by a very strong spirit, who revealed his identity as that of Cardinal Vaughan. Much to our regret we were unable to take notes of what he said, as he caught us unprepared, without notebook or pencil, but I was told that the few words he did say were very beautiful and that he dedicated the cross to the healing of the body, closing his remarks with prayer. Then an old monk pronounced the benediction. After this a very strong element of Roman



Catholicism pervaded the healing circle. A Sister Agnes of St. Peter's, Rome, was found to be a guide of Mrs. Stanley, the wife of the healer, while the same old monk, in a deep bass voice, always pronounced the benediction. We never learned who he was, but we knew he was one who was interested in our work for the Master, and we left it at that.

After a period of nearly two years the lease of our Hall expired, so we did the best we could by taking a large room over some stores. But this entailed a lot of stair climbing, which was not liked, and after a vain effort to find another place, the finances ran out and we had to close down. Although we had to close at Caterham, however, we nearly all were able to keep together, and returned to the Purley Mission, which at that time was in need of any help we could give it.



## MY LAST ADDRESS IN PUBLIC

The reader may be wondering what was happening in the family circle during the times when I was active in other directions. He must not think that this, the foundation of all the work, was neglected. Every Tuesday night at 7 o'clock we were in our places in my brother's house, and the only occasions when the sittings were unable to be held were when sickness interfered or when I was away.

My Army work, as I have stated earlier in this book, caused much interruption, and there were a few weeks after my wife's passing when I did not feel able to attend. Some may consider this weakness on my part, but I will leave the reader to place himself in my position and to judge for himself.

Our Tuesday meeting was looked upon as being sacred. Many poor souls who were crowded out at the Sunday circle seemed to follow me, for they would come to the home circle and private confessional. Then there were occasions when I was quite unable to do rescue work in front of so many strangers, some of whom seemed quite unable to grasp the fact that there were many, even among their own friends and relations, who had sins to confess and needed help. At times such as these, I would ask the spirit to come to my home sitting, which they usually did. I wonder when we shall all realise that the slate has to be cleaned? I have already dealt with this subject at some length, and feel that I have shown the reader that settlement has to take place, however distasteful the thought may be, so let us always be guarded against that which is displeasing in the sight of God.

On the 21st of August, 1935, our circle sustained a great loss by the passing of my sister-in-law, which ren-



dered another chair vacant. This was a great sorrow to us all, and we missed her bright and cheerful presence, which always seemed to furnish the best conditions, especially for me, as I acted as the medium. I often wondered afterwards if we ever realised what a prominent part she played in the circle, but though we sadly missed her earthly presence she very soon returned in spirit, and the chair she had occupied was always allowed to remain empty.

At this time many addresses were given us from the Spirit World, and it was from these that my friend Meads gathered the subjects of his Sunday talks. I doubt if the congregations who enjoyed his eloquence ever knew that his last sermons were largely drawn from suggestions he received in our home circle from the Spirit World. My friend was a great lover of Nature, and one of the finest addresses I heard him give was on the words "Consider the lilies. They toil not, neither do they spin." This address was based on one of Wesley's trance talks that was given in the home circle, and I am sure that those who heard it, and the way in which my friend worked it up, showing God's Love to mankind and His Finger pointing through Nature to the spiritual life, will not readily forget it.

In 1936 the circle had a serious set-back owing to the illness of my brother. He had been in failing health for some time, causing us some uneasiness and anxiety, and eventually he had to undergo a major operation, which laid him on a bed of suffering for many months. As he got a little stronger, the sitting was transferred to his bedroom, but these times were, of course, short and infrequent. Dr. Haslem would come with advice and cheer to the patient and assure him that "he was not done yet," also speaking of Black Hawk's power to sustain strength. This proved to be true, for as I write these records he is now able to get about the house and do his correspondence with the aid of strong glasses, besides being moderately free from pain.

