

FIFTY YEARS
A MEDIUM

Estelle Roberts

Mistress of the Medium

Her name is Estelle Roberts. Her strange psychic gifts first manifested themselves while she was still a child, but she was thirty years of age and a widow before she allowed herself to be encouraged to develop them. From that point on, her whole life has been devoted to spiritualism.

Estelle Roberts has become famous all over the world as the greatest living medium - the woman whose mysterious powers go beyond life itself!

Dedicated to All my friends in both worlds

INTRODUCTION

By Hannen Swaffer

Estelle Roberts will long be remembered as the most versatile British medium of her time. Her public clairvoyance is remarkable not only because of the determination with which she forces home a piece of evidence - seldom will she accept a skeptic's reluctance to acknowledge it - but because of her dramatic and arresting appearance on the platform.

In former years, her direct-voice séances, attendance at which was a prized privilege enjoyed only by the favoured few, were an almost unique emotional experience that could never be forgotten by any sitter, however accustomed he or she was to psychical phenomena. Why she abandoned them, I never heard.

Her trance addresses by Red Cloud inspired many.

She has used her rare gifts lavishly, bringing comfort to thousands and proving Survival to innumerable inquirers.

I first met her on Sunday when she was the clairvoyant at a Marylebone Spiritualist Association service in the Aeolian Hall in Bond Street. Then I was deeply struck by her impressively dignified appearance, one obviously due, I was soon to know, to the fact that psychic power was beginning to prepare her for what would be a challenge to almost anyone else's nerves.

Then, after she had successfully given messages, with the names of the spirit communicators and descriptions of their personalities, she became the very ordinary woman she is in her private life.

During the next few years, she acted as the clairvoyant at many meetings I addressed - in the Royal Albert Hall and Queen's Hall, London the Town Hall, Birmingham; the Free Trade Hall, Manchester; and in Reading and other towns the names of which I cannot now recall. All of them were among the most successful gatherings of the hundreds at which I have spoken for our cause.

Often it is with some anxiety that a speaker like myself, who has been emphatic about the abundant proofs of Survival and has indulged in fervent oratory, awaits the beginning of the clairvoyant's demonstration. For, if he has never shared a platform with the medium, he fears the evidence will be weak and unconvincing. The medium may be unwell, with a natural deterioration, however temporary, of his or her psychic powers - and so the meeting may end in an anticlimax. This has happened to me more than once - and so I fear to trust a stranger.

With Estelle to follow me, I never had the slightest qualm. I could use the phrase "As the medium will soon prove to you" with the highest assurance that it would be justified. Her psychic personality invariably dominated any public assemblage at which she demonstrated.

At two enormous meetings arranged in the Royal Albert Hall by the *Sunday Pictorial* within three weeks, Estelle excelled even herself. I had spoken with unqualified conviction and, directly afterwards, her electrifying mediumship more than proved my case.

At Reading, knowing the sort of criticism the meeting might meet with the local Press, I used such words as these:

Mrs. Roberts tells me that she has never been in this town before tonight, when I accompanied her from the station and have been with her ever since. That can be checked.

“She has had no time to copy names of the ‘dead’ from any local cemetery, or to arrange a conspiracy with any of the town’s residents.”

“So I issue to the Press this challenge: ‘Get the name and address of every person to whom a message is given. Call on them at home and cross-examine them about any possible complicity. Then print the truth, favourable or unfavourable to the medium as it may prove. I defy any reporter to do this.’”

As I knew would be the case, I heard no more of the matter.

About Estelle’s voice sittings - much of the evidence will be found in the pages following - I could write a volume. Until, in later years, a non-professional member of my own home circle developed similar powers, they were the most convincing I ever attended.

That at which Air Chief Marshal Lord Dowding heard, once again, the eager voices of some of “The Few” who had lost their earth lives in the Battle of Britain, which, under his victorious leadership, saved our island from invasion by Hitler’s hordes, was the most dramatic of them all.

It was at the opening of the House of Red Cloud - the revered Indian Guide himself performed the ceremony - that I first met King George of Greece, one of her many highly-placed sitters.

Spiritualism owes much to Estelle Roberts. It is because of my personal debt to her that I have written this brief tribute to her remarkable qualities.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I should like to express my gratitude to all those who have kindly consented to the publication of their private experiences, and in particular to my old friends Maurice and Sylvia Barbanell, whose detailed records, made at the time, have served to stimulate my own memory, and to recall the experiences of themselves and of others, which I could not share, since I was in a state of deep trance.

My deep gratitude is also due to Margaret and Percy Illingworth, without whose untiring devotion this book would never have been written, and to Hannen Swaffer who has so generously contributed the Foreword.

ESTELLE ROBERT

CHAPTER ONE

1889 - 1919

“This girl must be called Estelle, for one day she will become a star.”

These words were uttered by my grandmother as she gazed down at her daughter's child who had entered this world barely two hours before.

In later years my mother told me of this incident for which there was no apparent reason. My grandmother had no reputation in the family as a prophetess, and no doubt would have been shocked at any suggestion that she had psychic powers. However, my father had different ideas in the matter of names. For the good and sufficient reasons that I was born on May 10th 1889, and that we were then living at May Cottage in Kensington, he chose to call me May. And so, in due course, there appeared a new entry in the registry of births - May Estelle Wills, daughter of Edwin Blackstone Wills and Isobel, his wife.

My parents were good kindly people, typical of the Victorian age. They had a family of eight children, five girls and three boys, and we all lived in Kensington in comfortable but not affluent circumstances. In company with my brothers and sisters, I grew up a very ordinary, unremarkable child with the sole exception that from the moment of my earliest recollections I heard voices which the other members of the family could not. Though I knew nothing of Spiritualism I soon came to recognize them as the voices of the spirit people, and knowing myself to be part of them as they were part of me, I never had the slightest fear of them. My father, however, had no understanding of such things and, although he was always a just man, he nevertheless frequently felt it his duty to correct my allegedly riotous imagination by means of his leather belt! I was repeatedly told that such things were evil, and because of this until the day of my enlightenment, I was haunted by the fear that perhaps my mind was a little “touched.”

One of my brothers, Lionel, who had died before I was born, was among my earliest visitors. He often used to come of a morning or evening, and I would talk to him. He was then only a child, but I watched him grow through the years to maturity. He still comes to me. Other spirit children of my own age would also visit me and I would talk aloud to them. It was hearing me speaking apparently to myself on these occasions that was the main source of alarm to my parents.

Looking back after long experiences of psychic phenomena, I am convinced that these early visitations were a preparation for my future work; to allow me to accustom myself to their presence and to converse freely with them at all times.

My first major psychic experience as a child was in the form of a vision, and its impression remains as vivid today as it was then at the age of seven. It occurred at about eight o'clock on a sunny May morning when my sister Dolly and I were getting dressed, ready to set off for our daily lessons at the local school. I had a mass of thick black hair, and I was standing before a mirror in front of the window endeavouring to arrange it when I became aware of a movement beyond the window. Looking up I saw a dazzling vision of a knight in shining

armor, poised in the sky. Of majestic, life-size proportions, he was encased from head to foot in armor. Each leg was sheathed in steel plate running right down to his feet and ending in points at the toes. His body was clad in chain mail, on the front of which was a blazing red cross. On his head was a helmet, and, though his face was covered by a visor, I could see a pair of piercing eyes shining through the eye-slits.

At the back of his helmet he wore a crest, which I could not see sufficiently well to describe, and in front of him he held a two-handed sword pointing to the sky. His right hand grasped the hilt, which was studded with gems, while his left hand gripped his right wrist in support. On his hands were gauntlets. The whole figure, and particularly the sword, glinted dazzlingly like sunlight reflected by snow and from that moment onward I have always thought of him as my White Knight.

As I watched him, he slowly lowered the blade of the sword and extended the point towards me as though in salute. This action must have released powerful vibrations towards my body, for I suddenly felt myself go weak at the knees, and my stomach seemed to turn over.

The vision persisted. Three times I glanced away, to find it still there when I looked back. Then I called to my sister, "Dolly, come and look!" Dolly looked, and a moment later to my horror, she had collapsed in a faint. The vision then disappeared as mysteriously as it had come.

Alarmed by Dolly's fainting fit, I called out to my parents, who rushed in and bore my sister away. When she had recovered sufficiently, my father questioned her, in the course of which she described the figure exactly as I had seen it. It made a great impression on me because this was the first time any member of my family had seen or heard any of the spirit people I knew so well.

My poor parents were most disturbed and puzzled by the occurrence, particularly as I had no opportunity of talking to my sister and exchanging impressions with her before my father questioned her.

I have seen my White Knight only once since then. This was years later on the occasion of my first meeting at the Queens Hall in London. Not unnaturally I was somewhat nervous at the prospect of addressing my first meeting, but as I stood up to speak, I suddenly saw him suspended above the audience. Again he lowered his sword and pointed it at me, causing me to shake violently, as though the rays of the sword were disintegrating my body by the strength of their vibrations. Shaw Desmond, the distinguished writer, was on the platform with me and, unaware of what was happening, asked anxiously if I was ill. I shook my head and stood waiting, wondering whether I should hear my Knight's voice. There came no sound, but unbidden into my mind came words, "To serve and not to yield." I knew they had come from him.

A medium, taking her place on a public platform, relies entirely upon her spirit friends, for without them she can do nothing. It is only at the ultimate moment before addressing her audience that she becomes aware whether or not her gift will manifest itself. No dress rehearsal, no prompter in the wings can help her. She stands alone save only for her spirit

communicators, and this was the first time I had been called upon to take the platform at the Queen's Hall. It was the beginning of an important series of fortnightly meetings and a most significant moment in my career. There can be no other explanation than that the Knight had come to show me I was not alone in my mission to spread the truth of survival after death - that the blazing red cross on his breast was symbolical of the crusade upon which I was setting out.

I had an ordinary schooling in the local council school, which I left at the age of fourteen. I had continued without a break to meet my spirit people. They now started to warn me of events, which afterwards came to pass. At such moments I would receive intensely strong impressions about future happenings, accompanied by the certain knowledge of how they would work out.

One day, shortly after my father's death some years later, he returned in spirit form to my mother's house. I can see him now, standing at the top of the stairs and speaking words which filled me with alarm. "My dear," he said, "I am worried about Bella."

Bella was my sister, and for the next two or three days I hugged my father's words secretly to myself in a fever of worry and anxiety. On the fourth day the blow fell. Bella became ill - very ill - and for a time I was certain that her last earthy hours had come. Then to my intense relief she slowly began to recover and eventually was quite well again.

It was natural that my father should have been concerned for Bella's well-being. It was no less natural, having regard for my tender age, and the circumstances of my father's visit to me, that I should put the blackest, most dread interpretation on his words, and, as a result, I suffered needless agonies of suspense. It seemed to me that there was a moral to be drawn from this experience, and that there was a lesson to be learned. That, at least, was how I looked at it. As a consequence, from that day to this, I have always guarded carefully against the slightest tendency to read more into the words which come to me from my voices than is intended, or, indeed, is strictly there.

At fifteen I went to work as a nursemaid to a family in Turnham Green. I loved children and here there were three of them to look after. They occupied nearly all my time for the next three years. Then I met and married Hugh Warren Miles.

Hugh was born at Cumberland Lodge, Windsor Park, and had received his education as a Bluecoat Boy at Christ's Hospital. His stepmother, whose maiden name was Evelyn Galt, was a sister of the wife of the President Wilson.

He had a kind and sympathetic nature, and we were as happy as any two young people can be. It was a great joy to me to be with someone to whom I could talk freely about my spirit people, someone who listened and understood. One such occasion was on the morning when I woke up and told him I had seen his Aunt Mary walk through our bedroom during the night. I had never actually met this aunt, yet somehow I knew intuitively that the figure I had seen had been she. We learned later that she had died that night.

In due course I found that I again had three children to look after, but this time they were my own, Ivy, Evaline and Iris. They were happy days though we had little on which to live,

getting by only with difficulty on my husband's meagre wages as a clerk. Hugh was the most generous of men, with the softest of hearts. One day as he was walking home at the end of a week's work, he was so touched by a tale of woe told him by a poor man he gave away his entire week's wages! Imagine my feelings when I had no money with which to buy food for our own children!

Eight years after we were married Hugh fell ill. It was thought at first that he was suffering from consumption. Sir William Fairbanks, physician to the Royal Family, who was a friend of my husband's family, arranged for him to be examined at Brompton Hospital. The diagnosis revealed that he was suffering from Bright's disease. He was never able to work regularly again, although he tried hard to do so.

I had to be the breadwinner. With an invalid husband and three children to maintain, our meagre sickness allowance of ten shillings a week was woefully inadequate. I found employment doing housework from eight in the morning until two in the afternoon at a nursing home in Twickenham. The pay was small and insufficient for our needs, but it enabled us to keep going even though I had many a time to go without meals in order to feed my little ones. Clothes were an even greater difficulty, and the only solution to the shoe problem I could find was to stuff the soles with newspaper. It was not very effective in wet weather.

One snowy morning I set out to work without having eaten and collapsed in the snow. I was found by the police, who took me home, where I had to remain in bed for several days. The doctor who called advised me strongly to take my husband to live by the sea and I, willing to do anything to help him, readily agreed. We went to Hastings.

Again Hugh tried to work, but his dropsical condition made it impossible. We rented a flat in Hastings and I began to take in paying guests, but as a result of trying to nurse my husband, look after the children, and take care of the guests as well, my health broke down and I again had to take to my bed.

My husband called in a doctor, a Frenchman, who examined me and made the obvious pronouncement that I needed rest. How well I knew it, but what rest could there be with four hungry mouths dependent on my efforts! I had become very thin and Hugh anxiously pointed this out to the doctor, who replied with true Gallic gallantry: "Did you ever know a thoroughbred horse that was fat?"

Life was desperately hard during these years, full of worry, work and discomfort. But, looking back, I am convinced that it was all part of the pattern of things to come - indispensable training for the work I was to do. If you have not suffered, how can you understand the suffering of others? Without sympathy for those in distress, how can you help to alleviate burdens? At the time, of course, no such thoughts entered my head; I was much too busy coping with more immediate problems. Nor indeed did I understand the significance of the presence of the spirit people who continued, as ever, to share my everyday life. They were as much a part of my environment as were the ordinary people in

the street; the world would have been a strange and empty place if they had suddenly ceased to be there.

The months passed. My husband became progressively weaker, until the day I returned home at lunch-time to find two of the children standing at his bedside. He was obviously very ill, much worse than when I had left him that morning. With an overwhelming sense of shock I knew that he was dying. Quickly I sent the children to a neighbour, who I knew would look after them. Then I sat alone in the room with him and held his hand. He was only spasmodically conscious and did not know what he was saying for much of the time. But every now and then he would have lucid moments, in one of which he said to me: "You will be alright, darling. God will take care of you."

I stayed with him until far into the night. He died while looking at me. At the moment of his passing I heard strange, terrifying noises coming from the kitchen. It was as though someone was rending linen and, every now and then, cracking a whip. It was an eerie, uncanny experience which, coming at that particular time, was unnerving. For some moments I sat unable to move; then the sounds ceased.

I looked again at dear Hugh, recalling the happiness we had enjoyed together, and while I sat there I saw his spirit leave the body. It emerged from the back of his head and gradually moulded itself into an exact replica of his earthly body. It remained suspended about a foot above the body, lying in the same position, and attached to it by a cord to the head. Then the cord broke and the spirit form floated away, passing through the wall.

I went into the kitchen to get some water to wash his face and hands, and an astonishing sight met my eyes. All the wallpaper on one side of the twelve-foot room was hanging from the wall in strips. This, then, was the explanation of the rending noise, which I had heard as my husband died. It was the first physical manifestation of the spirit power I had experienced. I could not explain the occurrence, yet I intuitively understood its meaning. It was I believed a symbol of the rending of the veil.

I had no money to buy flowers, so I took the children to the Downs, where we gathered bunches of the little purple flowers which my husband had loved so well. All of us joined in weaving them into a wreath.

On three consecutive nights after he died, he called to me. On the third night I heard his voice say: "I need you. I want you to come to me."

"But how?" I asked, distraught by grief. "By dying."

"But, darling, I can't do that," I said. "There are the children to care for."

He said no more. The stress of his passing after his long illness must have been great. It was natural that he should want me.

He appeared in the room once more before the burial. He said, as if in apology: "I did not understand. I do not need you now. What you have always told us is right. Here, all live on and cannot die. It is quite wonderful."

Deeply moved, I said; "You live, and others live. It is the message I must tell the world."

CHAPTER TWO

THE COMING OF THE RED CLOUD

Hugh died in May 1919, three days after my thirtieth birthday.

Since the necessity for living by the sea had now gone, I decided to leave Hastings and went to settle with my three children in Hampton-on-Thames. Although I had passed through much stress and grief during the twelve years of my marriage, our family life had been a happy and united one. And so it continued; the children, who were now reaching companionable age, bringing me great joy and consolation.

I never spoke to them of my spirit people, but inevitably they became aware that I possessed some special insight which they did not share nor could they understand. It became almost like a parlour game when I would predict for their amusement little unimportant things that were going to happen. Sometimes I would startle them by telling them what they had done in my absence. I derived endless amusement from mystifying them, as children always love to be mystified, and they never tire of laying traps to catch me. One of their favourite games centred in an old-fashioned phonograph we owned, which had a large trumpet; the records were in the form of cylinders. The children delighted to bring these cylinders to me, holding them behind their backs so that I could not see them, and test my powers of clairvoyance by demanding that I tell them the names of the particular cylinders they held. Nearly always I was right, but on the odd occasions when I was wrong, the cheers of triumph from the little ones rang joyously round the house.

Again I was faced with the task of supporting a family and I succeeded in getting work at the Sopwith factory in Kingston. My job was to sew the fabric on to the ailerons of airplane wings.

One day I was asked to sew a canvas boat, which was to be carried by Harry Hawker, Sopwith's chief test pilot, on his attempt to fly the Atlantic. In the course of sewing it I became more and more convinced that the boat would be put to the purpose for which it was intended. The feeling was so strong I told my friends about it, adding that it would be the means of saving Hawker's life. Nobody paid much attention to my prediction, until it was fulfilled exactly as I had foreseen. Although it was unfortunate that Hawker's bold attempt was unsuccessful, I was nevertheless happy that my sewing had stood the test.

The strain of Hugh's illness, over-work and undernourishment had taken toll of my strength. My health gave out again, and for several months I was unable to do anything in the nature of steady work. I began to despair of ever getting stronger. Necessity, however, is a relentless taskmaster. As soon as I felt I could stand the course, I secured a post as a waitress in the upstairs restaurant at Victoria Station. All the children were now at school all day, so I was free to leave home, but it was a long and wearisome working day. I started at six each morning busying myself with housework and getting the children ready for school. Then I would leave for work at the restaurant and not return home until nine or ten at night. My eldest daughter and a kind neighbour cared for the younger ones, putting them to bed and watching over them until my return.

This arduous routine went on until the end of 1920, when I married Arthur Roberts. I was then able to give up my work as a waitress and return gratefully to the duties of a housewife, which also happily meant that I could devote more time to the children. My spirit people still came to me regularly and my understanding of them was growing noticeably. I began to give them much more thought than I had in the past and even went so far as to discuss them with my next-door neighbour, a Mrs. Slade, who invited me to accompany her to a Spiritualist meeting which she was going to attend. I agreed, and we went to a little Spiritualist church at Hampton Hill. This church, I recall, was constructed entirely of tin. We attended three times.

Each meeting was addressed by a different medium, and each medium, it seemed to me, was focusing her entire attention exclusively on me. I began to think it was all part of a conspiracy to convert me to Spiritualism. At the third meeting the psychic demonstrator was Mrs. Elizabeth Cannock, whom I later came to know as a very good medium, highly respected for her gifts and her integrity. She singled me out at once, saying in unequivocal terms: "You are a medium and have much work to do. Chosen by the Spirit World, you must not ignore the call. Please come and see me after the meeting."

I did so, and we discussed my spirit people and their voices. I told her there had been many times when I had feared that I was suffering from hallucinations, so strongly had this idea been implanted in my mind as a child by my father. Even now, I could not bring myself to believe her when she declared that she knew beyond all doubt that I was a medium. I asked her for proof of her words, proof by some happening that was entirely outside my mind and unconnected with myself in any way. Only in such circumstances could I be convinced of her faith in me and the mystic work she said that lay ahead of me. Only then would I feel that I could go into the world and say with conviction, "I know."

She readily conceded my point and said: "Go home and sit at a table. I am confident they will make physical contact with you."

I did as I was bid. I went straight home and sat alone at a table, expectant and apprehensive. Nothing happened that night, or on any of the next six nights when I repeated the procedure. I just sat there, silent and solitary, until I began to feel more than a little foolish. The table did not so much as wobble. I decided to have one final session. I sat again the next night and the result was exactly as before. When I could stand it no longer I got up in disgust, telling myself that other people might be mediums, but I certainly was not. I picked up the table and carried it across the room to its accustomed place by the opposite wall. It was a solid table, with tripod legs, and it required considerable effort for me to lift it. "Well, that's that," I thought. "I shall not be so easily persuaded the next time."

I turned and began to walk away. As I did so, the table rose into the air and hit me firmly in the back. I stood momentarily in astonishment, and then ran in panic to the far end of the room.

The table pursued me inexorably, within inches of my back. When I stopped, it stopped, too, returning to the floor with a thump.

After the first shock had subsided, I immediately realized that this was proof of the existence of a power outside myself that I had demanded, and with this realization came a reaction of intense gratitude. Turning around, I put one hand on the table and said, "Thank you, whoever you are."

It is difficult in retrospect to analyze an emotion, especially one which has no other parallel to use for comparison. I can only describe it as a grave and wonderful moment in which I felt as though my whole being had been reborn into a new level of consciousness. I was still trying to adjust myself to what had happened when I saw and heard my guide for the first time. A voice said in stilted, too precise English: "I come to serve the world. You serve with me, and I serve with you."

I asked, "Who are you?"

The voice replied, "I am Red Cloud."

As these words were spoken, I saw the top part of a man's figure surrounded by a halo of white light. His skin was olive-coloured, his eyes were dark, and he wore a small black beard. In that moment I was aware as surely as if Red Cloud had told me that all that had gone before in my past life - the privation, the long hours of manual work and, particularly, my spirit voices - had been part of a preconceived pattern. And now the pattern was complete. I knew with unwavering certainty that my true mission in life - whatever it may be - had just begun.

A week after I first saw Red Cloud, I invited Arthur, my husband, to sit with me. We drew the curtains making sure that no light from outside could enter, and then sat down on two chairs we had placed opposite each other. Arthur took the bigger of the two, a heavy chair upholstered in leather, leaving me a cheap little chair having a thin wooden seat pierced with an intricate pattern of small holes. We sat facing one another in total darkness, and awaited some manifestation of the spirit power which I now knew existed. We had not long to wait. Almost at once a brilliant golden light shone down from above my head, enveloping me in its rays like a theatrical spotlight.

Arthur's reaction was immediate. "Where are you, Estelle?" he demanded. "Where have you gone to?"

I had no idea what he was talking about. I had not moved from my chair and I thought for a moment he was playing some game with me. Rather impatiently, I replied: "I haven't gone anywhere. I'm sitting just where I've been sitting all the time."

"But you can't be," he said, "Your chair's empty. I can see it quite clearly the seat, the back, all of it. The chair's empty."

It was my turn to be surprised. "But, Arthur, it isn't empty. I'm sitting here just as I was before."

"My dear," he insisted, "you're not. I tell you the chair is empty."

I pondered this uncomprehendingly. Quite certainly I had not moved from the chair, and as far as I was concerned no change had taken place in the room since we sat down except for the unexplained appearance of the light overhead.

“You say you can’t see me,” I said, “yet I can’t have gone. Otherwise I shouldn’t be able to answer you as I am doing now.”

“Well, I can’t see you,” he replied, “but I can see the chair you were sitting in. I can even see the holes in the seat.”

“Then tell me how many holes there are.”

He leaned forward and with his forefinger traced the pattern of holes, counting each one as he came to it. He could feel nothing of my body sitting on the chair, nor could I feel the touch of his hand.

A few minutes later the golden glow overhead was extinguished as mysteriously as it had appeared, and we were left sitting face to face in the darkness. Arthur got up and put on a light, turning quickly as he did so to see if I really was still there. Then he came over and stood by me. “Let me have a look at that chair, my dear,” he said. I stood up and together we counted the holes patterned in its seat. They totalled precisely the number Arthur had counted not five minutes earlier.

Some years later a similar happening, though working in reverse, when a psychic photographer exposed his camera on me. The photographer could clearly see me sitting on the chair, but when the photograph was developed, only the chair was to be seen in the picture. I had somehow been “eliminated.”

In 1922 my son, Terry, was born, and when he was a year old the whole family had a narrow escape from disaster. One evening I had been to the Spiritualist church to listen to Mrs. S. D. Kent, a medium whom I had always wanted to meet. After the meeting Mrs. Kent walked home with me. When we arrived we found Arthur giving a chest of drawers a much-needed coat of white paint. As we entered the sitting room Mrs. Kent looked around and asked, “Why are you painting it white when all else in the room is black?” Neither Arthur nor I had the least idea what she meant by this question, and she could not explain her words. As far as I could see there was nothing black in the room, but as Mrs. Kent offered no further comment, I thought it best to let the matter drop.

However, we were soon to be enlightened. The significance of her apparently meaningless statement was brought home to us in no uncertain fashion two nights later.

The room in which we slept had a double bed, which stood in a corner with one side pressed close against the wall. I usually slept on the side nearer to the wall. I had been fast asleep for some time when suddenly I awoke to find myself lying on the floor. Too dazed to give the matter any thought, I just climbed back to my side of the bed and fell asleep again. Some minutes later I again woke up, and once more I was lying on the floor by the far side of the bed. I thought I must be having a nightmare, and, more awake this time, got back into bed. I was still lying half-awake when suddenly I felt myself rise into the air, and pass

over the top of my husband. A moment later I was unceremoniously bumped on to the floor. I became wide awake after this treatment. Putting one hand to the floor in order to pick myself up, I saw that it was covered by a white vapour which, when I scooped some in my hand to smell it, I discovered to be smoke.

I shouted to Arthur that the house was on fire. Together we rushed downstairs with the children and passed them to safety out of the back window into the yard. The firemen later told us that the sitting room must have been in a state of slow combustion for over two hours for when the door was opened the whole place burst into roaring flames.

Sadly we surveyed the ruins of our home. What remained of the furniture and walls of the sitting room was charred and blackened, including the chest of drawers, which we had so carefully painted white. It was then that we recalled the words Mrs. Kent had uttered, two nights before. Another aspect of the disaster, however, brought me great comfort. There was now no doubt in my mind that I was under the protection of the spirit world. By dumping me three times on the floor to awaken me, my spirit friends have conclusively shown that they had no intention of allowing me to leave this life until my work was done.

I had now reached a stage in my physical development where I felt the urge to go into the highways and byways and work among people, trying to bring hope and comfort to their minds and healing to their bodies. I longed to share the light of understanding which had been given to me, and to help to bring into sharper focus the truth which had been demonstrated to mankind nearly two thousand years before.

There began for me a gradual process of the unfolding of the psychic powers necessary for the fulfilment of my mission. This was accomplished, not by special training, but simply by opening up my mind to receive impressions from the spirit world and in so doing becoming the instrument for the exercise of the divine power through Red Cloud.

I would like at this point to correct a common misconception of the manner in which spirit guides are sometimes said to treat their mediums. It is frequently suggested that guides force their way through to mediums without any regard for their feelings. I must stress this is emphatically not the case. Red Cloud has always treated me with gentleness and the greatest consideration for my health and well being. He has never asked me to do anything to which I have not freely given consent. Always he has insisted that not only mediums but all men and women have free will to act as they choose, and with it goes the responsibility for their actions.

An interesting example is the case of a young man who came to me seeking proof of Survival. He was anxious to get in touch with his father in the spirit world. Red Cloud told him: "I am sorry, my son, but I cannot bring your father to see you. When he was on earth he believed that after his death he would sleep until Resurrection Day. I cannot interfere with his free will. He now sleeps in one of the rest homes in the spirit world."

From this it will be seen that spirit people cannot be called back against their will to communicate with those on earth. They come only if they wish to do so. There can be no questions of "raising the dead" as so many people erroneously assert.

I began to take many meetings in many districts round London, at Spiritualist churches at Hampton Hill, Richmond, Surbiton, Wimbledon - to mention only a few-giving clairvoyance, clairaudience (a means by which I hear spirit voices), healing and trance lectures. At Richmond Spiritual Church a curious incident occurred when a picture was taken by a psychic photographer who, although a non-professional, was operating under test conditions. When the plate was developed it contained a ray of light in the form of a spear, the head and shaft being clearly distinguishable. It was winter-time. There was no sun, and there was no window in the direction from which the spear was pointing. I had not seen the spear clairvoyantly when the photograph was taken. I can only surmise that the purpose of its appearance was to symbolize the piercing of darkness of ignorance by the light of understanding.

From a material aspect, these meetings were anything but remunerative. At the time of which I am writing, it was the custom for mediums to receive five shillings for a meeting, out of which they had to pay their own fares. Furthermore, it was no uncommon occurrence for a medium to take both afternoon and evening services without any increase in payment. This did not worry me, however, useful though a little extra money would have been. I was too filled with the zeal of the crusader to look for pecuniary gain. Indeed, I was probably too idealistic and too serious in outlook.

It is so easy to become too intense about any subject on which one feels strongly. Because of this, during the early days of my career, at sittings when I was not entranced, and therefore aware of all that I said, I was sometimes tempted to ignore or dress in greater decorum occasional phrases, which shocked me as being flippant, or in bad taste. I recall such an instance when a young woman, whose fiancé had been killed, came for a sitting. He immediately came through to me. I heard him with perfect clarity, repeat the same words over and over again, but as they shocked me I was reluctant to pass them on to my sitter. "Tell me," I asked her, "was he a man who used strong language?"

"Not especially," she replied. "Why do you ask? What is he saying?"

"Well," I said dubiously, "he keeps on saying, 'Not bloody likely, not bloody likely!' "

She laughed happily at this, and told me they had agreed that whoever died first should try to come back and give as a password the famous phrase from Bernard Shaw's 'Pygmalion'.

I soon learned that the spirit people behave just as naturally and individually as we do. By passing over they do not suddenly become paragons of all the virtues as some people seem to think.

They retain their mortal characteristics and to all intents and purposes are the same people they were on earth, except that they have discarded ailing, injured, or worn out bodies in exchange for perfect spirit bodies.

Red Cloud loves laughter, which he says creates harmony. He has a sparkling and delighted sense of fun which he frequently brings into play when he feels the atmosphere of a sitting is becoming too tense. I remember one lady, who moved in elevated society circles, and always exquisitely dressed in the height of fashion, once asked him: "Red Cloud, why is it

that the so many of the guides are Indians with painted faces?" She did not mean this unkindly. It was a genuine question which, incidentally, has been asked many times.

"Should the Indian not paint his face?" Red cloud replied with a twinkle. "Do you not do the same?"

The tenseness of the séance at once dissolved in laughter.

At another sitting, when the atmosphere had become charged with emotion, Red Cloud suddenly interposed: "Two days ago others of my race approached me, saying, 'Come quickly, there are those who would scalp your medium.' I went with them and found her seated in a chair with her hair attached to a machine. I looked, but she was well and happy, so I went away."

I was, of course, at the hairdresser's, having my hair permanently waved.

Another example of spirit identification by a pre-arranged password was when a lady came bringing a personal object which had belonged to someone she loved. She hoped that with its aid she might receive a communication. In the course of the sitting I became mystified when the only word I could hear was "rabbits," repeated several times. The sitter asked if there was any message for her. I replied there was, though I doubted whether it could possibly interest her. Somewhat diffidently I told her that all I had received was the word "rabbits."

"But that is the very word my husband and I agreed upon as evidence of identification," she exclaimed triumphantly.

After that I was no longer surprised at any message which came from the spirit world.

It was at Richmond Spiritual Church in 1925 that Red Cloud first controlled me. A small group was sitting with me in an experiment to discover the extent of my psychic powers. I was not in a deep trance, and therefore had some knowledge of what was happening. It was as though I was partly present, partly detached. No doubt Red Cloud chose this semi-trance state to give me confidence before entrancing me fully, when all consciousness is withdrawn.

I could hear what he said through me, though I had no control over what was said. I heard him say: "One day this medium will be known to all the world. People will come from every country to hear her. Many will be turned away, for there will be no meeting place big enough to hold all who wish to listen to her. She will never want, nor yet will she ever know riches."

When I emerged from this semi-trance I laughed self-consciously, saying, "What lovely fairy story I have been telling?"

Events proved it to be anything but a fairy tale. I have demonstrated my mediumship at many mass gatherings from which people had to be turned away because there was no room. I have met men and women of many races and creeds, from all over the world and from all walks of life who have come to receive comfort from Red Cloud and to hear his

wisdom. Perhaps the most remarkable example of the truth of Red Cloud's words is to be found in a most unexpected occurrence in India.

The late King George of Greece often came to talk to Red Cloud; to receive his teachings and guidance. This fact has since become generally known, but at the time his visits were never mentioned outside the small circle in which we sat and were unknown to the world at large. He had gone to India and stayed with the then Viceroy, Lord Willingdon. Being deeply interested in psychic matters, he inquired of Lord Willingdon if he knew of a mystic with whom he could discuss them. The Viceroy told him of a holy man who lived like a hermit. King George set off to find him, taking care to preserve the secret of his identity. En route he had to cross a wide plateau. After he had gone some distance, he was met by a holy man, dressed in a loin-cloth and wearing a turban. The hermit held up his hand, bidding the king to stop.

"Come no further, my son," he said. "You have no need of me, for you are under the protection of the great Red Cloud." He turned back, refusing further conversation, and made his way out to his hut.

When King George returned to England, he came immediately to tell me the story. He was greatly impressed by what had happened, particularly because the holy man could have had no knowledge from earthly sources of the visitor's association with Red Cloud. Nor could the holy man could have known who the monarch was.

Other members of the Greek Royal Family have visited my house; the late Paul, who was Crown Prince at the time, often came to seek guidance. Neither King George nor Prince Paul made any secret of their great interest in Spiritualism and Red Cloud, but I and my family always referred to them as "Mr. Roy" and Mr. Constantine," the names they chose when travelling incognito. My daughter Iris has acted as my personal secretary throughout her adult life, and she considers herself shock-proof. However, even her natural aplomb was shaken when answering the telephone one day was met with, "Buckingham Palace calling." Mr. Roy was an official guest at the Palace. Another member to come to Red Cloud was their sister, the late ex-Queen Helen of Rumania. King George was the most frequent visitor. He loved Red Cloud, and liked to discuss all manner of subjects with him. Greece was in a troubled ferment at this time. The King, exiled in England, came many times to discuss his country's affairs with Red Cloud. When eventually he was invited to return to the throne of Greece, as the guide had foretold, he wrote often, sending questions for Red Cloud to answer. I still have his letters covering the years from 1933 to 1940. They are, of course, entirely private, and will never be allowed to pass out of my hands.

King George was a most charming man, a strong but kindly ruler, able to make his own decisions and to carry them out. In spite of his exalted position, he was modest and unassuming in his private contacts, always completely natural, and possessed of a strong sense of humour.

I remember he once came to a public meeting at the Aeolian Hall, where, for a time, I demonstrated clairvoyance on Saturdays. One Steward, Nicknamed "Twiggy," was a

Cockney of the best type. King George asked my daughter, Iris, for a seat in the balcony. She, unable to leave her post at the door, called to "Twiggy" to conduct him there, without mentioning the Sovereign's identity. When "Twiggy" returned, Iris asked him if he had found the visitor a seat.

"Yes," said "Twiggy" complacently, "and I gave 'I'm an acid drop.'"

"Good gracious!" said the horrified Iris. "Did he take one?" "He did. Several!"

The King also attended the opening of the House of Red Cloud, in a lovely old building in Wimbledon, formerly the residence of Mr. Justice Hill. In October 1934 it was dedicated to healing the sick and for demonstrations of my psychic gifts. It also became the headquarters from which many huge Spiritualist meetings were organized in London and the provinces. They included those held in conjunction with the *Sunday Pictorial* and a campaign sponsored by the *Daily Sketch*. Much valuable work was done there until 1941 when, bombed out of my home in Esher, I went to the West Country to live, closing the doors of the House of Red Cloud behind me.

The opening ceremony of the house of Red Cloud was performed by Mrs. Gordon Moore in the presence of King George of Greece, Mr. Hannen Swaffer, Rose, Marchioness of Headford, Shaw Desmond, and many other notabilities. Mrs. Gordon Moore was accompanied by her husband, who was physician to Princess Beatrice, whose sister, Princess Marie Louise, was interested in spirit healing and had received treatment from Harry Edwards.

Princess Marie Louise frequently sent requests and questions to Red Cloud through Dr. Gordon Moore, who conveyed the answers to her. On more than one occasion Red Cloud sent messages to the Princess from people in the spirit world whom she was able positively to identify yet who were quite unknown to me.

For some long time Dr. Gordon Moore was far from convinced of the truth of Survival, or of the existence of Red Cloud. He accompanied his wife on one of her visits to Red Cloud, and decided to put Red Cloud to the test. He had been much distressed by seeing the suffering of a young housemaid in his own household who was dying with cancer. "If you can stop the suffering of this girl, I will believe," he said to Red Cloud.

The guide replied: "I cannot cure her, for the disease is too far advanced, but I will stop the pain."

The doctor could hardly get back to the hospital to see if this promise had been kept. When he arrived, he found that Red Cloud had been as good as his word. The girl was free from all pain and continued to have no suffering right up to the time she eventually died. It is no wonder that Dr. Gordon Moore became completely convinced of Red Cloud's existence. More than twenty years later, he became a victim to cancer. Red Cloud said he would tell him when his final earthly hour was approaching, promised to help his passing into the next world. Again Red Cloud kept his word, telling us he was standing by for this great event. Twenty-one hours later the doctor passed over.

Another strange incident concerns the man who was then president of the Marylebone Spiritualist Association. He came to me because he said that he had an interesting story to relate. He told me how a stranger had come to the officers of the Association and had insisted on speaking to him in person. The visitor said he had come to seek out a well-known medium whose name he had forgotten. Could the president help him to remember? The official was only too ready to assist and reeled off a string of names, mine included.

“Ah,” said the man, “is she a lady with black hair and dark, very bright eyes?” The president agreed I had the features described. The visitor then gave a clearly recognizable description of myself. The official asked him in surprise: “Do you not know her, then?”

The man shook his head. “No,” he said, “but I have just come from Africa. There I lived for months with a primitive tribe who know little of white men or of the civilized world. Yet they told me. ‘When you go back to England you must find the Lady Estelle. She is the one who will help you.’”

Answering further questions the man stated that many of this tribe were accomplished mediums. He believed they must have heard of my name through the spirit world. This opinion is confirmed by Red Cloud, who says that though the white races have made many advances in civilization, the primitive African leads in his understanding of psychic laws.

Not unnaturally I was deeply interested in this story and eagerly awaited the visit from the man who had recounted it. There was so much I wanted to ask him about this primitive tribe, especially about the extent and the limitations of their psychic powers. It certainly never crossed my mind that I should hear no more of him. Yet that proved to be the case. Despite the trouble to which he had gone to ascertain my name and address, he never came to see me - or, if he did, he did not make himself known to me.

I have, of course, had dealing with many coloured people. One I recall very vividly was an African, a medical student burning with the desire to help his own people who were sadly in need of proper medical attention. He had come to England in the hope of training as a doctor at one of the big teaching hospitals. Unfortunately he was having difficulty in being accepted. He explained that though there were no regulations excluding African students from British Hospitals, he was meeting with resistance which, he believed, was due to a colour bar.

It was clear to me that the eager enthusiasm with which he had embarked on his private crusade was turning to disillusionment and despondency. He was alone in a strange new country and felt himself shunned by the white people around him. He longed desperately for the comfort and encouragement of his own people. Diffidently, he asked me if I harboured any feelings of racial and colour prejudice. I replied that the spirit world recognized no boundaries of race, creed or colour and that this was also my outlook. He thanked me for this assurance. In the course of our séance his father and brother returned to him and also an African surgeon with whom he had been very friendly.

As he left he said: “When I came into this house, I was alone. I believed that in the whole world there were only myself and, infinitely remote from me, my God. Now I know that I

have not only many friends but also Red Cloud to act as intermediary between me and God.”

I learned later that he quickly succeeded in getting into a Hospital for training, but I never heard whether his story had its happy ending.

Countless numbers of people have come to me seeking evidence of Survival. Though the majority were skeptics, almost without exception they have gone away convinced by an abundance of evidence that their loved ones still live.

One woman, I recall, was shocked by the possibilities revealed by life after death. She was a prim unmarried woman to whom I had said that I could see clairvoyantly three men around her. From my description she identified them as her father and two brothers who had died.

“They often come to see you at night after you have gone to bed,’ I told her.

At this she sat bolt upright and said: “Mrs. Roberts, if Spiritualism teaches that male spirits can come into one’s room after one has retired, I want nothing more to do with it!”

CHAPTER THREE

HEALING

My first patient for healing arrived unexpectedly at a Spiritualist meeting at Hampton Hill. A mother brought a little boy suffering pitifully from asthma, and asked me to do what I could for him. I saw the child’s laboured breathing and my heart sank. What could I, who knew little of spirit healing and had certainly never attempted it myself, do for this poor little boy who gazed at me with anxious, trusting eyes? But I knew I must try. With a silent appeal to Red Cloud to guide me in what I must do, I laid my hands gently upon the child’s chest.

I have no idea what reaction I expected. I had never thought of myself as having healing powers. In touching the child, I did so more in response to the mother’s faith in me than any faith I had in myself. Yet what happened was nothing short of miraculous. One moment the child was struggling for breath, and the next he was breathing easily and normally. It was as quick and simple as that and, of all those present, I’m sure I was the most dumbfounded. I could not believe the evidence of my eyes and stood unconvinced, certain that the spasms must be renewed at any minute.

The child went on breathing normally, and continued to do so for the next twenty years, when at last I lost touch with him. It was, by it’s unexpectedness and the permanence of the cure effected, a profoundly moving experience. Though I have since being the instrument of hundred’s of other healings - some much more spectacular from the point of view of the onlooker – none has ever made a greater impression on me than my first treatment.

I remember the anxiety of another mother who came distraught to my house one winter’s evening. Her son, she said, was suffering from meningitis. All that was possible medically for the boy had been done. The Doctor’s had reached the limit of their resources. Now the child’s life lay in the balance. Was there not something that I could do, she asked, or Red

Cloud, of whom she had read so much? She made tragic little figure sitting there, her eyes red from weeping, her shoulders bowed with worry. At such moment's words of consolation bring hollow and I wasted no time with them. "Come," I said. "We will see what can be done."

I went home with her and sat all night giving healing to the child. It was some hours before any change of condition became evident, but when it did it was undeniable. From then on, improvement was slowly but steadily maintained. When the doctor came the next morning he was greeted with joy where he might have expected grief. I returned home and had no further contact with the boy and his mother. Some fifteen years later as I was getting into a car after a Spiritualist meeting at Surbiton, a woman and a young man tapped on the window. The woman said, "This is my son, whose life you saved." It was a happy moment for me when they reminded me who they were.

A great deal of Red Cloud's work is devoted to healing. He says there are two types of healing: divine and magnetic. Divine healing is accomplished by means of seven rays, each of a different colour, which come from higher spirit spheres. Arranged in order of their attributes they are purple, green, gold, blue, steel, pearl and red. The highest attribute in the seven vibrations is the purple ray, representing in its spiritual form the ray of life. This is the one which Red Cloud had used when curing the boy of meningitis. We know very little of these rays or how they work. We believe they are radiated on certain wavelengths, but beyond that we can say nothing with certainty except that they are manipulated only by very highly evolved spirit beings.

Magnetic healing is done by the white ray. This is a magnetic or earthly vibration. Its healing is useful but not permanent. Very often, when there are cases of sickness returning after a "cure," it is because the healer has only been able to contact this vibration. Red Cloud has said: "Magnetic healing is like the passing of a cloud from the sun's face. It brings the comfort of relief, but not cure. Only divine healing brings cure, stimulating the soul as it heals the body."

Spirit guides use the different rays according to the capacity and strength of the healer's body. So much depends upon the ability of the earthly healer to attune his consciousness to the level of the highest possible rays. So much, also, depends upon the patient. Even though the healer is attuned to the highest rays, if the patient's vibrations have not been lifted to a sufficient level, contact will be only by the magnetic ray, and no more than temporary healing will result.

Even Jesus made demands of his patients - "Thinkest thou that I can do this thing?"

Red Cloud has a band of spirit helpers which includes some who were doctors on earth. One of them is Sir Morell Mackenzie, whose photograph stands on my mantelpiece. The portrait was given to me by Sir Morrell's grandson, whose acquaintance I first made when he came to see me and was bubbling over with indignation. He had come, he said, "to scotch all the nonsense" about his grandfather being one of Red Cloud's spirit helpers. We

talked for a long while and when we parted we had formed a friendship that persisted until his death.

Through my mediumship, Red Cloud and Sir Morrel Mackenzie performed a remarkable "operation" on a young woman, a nurse, who came for healing. She had had an accident at an earlier date and now complained of pain in her spine which obstinately refused to yield to medical treatment. Sitting with me in the circle were several psychic healers. Also present was a doctor who was inquiring into this form of healing. We placed the patient on a table and Red Cloud diagnosed that the pain was caused by a splinter of bone. Acting through me while I was in deep trance, Red Cloud first sent the nurse to sleep-by placing my hand on her head. She became unconscious almost immediately. No form of hypnotism or auto-suggestion was used.

The doctor examined her and, deeply impressed, said, "For the sake of humanity, show me how to do this, Red Cloud."

The guide replied: "No, my son. Such power can take life as readily as it saves it, leaving no trace of how death occurred. In the hands of the wicked it would be an evil thing. For this reason I will not show you."

Through my hands he began gently to massage the woman's back until there appeared in my right hand a small piece of bone. This, Red Cloud told the group, was the cause of pain. The doctor almost snatched it from my hand in his eagerness to examine it. Then, after a quick scrutiny of the bone-chip, he turned to the patient and made a careful search of her spine for some trace of scar or puncture through which the bone could have passed. There was none.

A few minutes later the nurse regained consciousness. She sat up and bent experimentally first in one direction, then in another. The pain had completely disappeared. It is now more than twenty years since this happened. I saw the nurse again about two years afterwards, and she told me the pain had never returned.

I need hardly add that possession of the piece of bone was promptly claimed by the doctor. It was his only proof that the "operation" had indeed taken place. He submitted the little chip to every test that he and medical friends could devise. It passed them all, being definitely established as human bone. Whether it was a splinter from one of the spinal vertebrae, however, could not be stated with the same degree of certainty though all those who examined it and were qualified to express an opinion were unanimous in believing that it was. I have had several visits from this ex-patient, Mrs. Haining, she now lives at Bournemouth and has resumed her nursing by looking after elderly people.

Another case of healing I recall is that of David Short, a three year-old boy, whose mother implored me to see if there was anything that could be done. Suffering from pneumonia and gastro-enteritis, he was being kept alive on a diet of glucose and water, as he could keep no other food down.

My daughter Iris went with me and when we arrived at the house the boy was clearly very ill. I placed my hands on his body while Iris held his head, and for half an hour gave him

healing from Red Cloud. Then I suggested he should be offered a little food. He took it readily, almost greedily, and to our delight was able to retain it. He became noticeably less restless and finally fell asleep.

The doctor called later that evening and was surprised to find the boy in a deep, natural sleep, with his breathing greatly improved. I think he feared that he might not find him alive. This sudden turn for the better was completely unexpected. Iris and I went to the house to renew the healing on three consecutive days, and it was wonderful to watch the child's response. We could see him gathering strength from the treatment. His recovery was complete. As a mark of gratitude he brings me a bunch of flowers every year on my birthday.

Spiritual healing can be effective in some cases of mental sickness. I remember an interesting instance in which a young man was the subject of a dreadful obsession. Normally he was a person of charm and accomplishment, but he had periods when he was overcome by an almost irresistible desire to kill his mother. The climax came when he was discovered making his way to her room with the fixed intention of taking her life. Something obviously had to be done, and I was approached to give what help I could. I arranged for a sitting of my group members and invited the young man to attend. Red Cloud controlled me in a deep trance and addressed himself to the young man.

"Two years ago you visited a house of ill repute in France," he said, "and when you left you did not come away alone. An evil spirit accompanied you in your aura, seeing in you a channel for the earthly expression of his own sinful desires."