Allowing for all the best of medical skill on the part of the earthly doctors, it is impossible to get away from the



part that Dr. Haslem and the spirit friends played in bringing about my brother's recovery when in his eighty-fourth year. It was a great joy to us all to see him take his place at the head of our very depleted circle after an interval of more than two years, and later there came a day which found us walking side by side in the garden of his home, thanking God and the Spirit World for all the mercies bestowed upon us.

These occasions when the family circle was prevented from sitting proved to me the important part it had played in my work, and how it had been the means of supplying strength and support. It had been indeed as a charging station from which I had drawn my supply of magnetism every week, and where I had been able to cleanse myself from those things that might have been harmful—a place where I could leave distressed souls who might otherwise have clung to me. It can readily be understood that these interruptions of the circle occasioned me much distress, particularly after Ernest Meads had passed on and I felt I was standing alone.

How often at these times was my prayer in the words of the hymn :

*I do not ask, O Lord, that life may be  
A pleasant road.*

*I do not ask that Thou wouldst take from me  
Aught of its load.*

*I do not ask that flowers should always spring  
Beneath my feet—*

*I know too well the poison and the sting  
Of things too sweet!*

*I do not ask my Cross to understand,  
My way to see—*

*Better in darkness just to feel Thy Hand  
And follow Thee!*

MISS A. A. PROCTER.

During the trying years of my brother's illness, and



especially after Ernest Meads's passing, I was not able to take a very active part in Spiritualistic work, but Sunday after Sunday found me sitting amongst the congregation of the Purley Mission. After the service I tried to give some comfort to those whom I felt needed it, and I was able to bring a little joy to many a poor soul by giving a clairvoyant description.

Only once after my friend Meads's transition did I take a service, and that was at the Purley Mission on Christmas Day, 1938, when I gave the address. For some time previous to this I had taken the Christmas service at Caterham. It happened that I had a long-standing engagement to go to a Christmas Tree Party on that date, and I was rather anxious about the service, as I felt that the party might not furnish ideal conditions. A feeling came over me that I did not want to go, but I knew I must, and leaving the games and shouts of happy children I set off for Purley Mission.

Some time had elapsed since I stood on a public platform, and my nervousness was accentuated by the fact that I had forgotten what I intended to say. Whilst I was in the vestry pondering on how I should begin, the Chairman reminded me that it was time to commence the service. "Wait a minute," I said; "shut the door!" Then, lifting my eyes, I prayed for help.

There happened to be a shorthand writer in the hall that night, who took notes of my address and gave it to me some time afterwards, so I am able to quote from it—probably my last address in public.

As I stood before the congregation, a text from the Gospel according to St. Luke came into my mind: *If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask Him?* I explained that I had just left a Christmas party and how the children had clustered around the tree, some hoping for one thing, others for something else; also how one had sent a letter to Father Christmas requesting a special toy. This led me



to the subject of prayer, and I said that as I had stood in that room with them, I had felt that the children were portraying their future years. I could see them going, not to an earthly father nor yet a Father Christmas, but to their Heavenly Father. What would they ask for? Some flimsy toy, soon to lie broken on the nursery floor of life, soon to be discarded and forgotten? Or yet asking for something that might satisfy a sudden and harmful infatuation? "Might I be allowed," I said, "to give an experience of my own early life? One of my own early ambitions, like that of many another boy, was to possess a pen-knife. I had seen the one I wanted in a shop, but had no money with which to buy it. I had some money in a box, it is true, but was not allowed to touch it. After puzzling my little brain, I at last decided to go and ask my father to give me the knife on my birthday, which was near at hand. So one night I approached him with the request. 'Father,' I said, 'I want a pen-knife. Will you give me one for my birthday?' 'Fancy a little chap like you wanting a pen-knife,' he said. 'And what do you want it for?' 'I want to make myself a little boat, like my friend John,' I replied. 'You will give me one, won't you?' I can see him now, as he shook his head. 'No, my boy, not yet! When you are older and know how to use it, I may. Do you know what might happen? You might cut yourself, and maybe scar or maim yourself for the rest of your life. No, Percy boy! Not now!' I remember going to bed in tears and feeling that my father did not love me one little bit.