The young man was astonished at this mention of a visit which he shamefully admitted it to be true. But how did Red Cloud know of an escapade which had never been repeated?

"My son, much is known that is beyond your understanding," the guide told him. "It is sufficient that you know only that the spirit which now possesses you shall this night depart from your aura. And with his passing health will return to you and your body."

The exorcism which followed was, in the words of the witnesses, a raucous, rambunctious performance in which the threats and screaming blasphemies uttered through me – Red Cloud had allowed the entity temporarily to control me – eloquently betrayed the spirit to be of a very low order. The protests gave way to whining whimpering, while the circle members added the persuasion of their words to the force Red Cloud was exerting to dislodge the unwanted creature. The end came suddenly and without warning. The whining and whimpering ceased and all was silence.

I next saw the young man two or three years later. He called, bringing a young woman with him. He asked me if I remembered him and for a moment I didn't. I apologized, explaining that I met so many people.

"They were beginning to say I was mad," he went on, "but Red Cloud said I was possessed by an evil spirit. Do you remember now?"

I nodded. "I remember. And who was right?"

“Red Cloud,” he said emphatically, “though I wasn’t convinced at the time. The idea of evil spirit sounded so medieval. But I haven’t had another attack from that day to this, and that’s proof enough for me. It satisfies my wife, too, doesn’t it, darling?” He looked down at her confidently as she smiled up at him.

“Completely, darling,” she said.

“That’s all we came for,” he said, turning to me, “that and to say thank you. I owe you more than I can ever repay. I want you to know that I am grateful.”

When they had gone I thought about these two young people, so obviously adoring each other. It was pleasant to feel that I had played some part in making their happiness possible, especially when they had taken the trouble to come and tell me so.

I recall another case of obsession in which the cure was rather more drastic. It concerns a girl of twenty-three who was obsessed by a male entity. She would be perfectly normal for some weeks and then the invading spirit would suddenly take possession of her with distressing and startling results.

The difficulty in dealing with intermittent attacks of this sort is how to be on hand when one takes place. Since the attacks are unpredictable one can only arrange to spend as much time as possible with the afflicted person and await results.

A plan was arranged so that I could keep her under observation or be quickly available when needed. I soon discovered her to be an intelligent and charming companion. She was apparently so healthy and normal that it seemed we might share each other’s society for a very long time before her obsession was again ready to show himself. He manifested, however, within a few hours.

During our morning together we talked on many subjects. In the afternoon we went for a walk, arriving in time back for tea. We went upstairs to my room, I leading the way and chatting inconsequentially over my shoulder. As I opened the door I saw that someone had placed a lovely bowl of violets on my table. I hurried over to them, exclaiming: “Just look! Aren’t they perfect?” Naturally I expected her to respond in equally glowing terms.

No reply came. Suddenly, remembering the reason for her presence, I glanced quickly over my shoulder to see what she was doing. I was astounded by the transformation that confronted me. The pleasant-faced girl with whom I had spent the past four hours had in some Jekyll-and-Hyde metamorphosis changed into a coarse featured, full-mouthed man. It is difficult to explain. The features were as was before, yet different in some indefinable way. They had strengthened and hardened, their femininity replaced by something entirely masculine. There could not be the slightest doubt that it was a man who glared from those formerly gentle eyes.

The voice, too, was completely different. It had dropped several tones, and the words it now uttered belonged to the gutter. With bold effrontery the creature sprawled into a chair and dared me to take a step forward. Offering dire threats of injury if I did not obey his

commands, he boasted of this strength and his determination to manifest in the girl's body whenever he felt so disposed.

I have been thought never to fear the unknown. With absolute certainty I knew that Red Cloud was with me at that moment and I could have asked for no greater champion. As I began to advance on the intruder I was met with a volley of oaths and obscenities. I told him he must forsake the girl's body for all time.

At this he screamed further threats of violence but made no move to carry them out. He just sprawled in the chair, his mouth slack and wet, his eyes furtive and frightened. I came to where he was sitting and now, under Red Cloud's guidance, placed my two hands on the creature's forehead. The cry this action produced can be described only as a scream of terror, followed by sobbing entreaties to leave him alone. Again I urged him to leave the girl's body. Again he refused. I felt my hand beginning to move under some gentle compulsion until the thumbs met in the middle of the forehead and the fingers, stretched to their fullest extent, curved round the head and partially encircled it.

Again came the cry of terror, followed by the frightening sobs. Then came silence, broken a few minutes later, by the voice of Red Cloud breaking into my consciousness with the words: "All is over. He will return no more." With the entity's departure, the girl quickly returned to normal, never again to undergo a repetition of the ordeal she had suffered.

Not all healing cases are accomplished with spectacular speed; in some instances it takes months and even years to effect a cure.

Even so they are none the less remarkable, because they are mostly the cases in which all other remedies have been tried and have failed. The unfortunate sufferers come to spirit healing as a last-ditch resort, without real hope but ready to try anything. The percentage of such cures is hearteningly high, but they take longer to effect.

The case of Ewart Dudley, an author by choice, but a civil servant by profession, who first came to me in February 1955, was one of these. His doctors told him he was suffering from a condition known as chronic spastic colon, complicated by diverticulosis and diverticulitis of the transverse and descending colon. Translated into less complicated language this meant that he was suffering from a serious bowel complaint which ten years of the best medical treatment had failed to cure. The regular use of powerful drugs had contributed to lessening the intense pain but rigorous diet had sapped his strength. He was desperately under weight and in no fit condition to undergo the major operation which would be necessary should the colon close. It was a grim prospect for any man to face.

That was his condition when he first came to me a very ill man going steadily downhill, a man in continuous pain who was losing strength and beginning to lose hope. I gave him contact healing from Red Cloud. At the end of three weeks he began to show the first signs of improvement. We continued the treatment. For twelve months he visited me once a month for forty-five minutes. At the end of this time the bowel complaint was far less acute and his general health had improved out of all knowledge. After the first six months he had

been able to reduce his intake of drugs from three times to once per day and after a year he was able to do without them altogether.

Six months later he stopped having colonic lavage, and his visits to me were reduced to one every two months. By December 1957 his bowels appeared to be perfectly normal. Though he still had to be careful with his diet, he claimed he was in better health and was more active than at any time since 1944. The cure took time, but it was successful.

In recording these cameos of spirit healing, I do not for one moment suggest that orthodox medicine should be superseded by spirit healing. As long as we have physical bodies, medical treatment will be necessary to repair them when they run down. But there are instances when medicine falls short of what is required. It is then that spirit healing, with its much greater reserves to draw on, can sometime play an astonishing part.

The skeptic's among my readers, if they have read this far, will doubtlessly be saying that the healer is the wrong person to be recounting such stories of miraculous cures – that it is the testimony of the “healed,” not of the healer, that they want to hear. And so they shall. The words comprising the paragraphs which follow are not mine but were written and published some years ago by Mrs. Emma Cunliffe-Owen, O.B.E. They call for no comment from me.

“Words fail me in trying to express the deep gratitude to God Almighty and to Red Cloud for all the wonderful help and protection I have received, and in being cured of rheumatoid arthritis. Red Cloud's extraordinary knowledge of all medical matters, and his forceful, clear explanations in all details relating to the disease of both mind and body, are beyond words.

His loving guidance and teachings of God's holy will are the greatest help to those in trouble and who have faith in God. Red Cloud's chief aim and object is, apparently, to make us human beings realize more fully that ‘To God, nothing is impossible; and to do unto others as we would they should do unto us.’

Red Cloud, the great spirit physician, is continuing his work for our heavenly Father here on this earth, curing and helping both soul and body. Wisely, tenderly, Red Cloud guides and leads those who need him, and who will listen to his voice; his spiritual work is never-ending.

As a young girl I was full of uric acid, and continually suffered from rheumatism and so called gout. Later, I had a very serious illness, septic pneumonia in both lungs, and phlebitis in four veins. Then a recurrence of some poison in my system revived the rheumatism, and all medical remedies failing me I determined to get in touch with Mrs. Estelle Roberts' control, Red Cloud, who, I understood, was a spirit doctor.

I applied at the Marylebone Spiritualist Association for a sitting with Mrs. Estelle Roberts in the October, only to be told that the demands on this lady's time were so great that I could not have a sitting with her until the following January 3rd. I demurred, saying, ‘Suppose that I am not alive in January?’ The reply was, ‘You need not fear: we should not

be allowed to give you an appointment if there was any likelihood of your being on the Other Side then.'

When, at last, the day arrived for me to have my sitting with Mrs. Roberts, it proved to be a red-letter-day in my life. Red Cloud told me all the details of my earlier sufferings, and went on to say; 'All your joints are rusty, and that is what is causing the pain. I will help you, if you have faith in God and will do as I tell you.' Naturally I promised this, and I have never regretted the promise I made, or looked back for a moment.

Red Cloud asked me if I could have treatment in London under his guidance, but as this was impossible for me owing to the fact that I was living in Leicestershire, he told me to have one treatment before I left London and he would then give me treatment every night when I was asleep.

Red Cloud then spoke to me of many family matters, naming my dear ones in the spirit world, and telling me of many private family matters connected with them when alive. All these details were correct. And I would mention here that when booking my sitting in October I did not give the name of Cunliffe-Owen. There was therefore no chance of the medium knowing even my name, less still of making inquiries concerning my family!

All my swellings, aches and pains gradually subsided, but I began to have pains in the small of my back. When these continued I felt they might be connected with my treatment, so I went to London to have another sitting with Mrs. Roberts.

Red Cloud at once told me that he was sorry that he had been obliged to make me suffer pain in my back, but that he was getting rid of the uric acid through my kidneys, which, to my 'lay' mind, sounded feasible and common sense. There were many outward signs that this was the case. In connection with this, a very private remark, made on the subject, to my tried and faithful maid of thirty years' standing, was repeated to me by Red Cloud verbatim, even to mentioning my maid's name. Red Cloud informed me that the pains in my back would go, and they did. He also informed me that I should have no more violent headaches after three days had elapsed, and these too disappeared and I have had no more since.

On one occasion while on holiday I walked too much, and my maid rubbed my back night and morning for two days. The next night, while awake, I heard a voice say:

'Do not let Hoare rub your back, it is dangerous.'

At my next sitting with Red Cloud he said to me: 'I am glad you heard me when you were abroad; I told you not to let Hoare rub your back because it was dangerous. 'You see, dear child, you do not look old, you do not feel old, but your internal organs are old, and your kidneys are inclined to be flabby. Any massage, in consequence, is dangerous, and might lead to serious trouble.'

Red Cloud can see in the human body what no human eye can possibly see. Tenderly and lovingly, he gave me daily treatments and simple instructions, which I carried out to the letter; the result being that now, thirteen months after my first treatment, I am completely

cured of rheumatoid arthritis. My knees, which had been six inches larger than their normal size, are quite normal again now. My stiff, rusty joints are now all quite painless, and I am told that I look twenty years younger than I did ten years ago. And however true this may or may not be, the fact remains that now I can walk and get about in the usual healthy way.

What electrical treatments (which were useless in my case), vaccines, and all earthly remedies had failed to accomplish, Red Cloud as God's agent, had accomplished.

Before I knew of Red Cloud, I was repeatedly told that I should never be cured, but would steadily get worse. I am sure that God guided me to Red Cloud, and under his wise and loving care I am cured. Whenever I have thanked Red Cloud for what he has done for me he has always replied: 'My child, do not thank me; thank God Almighty, the Master, whom I serve.'

Since I have known Red Cloud my faith and gratitude to God have increased a thousandfold, and I shall never cease to be thankful that I was permitted to get in touch with his messenger - Red Cloud.

I hope and pray that these words may help other sufferers, proving to them that "To God, nothing is impossible,' and that God in his great mercy allows this wondrous spirit physician to help and heal us poor mortals if we have sufficient faith."

CHAPTER FOUR

PSYCHOMETRY

Psychometry is an aspect of mediumship which I have always found fascinating because of the remarkable results it produces. It is based on the fact that everything material pulsates with vibrations. The aura surrounding the human body also emits vibrations which are constantly being absorbed by inanimate objects lying within their field of influence.

Small personal possessions, such as those regularly carried in pockets or handbags, are ideal for psychometrical purposes. Repeated handling of them over a period of time impregnates them with their owner's vibrations. This impregnation may persist for a long time - often after the object has been permanently laid aside or, as happens in many cases, after the owner's death.

It is not only from the personal objects that I get the most interesting psychometrical readings. Articles with no personal association frequently reveal strong vibrations gathered from the surroundings in which they were found. Those which have remained undisturbed for a long time - hundreds of years, in some cases - frequently reveal the most interesting historical associations.

How psychometry conveys its "message" to the medium is one of the mysteries of the occult which I have found almost impossible to explain to the uninitiated. It is easy for even the most earthly individual to understand clairvoyance, because he is accustomed to seeing things with the physical eye. When you tell him that you see spirit forms as clearly and sharply as he can see you across the room, he has no difficulty in understanding what you

mean though he may privately think you are a little unbalanced. Similarly with clairaudience. He is accustomed to listening to voices of his friends, so it does not need any great stretch of imagination for him to understand that there might be people who can hear voices which are not audible to him. He probably does not believe in it as a possibility, any more than he would have accepted the feasibility of radio and television fifty years ago, but at least he can understand what he is saying.

But what about psychometry? In this the medium sees nothing and hears nothing. There is no mental picture which she can look at and describe in detail, and no distant voice to penetrate her consciousness with verbal messages. Then how do the vibrations of the object she is holding communicate their message to her? As far as I am concerned the answer is inexplicable because there is no physical counterpart from which to make a comparison. I can only say that as soon as I take the proffered object in hand I know its message. I can't tell you how I know, I can only say I know.

The observant reader will doubtless note that when describing psychometry experiences elsewhere in this book, I sometimes contradict what I have just said by using the words "I got a picture of" or "I heard him say." In fact, I did neither, but I find myself forced to use such expressions because I can think of no other way to express what I want to say. What is popularly known as "feminine intuition" is perhaps the nearest parallel I can offer. Much humour is regularly extracted from this subject, and some of it may be justified. Nevertheless, intuition does play its part in the lives of all of us, regardless of sex. Many people have at sometime had an unmistakable hunch which has come unbidden into their thoughts. Suddenly they know that such and such a thing has happened or is about to happen. It is not a matter for speculation but of certainty. Without any facts to go on, without even having been conscious of thinking about the subject, they are miraculously provided with the answer. Questioned on it, they will tell you that they knew "intuitively," which is their way of explaining that they do not know how they knew, or why they knew, but only that they knew. And in the majority of cases their hunches are proved absolutely right.

This sudden "feeling" - whether you call it instinctive or intuitive does not matter - cannot be accounted for by reasoning or logic. It is as though the mind has been momentarily swept clean of all the other thoughts and ideas that normally clutter its surface, leaving it responsive and susceptible to some latent force that is waiting to impress itself.

If, then, you are prepared to agree that every man and women may occasionally experience such moments of unexplained "clear sight," you may also agree that a few, who by nature and training are mediums, can develop an extension of it. Not that I suggest that psychometry is a straightforward extension of what is popularly known as intuition. It goes much deeper. But in seeking an answer to the oft-repeated question of how I am able to give my descriptions and verbal messages when demonstrating psychometry, I can only advance intuition as the interest parallel.

An experienced medium handling a personal object can translate its vibrations into a detailed description of its owner, his character, idiosyncrasies, and talents. Alternatively

she may conjure up a scene or age far removed from the present time or place. I vividly recall an instance of the distant past coming strikingly to the fore. I had been invited to dine with a very charming woman named Mrs. Hackney. Although she had visited me on a number of occasions, I had never before been to her house, nor had I met her husband.

After the meal Mr. Hackney placed a small piece of flint in my hand and asked if I could learn anything from it. I got an immediate reaction and was able to tell him that until recently it had for long lain deep in the earth and, before that, had been part of a stone implement - probably an axe.

Mr. Hackney was intensely interested because he could confirm the accuracy of the first part of my reading. He told me he was a mining engineer who had occasionally to examine mineshafts and pit workings. He had idly picked up this small piece of flint in a mine and had brought it to the surface to examine it more closely. Whether it was a splinter from a Stone Age axe he was not qualified to say, but he was sufficiently interested to seek the opinion of the experts. He took the chip to the British Museum where my diagnosis was pronounced to be correct as far as they were able to judge.

Another piece of stone that was brought to me conjured up an impression of a medieval castle and a battle raging round it. Especially clear were the arrow-slits let into the massive walls. I told the man who had given it to me that this stone chipping had been taken from one of the slits. He confirmed this in detail, telling me that it had come from a castle in North Wales whose name I have forgotten. I remember only that it was reputed to be the birthplace of Prince Llewellyn of Wales.

On another occasion I took from a tray of some thirty objects, each labelled with a number so that the owner could identify their own possessions, a small cube of white marble about the size of a lump of sugar. I was at once able to identify the owner - whom I did not know - and told him that he habitually carried the marble in memory of his wife whose body was buried in Italy. The marble itself, I said, he had taken from the foot of the grave. Thus, verily, are sermons written in stones.

One day a heavy metal ball, obviously a cannon ball, was among the collection of articles presented for psychometry. On placing my hand on it, I had no difficulty in identifying the battle in which it had been used - the fight for Quebec on the Heights of Abraham in 1759.

Some time after the death of his first wife, Sir Hugo Cunliffe-Owen placed a ring in my hand. I was at once aware of a sense of tragedy attached to it. Indeed, it was more than tragedy - it was as though the ring bore a curse. Though I got no more detailed picture than this, I was repelled by the evil it emanated and said I would like to throw it into the sea. Sir Hugo then told me that the ring, which had belonged to his wife, was set with a stone taken from the tomb of Tutankhamen.

At one psychometrical sitting a strange thing occurred which impressed everybody who witnessed it. I had been handling a string of large beads which had no clasp. It was a cheap necklace, long enough to be slipped comfortably over the head. As I handed it back to the owner, I found one of the beads lying loose in my hand. I thought for a moment that I had

broken the threads on which the beads were strung. But examination showed that the thread was as whole and unbroken as ever it had been.

Another incident illustrated the influence of spirit power over matter concerned a silver cigarette case. It was wrapped in tissue paper when it was handed to me by a woman and I did not remove the wrapping. Through the flimsy paper I could feel the case was badly dented. With its aid I made successful spirit contact with a young airman who had recently been killed in a plane crash.

When the sitting was over, I handed back the package to my visitor, who returned it unopened to her handbag and, shortly after, she left. Later she wrote to me, a good deal bewildered. The cigarette case, she said, had been damaged in the crash that had killed her nephew and consequently it would open and close only with difficulty. "Well," she went on, "it's damaged no longer."

When I got home I took it from my bag to put it in a safer place. I unwrapped it before putting it away, and to my unbelief the dents in it had completely disappeared. Did you do anything to it because, if not, a miracle has happened?"

"I did nothing," I assured her in reply. "How could I? You were with me all the time; you must have seen had I done so. But what was done was accomplished through me. I was only the instrument through which spirit power worked."

She accepted my explanation because it was the true one, the only possible one to fit all the facts. But she did so, I thought, with mental reservation.

My recognition of the cigarette case through the wrapping was, of course purely from the feel of it. It was altogether too familiar an object to need spirit help for its identification. This, however, is not always the case, as may be judged from this story of a woman and her son who came to a meeting at the House of Red Cloud. From the tray in front of me containing a score of miscellaneous articles, I took up a small parcel wrapped in soft paper. I pointed to the women and said: "I will begin by telling you the contents of this package. Inside it is a caul taken at birth from the face of the young man sitting at your side."

"But how can you possibly know?" The women asked incredulously.

"I know because I was told by the voices of my spirit friends," I replied. "How else could I know?"

They looked at me in wide-eyed wonder, apprehensive that they should be in the presence of all-seeing spirits whose voices I could hear but they could not.

Many and varied have been the personal possessions of deceased loved ones which their friends have brought to me in the hope that the vibrations of the objects would help me to contact the owners. I recall one old lady who was the unwitting cause of general alarm in the famous Queen's Hall. Just before the service a steward came and told me that he believed a member of the audience had come armed with a revolver. He had caught a brief glance of some dull metal gleaming inside a paper bag on the women's lap. To be on the

safe side he had planted a burly steward by her side with instructions to watch for the least suspicious movement.

His anxiety was not quite so alarmist as it might at first seem because there had been an unruly disturbance at a previous meeting when I was threatened from the body of the hall. A man - presumably a Spaniard - leaped to his feet and noisily voiced his displeasure of the "blasphemy" he had witnessed. "In Span", he bellowed as attendants forcibly escorted him to the door, "we know how to deal with your sort." Perhaps he had the inquisition in mind for me.

My friend the steward was probably justified in taking precautions. Anyway I went on to the platform shortly afterwards and the service was held without any untoward results. When it was over the steward came and said that the woman with the gun was asking for me. Did I think it wise to see her? I told him I was confident she meant me no harm and requested him to send her to me. It was a funny little woman who hurried in, clutching the brown paper bag.

"Mrs. Roberts," she said sadly. "I was so hoping for a message from my husband tonight. You see, I thought it might help if I brought his braces."

She produced the braces from the bag and as she did so the light glinted on the buckles. So that was my steward's revolver!

From time to time I have enjoyed discussions with sceptical men and women from all walks of life. Mostly they were intelligent, fair-minded folk who came in a spirit of genuine inquiry. I always did my best to answer their questions as fully as I could. Often they would counter my explanations with their own theories. The trouble with all such theories is that they never stand up to examination over a wide field of experiment. They may provide a complete and satisfactory explanation of the particular phenomenon under discussion and, indeed, of a wide range of similar phenomena. But extend the field of inquiry and immediately the most tenable of explanations gets wrecked beyond repair.

A popular theory, for instance, is that telepathy explains clairvoyance. The existence of telepathy is generally accepted by most people these days. So, say the theorists, it is not widely surprising if a person more than usually sensitive (the medium) should establish mental communication with his or her sitter. They even suggest that neither medium nor sitter may be aware of the thought transference between them.

This is a possible line of reasoning that can be made to explain some phenomena, the story of the caul just related, for instance. It apparently meets all the requirements. The women came to my house fully aware of the strange contents of her parcel. We are together in the same room and in picking up the package I am miraculously made aware of what it contains not mediumistically, as I maintain, but by thought transference working from her subconscious to mine. What could be simpler?

For the benefit of any reader who may have been reasoning along these lines, I offer the following account of an experiment I conducted recently, which, in my submission, disposes of the "telepathy" theory once and for all. It did not begin as an experiment but as

an ordinary sitting which was remarkable only in that a doctor visitor was acting as proxy for someone living in Canada.

Clairvoyantly I described an act of suicide, where it had happened and how it was done. Every word I spoke the doctor faithfully recorded for transmission to Canada. At the end of the sitting he read back what I had said, telling me that his friend in Canada was the wife of a man who had killed himself. In due course a reply came from Canada, suggesting that the doctor must have unknowingly hinted details of the suicide to me or, failing that, these must have been uppermost in his mind at the sitting.

As the doctor himself was quick to acknowledge, at the time of the séance he had known of the suicide, but none of the details, which I had supplied. He had been astonished to have them confirmed in every particular by his Canadian correspondent. He asked if there were some way by which we might convince his Canadian friend of Red Cloud's existence. I suggested an experiment.

At my request the doctor wrote to the widow asking her to choose some object connected with her husband and post it to him in England. The object was to be placed in a rigid box so as not to reveal its contents by shape or feel, and it was to be wrapped and sealed in such a way that it could not be opened without breaking the seals. When the parcel arrived at the doctor's address he was to bring it unopened to me.

These instructions were carried out. When the doctor next called at my house he carried the mystery parcel. It measured in inches about eight by six by two. Judging by the way it was heavily sealed the widow was taking no chances.

"Have you any idea what this box contains?" I asked the doctor. "None whatsoever," was his emphatic reply.

As I held the box in my two hands, I knew at once what it contained.

"Inside this package there is a photograph of the dead man," I said. "It was originally a picture of two people standing side by side, but it has been cut in half so that only one portrait remains - that of the dead man."

With the seals still unbroken the parcel was returned to Canada together with my description of its contents, which I learned, was correct in every detail.

Of course it might be argued that the widow and I were in unconscious telepathic communication; distance, it may even be argued, is no hindrance. But as this woman and I did not know each other, had never corresponded, and the date and the hour of our experiment had not been disclosed to her, it is hardly a theory that can be seriously entertained.

Nor could telepathy explain the following case in which neither the medium nor the two sitters had knowledge of what was communicated.

The first of these sitters had a private sitting for clairvoyance. A message came from her father in the spirit world.

I said: "Your father is giving me the name Florence. Do you know who she is?"

"Yes," she replied. "Florence is my mother."

"The message is: 'Florence has an affliction of the heart. Soon it will show itself and she will be very ill. But she will not die.'"

My sitter went away with this alarming, yet reassuring, warning ringing in her ears, and could think of little else. Without saying anything to me, she sent her sister for a sitting and deliberately did not tell her the message she might receive. The sister came as a complete stranger, yet she received the identical message. Two sisters, one mother and the same message from the same source!

The mother was taken ill a few days later, and, in due course, she made an excellent recovery. The original sitter came back to tell me the whole story.

At one séance a husband returned to his wife with several messages, including one which stated that he had met his brother in the spirit world. This statement mystified her because she had always believed her husband to be an only child. According to the foster-parents, who had brought him up in Ireland, he was an orphan without kith or kin, and so he had believed himself throughout his earthly life. Now here he was, within a short time of passing, returning to speak of a brother whom he had never known existed.

Discussing it with me after the sitting, the wife was disposed to think a mistake had been made somewhere, though she couldn't think where. Determined to inquire closer, she decided to write to the foster-mother in Ireland to see if she could throw any light on the strange affair. It was some weeks before she received a reply to her letter and, reading between the lines, I thought the interval might well have been spent by the writer in wrestling with her conscience as to the propriety of revealing a confidence. She told us that the brother's existence - he had been reared in some other foster-family, there was no mention of the real parents - had been kept a closely guarded secret from the moment of his birth. To the best of her knowledge she was now the only survivor of those who had been party to it. How then, would the wife please tell her, had she become aware of these facts which had been jealousy guarded for nearly forty years?

In the circumstances I thought it was a fair question, and hardly one to be explained by the convenient "telepathy" theory.

Neither can it explain the following incontrovertible evidence. A lawyer from the Commonwealth was on a world tour, and during an extended stay in this country he heard me at various meetings, including one at the Albert Hall. He reached the conclusion that I had "planted" people in the audience, incidentally thereby opening up endless demands for blackmail! He decided to prove his theory by having a private sitting with me. His mother who had passed over many years before told him of two children she had with her, both of whom were born and died before his own birth. He vehemently denied it, insisting that he had been an only child, but his mother was equally as insistent. He was sufficiently intrigued to write to the Registrar of Births and Deaths in his parents' hometown, some 500 miles from where he was living. To his astonishment, two certificates, one of a boy and

the other a girl, were sent to him. The evidence was accurate; there was no possibility of thought transference because his mother was the only person who knew, and she was dead! He was finally convinced, and published the details in a book he subsequently wrote.

For the first twenty years of his life my son Terence was a ruthless sceptic of anything relating to psychic phenomena. Many times I heard him maintain that I would never succeed in convincing him. I knew that I could easily have done so had I wished, but I preferred that he should come to Spiritualism without any prompting from me.

The day of his enlightenment occurred during the war when he came home on a week-end leave from the Royal Air Force, bringing a young woman with him. He had told her I was a medium and she, never having come into contact with the occult before, was eager to learn what it was all about. In this she got no encouragement from Terry, who was almost belligerent in his antipathy to Spiritualism. She persisted in her questions until Terry, with such good grace as he could muster, offered to take her to a public meeting that evening. But, of course, he had forgotten it was wartime and that public Spiritualist meetings were few and far between.

As we sat quietly round the fire after dinner, my thoughts were preoccupied with this strange resistance by Terry to convictions so firmly held by other members of my family. I knew sooner or later he would change his views and under normal circumstances I should not have been concerned. But this was different. It was wartime; air raids were almost a nightly occurrence; none of us knew from day to day whether we should live to see the next. I felt I would suffer remorse if Terry or this pleasant-faced girl should pass into the next life ignorant of the knowledge I had to give them. And so, breaking the habit of a lifetime by offering to demonstrate my powers uninvited, I said: "If you like, I'll give the pair of you a little demonstration of what Spiritualism can do. There's a friend of yours standing beside you now, Terry."

"Is there?" Terry replied, humouring me, "what's his name?"

He says his name is Jimmy Macfarlane. Do you know a Jimmy Macfarlane?"

"Yes I do. Is he dead?"

"He was killed nearly a year ago. Tell me why he keeps calling you Toady?"

"Toady? Good Lord, I haven't been called that for years! It goes back to when I was a kid at school and kept some toads as pets. Do you mean to say that you can actually hear Mac calling me Toady?"

For the first time in his life Terry was half convinced by my spirit voices.

"How else would I know?" I asked him. "A mother does not invent such an unpleasant name for her son."

"How did he die? What does he say happened to him?"

"He was in The Navy, in Scotland. There was an air raid. He was blown overboard and drowned. He says his mother still lives in the old house."

Terry waited to hear no more. He pulled his companion to her feet, saying: "I know where Mac used to live. We'll go along and check."

They came back two hours later, tired but convinced. They had spoken to Jimmy's mother. She had been reluctant to discuss the details of her son's passing, but had told them enough to confirm all that I had said. It was a moment of revelation for them.

Before we went to bed that night, I said: "Jimmy has given me another message for you, Terry. He said: 'Tell Toady I'll give him a sign he'll remember. Tell him I'll watch out on Monday morning at nine o'clock.'"

On the Sunday, their leave over, Terry and his friend returned to their billets in different parts of the country. Terry was due to report back at 9 a.m. on Monday and, as nearly always happened, he overslept. The result was a mad rush to get back on time. As he hurried from his billet to the camp, Jimmy gave the promised sign. Terry was passing a churchyard when the clock in the tower struck nine. As it did so, an overhanging branch of yew touched the cap and tipped it to the ground. Bending down to pick it up, he suddenly remembered Jimmy's promise. He remembered, too, that many times when they were boys together, Jimmy had done just that to his school cap.

Of course, it could have been a coincidence that this characteristic action should have occurred at precisely the promised hour, but there was no doubt in Terry's mind. I have often heard him tell this story, though until this moment I have never thought to ask if he was put on a charge for being late. If he was, he would be the first to agree that it was worth it, because from that day to this he has yielded to no one in his Spiritualist convictions.

CHAPTER FIVE

HAUNTING

Haunted houses and sometimes the furniture in them are of special interest to people sensitive to psychic emanations because of the immense energy that is nearly always present. Even people who are not normally receptive of psychic phenomena can often sense its presence, though they may not appreciate its source. Tax them with it and they will tell you vaguely that it is "just a feeling" and will probably deny it if you suggest they are being influenced by the supernormal. Because of my mediumship a visit to one of these places is a fascinating experience. The emanations are so strong that they reveal scenes of unusual detail and crystal clarity.

Maurice Barbanell, one of the most experienced and best-informed psychic investigators, invited me to accompany him to the home of a woman who kept an antique shop in Hammersmith. I have no knowledge of antiques. As far as I was concerned the large, ornate bed we were shown on arrival might have been made in any country and in any century. The only information offered was that the bed was haunted, and this I had no need to be told. As soon as I entered the room I was conscious of its sinister associations. So strongly did they reach out and flood my mind, that I was almost overwhelmed by the impressions I received.

Fragments of its history came flooding into me and I described them aloud without pause. It was, I said, a great estate and occupied the principal room of a medieval ducal chateau. I saw a man asleep in the bed, and watched him being stabbed while he slept. The killer then ransacked the room in search of some papers, which I knew he would not find because they were concealed in a hollow leg of the bed. Failing in his search, the killer dragged the body from the bed and threw it into the moat.

This was the third murder to have been committed in this bed. The first victim had been poisoned and the second bludgeoned, the occupant's head being smashed in so that blood had spurted over the bed-head.

The present owner agreed that these details confirmed the information she had obtained from other sources. She told us that, though many potential customers had come to look at the bed, none had liked it well enough to buy it. Her opinion, with which I agreed, was that prospective buyers were influenced by the bed's evil emanations, though they were not conscious of this being the reason. She told of a craftsman she had called in to make some repairs to the bed shortly after she had bought it. After making a survey of the work to be done he told her that he would prefer to have no more to do with it. "There's something about that bed I don't like," he said. "There is a feeling of murder about it, and I would rather not touch it."

Later she herself became aware of the bed's disturbing influence, and began to think there was something in the craftsman's vaguely expressed fears. At this stage I was called in. I had no doubt that my reading of the bed's history was correct in every detail. The clarity of the impressions I received permitted of no other version. The haunting was caused by the anxiety of the stabbed man for the safety of his hidden papers, important, perhaps to the heirs of his estate.

Whether the papers were later found in the hallowed out leg of the bed I never heard. Probably they were not, as news of their discovery would certainly have come to me. But failure to find them did not surprise me at all because, as I have said, it was an ornate bed with much rich carving. A craftsman who could produce such exquisite work would have had no difficulty in concealing the entry to any hiding-place he cared to contrive behind its elaborate ornamentation. I advised the owner to destroy the bed, not in an attempt to prove that it contained this secret receptacle but because it radiated so much terror and sorrow. No good, I felt, could come from preserving a piece of such melancholy memory.

In November 1935 I was invited to investigate a house, which, it turned out, was also haunted by an earthbound spirit in search of missing papers. The house, in Surrey, was owned by a wealthy businessman and shared by his secretary and housekeeper. Ever since they had taken possession they had been disturbed by sporadic visitations, but these had increased in frequency to such an extent that the occupants were becoming thoroughly unsettled.

The owner had several times been awakened by the piteous howling of a Dalmatian dog which shared his bedroom. Each time the howling was followed by the sound of footsteps

moving about the house in places where there was no human being. The secretary had been awakened several times at night to find a ghostly face peering at her from the darkness. The housekeeper had a similar unnerving story to tell. Altogether it was not the sort of atmosphere in which anyone could live comfortably for any length of time.

Accompanied by two male companions I went to investigate. After walking through the rooms, the three of us stopped in a long unfurnished gallery which ran from the living apartments to an empty room in an ornamental tower forming one corner of the house. Here, where the vibrations were strongest, I was confident we would get the most positive results.

Presently we were joined in our vigil by the three occupants of the house. All six of us 'sat', a little tense and on edge, waiting to see what would happen. Red Cloud made the first move. I became aware that he was with us when I heard his voice telling me to walk along the gallery towards the empty room. I got to my feet and had taken only two or three steps when I saw, ahead of me, a man in what seemed to be a monk's habit.

"Can any of you see this figure?" I asked my companions. None of them could.

"Have those of you who live here ever seen a man wearing a cloak and cowl?"

"Yes," the secretary and the housekeeper answered almost in concert.

"He's here now," I said, "searching a cabinet." The cabinet was old fashioned and heavy, the only piece of furniture in the whole length of the gallery.

"He won't find anything in there," said the owner of the house. "It's empty."

As though he had heard and understood, the spirit figure left the cabinet and moved into the tower room, where he mounted a small iron staircase, disappearing at the top through a closed door that led to the roof.

As we had done all we could in the gallery for the time being, we left to the comfort of the drawing room. Here Red Cloud took control and speaking through me, he told us what lay behind these visitations. The spirit form I had seen was a brother of a former owner of the house who had been strangled to death in an upstairs room. Before his death the murdered man had concealed some ancient manuscripts which his earthbound brother was now perpetually hunting.

"Is there anything distinctive about the papers?" the present owner asked Red Cloud.

"They are of parchment, written in Latin and Hebrew, each sealed with a great seal."

"What must be done with them when they are found?"

There will be no rest for this unhappy spirit or for those who inhabit this house until the parchments have been destroyed."

When I came out of the trance our host excused himself and returned some minutes later with a large metal studded box. He placed it on the table and opened the lid wide so we could all see inside. Then, almost reverently, he withdrew some parchment documents,

carrying the biggest seal I had ever seen. The seal was already broken and our host carefully opened each document in turn.

“As you will see,” he said quietly, “they are written in Latin and Hebrew.”

I was never told whether or not the papers were destroyed. Since, as recently as last year, I heard the hauntings were continuing, I am sure they were not destroyed.

A particularly unpleasant case was brought to my notice by Colonel Castello. The Colonel, who had experienced many reunions with his war-pilot son through my mediumship, now sought my help for two of his friends. They were a married couple, living in a country house which they declared was the subject of some sort of hoodoo.

Ever since they had moved in, calamities, great and small, had increasingly befallen them. In as many months, half-a-dozen deaths had occurred, ranging from domestic pets to the girl's own mother. This accumulation of misfortunes had so preyed on her mind that she was beginning to be obsessed with unreasoning fear for the life of her small son. Of course, all this might have been a chain of circumstances simply explained by an overlong streak of bad luck. Or there might be something in the hoodoo theory. Colonel Castello asked me to find the answer.

A party of six of us motored into the country. As soon as I entered the house I was accosted by the spirit form of a previous owner who was roaming around in a highly disgruntled frame of mind protesting: “Look what they've done! They've cut down all me damn trees!” Though he was unhappy at all the tree-felling, he was a harmless old fellow, entirely without malice. If the misfortunes of the household were attributable to supernormal influences, I was sure he had no hand in them.

With myself leading, the eight of us then proceeded to walk round the house. All went well until we entered a bedroom where, from the bed, came one of the most powerful manifestations of evil I have ever experienced. It was so strong that it pulled me up short, and my eyes were drawn irresistibly to the bed. I saw there what I had never seen before – the center of emanation of the evil I could feel about me. It was like a giant, obscene fungoid growth, gently pulsating and looking as malevolent as it undoubtedly was.

My natural reaction was to back away from it, but Red Cloud presented himself to my clairvoyant vision and told me to keep standing where I was. Then, impelled by his gentle reassuring presence, I allowed myself to advance to the bed. Involuntarily my hands shot out and, with an intense feeling of revulsion, I felt my fingers sink deep into the disgusting mass. Perhaps six times I felt it quiver beneath my grasp as Red Cloud destroyed its evil energy with vibrations of purifying power. Then the “thing” began to shrink and subside, and before long was no more.

My companions watched my actions, fascinated but uncomprehending. When it was all over I explained what I had seen and done, and promised the householders their hoodoo was at end.

“But what was it, and what caused it to come here?” they wanted to know.

“It was what is known as a psychic rod,” I told them. “Red Cloud says that such a rod may build up anywhere where there is a strong concentration of wickedness.”

“But there is no concentration of wickedness here,” they protested.

“No longer perhaps, but who knows what happened here before your coming?”

“The evil that men do lives after them. . .” Somebody quoted.

“Precisely that,” I agreed. “I think that if you care to do a little research you may find that this house was the scene of some forgotten tragedy or other.”

“I’ll make it my business to find out,” said the Colonel. And he did. He quickly discovered that the house was built on the site of a bloody feud which, growing out of lust and hatred, had lived grimly on this spot. The story, however, has its happier note. The owners of the house have lived in peace of mind ever since, which for me is the crowning achievement.

On the few occasions I have related this story to friends, it has prompted the same questions:

“How is it that you are able to see things which are not there – at least, not in the physical sense? And, seeing them, why do you react to them as if they were solidly material?”

The answers are presumably that my mind is functioning on the astral plane of consciousness, a condition in which my visions are clear and sharp, just as if I were seeing them with my physical eyes. Furthermore, the reactions and emotions they engender are no different from those produced by similar sights on the physical plane. My reaction to the psychic rod, for instance, was one of revulsion, indistinguishable from what I should have felt had it been a tangible, growing thing.

Shortly before the last war I witnessed a remarkable example of one man’s high sense of moral duty. I have since thought much about this episode and wondered, not too cynically, I hope, how many other men would have behaved as he did. In similar circumstances, would they not have taken the easy way out and destroyed the few pages of evidence that no one knew existed?

I was asked to investigate at a house whose occupants were suffering physical violence at the hands of an earthbound spirit entity. The attacks always followed a similar pattern. Every now and then one of the residents using the staircase would be pitched down the steps. This was not only disconcerting but dangerous.

When I arrived at the house, I stood at the bottom of the staircase and looked up. There, half-way up, was the spirit figure of a grizzled old man who came directly to the point.

“If you come up here, I’ll push you down again,” he said.

“I don’t think you will,” I replied. “I’m coming up and if you are sensible you’ll go up too. We’ll talk things over when we get to the top.”

“I’m staying here,” he answered, flatly.

“Very well. If you want to give battle, I’m ready.”

My words sounded bold, and were so intended. You must never show fear when dealing with an evil entity or even a fractious one.

I went up the stairs towards him . . . he stood his ground. As I came within his reach he put out his hand. Instead of pushing me backwards, as I expected, he wrenched at the string of beads I wore and scattered them in all directions.

“What’s happening? Your necklace is broken,” the watchers at the foot of the staircase exclaimed.

“It’s all right,” I reassured them. “No harm has been done.” I went on mounting the stairs while the old man retreated before me. At the top I stopped and said: “Tell me what is the trouble? Perhaps I can help you.”

“This is my house,” he replied. “And that man down there has robbed me of it.”

“Has he? How did he manage to do that?”

“Well, it wasn’t him really. It was his father before him. The old man cheated me of the place and I mean to get it back.”

“Can you prove any of this?” I asked.

“I can. The papers are in a parcel on a shelf in the cellar, just where the thieving old devil hid them. They’re all there. You won’t want other proof.”

With the owner of the house, I descended to the cellar. There, high up on one wall, was a rough bracket shelf. On it we found a parcel, thickly coated with coal dust. We took it down and removed the grime. Then we carried it back upstairs. We cut the string. Inside was a jumble of papers, just as the old man had prophesied.

Subsequent examination proved that the old man had been cheated of his property. It was then that the present owner behaved so magnificently. Without more ado he transferred the deeds of the property to the surviving members of the old man’s family. This altruistic action ended the reign of the irascible spirit intruder whose presence on the staircase had become a menace to everyone in the house.

CHAPTER SIX

MURDER AND SUICIDE

When I had a telephone call from Douglas Sladen, an old friend whose books I enjoy, I guessed from his tone that he was diffident about coming to the point. After some humming and hawing he said: “Look Estelle, I have just been talking to an editor. He asked if I thought you could do anything to help find this child.”

I knew at once whom he meant by “this child.” It was 1937, when the disappearance of ten-year-old Mona Tinsley had been making headline news for several days. The child had vanished from her home in Newark and the efforts of police throughout the country had failed to produce any trace of her.

“I’m sorry, Douglas,” I replied, “but you know my views. I’ll do anything to help, but I can’t be associated with something which might be condemned as a stunt as soon as the other papers get to hear of it.”

“I was afraid you’d say that, and you’re right, of course. But there’s another side to it besides sensationalism. Think of the child’s parents, how they must feel, waiting, wondering, not knowing whether the child is alive or dead. You could help them Estelle, if only to end the dreadful uncertainty.”

Douglas had always known how to play on my emotions and he was not hesitating to do so now. He knew perfectly well that I could not stand up to argument of the kind.

“All right,” I agreed at last. “I’ll do what I can, but don’t let them turn it into headlines news.”

“You can rely on me,” he said and rang off.

I had received many tempting offers to utilize my powers of clairvoyance for material purposes but had invariably turned them down. To have accepted would have been to lay myself open to charges of sensationalism and of cheapening Spiritualism and all that it stands for. But the present instance was somewhat different. In the case of Mona Tinsley, there were the parents to consider and the agony of mind through which they were passing. If I could help them in their hour of trial, I felt I must do so, even at the sacrifice of my principles.

I wrote to the Chief Constable at Newark-on-Trent, and told him that I believed I might be able to bring some comfort to the unhappy parents if he would send me some garment belonging to the missing girl. I received a reply in which the Chief Constable, Mr. Barnes, said: “This is forwarded at the request of the parents of Mona Tinsley and I shall be glad if you will refrain from giving my action any official interpretation.” As this was in accordance with my desire for no publicity, we were both satisfied.

In the parcel which reached me the next day was a pink silk dress belonging to Mona. As I took it from its wrapping and held the soft material in my hands, I knew at once that Mona was dead. Just then, my old dog, who had been sleeping quietly on a rug, suddenly leaped to his feet and began to career madly around the room. It is no uncommon thing for cats and dogs to react strangely in the presence of strong psychic phenomena, but this was the first time I had seen it occur with my own pet. Puck, normally the quietest and gentlest of creatures, now behaved like a thing possessed and finally had to be shut in another room before he quieted down.

Then, with Red Cloud’s help, Mona spoke to me, saying she had been taken to a small house where she had been strangled. She gave me a picture of a house, with a water filled ditch on one side, a field at its back, a churchyard close by, and an inn within sight. In my vision I was taken to a graveyard, over a bridge, and across some fields to a river beyond. There I stopped, unable to go further.

The picture projected to me was so clear that my secretary telephoned the Newark police to check its details with them. Evidently my description coincided close with the location of the child's disappearance because before they rang off they invited me to visit the site. If I would go to Newark, I was told, they would send a car to meet me at the railway station. Despite earlier misgivings, I was now deeply interested, and readily agreed to go.

At Newark railway station, I found the car awaiting me and, without any preliminaries, we drove off. Soon we came to a small house, which I recognized from my vision though I had never seen it with my physical sight. Two policemen accompanied me up the path towards the front door. Before we reached it, however, without knowing why I did so, I turned from the path and walked to the side of the house where I found another door. It was unlocked and I went in.

Inside, the house was bare from top to bottom; every stick of furniture had gone. Left to roam as I pleased, I went first to the staircase and climbed to the two rooms above. I received no psychic impressions in the first room I entered, but in the second, at the back of the house, particularly near the water tank, I could feel the presence of Mona. I went downstairs again and walked around the two lower rooms. It was in the front one that Mona had spent her time – of this I was certain because the child told me so clairaudiently.

When I rejoined the policemen outside they quizzed on my findings. I told them the girl had occupied the upstairs back room, and they said it was the bedroom in which some furniture had been found. The front bedroom had been quite bare. They nodded when I mentioned the water tank and said they had found a handkerchief there. This was later produced in evidence at the trial. Downstairs I told them, she had spent most of her time in the front room. This Mona had told me, adding that she had amused herself in copying something out of a book. This was also borne out later in the trial.

I said: "I knew before I came here that the child was dead. I can now tell you she was killed in that back bedroom."

"The child's death has yet to be established," came the guarded reply. "We have found no body. But, assuming you're right, can you tell us how the crime took place?"

"Death was by strangulation. The murderer then put the body in a sack and left the house by the side door."

"Why not by the front door?"

"I don't know. All I can say is that it was the side door he used."

"Actually," one of the policemen admitted, "the front door won't open. Nodder screwed it up so that it is permanently closed."

"This is Nodder's house?" I asked. "Yes."

"I thought it might be."

Frederick Nodder's name had been very much in the news. It was clear to readers of the newspapers that the police were very interested in Nodder's movements at the time of the

crime and just before it, but interest and suspicion are not enough to substantiate a charge at law. The police needed proof and they had not been able to get it. Neither had they been able to find Mona Tinsley, dead or alive.

“Assuming the child has been killed, where would you say the murderer hid the body?” I was asked.

“Some distance from here,” I said. “I can’t say precisely where, but if you would care to walk with me, I’ll do my best to help you.”

Together we walked past the churchyard, where I saw that some of the graves had been opened – doubtless by the police, who had been leaving nothing to chance. We crossed the bridge and came to the fields, exactly as I had foreseen.

“Beyond these fields there is a river,” I said. “There is.”

“The river holds the secret of the child’s whereabouts. If you’ve dragged it already and found nothing, you must drag it again.”

I could tell them no more and, shortly after, they drove me back to the station.

Some days after my visit to Newark, the police charged Nodder with the abduction of Mona Tinsley. He was found guilty and sentenced to seven years’ imprisonment. But the hunt for the child was never relaxed. Many weeks later her body was found still inside its sack in the River Idle beyond the fields. It had become jammed in the mouth of a drain, which explained why previous searches had failed to bring it to light.

Nodder was brought from prison to stand trial for murder. He was convicted and duly executed.