"How often in after years did I think of this incident! And how wise he was to say 'no!' Did it cost him anything to say it? I think it did. Is it not a fact that we in this hall to-night look back on times when we have asked our Heavenly Father for things, and have had no reply? Is it not a fact that we have resented this silence? Might it not be that we have asked for something that, unknown to ourselves, would be harmful to our spiritual life? Oh, friends, let us give Him credit for knowing best,



as indeed He does !

“ During my life I have heard of some wonderful answers to prayer, and I am sure that He listens to our faintest whisper. Allow me to repeat a story which some of you may have heard before. It is about an old woman, named Ann, who got her living by selling flowers outside one of our London termini. One night, after a long day standing in a bitter east wind, she returned to her little back room in a poor street off the Strand, to find she had contracted a chill and subsequent rheumatism.

“ The next morning she was unable to get up, so her hand had to go into the little bag of savings for her daily needs, and for several mornings the same thing happened, until at last she came to the end and the bag was empty. There was only the Workhouse facing her. So she turned her thoughts to God, seeking help in this time of trial, and in her extremity she called out aloud : ‘ Oh, God, send me some bread ! ’ This she repeated several times.

“ It so happened at that moment that two boys were coming down the stairs from a tenement above, to spend a little tip they had received during the morning. ‘ What is that ? ’ said one named Jim, listening to poor Ann calling to God for help. ‘ Why, that’s old Grannie calling to God to send her some bread. ’ ‘ What do you say, ’ said Jim, ‘ if we have a lark and get a little loaf and put it outside the door ? ’

“ This being agreed upon, a loaf was soon procured and placed, as suggested, outside the door ; then giving a knock, they flattened themselves against the wall to see the result.

“ ‘ Come in, ’ called Ann, but all was silent. Again they knocked, harder than before : ‘ Come in, ’ old Ann called again, but as no-one opened the door, she crawled to open it herself, and there on the floor was the loaf she had prayed for. ‘ Oh, thank you, God, for answering my prayer, ’ she cried, ‘ oh, thank you ! ’

“ To the boys, standing flattened against the wall,



the incident was not so funny as they had thought it would be, and Jim stepped out, saying : " Don't be silly, Granny, God has not sent you that loaf ; we put it there, and bought it ourselves."

" ' I don't mind what agent He used,' said Granny, ' but I know God has answered my prayer—Thank you, Jesus, thank you !'

" The two boys went silently into the street. Presently Jim said to his friend : ' Did you notice what Granny said about being agents for God?' The thought remained with him for the rest of the day.

" That night, when the rush and turmoil of the day was over and all was peaceful, in that tenement garret could be seen a boy named Jim kneeling by his bed. ' Oh, God,' he said, ' is it true you made me an agent, to answer the old lady's prayer?'

" Years later, Jim, as a Missioner, stood in an East End chapel, and told the story of his conversion and consecration in a tenement off Drury Lane. Old Ann called for bread, but God gave more—His Holy Spirit, and in that East End chapel there was joy in the presence of the angels for those who turned their thoughts towards a better life. Was old Ann there that night? Yes, I feel she was—very near to Jim !"

In conclusion, I told the audience how I often went to tidy my wife's grave in Morden Cemetery, and how on one occasion, after finishing my task, I strolled round and looked at other gravestones. Suddenly my eyes alighted on a headstone to an old lady. After giving her name and the dates of birth and death, these words were written—

I lived to have the joy of seeing my four sons  
converted to God, especially my first-born, for  
whom I prayed twenty years.

Mothers, pray on !

Finally, raising my voice, I shouted : " Let there come into this hall to-night an echo from that stone in Morden Ceme-



tery—Mothers and Friends, pray on ! Amen.”