I have never enjoyed dealing with murder cases because it is a harassing experience for the medium to relive the impressions of the victim’s last moments on earth. It has happened several times that I have embarked unknowingly on a case in which murder was involved, but it has required only a few seconds of spirit communication before I was aware that the victim died by violence. One such instance was when the *Sunday Pictorial* asked if I would try to help two bereaved mothers without disclosing their names or the reason for their mourning. There could be only one answer to such a request and in due course a newspaperman arrived at my door bringing the two ladies with him. The reporter, whose name was John Ridley, wrote an account of our séance that afternoon, and it was published in a subsequent issue of the newspaper. I am indebted to the Editor of the *Sunday Pictorial* for permission to reprint this article exactly as it appeared in the newspaper. Mr. Ridley wrote:

“Here and now I must admit that I am completely staggered and bewildered. The picture of the little girl you see on this page is that of Sheila Wilson. You may remember her, for three months ago Sheila, eleven years of age, was brutally murdered in a London house.

I did not know Sheila. Until three days ago I had never seen her parents. But it happens that Mrs. Wilson read in the *Sunday Pictorial* that I was investigating claims of Spiritualists to be able to communicate with children in the spirit world.

So Mrs. Wilson wrote me this letter:

‘Dear Sir, - I have just read with interest your article in the *Sunday Pictorial*. If it is possible that you can speak with your loved one who has gone, will you please inform me where to go, as my poor little darling Sheila was murdered three months ago. I cannot believe it is possible to speak to her again. I remain, yours sincerely, Edith Wilson.’

I told you that I would be taking three bereaved mothers to séances, without revealing their names or anything about them beforehand to the mediums. After receiving Mrs. Wilson’s letter I decided to take her along to see Estelle Roberts.

I chose Mrs. Roberts for this supreme test because, in Spiritualist circles, she is acknowledged as the outstanding medium.

Let me add that until three days ago I had never met Mrs. Roberts, but here and now let me say that I am prepared to swear in any court of law that the following account of what happened at our sitting with the mother of little murdered Sheila Wilson is true.

We sat around in a circle in broad daylight in an ordinary room; not at all a room in which you would expect uncanny things to happen to you. There beside me was Sheila’s mother and four feet away was Mrs. Estelle Roberts. Beside us was the other bereaved mother, Mrs. Pugh, of Broad Lane, Birmingham, who had contacted me in exactly the same way.

Almost at once, Mrs. Roberts began rubbing her throat. There was no question of her being ‘in a trance’. She seemed perfectly normal. Then she spoke - to Sheila’s mother.

‘Your little girl’, she said, ‘passed into the spirit world with a terrific shock. I have a feeling of constriction round the throat - of choking. Your little girl was strangled.’

Now do you remember the case of Sheila Wilson? She was, in fact, strangled by a man who has since been executed for his crime.

‘This spirit,’ Mrs. Roberts went on, ‘passed over only a short time ago. She has been dead less than six months. It is difficult for her to communicate . . . she has not yet adjusted herself to her new life.’

‘After her death, you went to see your little daughter - but you only saw her through glass.’

Mrs. Wilson nodded. It was true - all true.

Mrs. Roberts appeared to be seeing and talking to people all this time; to people who were not visible or audible to me or to anyone else in the room. Then the medium spoke again:

‘Your daughter is asking what you have done with her little coloured shoes. You took them out of the cupboard downstairs.’

Mrs. Wilson, fascinated now, agreed. She said she had taken them out, a pair of her child’s red dancing shoes, and given them away.

‘Your little girl sends you all her love,’ Mrs. Roberts went on, ‘also her love to Baby, Rosie, Jim, Peter, John, May, Nelly, Margery, Vi, Ruby, Doreen and to the Three.’

All of these names were instantly recognized by Mrs. Wilson as being of Sheila's relations and little friends.

'Kiss Peter for me', she says, went on Mrs. Roberts. Peter is Sheila's little brother.

There was another pause, then the medium went on 'Listen! The child is telling me that you keep holding in your mind a picture of her as having suffered a great deal. But you are wrong. She did not suffer. She was very peaceful before she passed.'

Mrs. Wilson sat wide-eyed with wonder. Her whirling mind tried to grasp the immensity of the revelation.

Mrs. Roberts turned to Mrs. Pugh. After a while she said:

'Your little boy is a dear kiddie, with brown curly hair. He is standing just beside you now.'

Mrs. Pugh gave Mrs. Roberts a toy which had belonged to her child. But the medium was not satisfied. She asked: 'He says he wants to have the other toy you have brought with you in your bag.'

Mrs. Pugh opened her handbag and produced a very small woolly doll. No one but herself could have known it was there.

Mrs. Roberts told Mrs. Pugh that her little boy was being cared for by a tall old lady called Emily. She described in detail this old lady. But the description conveyed nothing to Mrs. Pugh. Nothing - until Mrs. Roberts said that this lady was the mother of Mary, the little boy's granny.

Then she remembered that again the medium had discovered a fact that she herself was hardly aware of, for she recalled that Emily was in fact the name of the little boy's great-grandmother.

As she was still sitting almost transfixed by this revelation Mrs. Roberts in the same conversational tone continued:

'Yesterday you went up to your little boy's grave and put some flowers there. He thanks you for them. There were also some chrysanthemums that were sent - but they are not on his grave.'

Mrs. Pugh admitted that she visited the child's grave on the previous day with some flowers, but that she had left at home some chrysanthemums sent by her sister.

The séance ended. For a while the mothers were too overwhelmed to speak. But gradually their minds adjusted themselves to this amazing experience and when we parted they were happy. I say deliberately - they were happier than they have ever been since they were parted from their loved ones.

That was not my only experience in last week's investigations, although after that almost incredible sitting with Mrs. Roberts, the others pale away in my memory . . .

I had a séance with another medium, Lilian Bailey. To her I took another bereaved mother from Birmingham, Mrs. Ethel Wright.

Mrs. Wright lost her five-year-old daughter nine months ago - and the medium told her that the child died ten months ago.

Mrs. Bailey also described the child quite fairly and added: 'She wants you to give her love to her daddy and to tell him that she is still his "little sweetheart".'

It was true that the child's father often used this phrase to the little girl.

I began this investigation a complete sceptic. Until last week I saw nothing to make me change my mind.

After last week's tests I am no longer a sceptic. I am completely mystified, simply because I cannot hope to explain how this had happened to me and to those mothers.

The question is whether grief-stricken parents can find in Spiritualist experience comfort and solace after the death of their beloved children.

Before they went to the séances, Mrs. Wilson and Mrs. Pugh and Mrs. Wright, were three bereaved mothers, living in the shadow of their sorrow.

But afterwards their whole aspect changed, as if by magic. Gone was the strain and the tension. They chatted brightly to each other, exchanging anecdotes about their children, their minds at rest.

Not all Spiritualists have the power of Mrs. Estelle Roberts and Mrs. Bailey. There are, I am sure, racketeers and charlatans who will try to take your money and give you nothing but a conjuring show.

Yet, if you will bare this warning in mind, then I shall not hold you back from seeking comfort in Spiritualism

And I say even though I cannot even yet regard their case as proved, the experience that happened to the mother of that murdered child in my presence last week has made it impossible for me to say any longer: 'I do not believe.' For it was something I shall never forget."

Suicide is no less an offense against the spiritual laws than it is against the laws of man-made civilization. And, as in the one so in the other; there are degrees of transgression. Both laws recognize there is no fault attaching to the unfortunate person whose mind is so unhinged that he is not aware of the sins he is committing. In such sad cases there can be no penalty, only love and sympathy. Both laws equally condemn suicide in those who are responsible for their actions, the spiritual law being meticulously just, as Red Cloud has made clear on many occasions.

Everyone is given freedom of action to do as he will says Red Cloud. It is for him to choose, but in choosing he must also accept the consequences of his choice. He may destroy his earth-body, but because he has been granted eternal life the spirit is indestructible. In passing into the next plane of life it suffers no change except that the imperfect earth-body is no more. The individual continues to exist, expressing himself through the spirit-body, which is the replica of the earth-body except for its imperfections. He who was blind can

again see; he who was maimed is whole. Individuality and character remain unchanged, for the soul starts after death from the same stage of evolution that had been attained. The problems from which the suicide hoped to escape remain with him, as does the realization that death has solved nothing.

By the act of suicide, man undergoes premature birth into the spirit world. He cannot immediately reach the plane of consciousness to which his evolution would entitle him had he fulfilled his allotted span on earth. Instead he remains suspended between the earth and the astral plane, which is the first stage beyond earth. In this state he is deprived, for the time being, of the company of his loved ones in the spirit world, unable to cross the barrier raised by his premature birth. Only when he has advanced in his evolution to the required degree can he rejoin those he knew and loved.

How futile then are the efforts of those who commit suicide in order to rejoin more quickly those loved ones who have preceded them! How futile to try by this means to end earthly sufferings! Only if life on earth is endured to its end can the spirit progress in its evolution.

Some years ago *The People* published a series of articles on Spiritualism. Written by Maurice Barbanell, the series aroused so much interest and correspondence that the Editor invited readers who were bereaved and who had never attended a séance to send him their stories. From those submitted, the Editor undertook to select a few readers to have sittings under rigid test conditions. Maurice Barbanell had no hand in choosing the readers whose stories suggested they were most in need of psychic help; and neither, of course, had I.

With one of these readers, the story that unfolded was profoundly moving. He was a man named Proctor, brought to my house by a reporter from the *The People*. His name and all the circumstances surrounding him were deliberately kept from me. The preamble to our séance was no more than a polite comment on the weather. As soon as the sitting began I became aware of a woman about thirty-five years old who had clearly passed over not long before. She was very distraught and I knew her death had been a tragic one. She almost pounced on me in her urgency to speak to my visitor who, she said, was her husband, she said:

“Darling, I didn’t want to leave you. I can’t remember the end; it was so quick. Have nothing on your conscience, darling; it was not your fault. I was choking and then I just slept and slept and slept. The babies are with me still. The three of us will always be near you, waiting for you. I have wanted so much to tell you these things, to tell you there is no death, but I’ve never been able to reach you. Now that I have done so, I am happy, so happy.”

From the husband I later learned the full details of what had happened. Some eight months before he had returned home to find his wife dead on the floor from an overdose of sleeping tablets. She had first tried to gas herself, but the gas had run out, and so she had resorted to the pills. (The choking sensation to which she had referred in her message must have been the effect of the gas.) Beside her lay the bodies of their two children; one aged four, the other five months. The poor woman had been in a bad state of nerves since the

birth of the baby, and though she seemed to be getting better, had suddenly suffered a relapse which ended with this brainstorm. From the way she had almost hurled herself at me in her anxiety to assure her husband that she still lived, there could be no doubt that the sending of this message was as important to her as receiving it was to him.

My visitor was much impressed by the events of our sitting; no less it seems by my involuntary hand gestures than by the message I had given him. He remarked to the newspaperman who accompanied him that while I was in communication with his wife, I kept clasping my hands in front of my face. I was unaware of having done this, nor could I later recall having done so. However, the significance of it was not lost on him. He explained that the movements of my hands had been a faithful reproduction of a characteristic gesture of his wife's. Many times he had seen her hands make the same nervous movements that mine had done, especially in the mornings when he had had to leave to go to his business.

An account of Mr. Proctor's visit was published in *The People* the following Sunday. It was a full description, much more detailed than the brief resume I have just given. Towards the end of the article the reporter, Alan Bestic, wrote:

"There is, of course, another possible interpretation of what happened. Mrs. Roberts has a keen, sensitive mind. Mr. Proctor came to her with an appalling problem dominating his thoughts.

Perhaps that sensitive mind reached out and picked up those thoughts as a delicate radio receiver picks up faint, persistent signals. It could have been telepathy.

But that theory does not hold good for another test which Mrs. Roberts conducted in my presence that day. This time the subjects were Mrs. P. and her daughter, who, for family reasons, wish to remain anonymous.

Neither had seen Mrs. Roberts before. She knew nothing of them.

Mrs. P. wanted information about her son, Will, who was reported killed, on a bomber raid over Germany 15 years ago.

Both she and her daughter had been told by several mediums that he was still alive, wandering in France, suffering from loss of memory.

Mrs. Roberts told them she was in contact with a man, Mrs. P's husband. She described accurately how he had died of cancer and how his mind had been unsettled for a few days before his death.

But, of Will she could tell no more than other mediums. His father, she said, told her he was looking after the boy, who was still alive on earth.

But, because Will was suffering from amnesia, it was difficult for them to influence his mind. She felt he had (gone) into Germany, perhaps into the Russian zone. She could not pinpoint his exact position.

Naturally, Mrs. P. and her daughter were disappointed. But the experiment was by no means a failure.

Mrs. Roberts gave them information which they could not possibly have had in their minds when they came to see her.

She said: 'He is trembling with excitement. He is talking of a woman called Lizzie. Who is Lizzie?'

Neither of them knew. 'Yes you do,' said Mrs. Roberts. 'She is connected with his father.'

'That's right,' beamed Mrs. P. 'My husband had an aunt called Lizzie - his father's sister. I never met her.'

Mrs. Roberts: 'He is talking about Jim. No . . . it's Jenny. Who is Jenny?'

Both Mrs. P. and her daughter looked blank. 'Her name was Jane,' said the medium. 'They're together now. Everyone called her Polly.'

Mother and daughter burst into laughing. 'Aunt Polly!' they shouted together.

I am convinced that Mrs. P. and her daughter had not thought of some of these folk for years. And some they barely knew."

There have been many cases in which my mediumistic powers prevented tragedies. One I recall concerned a girl-wife who had lost her husband and was inconsolable. Her father and mother brought her to me, volunteering no information other than that she needed my help. The girl and I went alone to my little séance room. Her husband speedily communicated, giving irrefutable proof that he had survived the grave. He referred to little incidents, domestic happenings that had occurred quite recently, thus showing that he was still with her. The loneliness of bereavement she had been suffering was now over. In her joy at this reunion, she ran quickly to the car outside, without stopping to rejoin her parents who were waiting in another room. Understanding her action, I went to them to tell them of her newfound happiness.

As I went into the room the mother sprang to her feet, anxious to know the result of the sitting. I assured her that the girl's husband had returned and proved his survival. Tears were in the mother's eyes as she clasped my hands, saying: "Mrs. Roberts, you have saved her life. Had he not come, I don't know what she would have done. Several times the poor child has talked resolutely of taking her own life."

In that moment the full measure of the responsibility of my work dawned upon me. I offered a silent prayer that I should never be found wanting.

A more dramatic case of forestalling tragedy occurred at the Queen's Hall in London. I had been giving a demonstration of clairvoyance when, in obedience to Red Cloud's prompting, I pointed to the back of the packed balcony. There, I addressed a man, begging him to see me before he left the hall. When the meeting was over a steward came to say the man was asking to see me.

“Please bring him here,” I said, and turning to Mr. Hannen Swaffer, who had been talking to me, I told him I should be glad to have him witness what I proposed to do.

The man came in a minute later, poorly dressed, dejected looking, one who had clearly known better days. He said politely, “You asked to see me, Mrs. Roberts?”

“Yes,” I told him. “You have a bottle of poison in your pocket, and I don’t think it should be there. Will you give it to me?”

At once he began to bluster. “Poison,” he said. “I’ve got no poison.”

“Yes, you have; and for no good purpose.” I held out my hand for it.

He looked at me steadily for several seconds and then shrugged his shoulders.

“Since you know so much about it, you’d better have the razor, too.”

He handed over a small bottle of prussic acid and a rusty razor.

“Would you like to tell us what it is all about?” I asked. Again he shrugged his shoulders, as though it did not matter whether he told us or not.

“It’s the usual story,” he said, at last. “Out of work, down and out, broke! It wasn’t too bad while the wife was alive; when there’s two of you, you seem to make out better. But she died a couple of months ago, and somehow it took all the heart out of me. I’ve been trying for the last couple of weeks to pluck up courage to do myself in. But it isn’t so easy when you come down to it. I thought at first I’d use my old razor. Then one day I spotted this bottle of poison, all nice and handy, so I slipped it in my pocket. It seemed cleaner than a razor, somehow.” He paused, reflecting on the rival merits of acid and steel. Then he went on:

“Well, this afternoon while I was on a bench in the park, I decided to use the poison. I was sitting there, thinking out when and where to do it when a newspaper blew across the grass and wrapped itself around my legs. And there across the top of the page were the words, ‘You Can Talk With Your Dead.’”

“It was by Mrs. Shaw Desmond,” I told him.

“Maybe, I don’t know who wrote it, but it said to come here. There wasn’t any charge to come in, it said, so I thought I’d come. I’d nothing to lose, and it’d be warmer inside than sitting around in the park till it got dark enough to drink the poison without some busybody spotting what I was up to. I reckoned, too, that if I could talk to my wife I could find out if she’s better off up there than I am down here. So there you are. That’s why I am here, and what I’ve told you is God’s truth.”

Neither of us who listened to this sad little story had the least doubt of its truth. Swaffer picked up a hat and began a collection on the spot. Later he took the man under his wing and, with characteristic kindness, continued to help him until he was finally established in a job and firmly on his feet again.

Many times I reflected what forces combined to lead that man to the Queen's Hall that eventful evening. Perhaps it was simply his wife, watching over him faithfully, as she had always done in the past.

CHAPTER SEVEN

CLAIRVOYANCE: PUBLIC AND PRIVATE

In the course of a long career as a medium I have given clairvoyance in most of the principal public halls in the United Kingdom. My biggest meetings were, of course, at the Royal Albert Hall where, on most of the score of occasions that I appeared there, every one of the seven thousand seats was occupied. But, more often, my London appearances were at the Queen's Hall, where I demonstrated many, many times, and at the Seymour, Caxton, Kingsway and Aeolian Halls.

I asked no payment for my services though generous fees were frequently offered. I wanted only to bring my gifts to the greatest number of people, without thought of personal gain. The only exception to this rule was when I demonstrated in Scotland, Ireland, or on the Continent. My limited resources could not be stretched to cover the costs of these journeys, and at such times I was happy to accept my out-of-pocket expenses.

These public demonstrations usually followed a similar pattern. I always made a point of arriving at the venue, in plenty of time, going straight to the ante-room where I would silently commune with the spirit people. "I have come here as a bridge between you and your loved ones in the audience," I would tell them. "Help me to help both you and them." Not that they have ever failed me, or were ever likely to do so - of that I was quite sure. It was in my own shortcomings that my doubts lay. I imagine that few people accustomed to appearing on a stage or platform have entirely outgrown the "nerves" which invariably precede the big occasion. This heightening of tension is almost bound to arise and at such moments my fears were not that the spirit people would fail me but that I might somehow fail them. It was a burden of responsibility which always weighed heavily upon me until I rose to speak. Then, magically, it would disappear, to be replaced by a surging sense of power and confidence.

At the advertised hour for the meeting to begin, I would leave the ante-room and take my seat on the platform. Sometimes we would begin with a hymn and a prayer; sometimes just a prayer. This would be followed by the chairmen's introductory comments. Usually he was famous in some other field of activity and had a number of well-known people seated on either side of him. When he sat down, it was my cue to rise. I would walk to the front of the stage and, speaking into a microphone, would quote the biblical phrase, "I heard a voice from heaven say . . ." I made a practice always of beginning with these words so that the audience would know that I was in touch with the spirit world.

A medium taking the platform at a mass meeting is in a very different position from any other lecturer or public speaker. The lecturer comes to the meeting prepared in advance; he knows for how long he proposes to speak and precisely what he is going to say. The medium knows neither of these things. She is there to transmit the messages of others and

continues to do so for as long as they come, or until her guide calls upon her to stop. In my case I cannot recall a demonstration when there were not many more spirit messages than I could possibly give. As I listened I would hear perhaps as many as a dozen voices all excitedly claiming my attention: "Tell my mother this . . ." "Tell my brother that . . ." Often I would have to entreat them to be calm, begging them for a chance to do their bidding. I remember once remarking on this to Red Cloud after a packed meeting at the Albert Hall. "Why is it," I asked, "that all these dear ones crowd in on me with never a pause or break?" He replied:

"The hall was filled with the people of your world tonight because they know and trust you. Does it not enter your mind that you are no less known and trusted by the people in my world, too?"

The receiving and transmitting of messages is always a most exhilarating experience. I feel myself vibrating with the power of the spirit as I walk from side to side of the platform, pointing to people in all parts of the audience, even to the back of the gallery. Some messages are short and to the point, others long, and some so involved that they have little meaning to anyone but their recipients.

Then, usually after about three-quarters of an hour, Red Cloud comes to me and says gently, "Sufficient." He always knows when the high state of tension to which I had been brought is beginning to take its effect. He never allows me to carry on beyond my endurance. Then I bow to the audience and return to my seat. As this action is invariably greeted by an audible sigh of regret, I joyfully know I have not failed my friends in either world.

During the 1930's my public demonstrations of clairvoyance were regularly filled to overflowing. It used to worry me that so many interested folk should have to be turned away. One of my regular meeting places at this time was the Victoria Hall, Bloomsbury, which, in fact, was not one hall but two. Somebody suggested that it would help to solve the "House Full" problem if we were to link these two adjacent halls by microphone. This proved to be an excellent solution, enabling me to give clairvoyance to packed audiences in both halls at the same time.

Before the first "twin" performances, I wondered whether I should be able to project my clairvoyant powers beyond the immediate surroundings to an entirely separate assembly, even though the distance between the two was trifling. I need not have worried, however. I found I was able to send messages and describe spirit people to the audience in the second hall as successfully as if I had been sitting among them. A two-way microphone arrangement enabled those in the second hall to converse with me and acknowledge the messages I gave.

It was at one of these "overflow" meetings that Ishbel, Marchioness of Aberdeen and Temair received convincing proof of her husband's survival. As a result, she became an enthusiastic Spiritualist. When, at the age of eighty-four, she joined the House of Red Cloud, she thought nothing of flying back from Paris expressly to attend my direct-voice

séances. During his earthly life the Marquis had been deeply interested in Red Cloud's teaching, and had actually passed into the next world while peacefully reading one of his guide's lectures.

At another of these meetings a man received abundant evidence of his wife's survival from the messages I transmitted to him. He acknowledged the truth of all that I told him until I spoke of flowers being placed in his wife's coffin.

At this the husband explained, "What a pity you said that, Mrs. Roberts, because no flowers were put in the coffin!"

"It was not I who said it," I reminded him. "It was your wife who was speaking."

But, he insisted, he was quite certain no flowers had been placed inside the coffin, and emphasized that he was in a better position to know than I was.

However, he was on the telephone to me the next day. When he repeated the messages on his arrival at home, his daughter had told him what he had not previously known - that she had enclosed a little posy for her mother in the last few moments before the coffin was sealed. It was generous of the man to confess his error so readily.

Spiritualism is a subject which consistently interests the Press. Several national newspapers have conducted investigations and invited my collaboration. I have always been willing to cooperate and have invariably found them to be considerate and fair in their reports. I well remember Mr. Hugh Cudlipp, then Editor of the *Sunday Pictorial*, coming to take his place at one of a series of public meetings his paper had organized. A few hours earlier he had suffered a great bereavement, caused by his wife dying in childbirth. But he appeared in his place nevertheless, and stressed that nothing should be said about this tragedy, thereby earning my gratitude and admiration.

More recently that other mass-selling Sunday newspaper *The People* published a series of articles on survival after death, basing their findings in some instances on certain of my cases. I was not unnaturally proud when they named me among the five best-known women in the country, but I was embarrassed by the unexpected response. During the next few days over five thousand letters from people all over the world came pouring in to me. Most of them were from strangers, though from their wording they might have been from old friends. Thus strong is the bond that unites all who are convinced of spirit communication.

My marriage to Arthur Roberts ended in the divorce court in 1938. I was granted a decree on the grounds of cruelty after successfully defending an action alleging misconduct. The hearing of these actions aroused wide-spread interest in the Press. Naively I had hoped they would pass through the courts as unnoticed as the vast majority of similar cases, but in this I was sadly disappointed. The case was widely reported in all its unhappy details and in some instances the printed accounts did not stop at straight reporting. I was astonished to read in one paper, for instance, that Red Cloud would vindicate me at my next public meeting. As far as I knew this was a rumour completely without foundation. It made me

very cross that people should think I could mix my private and professional lives in this manner.

At this time I was speaking each Sunday evening at the Aeolian Hall in Bond Street. Although the court had clearly established my innocence, I did not look forward to that first meeting after the verdict was announced. As a representative of a religion in which I sincerely and devoutly believed, I was fearful of the general public's reaction to the widespread publicity I had received. With trepidation I made my entrance through the big swing doors. Inside, the broad foyer and the staircase leading to the hall were packed with waiting people. There was no murmur of conversation, just and uncanny silence as I walked to the foot of the stairs. Then somebody began to clap . . . and the applause was taken up all round - hands clapping, feet stamping, spontaneous cheering. The apprehension in my heart gave way to jubilation, an overpowering happiness swept through me. In the eyes of the general public I had been tried and not found wanting.