After a short pause, I asked the congregation to remain seated and sing two verses of “ Nearer, my God, to Thee,” my wife’s favourite hymn, as it was Christmas Day. I cannot say the response was very good, but I know they did their best. After a short prayer and the well-known hymn, “ Abide with me,” I stepped down from the Spiritualist platform. I feel it was my last address given in public.

Soon after this I had a bad attack of bronchitis, which left a weakness in my voice, and a huskiness, and in consequence I had to refuse all other requests to take a service. But it is a great joy to think of that Christmas Night.



## A BLESSED FRIENDSHIP AND HAPPY REMINISCENCES

I think there can be very few who, at some time in their lives, do not pause to look back on the way they have come and to view the twists, turns, sharp corners and obstacles that have been in the way, and the many places where the road has led uphill. John Bunyan did not exaggerate in his *PILGRIM'S PROGRESS* when he described the journey that many of us have to take.

Some have likened life to a school-room, where we are being educated for something higher and better, but how hard are some of the problems we have to define! Yet methinks there are times when we get a glimpse of the playground outside, and when we see those who have passed out after their finals—those who have come through great tribulation.

My life has been no exception to the general experience of others, and, like many more, I look back on days that stand out in prominence, days that have been hard and have brought their lessons with them, to be learned and understood.

One of these times came on January 25th, 1937. On the evening of that day, as was usual on Mondays, I was taking the devotional part in the healing circle in our little basement Sanctuary at Mr. Stanley's home. Our meeting had commenced with the singing of that well-known hymn, "At even ere the sun was set," and followed by a prayer under the control of Wesley. I can see again that little room with its distempered walls, the table altar in the corner with the brass cross reflecting the rays of the solitary candle which was our light, and Mr. Stanley standing with uplifted hands over the patient, while we with





Ernest Meads (left) and Percy Johnson



bowed heads joined in silent prayer. Then, after a few clairvoyant descriptions, the meeting closed with Cardinal Newman's hymn, "Lead, Kindly Light." Little did I think, as I went home after the meeting, that I should shortly be repeating those words as a prayer for myself.

*Lead, kindly light, amid the encircling gloom,*

*Lead Thou me on.*

*The night is dark and I am far from home,*

*Lead Thou me on.*

*Keep Thou my feet, I do not ask to see*

*The distant scene, one step enough for me!*

During my absence a message had come to the effect that my friend Meads had suddenly passed away whilst sitting in a 'bus by the side of his wife. No words can express what a blow this was to me! For over thirty years he had been my constant friend and helper, standing by me in hours of danger during the investigation of hauntings, and in the hours of my own sorrows and troubles. He was always by my side and the first to give a cheer and a handshake at my successes.

Standing in the hall of my house next morning, and feeling how empty the world had become, I was suddenly aroused by a voice calling, "Percy, Percy!" I did not have to think twice who was calling—I recognised the same voice that had swayed so many a congregation and moved it to tears. "It's alright, Ernest," I replied, "I will carry on alone. God be with thee!"

But am I alone? I think not. Many a time he has been described as standing by my side, and many times since then have I felt his presence. Even in writing these records I have felt his prompting.

Miss Winifred Moyes wrote an article in THE GREATER WORLD on February 6th, 1937, which I reproduce here. She has very aptly expressed what I should like to say.

"The transition of Ernest Meads, which came so unexpectedly on January 25th, brings to light how deeply he was loved. How much we shall miss him words cannot



express, and we can only try to imagine the joyous welcome he must have received in the Spirit World from all those whom he has helped over years.

"Here was a man of many gifts, the greatest being perhaps dramatic talent of a high order, Mr. Meads having portrayed most of the chief characters in Shakespeare's plays. Undoubtedly there lay before him the opportunity of gaining renown before the footlights, but there was something that was nearer still to his heart, and that was communing with the Spirit World. Mr. Meads, realising that he could not serve two masters in a whole-hearted manner, renounced his theatrical career and disappeared from the stage for twelve years, although later he used his fine talents in the cause of charity.

"As the years went on, his enthusiasm for missionary work grew and grew, and inevitably the time came when no longer could he ignore the fact that a public awaited him, but this time it was one that hungered for spiritual truth. If ever a man responded to the Love Rays of the Christ, Mr. Meads is that one. His loving attitude towards his fellow-men became second nature to him, yet with a touching humility he did not seem to realise how much we all loved him.

"In looking back over his life, what is it that stands out most distinctly? I think it is his kindness. A wonderful orator he was, yet in spite of the shower of appreciation that followed his inspired addresses, he always had time to step out of his way to shake hands with someone in the background who did not like to intrude.

"As I stood beside the still form in the little Chapel of Richmond Hospital, I realised that 'death' could not touch him. When the summons came from the Master — 'Come up higher,' there was no struggle, no holding back; he was ready to respond instantly and to set to work anew in wider realms of opportunity.

"What a record to leave behind!"

Highgate Cemetery looked beautiful on the following Saturday, the 30th January; nothing marred the white-



ness of the snow as I followed my friend's body to the grave. There had not been a vacant seat during the service in the Chapel, which was conducted by Mr. H. F. Bendall. Many years previously, my friend and I had made a promise to each other that whichever one died first, the other would repeat the Twenty-Third Psalm over the grave. This I regret to say was never done. The crowd was so dense with his many admirers, I was unable to get anywhere near and was obliged to stand on the outskirts of the throng. I tried afterwards to push myself through, but was soon recognised as his medium and found myself surrounded by many sympathetic and kindly wishing friends, foremost among whom were Miss Moyes and the staff from The Greater World Association.

So the curtain fell ! The actor had played his part, and played it well !

It is not surprising that Ernest Meads, after many years of investigating Spiritualism, should lose no time in communicating with his loved ones. Being invited by Mrs. Meads to go back to the house for lunch after the funeral, I soon became conscious of my friend's presence, and it happened that within a short time of his funeral he controlled me and spoke to his assembled family. It was said afterwards that the control was so complete that his voice was recognised as being different and distinct from my own.

A few days later on, I paid a visit to a mutual friend who, like myself, was deeply grieved at the loss of Ernest Meads. I was once more controlled by him, and notes were taken at the time of what was said. An article, also, containing an account of it, was published in THE GREATER WORLD, written by a friend. After an eloquent introduction, he wrote :

“ On the first occasion of my speaking with that great missionary Ernest Meads, since his call to the Higher Service, and on his controlling our mutual friend Percy Johnson, his experiences suggest so keenly how many do fall over earthly obstacles. A few words from a sympa-



thetic soul might have minimised the trouble and set them quickly on their pilgrimage again. I feel that I cannot do better than give Ernest Meads's words, conveying not only his experiences in 'passing,' but also, in a way, illustrating what I am endeavouring to express. Undoubtedly, the more we give services to others, the more will opportunities occur and power be given us for the purpose. Ernest Meads, controlling Percy Johnson, said :

'I cannot say exactly what were my feelings in passing. I had none of the mysterious feelings of death, only a profound sleepiness which, after a time, gave way to the feeling of the absence of a body, a feeling of freedom from obstacles, and the possibility of greater work. I looked on the path I had come as that of a pathway up a hill, and I saw those I had helped, and also some who had left the pathway, and I, too, on the journey had stumbled, but had been upheld by the angels, as we are told : *He shall give His angels charge concerning thee, lest thou dash thy foot against a stone.* God's help has kept me all the way.

'And I saw other pathways where others had fallen, and were lying on the obstacles, and it was a great help to investigate their falls. Some of these people I had helped. Thousands are still clinging to the work of the body, and the conditions of many who pass over are like those of men coming out of a railway station, who, not knowing which way to go, look this way and that, failing to find or ask the right way. So they return to the old life, earthbound, and wander back to the old office or warehouse, trying to carry on as of old. The cities and villages are full of such.