I opened the meeting with a flat denial of Red Cloud's "vindication" rumour. Red Cloud, I reminded my audience, was a spiritual teacher and unconcerned with my material affairs, however distasteful they may be to me. In saying this, however, I was not entirely right. At this meeting Red Cloud delivered one of his lectures, speaking, as always, through me after I had been entranced. The trance address lasted some thirty minutes and when it was over he turned briefly to the subject of my recent sufferings. Speaking of the mental stress through which I had just passed, he thanked all those present for "the love and sympathy shown to our little instrument during her hour of trial."

For hundred's of years witchcraft was the subject of dire punishment according to English law. The story is told of King James I sailing to meet his bride, Ann of Denmark, in 1589. The sea was rough and His Majesty was very seasick. The King believed firmly in demonology and declared that his discomfort was brought about by evil spirits invoked by witches working in league with his enemies. Determined to outlaw any recurrence of such misfortune, he set about the Passing of an Act making witchcraft a punishable offense. By 1735, however, public opinion in the efficacy of witchcraft had become considerably modified so that a new Act was drafted changing the offense to "pretending to conjure up spirits."

In 1824 the Vagrancy Act became the law of the land. This was designed to protect gullible people from "rogues and vagabonds" like itinerant gypsies who told fortunes. Although the Vagrancy and Witchcraft Acts became law before modern Spiritualism began, they were successfully used to prosecute mediums. Winston Churchill, as Prime Minister, spoke strongly against this practice when, in the midst of the war, the Witchcraft Act was invoked to prosecute a medium who was imprisoned.

These two Acts, which had the effect of making séances illegal and denying religious freedom to Spiritualists, were still on the State Book at the end of the Second World War. A campaign to repeal the sections which affected mediums began to gather momentum, and a vigorous attempt was made to end this archaic legislation. A Spiritualist Member of Parliament, Mr. T. J. Books, invited me to attend the first of a series of all-party dinners in

the House of Commons, the purpose of the gatherings being to enlist the cooperation of M.P.'s in redressing our grievances. This function was attended by a large number of well-known men and women from political and social spheres. After coffee had been served I was called upon to recount some of my psychic experiences. I did so and followed my words by a practical demonstration of some of the things I had been talking about. One man, a sceptical Scotsman seated next to Maurice Barbanell, was vocally convinced by my opening preamble, and sat back to receive my demonstration of clairvoyance in the same sceptical frame of mind. A few minutes later, however, I unwittingly gave him more food for thought in this direction than he had believed possible.

Among the spirit messages I transmitted came one for the Scotsman - from his son. The boy had ended his earthly life in a burning aircraft and this I told the father, together with the words of comfort that the son offered. I am sure that he left the dinner table in a far less sceptical frame of mind than when he had arrived

Mrs. Helen Hughes was the guest-medium at another dinner, and I was present at a third. It is impossible to estimate to what extent the minds of the M.P.'s who came were influenced by these demonstrations, though some thing may be read into the fact that several of them attended more than once. The fact remains that not long afterwards Parliament amended the Witchcraft and Vagrancy Acts replacing them by the Fraudulent Mediums' Act of 1951.

I must confess that although under the Act, as it stood, I could have been arrested as a rogue or vagabond, I had been neither deterred nor frightened by the thought of such a happening. My family rested a little more peacefully after the amendment, however, because it was customary for Hannen Swaffer, when on the same platform, to challenge the Police generally on duty at the rear of the Hall, because of the large audiences, to arrest me. There was no longer the need for them to carry my own Solicitor's telephone number around with them should the necessity arise for him to bail me out!

Many Members of Parliament have attended my public meetings and have had private sittings with me. Some of the best known, men like Ernest Bevin and George Lansbury, more than once shared the platform with me. Sir William Stewart often came to talk to Red Cloud. In May 1959 Sir William took the chair at a London public meeting at which I gave clairvoyance and openly testified to the help he had received from my guide.

In the course of one conversation Red Cloud warned him that a wheel of his car was unsafe. At the end of the séance Sir William drove off, forgetting the warning until he called at a nearby garage for petrol. Then he remembered and asked the attendant to make a quick check of the wheel-nuts. The man did so and reported all was well.

A day or so later Sir William was about to visit his mother. He knew it would mean a fast journey to get back in time to sit in the House of Commons next day, and he had not forgotten Red Cloud's warning. He decided to make a second check. He drove to another garage and accompanied the mechanic on a tour of inspection. This time they found that

the retaining nuts of one of the back wheels were so dangerously slack that the wheel must have come off had the car travelled far or fast.

I always remember with pleasure an occasion when Mr. Ewart Dudley, whom I knew well from his regular visits for healing, brought his sister to my house for a séance. It was a particularly satisfying meeting because, unknown to me, my two sitters had prepared for it carefully and intelligently and the results were gratifyingly convincing. The sitting began unremarkably enough. One or two relatives came with short spirit messages and were at once recognized by the brother and sister. Then I said: "Ah, here comes someone rather special; she gives her name as Mary. She is very beautiful and is most excited at coming through to you. She says she is your mother."

"Please take this and see if it helps you," said the brother. He thrust a large sealed envelope into my hands. As my fingers closed on it, I could feel it contained some folded textile. The mother talked almost without pause, naming another of her sons, and her husband who was with her in the spirit world. Then I added: "She says that this envelope contains some of her needlework. There is a text on it worked in red cotton."

"What are the words of the text?"

I felt the mother gently take my hand and trace the letters with one finger on the arm of my chair:

"COME UNTO ME ALL YE THAT LABOR AND ARE HEAVY LADEN AND I WILL GIVE YOU REST.

MARY BAKER"

"There is a date on it," said Mr. Dudley. "Can you tell us what it is?"

Again my finger traced the letters on the chair-arm, as I repeated aloud! "JUNE, 1869"

Then, still without pause, came the words:

"Also in the envelope are two lace fronts which I used to wear with my low-necked blouses. One is square and the other triangular in shape. There is also a narrow strip of hand-worked lace which was done by my mother, your grandmother."

After the sitting the Dudleys opened the envelope and studied its contents, carefully wrapped in tissue paper. They also showed me a photograph of their mother. There could be no doubt that the spirit figure I had seen was the same person, though she had appeared younger and more beautiful.

Occasionally a medium is granted the satisfaction of a crosscheck on the evidence given which becomes more impressive and convincing as proof piles on proof. A remarkable instance of this was set in motion when a woman telephoned my home from Manchester making an appointment to see me. At our subsequent sitting I said that her son was communicating. The boy, about twelve years of age, gave a graphic description of a fire at his school in France which had cut off his, and other, young lives. His mother was overjoyed at this evidence of his survival and I was very happy for her.

Some months later a man and his wife, who were clearly newcomers to Spiritualism, were sitting with me when a well set up youngster of about twelve communicated. It often happens that people who have never given a thought to Spiritualism during long untroubled years turn to it hungrily, if uncomprehendingly, in their hour of grief. It was sorrow, I felt certain that explained their presence in my room. I was not surprised when their young son manifested and offered the usual proofs of identity. What did surprise me, however, was that having established himself beyond doubt in the minds of his parents, he went on to give an identical description of a fire in a French school with that described by the other boy some months before.

Twice more during succeeding months this experience was repeated. In the end I had convinced of four lots of parents, all strangers to me and whose background I could have had no possible knowledge. In each case they had lost a son in the circumstances described.

Normally I make a practice of deliberately trying to erase from my mind as soon as my sitter has left whatever messages may have passed. After all, such messages, being personal to my sitter and the communicator, are no concern of mine. For this reason I often don't remember from one week to another what has transpired. On the whole, the cultivation of this "professional absence of memory" works very well, but it can occasionally be embarrassing as when the sitter, who has probably spent the whole week pondering the events of the previous visit, arrives expecting me to recall in detail precisely what happened seven days earlier.

However the circumstances of the tragic passing of the first of the four boys were so unusual that I could not easily forget them. I heard them again at three more séances. In each case the parents confirmed what I told them and marvelled that I should describe these events in such detail.

Wondering how it was that four lots of parents should thus have come to me, I asked my secretary if she had any knowledge of them. She could tell me nothing save that they came from the different parts of the country. I think it likely that they were all known to each other and by prior arrangements among themselves had come one after another for proof of survival and, perhaps, to test my powers of mediumship.

A well-known authority and lecturer on psychic matters is Brigadier R. C. Firebrace. I am indebted to him for the details of an extraordinary sequel to one of my voice séances where communicators speak in a replica of their earthly tones. Red Cloud announced that the Brigadier would have further experience of direct-voice mediumship "at some other time at some other place." Shortly afterwards Brigadier Firebrace was sent to Latvia as Military Attaché. There he and his wife made the acquaintance of a Russian woman who was interested in spirit communication. It was not long before the three of them formed a circle for psychic development.

They met twice a week in Firebrace's flat and, as usual, a trumpet, not the musical instrument but a megaphone to intensify sounds, was placed in the circle. At first they were

not very successful, but they knew they were making progress when they began to get short whisperings through the trumpet. This was satisfactory as far as it went, but it also raised the intriguing question as to which was the medium. They were not kept long in suspense as one evening the trumpet began to move sharply about the room while the Firebraces were outside and only the Russian was present.

They continued to make progress until, to the Brigadier's astonishment, through the trumpet came mention of Red Cloud's name. The spirit voice said that Red Cloud had come to help until the Russian mediums guide had gained greater proficiency at using the trumpet. This statement was rounded off by a chuckle which the Firebraces instantly recognized as Red Cloud's distinctive laugh. From that evening onward, Red Cloud continued to visit the circle until it was broken up by the Firebrace's return to England.

On the Firebraces' first visit to me after their return home, Red Cloud volunteered a reference to their circle and its happenings in Latvia, giving further proof of supernormal knowledge at which I have never ceased to marvel.

The accounts I have given of events relating to a variety of people, some of them newcomers to Spiritualism, have been mostly solitary episodes for the purpose of illustrating one or another aspects of the subject. But through these happenings were presented as isolated instances they were, as often as not, nothing of the sort, being either single links in a long chain of experience, or else the first link from which many others were later to lead. It is extremely rare that anyone making his first incursion into Spiritualism, and witnessing some psychic phenomenon, does not investigate more deeply. Indeed, the very nature of Spiritualism insists that he should. In my experience, the more you know about psychic phenomena, the more you want to know. This opinion has been borne out by the scores of sitters who came to me knowing practically nothing and remained to make psychic study almost their life's work.

One such was a headmaster of a large boy's school, a man with a critical, well-trained mind. He first visited me about six years ago, seven months after his world had collapsed when his wife and younger son, Roger, were killed in a flood disaster. He knew no more of Spiritualism than he had read in the popular press, and was almost aggressively sceptical of it, though out of courtesy for me he tried to conceal it. He came partly out of curiosity, but principally because friends had urged him to do so. Such, then, was his frame of mind when we met - certainly not the ideal conditions for producing a convincing demonstration.

However, I did my best, beginning with detailed portraits of his wife and son. What followed was later described by the man himself:

"I sat dumbfounded as a stream of references to the small things which had made up our world came through from the Other Side in a young boy's language. Mostly they were things which nobody but I could know about - Roger's prized watch which had been found in the debris left by the flood; the mole on his thigh; the chipped tooth that had bothered us lest it interfered with his playing the clarinet; the present whereabouts of his playbox; the

photograph I had put away because I could no longer bare to look at it. Mention of all these and many more poured out in a torrent of words and in terms of expression that could have been no one's but Roger's.

"Then Estelle said: - 'Your wife is speaking of a bruise on her left cheek.' Immediately my thoughts rushed back to the dread I had felt as I entered the mortuary lest my dear ones be disfigured in death. Then had come the relief of finding that the only mark either bore was a small bruise under Alice's left eye.

"As a result of that first sitting with Estelle I read all I could lay my hands on relating to psychic phenomena. And I kept going back for further sittings. With each new sitting I got more evidence, incontrovertible evidence, of eternal survival. My father came and spoke with me, as did Alice's parents, a cousin and two old friends, each contributing substantial support to the concepts that were running in my mind . . .

"I learned that Estelle was a healer and eagerly asked her if she would treat a friend whose spine had been injured five years previously. She readily agreed though the doctors said the injury was incurable and the unhappy girl was resigned to spending the rest of her life in a spinal jacket. Estelle gave her healing, and for six months there was no apparent change. Then, quite suddenly, there was some improvement, and we dared to hope again. The improvement, once started, advanced apace. In a matter of weeks all pain had ceased and, a few months later, full use of the spine was restored.

"I continued to sit with Estelle, and one day came a message from Red Cloud indicating that the healing of my friend was an example of what could be done by spirit healing. I also could exercise such gifts if I would devote myself to the things which must be done. I felt very humble and inadequate, but immeasurably proud to have been thus chosen. I applied myself to learning, and under Estelle's guidance it has been my privilege to bring about many healings wrought by divine power working through prayer.

"Thus out of tragedy had grown new understanding. My recovery from the shattered loss of my wife and son has been due to the ample proofs of the nature of life, both here and hereafter. In grief I learned the true meaning of earthly existence and my own life is now ordered accordingly. Indeed, it could hardly be otherwise for 'as he thinketh in his heart, so is he'."

This is a very happy sequel to this story, as I now have the frequent pleasure of meeting with this headmaster with his second wife, the lady of the spinal jacket, and they have the most adorable small daughter.

An interesting instance of earthly friendship continuing undisturbed by death is that of Sir John Marshall and the late Marquess Curzon of Kedleston. Sir John, a distinguished scholar, the author of a number of outstanding works on Indian antiquities, was one-time Director General of Archaeology in India. Lord Curzon was Viceroy of India when the two men first met. Their mutual love of archaeology quickly drew them together and cemented a friendship which was broken with Curzon's death in 1925 but reborn thirty years later.

It was in 1954 that Sir John came to see me for the first and only time. Even then he was an old man, unable to get about as he could have wished. Ever since it has been his daughter, Margaret, who has come in his stead. Many times she has visited my house and carried back messages from Curzon to her father.

The occasion of Sir John's solitary visit was a memorable one. The sitting began inauspiciously enough until I mentioned the name, Curzon of Kedleston. Instantly Sir John was agog.

"What does he say?" he demanded.

"He asks whether you remember the two stone elephants." "Remember them? Of course I do."

This reference to the elephants convinced Sir John beyond all doubt that he was in communication with his old friend, because nobody but Curzon could have known the allusion. Explaining it, Sir John told me that he and Curzon, fully fifty years before, had been working together on reassembling the fragments of two black, stone elephants they had uncovered at Delhi Fort. Who but he and Curzon would remember, or even be aware of, an incident which, compared with their many other more important activities, was almost a triviality?

From that time onwards, Lord Curzon often communicated when Margaret Marshall was with me. Once she took a message to her father from Red Cloud. The guide said that he wished her father to know that he visited him from time to time and was familiar with his surroundings. As proof of his words he spoke of a curious little image in Sir John's room that carried an inscription on its base. Margaret knew the image well enough but was puzzled about the inscription. To the best of her knowledge it did not have one. On returning home her first action was to examine the image; the inscription was so minute that one had to look closely to see it.

Two years prior to this, Red Cloud had bewildered Margaret and me by speaking of a highly evolved spirit being who was helping Sir John and who had first been in touch with him many years previously in India. Time after time he spelled out the name, but for some reason I could never get beyond the first six letters - MAHAMO. Six more letters followed these but, try as I would, I could not get them. The first six letters, however, were sufficient for Sir John; he knew the name at once as one of Buddha's two chief disciples. He told Margaret how he had once reconstructed a burial mound containing relics of Buddha and his followers Mahamogalana and Sariputra. He had spent endless time and care in restoring the monument and supposed that in the course of it he must have come under Mahamogalana's notice. It is a significant example of the insignificance of time and distance to those who have passed beyond death.

Sir John was passionately interested in the many evidences of survival he received from Red Cloud, and was most insistent that I should include them in this book. He, too, has now passed over. Margaret, however, continued to come to me, receiving from her father repeated proof of his survival beyond the grave.

CHAPTER EIGHT

MATERIALIZATION AND APPORTS

While I was living at Teddington we arranged a special direct-voice sitting in appreciation of the long service given to the circle by one of our members. It was an important occasion to each one of us as the sitting had been organized in collaboration with Red Cloud and we had reason to believe he might show himself.

Our circle comprised nine people, all of considerable psychic experience. The proceedings began with the trumpet becoming most lively, circling the sitters and touching first one and then another. This was followed by an animated conversation lasting some minutes between one of our members and the spirit voice of her father. Then the trumpet returned to the center of the circle where it remained still, its spots of luminous paint glowing in the darkness. Silence followed, a heavy expectant silence as if everyone knew that what had just passed had been no more than the prelude to the more serious business of the evening.

“Ectoplasm, look at it!” somebody exclaimed, and all eyes turned to a billowing cloud that was becoming slowly more visible as it grew in volume. All watched as the ectoplasm writhed in the still air and slowly brightened.

“There’s a face in it,” one of the sitters said quietly. “Does anyone recognize the face?”

“It’s Donald,” said his mother. “He was a doctor once before, he heals with Red Cloud now.”

As mysteriously as it had come the face faded and was seen no more.

The trumpet came suddenly to life again. It darted swiftly about the room, accompanied by two luminous plaques, and for the first time that evening we heard Red Cloud speak.

“Give me the torch,” he said. “Hold it out that I may take it from you.”

The torch he referred to was an ordinary pocket flashlight, its glass shielded by red cotton material, which I sometimes used in the course of a séance. Iris reached across to pick it up, and held it out at arm’s length. The next instant it was high over the heads of the circle, flashing on and off as though being tested. Then it switched on, and stayed on. Slowly it moved across the room to where ectoplasm hovered in mid-air and shone its little red light where the cloud was thickest. Again a face appeared, but not the same face. This time it was the strong, cleanly-etched features of Red Cloud. The materialization remained there clearly visible to all for about fifteen seconds. Then, as the first face had done, it faded. The red flashlight snapped off and the room was again in complete darkness except for the glow from the trumpet and plaques as they followed their apparently aimless courses between floor and ceiling.

But all was not over. Eschewing the use of the trumpet, Red Cloud’s voice again filled the room. “I have something for all of you,” he said. During the next two minutes he presented each sitter with a jewel, varying in size from tiny little brilliants to hexagonally cut pieces of onyx and jet measuring an inch-and-a quarter in length. Gifts such as these are known as “apports.” They are highly treasured by those lucky enough to receive them, and were

especially cherished on the present occasion as mementos of a particularly memorable evening.

Two or three years later at the House of Red Cloud, my guide again materialized in the presence of some twenty people. The séance began when I entered a small cabinet raised a few inches from the floor and having a curtain across its front. I took a red electric torch into the box with me, and as soon as I was seated the lights in the séance room were extinguished. It was not long before Red Cloud was controlling me in deep trance and all heard him speaking in his characteristic voice. For a full description of what occurred I am indebted to Maurice Barbanell, who was present and who wrote this account in the *Psychic News*:

“I had a present from a spirit last week. Nearly twenty others had presents also.

Those who know very little of Spiritualism will read these words and smile. But this is not the first apport I have received.

Some years ago, at a direct voice séance, Red Cloud promised to bring me an apport. Last week, he redeemed the promise at his Wimbledon center.

The occasion was rather a special one. Once a year, Red Cloud holds a séance for the benefit of those who are closely associated with him. It is a sort of annual reunion - almost a party in fact.

He had previously asked for two luminous plaques and a red torch to be brought in to the séance room, so we knew there were going to be materializations.

The séance was an evening of laughter and joking. It was not doleful and weird, as our opponents think sittings usually are. Red Cloud insisted on bright conversation. Tenseness would ruin everything he told us right at the beginning, when he spoke through his entranced medium, who sat inside a hastily improvised cabinet.

This was made of four pieces of wood with some curtains draped over the front. It stood about five feet in height. ‘Wendy’s house,’ Estelle’s daughter laughingly called it.

They insisted that I should examine the cabinet and the room, so that I could say I had done so.

It did not take long for the materialization to begin. The two luminous plaques were lifted by invisible hands from the floor. Soon there could be seen between them the silhouette of a face. It was Red Cloud.

‘John,’ he said, calling me by the nickname he gave me years ago, ‘come forward.’ I felt my seat and stood within three or four inches of the cabinet opening.

‘Give me your hand,’ I was told. A masculine hand - certainly not that of Estelle - grasped mine.

‘Feel my hair!’ said Red Cloud. I did so. It was long and silky and reached almost to where his shoulders would be. This was extraordinary, because Estelle’s hair is crisp and wiry and inclined to be crinkly.

Standing so close to him, I could see the beard on his fine, oval face. When I told him, he asked me to feel that also. I did. It was a short beard, soft and silky in texture.

'It is very soft hair,' I said. One other person had this privilege, Mrs. Constance Treloar, who felt Red Cloud's hair and beard. 'This is known as bearding the guides,' I said jokingly. Red Cloud laughed.

At least six times I left my seat and stood very close to the materialized form of Red Cloud. Twice, to show himself as clearly as he could, he arranged for the light of the red torch to be focused on his face. It was a handsome face, with eloquent eyes. I could see the ectoplasm which was draped round his figure. His height I judged to be several inches taller than that of his medium.

Here was a 'miracle' - a materialization of a 'dead' man who could move and speak who had life and volition. Incidentally, the voice that came through his moving lips was a little softer than I have usually heard it, but it was undoubtedly the voice of Red Cloud as I have often heard it through his entranced medium and through the trumpet at his direct voice séances.

Then the guide invited all the sitters to file past the cabinet so that they could see his face. He held the two luminous plaques quite still for almost two minutes, as far as I could judge, while, one by one, the sitters went to the cabinet and filed past.

Shortly afterwards, we all saw an extraordinary spectacle. The curtains of the cabinet were slowly parted. At one end, there stood a materialized figure, holding the red torch which illuminated another materialization, dazzling white in appearance. To me, the illuminated figure seemed to be seated.

The most striking part of the materialization was the fact that in the center of the forehead there was a bright, scintillating jewel.

After that came the apports. We saw, by the two luminous spots painted on the trumpet, that it was moving. It tap- tapped on the ground. Soon we heard a rattling sound inside it.

'This is for John; hold out your hand, Rachel,' said Red Cloud, addressing Constance Treloar - Rachel is the name that he has given her.

When she did so, the apport fell into it. She passed it to me. I could feel it was a jewel of some kind.

This process was repeated again and again until everyone in the séance room had received a gift from Red Cloud. It was always the same procedure - the trumpet tapped on the floor, there was the rattling sound and then the apport shot into Rachel's hand.

'Where do they come from?' I asked Red Cloud. Laughingly, he replied, 'The Land of Anywhere.'

Red Cloud says that nature spirits help him to produce the apports. The trouble is that, once they have them in their possession, they are reluctant to let them go, and they have to be cajoled.

All the time these apports were being produced, Red Cloud was jesting, laughing in his characteristic way, treating it all as a huge joke.

When the lights were switched on, flowers which had been placed on the top of the cabinet and just in front of it were found all round the room, some of them on the laps of sitters. Just where I sat, there had been put a small bunch of violets.

We all examined our gifts. Mine was a beautifully cut amethyst. One or two had sapphires, while others had aquamarines. One had a small cross - I noticed it was hallmarked 'Sterling silver' - another had an Eastern charm.

When you have received an apport brought by a 'dead' man, the 'miracles' of the Bible do not seem so far-fetched."

A fortnight after this we held another materialization séance. On this occasion two spirit figures materialized, Red Cloud and another guide known to us as Archael. Archael, playing the more prominent part, was materialized for an hour, permitting each of the sixty sitters present to file past within two feet of him. Throughout this time he held a red torch so that its rays shone on his head and shoulders. When everybody was again seated Red Cloud called upon Constance Trloar to hand him a pair of scissors. He then cut a lock of hair from Archael's head and handed it to her. It was about six inches long, fine and silky and, for the benefit of the sceptics among my readers, bore no resemblance to my own. Archael's hair was straight, quite different from mine in texture, and unmistakably fairer than my own, with its signs of grayness and its permanently waved curls.

The lock was subsequently examined by Clarksons, the theatrical wig-makers, and pronounced to be genuine hair. I have it in my possession today and also a document signed by all those present testifying to what they had seen.