'I am still on this rescue work, and am in close touch with it now. I no longer desire the old joys of art from an earthly point of view, but leave that for the enjoyment of others. I cannot express my outlook more clearly ; the same work I did on the earth has my present efforts in this life. Good-bye—God bless you ! ' "



Then my friend closes his article with these remarks, which clearly express my own feeling—

“ If I may close with a few thoughts on our friend’s welcome words, do we not see so convincingly the joy he feels in the continuation in the Higher Life of the greatly blessed service that he had rendered to his fellow beings for the greater part of a life-time ! Right from the days of the Master on earth until to-day the valued testimony of others reiterates the truth that the happiness of that sense of having been of service to our brethren transcends all other joys. Do we all render all the service we might to those we meet ? I fear not ! Let us each and everyone try to extend our help in all ways to our fellow beings. It was never more needed than now. Let us realise the command, ‘ Bear ye one another’s burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ,’ and the blessed assurance to us in our Lord’s words : *He who hath done it unto the least of these My Brethren hath done it unto Me !*”

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As I stood in the Queen Alexandra Military Hospital, in the year 1918, and heard the great shout go up at the proclamation of peace, I never thought then that we should be again at war with Germany in 1940. But so it is.

Descriptions of the times in which we are living will be written by more able pens than mine, but when the public reads them I wonder if it will realise what we poor mediums have to face with the sorrow of broken hearts and the bitterness and hatred that charge the surrounding atmosphere.

Few of the uninitiated will realise how difficult conditions are for mediums during such times as these, and it is not easy to try to explain these things.

When war broke out again I did my best to return to hospital work, feeling that I could be of service, but although the reply I received from headquarters was most kindly worded, my application was refused owing to my age. So I have to stand aside and look on at the most awful spectacle the world has ever known, and as I ponder



on the thousands who, in their full manhood, have been suddenly hurled into the Spirit World, I wonder if the rising mediums of to-day, who are our hope for the future, fully realise their duty and call to God's work? If these lines should meet the eye of any such, I pray you stop and think! The cannon's roar is not so deafening that there cannot be heard a voice saying : *I have loved you with an everlasting love—Come unto Me all ye that are weary and I will give you rest.*

How I long that strength will yet be given me to help in this rescue work! But what the future holds for me I cannot say. However, as I look back, I can see how God's Hand has gently led me all the way, and many things stand out in my memory that are pleasant to remember. I think of that night in my brother's home, when I thought I had fainted but found myself controlled for the first time. Then again, my meeting with Ernest Meads in Regent Street, when I shook hands for the first time with a man who became my friend and stood by me for over thirty years!

I think of the many friends who have passed me on the way, and some I have loved long since and lost awhile. More distinctly than anything else, perhaps, stands out that afternoon under the trees in Hyde Park, when Ernest Meads and I joined hands and consecrated our mediumship to the service of the Master. I little thought then what the future would reveal to me, and how a new world was about to open out.

It has not always been an easy path to tread. I can remember times of danger and perplexity, periods when criticism and doubt have been thrown at me by those who forgot to be kind. But very clearly to my vision come the footprints of the angels who have held me up, those who have sustained me lest I dash my foot against a stone. And I have heard a voice saying : "As the hills are round about Jerusalem, so am I with those who love Me!" As I lay down my pen I lift my eyes to those hills from whence have come my help and strength.



If I am asked whether I regret giving the best years of my life to Spiritualism, my answer is "No," because it has taught me without a doubt the great truth that—

*There is a green hill far away  
Without a city wall,  
Where the dear Lord was crucified  
Who died to save us all.*

*We may not know, we cannot tell,  
What pains He had to bear,  
But we believe it was for us  
He hung and suffered there !*

*Oh, dearly, dearly has He loved,  
And we must love Him too ;  
And trust in His redeeming Grace,  
And try His works to do.*

MRS. C. F. ALEXANDER.

14th June, 1940,  
Purley, Surrey.