One of the most pleasing forms of psychic phenomena are apports, gifts from spirit world to friends on earth. As has already been shown, they usually comprise gems of a semi-precious nature, though occasionally they include small precious stones like rubies and emeralds. Generally speaking they have no very great intrinsic value, though they are highly prized by those who receive them. Because the stones are never in the rough, uncut state of nature when they are passed to the recipients there has been much speculation as to where they come from. Since they have been cut and polished by man, it is argued, somebody must presumably have owned them at some time. How have they come into the possession of spirit guides, to be given away later as apports?

Red Cloud is quite clear on this point. There can, of course, be no question of their having been stolen from their rightful owner; that just does not happen. The explanation is that at some time or another they have been lost and abandoned. Many are dredged from the sea.

Red Cloud has several times made gifts of this nature to those who sit with me, usually warning us in advance of his kindly intention. Not unnaturally we look forward to such occasions with keen anticipation. I remember the discussion of a promised distribution of apports between my daughter Iris, her husband Kenneth, and Charles Tilson-Chowne,

whom I later married. A good deal of light-hearted banter went on between them as they speculated on what each of them might receive.

"It's all very well for you people," Kenneth said, "you've all had apports before. I haven't, and I think that entitles me to something especially nice."

"What would you consider to be 'especially nice'?" Iris asked.

"Oh, I don't know. Something interesting . . . something unusual. Could I have something from Egypt, do you think?"

"You'd better be careful," I warned him with a smile. "If it comes from Egypt, it will probably be a beetle. I'm sure it's all you deserve."

"A beetle will be fine," Kenneth said with great satisfaction.

Iris, knowing that it would probably be her task to hand out the apports as they came from the trumpet added: "I hope it is a dead one. I hate beetles."

There were fifty sitters when we met to receive Red Cloud's gifts and there was a strong atmosphere of expectancy as I took my chair in the center of the darkened room. Red Cloud entranced me and then addressed the company through the trumpet. He was in high good humor as he welcomed us to his "party" and hoped we would enjoy our evening.

Then the trumpet took flight and darted around the room like a glistening firefly. A moment later, when there came a loud rattling inside, it paused in its gyrations and delivered its apport into Iris' cupped hands. As it did so Red Cloud's voice pronounced the name of the recipient.

One after another the gifts came rattling down inside the trumpet, sometimes delivered into Iris's hands, sometimes directly into the hands of the sitters for whom they were intended. They included exquisite little stone figures, likenesses of Buddha, and precious and semi-precious stones. Many of the gifts were much too large to pass through the narrow neck of the trumpet - as was clearly demonstrated at the end of the séance - yet pass through they did, and without any outside help. After about thirty gifts had been distributed, Iris was called by Red Cloud to receive Kenneth's gift. As the apport came rattling through the trumpet, Red Cloud said: "Take care. It is frail and easily broken. You are fortunate my son, in this granting of your wish. To you is given a sacred beetle of Egypt."

"Where in Egypt does it come from?" Maurice Barbanell asked. "Abydos," came the instant reply, spelled out letter by letter.

So it was that Kenneth received his beetle from Egypt, and a very beautiful specimen it was - brilliant green, edged with gold. Though it was no more than a hollow shell and extremely fragile, it was perfect in every detail. Kenneth was fascinated by it. Determined to find out more about it he took it to the British Museum where it was pronounced genuine. Abydos, he was told, was quite likely its source.

Charles, my husband, had received gifts on a number of occasions from Red Cloud. These he invariably kept in a little leather bag. When his turn came now to receive an apport, Red Cloud spoke with a jest in his voice of the good fortune which had enabled Charles to make this collection of trophies. This time, he said, he would represent Charles with two apports taken from the leather bag. There followed a rattling in the trumpet and out came a large piece of onyx and a piece of jet which Charles at once recognized as his own. To make sure, subsequent examination of the contents of his apports bag showed these two to be the only pieces missing.

The demonstration ended with an avalanche of a dozen or more apports gushing from the trumpet like water from a tap. Everyone present had been named and given an apport, but most remarkable of all was the unexplained manifestation of a piece of garnet on the bedside table of a woman who had hoped to attend our meeting but had been prevented from doing so at the last minute.

On another occasion Red Cloud used a different technique to bring an apport to a sitter. It was the more remarkable in that it took place in broad daylight. In this instance the sitter was a woman doctor who regularly came from Bournemouth to sit with me, not only from her own interest in Spiritualism but also to represent others who were unable to make the journey. Charles, she and I were at this séance. Red Cloud, controlling me as usual when I was in deep trance, talked to my visitor for some time. Suddenly he said, "Take the medium's hands in yours."

She did as she was bid. Red Cloud spoke again: "What do you see in them?"

"Nothing," she replied, looking carefully at my hands and turning them over. "Nothing at all."

"Close the fingers of her left hand till they are clenched in a tight fist. Now fold the fingers of the right hand round it."

Again she followed instructions.

"Envelop the mediums hands within your own and wait."

She sat clasping my two hands while Charles looked on, wondering what would happen next.

Suddenly she said excitedly: "There's something hard in my hand. It's getting bigger."

"Be still," Red Cloud admonished her. "Do not release your clasp."

According to Charles, perhaps a full minute elapsed before Red Cloud spoke again. "Unclasp your hands," he said.

She did so. There lying in the palm of her right hand was a circle of black onyx, the size of a halfpenny.

I have welcomed the serious investigator or the intelligent sceptic to my circles. The occasions when they have not gone away with a great deal to ponder have been rare indeed. I recollect one sitting with particular satisfaction as it was held under test conditions

principally for the benefit of one man. He was introduced to me as a specialist in mental disorders, but apart from that I knew nothing of him, nor where he came from.

The circle comprised ten people and no sooner had I been entranced than Red Cloud delivered a lecture to those present. His subject, abstruse and involved, was the passage of matter through matter but its purport, several members of the circle later confessed, passed largely over their heads. Doubtless Red Cloud became quickly aware of this, for he said: "I will demonstrate the meaning of the words I have used. Here we sit within four walls, in an upstairs room, with its windows shuttered to exclude all light, and beyond is the medium's garden. What is there in the garden that you would like me to bring here?" Charles said afterwards that his mind flashed to the garden roller but was deterred from asking for it by the knowledge that some of those present would accuse him levity. Shaw Desmond answered Red Cloud's question. "May we have a budgerigar from the aviary at the bottom of the garden?" he asked quietly.

"The little Desmond man" - this is a typical Red Cloud epithet - "has asked for a budgerigar," the guide said. "It shall be so."

As he finished speaking, one of the two luminous plaques on the floor took flight and darted quickly around the room. Then it returned to the center of the circle, where it remained poised in mid-air, its glowing phosphorus background showing the clear-cut silhouette of budgerigar.

"Come forward each of you and touch it." Red Cloud requested. "The bird has no fear; it is entranced."

One by one the sitters responded and felt the bird, amazed to find it warm to the touch, and equally amazed that it did not fly away. The last sitter to come forward was Mrs. Treloar. As she put out her hand to feel the bird, Red Cloud said: "Pluck a feather from its breast. It will feel no pain. Do this so that the little doctor-man may not think I have hypnotized you into believing you have seen this bird. Pluck the feather and give it to him as proof of the bird's presence here tonight."

She did as she was instructed, returning to her seat with three little feathers held between her fingers. As she sat down the bird disappeared from sight.

The sceptical doctor was naturally interested in the feathers at the end of the sitting, examining them with great care. I watched as his eyes roved around the room, taking in every detail, but finding nothing that could even begin to explain the phenomenon he had just witnessed. He offered no explanations - how could he? - But he returned many times to learn more of Red Cloud's philosophy.

As a family we have always been fond of picnics, taking every opportunity to get into open country whenever the weather is fine. I have been on many such excursions with my daughter, Eveline, and her husband Bill, and on two of these there occurred unexpected psychic phenomena which are certainly worthy of record.

We had driven to an unspoiled beauty-spot, enclosed on two sides by fine forest trees. Lunch was over and we were basking in the hot sunshine. Bill, always of an inquiring mind, was quizzing me about Red Cloud and the demonstrations of psychic power he had so often given.

“Will he come to you wherever you are?” he asked. “I believe so. He has never failed me yet.”

“But out here, amid the trees and sunshine, would he come here?”

“I don’t see why not.” “Try,” Bill urged.

“I’ll ask him first,” I said. I did so and Red Cloud willingly agreed to control me.

From what Bill and Eveline told me afterwards, I gather that Red Cloud took the opportunity to deliver a little lecture on metaphysics to which the two listened with attention, if not always with comprehension.

“Does that mean,” Bill interrupted at one juncture, “that you can control the elements - the wind, the rain, and what have you?”

“Watch,” said Red Cloud, “and I will show you. Turn your eyes to the line of trees that stand behind you. See how still and unmoving they are. No wind disturbs their branches, no breeze rustles their leaves. But if the medium points her hand to the left, see what happens. The wind bends the tree-tops to the left. If she point to the right, they bend to the right. Does that answer your question, my son?”

It certainly did. As a practical demonstration, it left the pair breathless and they could hardly wait to tell me about it. I came out of trance to hear them both talking at once.

“You pointed to the left and all the trees bowed to the left,” they said. “Then you pointed to the right and they bowed to the right. It was incredible!”

“I have no difficulty in believing it,” I told them sincerely. And, indeed, I had not.

The other instance occurred in late summer towards the end of a six weeks drought. The countryside was tinder dry and common sense should have told us not to smoke while lying comfortably back in the long brown grass. But Eveline is fond of her cigarettes. She relaxed with her eyes closed, a cigarette between her fingers. We must all have drowsed off because the next thing we knew was that the grass was on fire, and the blaze was spreading with alarming speed. We jumped up and tried to stamp out the flames, but it was useless. Fanned by a warm breeze the flames were advancing rapidly towards where our car stood with several others. Parties of nearby picnickers hurriedly collected their belongings, with the drivers running as fast as they could to remove their vehicles from the danger zone.

Bringing up the rear of my family’s retreat, I was suddenly frightened. The fire was clearly out of control and there was nothing we could do but save ourselves and our belongings. But untold damage might result to other people’s property as a consequence of our careless action. Desperately I cast about for something we could do that would halt this conflagration. Then I thought of Red Cloud. He had said he was master of the elements; he

could help us now. I stopped running and invoked his aid. Then I raised my hand and stood still and silent. And as I did so the flames died down, as if by a miracle. It was a moment I shall never forget however long I live.

The world of the supernormal ranges from the spectacular and seeming miraculous, such as the episode I have just described, to the insignificantly trivial that is hardly worth recording. Nevertheless, it is the trivialities which, coming unbidden into our thoughts, mostly make up our day-to-day life, and often bring entertaining glimpses. I have known many amusing intrusions into my domestic life of which the following is a fair example.

I was slightly unwell and had to remain in bed. During the morning Iris came to my room, saying that Charles had gone to do the household shopping.

“Yes,” I said, “I know. A few minutes ago I saw him come out of the flower shop. He had been buying me a bunch of violets.”

When poor Charles returned home half-an-hour later carrying his violets, Iris said: “You needn’t bother to surprise her. She knows.”

“I might have known it,” Charles replied with a rueful smile. “I never knew such a woman!”

“Never mind, my dear.” I said. “Thank you for the thought. The violets are lovely.”

CHAPTER NINE

DIRECT VOICE

In clairvoyance, clairaudience, and psychometry the medium never loses consciousness. If she is a good medium she may lose some awareness of the material things about her, but no more than one would expect of any other artist who becomes completely absorbed by the work in hand. To all outward appearances she is as much alive to what is going on around her as anyone else who happens to be present.

Inevitably there are certain dangers attaching to this, since it is one of the characteristics of human nature to receive one’s fellows - especially strangers - with a secretly appraising eye and to attempt to judge from their dress, voice and demeanour their probable circumstances and background. This is a factor on which psychic investigators have many times pounced with suspicion. But the truth is that every experienced medium has long since learned to shut visual evidence of this sort rigorously from her mind, though I am prepared to believe that the novice may occasionally fall victim to it, albeit unknowingly.

From the time I started to give sittings for clairvoyance I have never allowed myself to draw any inference from the appearance or behaviour of my visitors. I have not done so because I think a preconceived idea based on material considerations of a person’s circumstances might influence my clairvoyance, but purely as a precautionary measure for my own satisfaction. For the same reason I always prefer to be told nothing of the past history and associations of those who sit with me. I am happiest when confronted with strangers of whom I know absolutely nothing. Then I enjoy the comforting confidence that nothing I say can conceivably be coloured by pre-knowledge.

Instances of people coming to seek guidance on their problems are by no means rare. It is Red Cloud's advice that they want of course, not mine. In such cases it is far more satisfactory from my point of view to exchange the conscious condition for the trance state before transmitting any communication. By so doing I know that whatever is said in trance will have to come direct from my guide and will not be influenced by any ideas on the subject I may hold.

The deep trance is a condition which must be acquired gradually and by easy stages if the medium is not to suffer harm. I have already recounted my first experience when Red Cloud entranced me. On that occasion, and on many others which followed, I was never more than lightly entranced. In this state the spirit is only partially withdrawn from the body. I retain a drowsy consciousness of what is going on. I hear the voices of the sitters - including my own - as if from afar. I have a strong sense of detachment, of being an onlooker rather than a participant. It is almost a feeling of helplessness as I realize that the words put into my mouth are not my own. This is the state of trance which imposes the least strain on the medium's nervous and physical systems. Red Cloud, of course, fully aware of this, was very patient in his gradual process of preparing me for the deep trances I was to undergo in due course.

Many times I have been asked what are the sensations of the deep trance state. It is a question I have never found easy to answer, any more than it is possible to describe the sensations of sleep. I sit in my chair, relaxed yet with a strong awareness of what is about to occur. What happens next can best be likened to the effects of an anaesthetic. From full consciousness there comes a brief period of light-headedness during which I hover between consciousness and oblivion. This is the moment when the spirit is being withdrawn from the body and is marked by particularly heavy breathing - followed by heavy, dreamless sleep.

While I am deeply entranced I am conscious of nothing. The spirit forms I see clairvoyantly and the spirit voices I hear clairaudiently, the constant companions of my waking hours, are suddenly no more. I see nothing, hear nothing and, in demonstration of direct voice, say nothing. I sit in my chair as if in a drugged sleep and only return to consciousness when my guide and his spirit doctors decided that I shall do so. They usually awaken me after a period of up to ninety minutes. I return to the material world, physically and mentally tired but anxious to be told what has taken place in my absence.

Entrancement is not necessarily essential to the successful demonstration of the direct voice. There are a number of mediums, notably in the United States of America, who regularly hold direct voice séances while remaining fully conscious of all that is going on, but I am not one of them. My demonstrations of direct voice have always occurred while I was in trance and, with one exception, all have been held in private, though there were often as many as sixty sitters present. My one public demonstration of this phenomenon was the Kingsway Hall in London and is described elsewhere in this book.

I have, of course, often been entranced at public meetings when Red Cloud wished to deliver a lecture, but such occasions were "trance addressed" in which Red Cloud spoke

through me and not by the direct voice entailing the use of the trumpet. These lectures, which were often beyond my understanding, were avidly studied when transcribed by many of the outstanding philosophical and scientific brains in the country, and were frequently highly praised. A remarkable feature was the speed at which they were delivered. Even the most expert shorthand writers had difficulty in keeping pace, and then could do so only for a few minutes at a time. Because of this we sometimes had as many as four shorthand writers working in relays in order to ensure that no word was missed.

In the pages which follow I describe some of the more outstanding séances at which I was deeply entranced. But, of course, I am unable to do so from personal recollection. For my information I am indebted to the descriptions by the persons who sat with me, to the notes of the short hand writers who were invariably present at my direct voice demonstrations, and to contemporary accounts which found their way regularly into both the national and psychic press.

It was not until I had had three or four years' experience of trance mediumship that Red Cloud asked me to form a circle so that I could train for direct voice development. I was more than willing. There was no difficulty in organizing a circle having as its nucleus Maurice Barbanell, Hannen Swaffer, Shaw Desmond, and Constance Treloar. These four attended regularly and were augmented by some fifteen to twenty other persons, who varied from séance to séance. None attended without Red Cloud's prior approval. Occasionally their names would be known to me, but mostly they were strangers, introduced by other members. Names were rarely mentioned, and never when a circle member asked Red Cloud's permission to bring a friend to the next séance. Newcomers were warned at the moment of their arrival against volunteering any information that could afterwards be said to have destroyed the value of the evidence they had received. All this was rather conspiratorial and was frankly quite unnecessary because names mean nothing to you when you are in a trance. Nevertheless, it was a practice we persisted in, if for no other reason than that it satisfied the sceptical visitor.

Direct voice communication is perhaps the most convincing evidence of survival after death. The medium's party is wholly passive since it is not through her vocal chords that the spirit voices are made audible. Before these voices can be heard by the circle a replica of a larynx must be constructed. The larynx is formed of ectoplasm (drawn partly from the sitters but largely from the medium) acting on psychic rods of power, the whole delicately pitched to the mental vibrations of the medium. The larynx, when constructed, is surrounded by walls of light to protect it from unwanted spirit intruders. The one who has been chosen is passed inside the walls by the guide with instructions to communicate as clearly as possible. Within the protecting walls the communicator's vibrations impinge on the larynx and are translated into audible speech which is clearly heard through the trumpet.

A successful demonstration of direct voice is as much dependent on the spirit communicator as on the medium. He must know precisely the message he wants to convey - Red Cloud says it is not unusual to rehearse the hesitant ones - and be able to transmit his

message with clarity. The communicator must be allowed to deliver his message without interruption. Here the circle members play an important part. They must be sympathetic and receptive. Any attempt by one of the sitters to project his own ideas at such a moment will defeat the object of the séance because strong thoughts impose barriers which the communicator cannot break down. It is easy to harass and confuse a communicator by posing a question for which he has not come prepared with the answer. Usually when this happens he loses control of the trumpet.

We sat every fortnight in an upper room in my house at Teddington, and for the first ten months we made no progress. It was most disappointing. Only the knowledge that we were sitting in response to Red Cloud's request prevented me from giving up in despair. Nevertheless, he gave us his blessing and encouragement from time to time. At an early stage he asked that any donations resulting from these meetings should be paid to a medium who had fallen ill and was unable to work. Useful sums were regularly passed to her for several months until Red Cloud told us that her time of need was over and that thereafter donations received should be sent to the Marylebone Spiritualist Association.

Our sittings were held in darkness. This Red Cloud said was essential for making the psychic rods, and more than once he drew our attention to chinks of light appearing through imperfectly drawn curtains. There was, however, an occasion when a small crack of light passed undetected by us all. I am reminded of it now only because it subsequently formed the subject of a letter printed in a psychic journal. The writer, a Mr. Pillow, who was sitting in the circle at the time, said that he saw the trumpet pass between him and the chink of light from the curtain. In the fraction of time that it was illuminated from behind it had appeared to him that the trumpet was supported by a pillar of smoke.

The trumpet we used was of the ordinary tin variety, outlined at its broader end with phosphorescent paint which made it clearly visible in the darkness. According to eyewitness accounts it moved about the room with incredible speed, yet never did it accidentally strike the floor, walls, ceiling, or furniture; nor did it ever make a mistake, when transmitting a message, by going to the wrong member of the circle.

The only other essential to our sittings was the short hand writer whose job it was to make a verbatim record of all that was said. She was seated outside the circle, in a partitioned-off alcove containing a dim red light but sufficient to enable her to make notes. During the initial period when there was no success, she was certainly not over-occupied, but as results came she was kept more and more busy, her notes often running into dozens of pages.

The opening procedure of each meeting was invariably the same. The members would take their seats, each holding hands with its neighbour. Soft music from a gramophone would make a pleasant background of sound and by its vibrations contribute to conditions necessary for this form of psychic phenomena. Meanwhile, I was deeply entranced by Red Cloud and it would not be long before he greeted the circle with words, "God bless you all." Once our ten-month initiation period was over, the voices started to come in, and keep coming in, almost without break.

The characteristic tones of the spirit communicators were not always recognizable - which is not entirely surprising when you remember that all were reproduced through the same artificially constructed larynx - but occasionally sitters were dumbfounded by the resemblance. One such was a Mrs. Ellen Hadgeld who was so deeply impressed by what she had heard that she wrote to the Press about it. It was not, she said, so much the characteristic of phrasing which had convinced her that she was speaking to her departed daughter, though these would have been proof enough, but the tonal quality of the voice itself. It would have been nobody else. She concluded with the words: "Even had Mrs. Roberts wanted to, she could never have reproduced by any means other than true Spiritualism, the voice of a girl she had never met."

More often, however, it is the typical phrasing and verbal expression that provide the real proof of identity. Few people go through life without acquiring at least one or two habits of speech which are individual to them, and those who knew them well are rarely slow to recall them when they hear them again. And, if further evidence is needed, there is always the factual proof which spirit communicators are at pains to supply to clinch their identity and demonstrate their survival.

As our sittings became more successful, more and more voices came through, each one distinguishable from the last even though, in the early stages, few were identifiable from tone alone. Sometimes the conversations would be long and intimate, at others the talk would be general. The trumpet would move quickly around the circle, stopping here and there and gently nudging the sitter with whom it wished to speak.

Most of the communications were brief and were not repeated at later meetings, but there were important exceptions to this rule. Notably among the exceptions was Sir Henry Segrave, the racing motorist who lost his life in an attempt on the world's motorboat record at Lake Windermere. The story is that Sir Henry first became interested in Spiritualism while preparing his attack on the land speed record at Daytona Beach in Florida. I never heard the precise details but this is the broad outline as recounted to me. While in America, Sir Henry received a letter from an unknown correspondent in Britain. The writer explained that at one of a series of séances he attended a message of warning addressed to Segrave had come, claiming to emanate from some former ace of the motor-racing world. The writer then quoted the message in full and expressed the hope that it would be of some interest and value to Sir Henry in his new attempt on a world record. Apparently it was of great interest and value, and its Spiritualistic source so aroused Segrave's curiosity that he determined to look more closely into the subject when he returned to England.

He did so and, in turning to his old friend Hannen Swaffer for enlightenment, he could not have chosen a better mentor. Swaffer, who had his own home circle of sitters, invited Segrave to come and meet their medium. There Sir Henry had his first experience of psychic phenomena - a piano being lifted clear off the floor. He said that it was the only time in his life he had been too frightened to do anything but stare!

His death on Lake Windermere came as a great shock to the world. It was a profound personal tragedy to Lady Segrave. A few days later some strangely significant happenings

in Swaffer's flat, not capable of a normal explanation, suggested to him that perhaps Segrave was trying to make contact with former friends and associates. Swaffer described these curious happenings in a long letter to Lady Segrave. It was the first time that anyone had seriously suggested to her that she might be able to communicate with her husband and she characteristically gave it prolonged thought. It took her twelve months, and a careful study of Swaffer's own book on Spiritualism, to make up her mind what she wanted to do. Then she wrote a letter to Swaffer. Would he please put her in touch with a medium who would help her to communicate with her husband? Swaffer's reply was to refer Lady Segrave to Maurice Barbanell.

And so it was I received a telephone call one morning from Barbanell in which he asked if he might bring a newcomer to our direct voice sitting to be held that night.

"But you know the rule," I protested. "Nobody attends these meetings without prior reference to Red Cloud."

"I know," he said, "but if I wait until tonight in order to ask Red Cloud, at least two weeks must pass before I can bring my friend along. I'm anxious to avoid that if I can. I think you can trust my discretion, Estelle."

"I can," I said thoughtfully. "And I believe Red Cloud can, too. So bring your friend. I am sure Red Cloud will approve."

So Barbanell rang Lady Segrave to extend his invitation, but she was unable to accept. A previous engagement made it impossible for her to be present that evening but she would be grateful to be asked to the following one. Barbanell therefore came alone. Early in the sitting he asked Red Cloud what he knew of the guest he had hoped to bring with him.

"You be patient and wait," Red Cloud replied, with a cryptic ring in his voice.

With that answer, of course, he had to be content until the séance was well advanced. At last a voice through the trumpet called "Barbanell."

"Yes," he answered. "Who is that speaking?" "Segrave. Thank you for trying to bring my wife."

"That's all right, Sir Henry. I am only sorry she was unable to come. Have you a message for her?"

Sir Henry had. It was a brief personal greeting of no particular significance to anybody present but full of inner meaning, Lady Segrave volunteered, when it was telephoned to her. Before the séance ended, Barbanell asked Red Cloud's permission to bring Lady Segrave to the next sitting. It was readily granted.

A fortnight later Barbanell arrived with his guest. She was introduced to nobody present, though the handful of sitters who had attended the previous séance no doubt guessed the identity. It was not long before the trumpet moved in her direction and Red Cloud spoke to her.

"You do not know me," he said.

“No,” she answered. “I am a stranger here.”

“Oh no, you are not. Soon I will bring your little man to you.”

This snatch of dialogue was interrupted for fifteen minutes by conversations between other sitters and their spirit communicators before the trumpet returned to Lady Segrave.

“D!” it said.

Lady Segrave was so overcome at being addressed by the pet name which only her husband used and was unknown to anyone else present that she was incapable of answering.

“D!” the voice repeated, but still she could not answer.

“Speak to him,” Barbanell urged her, but she was still overwhelmed. The trumpet moved away from her and poised itself in front of Barbanell. The same voice greeted him. “You are there, Barbanell?” it said.

“Yes, Sir Henry,” he answered, but please speak to your wife.”

The spirit voice again called her name. This time she tried to reply, but her tenseness made it impossible.

“This is very difficult,” said Segrave, and the trumpet dropped. This was always an indication that the communicator could not hold the power to speak. Red Cloud’s kindly voice was again heard, offering sympathy and encouragement and promising to help in the future. It was a promise that was amply fulfilled. At the next séance and the many that followed, Lady Segrave was completely at ease. Sir Henry made such great strides in the mechanics of manipulating the trumpet that he was able to bring it to her ear and whisper to her, so that no one else heard what he said.

On an early occasion he mentioned: “I was with you on the 14th , D.”

“You remembered the 14th?” “Your birthday.”

He explained, in one of his initial communications, that he did not find it easy to communicate, adding humorously: “I knew how to drive a boat or a car, but I’m hanged if I can get the run of this yet.”

Later she asked him: “Are you with me in the car, Boy?” “Yes,” was the reply. “Do take care.”

“Why? I am a good driver.”

“Yes. So was I. . . .”

The months slipped by as one séance followed another. Always Sir Henry and Lady Segrave held long, intimate conversations. They discussed scores of domestic matters relating to their home, their friends, Sir Henry’s father, items that were of no interest to other members of the circle except in the abundance of the proof they provided of identity and that here were two people now completely reunited across the gulf of death.

One evening Lady Segrave asked Red Cloud’s permission to bring a friend to the next séance. Although she was careful not to mention the fact, her guest was to be Lord

Cottenham [the Sixth Earl] an old friend of the Segraves. Presently Sir Henry spoke, greeting first his wife and then Lord Cottenham. "Hallo Mark," he said, repeating the name which he always used. There followed a lively conversation between the two, as natural as many others that must have taken place between them before being interrupted by death. Now they even joked about the mechanics of direct voice communication.

"Can you tell me how to work this thing?" said Segrave, indicating the trumpet.

"You put your mouth to the hole, I suppose, and talk," Cottenham replied.

"But tell me first, where is the hole?" was the laughing spirit rejoinder.

Then in more serious vein he said: "I have been afraid for D. She's been so sad."

"But not anymore," Cottenham assured him. "She's been happier these last few months than at any time since your passing."

"And you are happier, too," Barbanell interposed, "much happier than the first time you returned to us."

"That is true and it is this that has made me so. I did not want to leave her. We had all our earthly struggles together and just as success came, this happened. I accepted it for myself, but not for her."

"Don't worry about D.," Cottenham reassured him. "We are looking after her all we can."

"They are, indeed," Lady Segrave acknowledged gratefully. "I am going out now much more than I was. I'm having dinner with Bill (a relative) on Monday. I'll tell him I've been speaking to you, but he won't believe me."

"Thank God that Mark, at least, has some common sense," was Segrave's comment.

Later Lord Cottenham developed his own gift of automatic writing and regularly received messages from Segrave. Moreover he succeeded in making direct contact with Red Cloud. On two separate occasions he was told in writing by my guide that if he came to see me at a specific time, he would find me ready to receive him. He followed the instructions and in each instance I had been similarly briefed by Red Cloud. When he arrived at my door he found me waiting with a note I had made of Red Cloud's instructions to me. The two versions tallied in every detail.

At one séance Lady Segrave asked if she could bring two visitors to the next gathering. When Red Cloud assented, she mentioned no names. Neither were this young man and women introduced when they came. Segrave proved he knew who they were by naming them. One was his brother, and the other his brother's wife.

Twelve months after her first visit to me Lady Segrave made public the evidence she had received, mainly at these voice séances, and which had proved her husband's survival after death. I had always found her to be a woman of great charm, with a strong natural reticence. She shrank instinctively from proclaiming her new conviction to the world because she was compelled to detail among her proofs so much that was essentially personal and private. What was the motive that compelled her to abandon inborn

reluctance? Here are her own words: "I feel it is my duty to help others who have been through the sorrow of bereavement, so that they can become happy again as I am."

At a subsequent séance Red Cloud complimented Lady Segrave on her courage. He was followed by her husband, who, after a long conversation with her, said he had brought a small tribute. Out of the darkness something fell lightly into her lap and touching it, she knew it was a flower. When the sitting was over and the lights were switched on, we saw it was a single red rose, almost as fresh as when first cut. Yet it had arrived at the end of a séance lasting an hour and a half, with doors and windows tightly closed, and the room oppressively warm and airless. Had the rose been in the room for the whole of the time it must have shown signs of drooping.

As soon as she saw it lying in Lady Segrave's lap, Iris went downstairs to the sitting room where, a few minutes before the circle began, she had arranged a dozen beautiful red roses, a gift to me. Counting them, she found only eleven and the lower half of the stalk of the twelfth.

An extraordinary episode must be included in this account of the Segrave communications. It was both unexpected and dramatic. The story began to unfold when Red Cloud told Lady Segrave that a boy wished to speak to her. The guide was followed by a young voice coming through the trumpet. The spirit speaker gave his name and added that he wished to thank Lady Segrave for the kindness she had shown his mother. Would she please give a message to his mother?

Lady Segrave readily assented and the voice went on: "Thank her for what she did for the chauffeur after he had driven her to visit my grave."

"What was the chauffeur's name?" she asked.

The boy repeated the name, a French one, and then spelled it out letter by letter.

At this juncture Red Cloud intervened to assist the youth who was obviously having difficulty in putting over his message. "The boy says his mother went to Paris to visit his grave. There she met and was driven by the taxi driver who was the last man to see the boy alive."

Then, characteristically, Red Cloud added a comment of his own: "When the boy passed over it was thought he had taken his own life. Yet this was not the case. He drank veronal, but only to sleep. He did not know its strength and he drank too much."

Lady Segrave had met the boy's mother in a chance encounter about a year earlier, and had since seen her only once or twice. She wasted no time in carrying the message to the unhappy woman, who confirmed in awestruck wonder every detail that had been made known. When she was told that her son had not intentionally taken his life, tears flowed from her eyes, but they were of joy, not of sorrow.

In December 1968 Lady Segrave rejoined her husband, Sir Henry. She had kept contact with me through the years, and after her death they returned together to thank me for the happiness I had brought them both.

CHAPTER TEN

SPEAKING IN MANY TONGUES

I have often been asked about speech in the spirit world. Is there one common language, or is there a Babel of all the tongues we know on earth? This is a difficult question, one which nobody can claim to answer with certainty. There is a strong school of thought which believes that there is no language, since none is necessary. This argument is based on the fact that thought is fundamental and common to both worlds. Speech, on the other hand, is essentially physical, while language is no more than a man-made device for transmitting thought through speech. It is therefore only in the physical realm that thought has to be translated into phonetic sounds. In the spirit world, a thought has only to be projected by one denizen to be perfectly understood by another.

I accept this as an interesting theory, but I believe it to be only partially correct. It is certainly true of advanced souls who have been in the spirit worlds for eons of time because, during their early essays at trance communications and the direct voice, there is ample evidence to show they have lost their facility for words. Red Cloud has told us that he faced this problem when he returned to earth as a spiritual teacher. Through lack of use he had become unaccustomed to the slow and ponderous practice of speech. When he first spoke through me, his words were halted and stilted, the English of the foreign classroom. But he quickly improved so that now he is capable of expressive and eloquent language or, when he is in jocular mood, the colloquial idiom of the present day. Yet he still retains certain characteristic pronunciations - "spurrit" for "spirit" is a notable example - which serve only to endear him more firmly in the hearts of his listeners.

It is in its application to more recent newcomers to spirit life that I do not agree with the theory that no language is spoken by them. I do not believe that those who have recently passed over immediately have the faculty of thought communication. I believe they continue to speak the language of their mother-tongue for a very long time after their passing, a view supported by the ease with which they revert to their native language when they communicate with their friends.

Through direct voice communications I have been instrumental in transmitting messages in a score of languages of which I have not the least knowledge, either as to the meaning of the words spoken, or of their pronunciation. When I demonstrate clairaudience I am able to repeat words I hear spoken in foreign languages that are completely unknown to me. In the early days of my psychic career, these foreign sounds eluded me; they reached my ear, jumbled and incomprehensible. Try as I would, I could not separate them or reproduce them in any recognizable form.

A typical example occurred many years ago in Holland when at the request of Estelle Stead, the daughter of W. T. Stead, the famous journalist and spiritualist who ended his earthly life in the Titanic, I gave a demonstration of clairvoyance in The Hague. It was beyond my capacity to repeat the strange Dutch sounds spoken by the spirit communicators, and so for my benefit the messages had to be translated into English by a spirit interpreter. I then

repeated them aloud in English and, because few of the audience understood the English language, the messages were translated back into Dutch by an interpreter standing by my side on the platform. All this sounds, and was, a very roundabout performance, but it was necessary because at that time there was no alternative method.

Given a similar situation today, however, I should manage very much better. From experience my ear has become better attuned to picking up the sounds of a foreign language, and my tongue is more practiced in reproducing them. Even so, it is still not easy, and it is a very laborious process since each word has to be spoken slowly and every syllable carefully enunciated.

A trance communication that remains clearly in my mind took place in the middle thirties when I was visited by Chief Oske-non-Ton, a Mohawk Indian, who was delighted to converse in his own language with Red Cloud. He had come to London for the stage production of *Hiawatha* in which he played the part of a medicine man and, according to his own account, he was spirit controlled throughout his performance. He claimed that his face changed completely and assumed the tired and wrinkled features of a man of ninety.

A memorable séance because of the variety of languages it produced took place in 1937. The International Spiritualist Federation was holding a congress in London. With Red Cloud's approval, Hannen Swaffer invited some of the overseas delegates to a direct voice sitting at my center.

Among those present was Mrs. Helmi Krohn of Finland who afterwards published an account of her moving experience. She wrote: "A spirit voice clearly called my name – Helmi. I replied in Finnish, 'Is that Mother?' Back came the reply in the same language, 'Yes, it is your mother.' I then asked if my father was with her and she replied that he was. I could hear every word quite clearly. It was the first time I could recall listening to my dear mother's voice, for I was a small child when she passed over."

In view of the fact that Mrs. Krohn had no recollection of her mother's voice, it may seem that her claim to have identified her spirit visitor was impetuous. Perhaps it was, but it does not alter the fact that somebody spoke to her in Finnish, and that the only person in the room with any knowledge of that language was Mrs. Krohn herself.

Mr. T. Biginelli of Switzerland was another of the delegates to receive a spirit communication which made a deep impression on him. He was addressed by his daughter, who spoke to him in clear, ringing tones. After the sitting, he confessed: "It was really wonderful. Not only were they the words of my little girl, but it was also her voice." The child told her father that he had brought her photograph and that it was in his pocket. At the end of the sitting he passed it around for us to see.

Mrs. Edith Hammerstrom testified that she was addressed by a spirit voice which, after giving his name, spoke to her in Swedish. A message came in Dutch from Dr. Goedhart who, before his passing, had represented Holland at former international gatherings. Mrs. Helene Fry was addressed in French by her sister in the spirit world. Described in a letter what happened, Mrs. Fry wrote: "I had the extreme joy of hearing my twenty-eight-year-

old sister, Marguerite, who passed in childbirth in 1917, talking to me in the direct voice. Though I could not catch every word she said, I clearly heard her answer my questions about her baby. 'My child is by my side,' she told me."

Another communicator that night was Sadie Perkins, a coloured girl, who returned to speak to her sister, Mamie, the Chicago delegate to the congress. There was no mistaking the distinctive dialect as the two girls, one living and the other "dead," freely discussed their friends and relatives. Of the two, Sadie was the more excited. "It is too good to be true," she bubbled with pleasure. "I am talking in my own voice."

The last to communicate at this séance of the nations was the author, Louis M. Nesbitt, who spoke at length to his friend Eva Barrett from Rome. He told her an involved story concerning two mutual Italian acquaintances finishing with the words, "What a story for the Standard!" This we took to refer to the *London Evening Standard* which was serializing his book, *Desert and Forest* at the time of his fatal crash in an aeroplane.

This unique séance ended with Red Cloud pronouncing this benediction. "If I have made some of you happy, then I am happy. Love God, serve your fellow-men, and may the power of the Great White Spirit ever teach you the truth of man's immortality."

I was the medium at an extraordinary sitting which combined the direct voice and spirit writing, in a language of which I have no knowledge. My sitter was Mr. E. S. De Jonge of Holland, who was addressed by the spirit voice of his brother in perfect Dutch. Mr. De Jonge volunteered that the voice spoke in excellent, idiomatic Dutch without any trace of accent, as would be expected of his brother. This sitting was one a series. It is best described in the account which Mr. De Jonge supplied:

"At the first sitting we had with Mrs. Estelle Roberts, Red Cloud told us my brother was present and established his identity by submitting evidential details. At subsequent sittings, my brother was always present and communicated with us through Red Cloud. The notable point is that not once during these sittings was his name ever mentioned, either by Red Cloud or by us. The question of his name was never raised, other evidence having been more than sufficient.

"On the morning of January 30, we again had a sitting. Towards the close Red Cloud told us there was a direct voice séance to be held the same evening. He invited us to attend. We were very keen to do so, especially when Red Cloud promised that my brother would try to speak to us by direct voice. We said that we hoped he would this time give his name, as it would be the easiest and quickest way of establishing his identity, it never having been mentioned before.

"The séance was held in a small room in complete darkness. Mrs. Roberts was the medium and a Mrs. Treloar presided. Besides ourselves there were seven other people present. As soon as all were seated, our hands were linked up, so that no hand was free.

"After a few moments, the voice of Red Cloud was heard, loudly and clearly greeting his visitors. Spirit voices were soon heard making their identities known and speaking to their

friends in our midst. Then Red Cloud announced that a young man, who had no previous experience, would try to come through.

“After some noises, which to us sounded very much like breathing exercises, a voice very slowly and deliberately spoke the following: `ik—zal—het— niet—kunnen-doen’ (‘I shall not be able to do it’). These words were repeated two or three times and it should be remarked that, although we could not recognize the voice, to us the Dutch was pronounced perfectly clearly and without the slightest accent. In one word, nobody but a born Dutchmen could possibly have repeated them, especially the ‘i’ in ‘ik,’ the ‘z’ in ‘zal,’ the ‘h’ in ‘het,’ and the ‘oe’ in ‘doen’ without a trace of fault.

“Despite this, it was obvious that the communicator was very excited and found considerable difficulty in speaking. This was soon confirmed by Red Cloud, who told us that another experiment was about to be tried. He then requested a Mr. Buckingham to leave the circle, after linking up the hands of his neighbours. Mr. Buckingham was then instructed to place on the floor, outside the circle, a blackboard which was hanging on the wall of the room and which, we were afterwards assured, had hung unused on the wall for as long as anyone present could remember.

“When Mr. Buckingham had resumed his seat in the circle, linking up hands as before, Red Cloud announced that he had placed the right foot of the medium on that of the sitter to her right, where it must remain throughout the séance. After a few moments’ silence the sound of scratching came from the direction of the blackboard and we knew that some spirit was busy with the chalk. Then more spirits came to communicate with their friends, and our attention was distracted from the sounds of writing. Then, interrupting a conversation that was going on between a spirit wife talking to her husband in our circle, came the sound of something brittle being dropped to the floor. I thought I recognized it as the sound of a stick of chalk falling and breaking. The spirit wife heard it, too, and broke off what she had been saying to tell us excitedly that the young man who had come for the Dutch gentlemen had been writing a message. She was very excited about it.

“At the close of the séance, when the medium, who had been in trance, had recovered consciousness, the lights were switched on. We saw that a message had been written in Dutch on the blackboard. The two halves of a stick of chalk were lying on the blackboard, evidently broken in falling.

“The message read:

‘Mijn Vader Broeder

Ikben heir

Ik vond het zeer moeielijk (te) spreek (en) Mijn les is moeielijker dan de uwe

Ik kon de deur neit open doen

Ik moet een Brief Schrijven

Ik zal morgen avond aan U (denken?) Wiltt U mij helpen

Om het te doen

Schrift

Ap.'

Translation:

`My Father Brother

I am here

I found it very difficult (to) speak

My lesson is more difficult than yours I could not open the door

I must Write a Letter

I shall (think?) of you tomorrow night Will you help me

to do it

Writing

Ap.'

“With regard to the conditions under which this direct writing was achieved it is important to note the following: (1) The sitting was held in total darkness. (2) The medium was controlled as to her movements throughout by the contact of her foot on that of her neighbour. (3) All members of the circle were linked by their hands. (4) The door was locked. (5) The blackboard was on the floor and the writing was done with chalk, neatly and clearly, with accurate space between most of the words, on straight lines and correct dotting all through.

“With regard to the message itself, the following should be noted:

“(1) The words between brackets were not actually written. They must have been omitted in the rush of writing under such conditions.

“(2) The capitals of Brief and Schrijven are superfluous and I would ascribe them to the same reasons as above.

“(3) Only the words `heir' and `neit' are spelled wrongly. The e and i have changed places, which is a common mistake in Dutch and one my brother often made when writing in a hurry. At first sight I also thought that the words `moeielijk' and `moeielijker' (the latter is the comparative of the former) were wrongly spelled. I was under the impression that the second `e' was superfluous, although when spoken this letter is actually pronounced. However, on looking it up in a dictionary, I found that it is equally correct to write `moeielijk' or `moeilijk.' The letters `ij' were rendered on the blackboard as the letter `y' with a dot over it. This

is correct Dutch and only in the Dutch language is this letter ever dotted.

(4) The three first words of the sixth line were not well spaced, which I again would ascribe to the sense of urgency under which the message was written. Likewise, there was a growing largeness in the size of the last lines, probably due to waning power and loss of control.

“With regard to the writing itself, the character is not Dutch. It strikes us rather as English and is not my brother’s at all. This might be explained by the fact that the actual act of writing was not done by my brother alone, but with the help of a more experienced spirit, just as a small child writes its first letters with the help of one of its parents. In our opinion, however, this is a small point compared with the rest of the evidence.

The signature is undeniable. My brother’s name was Albert, which the family shortened to Ap, which is not the customary Dutch abbreviation for the name. Furthermore, as I have already pointed out, this was the first and only time his name was ever mentioned throughout the whole series of sittings. Further comment is surely unnecessary.”

Another instance of the ease with which mediumship overcomes the problems of language occurred a few years ago when I gave a sitting to an Indian visitor named Dass. Within a few minutes, his wife manifested to me, speaking in Hindustani. As soon as I heard her speak, I decided to ask the assistance of a spirit interpreter because for me to have relayed the unfamiliar sounds of this language would have made communication extremely slow and difficult. I asked Red Cloud for help. He agreed, but insisted that the wife must first give the essential evidence of identification to the husband in her own language. This she did by slowly enunciating several Hindustani words and names which, to the best of my ability, I repeated to the husband. Mr. Dass readily acknowledged his understanding of them and their significance to him.

Then, Red Cloud interpreting, the wife spoke of her three sons on earth. She gave me the letter ‘B,’ which Mr. Dass said was the initial of their eldest son’s name, and she told me the boy’s birthday, July 13th. She then spoke of Mr. Dass’ concern for the welfare of their second son, who was touring in the U.S.A. Mr. Dass confirmed he had been worried about the boy’s well-being.

The wife next mentioned some unspecific object in her husband’s pocket which he took to refer to a photograph he was carrying. But in this he was at fault. Later in the sitting the wife spoke of the object again, saying it was something she had worn. I asked Red Cloud for more specific information, and as I did so the wife interrupted with the single word “ainak.” I repeated the word and immediately Mr. Dass took from his pocket a pair of spectacles. Apparently “ainak” is Hindustani for spectacles. Smiling, he explained that his wife had just reminded him of something he had forgotten, that after her death he had had his own lenses fitted to the frames of her spectacles.

From that moment almost every word the wife spoke was charged with unassailable evidence. She spoke of some trouble with her knee cap which had been injured in a motor-car accident. She sent her love to Shakuntla, their eldest daughter, and to “Agye,” the

diminutive of Agyavati, a friend of whom she had been very fond in Nairobi. She then spoke of “the three R’s” and gave me the name Rajan. Rajan, Mr. Dass explained, was the eldest of their three grandsons. He had been born two weeks after the wife’s death; the other two, Rajesh and Rupindar, six years later. She spoke also of Veena and Rohini, their two grand-daughters, the younger of whom had not been born until four years after the wife’s passing. And so it went on, intimate family details, all of which Mr. Dass quietly confirmed.

Her final observation was no less remarkable. She said that she now had the gold ring her husband had removed from her finger at the time of her death. Nodding agreement, Mr. Dass explained that the ring had played its part according to custom in the funeral rites. With articles of clothing and other personal items it had been ceremoniously offered for the comfort of the departed spirit. Now the wife was wearing it in the spirit form.

When Mr. Dass left me, I pondered the wonders of what had just occurred. Apart from the few isolated words of Hindustani which I had repeated phonetically, the whole of the communication had been interpreted by red Cloud and had related to people and events of which I could not have had the least knowledge. Moreover, in the incidents of spectacles, there had been reference to an occurrence of whose existence my sitter had completely forgotten. Was it surprising that Mr. Dass was greatly impressed with his séance?

CHAPTER ELEVEN

MORE DIRECT VOICE

Sir Henry Segrave helped another speed-boat victim to prove his identity when a Japanese visitor attended one of my voice séances. The communication she received not only set her own mind at rest but dulled the edge of grief of her son’s suffering. She was Mrs. Kingi Yano and her son was named Haro.

Her husband and his brother, Shingi, had collaborated in racing motor boats and had won deserved reputations at this sport. Then came the day when Shingi was killed while practicing for a race. Kingi never got over it. For five months he mourned his brother and then himself died as the result of no more than a chill.

This was the background to Dulce Yano’s visit, and for the first hour of the sitting she sat silent and interested, taking no active part. Then Red Cloud said: “There is a little man here whom I must help. Hold on!”

Regular members of the circle knew that a stranger was going to manifest for the first time. Deliberately the trumpet moved to Mrs. Yano and stopped. Then a voice said in perfect English: “I say, Dulce, this is Shingi.”

“Yes, Shingi,” she replied, “what have you to say?”

“Kingi and I are here together. We do not want Haro to grieve always. He saw me die in the boat . . . but we got the speed. He must take his university examination in December.”

“How can I make them understand in Japan that we must stay here until the end of the year?”

“Tell them Kingi and I say so.” “Very Well,” Mrs. Yano said quietly.

“I say, Dulce,” the voice went on quickly with obvious traces of excitement. “Do you know who brought us here tonight? Sir Henry Segrave. Tell Lady Segrave that her husband does much to help us here. He has helped Kingi and me a lot. Kingi wanted to come tonight but could not manage it. He says he will try next time. He says: ‘Tell Haro to grieve no more. All is well with us and we are always with him.’ ”

Mrs. Yano wrote her own impressions of this séance, from which I quote:

“The voice was Shingi’s own and he had the same mannerisms as when he was with us here. He invariably prefixed his remarks with ‘I say’ and almost the first thing he said at the séance was, ‘I say, Dulce.’ I could hardly believe my ears when he announced his name, Shingi Yano, but then he repeated it louder and more clearly.

“Sir Henry Segrave and Shingi were known to one another. My son Haro, was very grief stricken after the accident, and it interfered greatly with his studies.

“Shingi had set his heart on achieving a certain speed at the trial run. My husband was timing him. One lap had been just finished and he was at the beginning of another when the boat overturned.

“His statement was correct. He achieved his speed.”

One of the difficulties in writing a book from the medium’s viewpoint is that when you have been in a deep trance you are dependant on the memories of those present for an accurate description of what transpired. Because of this the presence of the shorthand writer at the voice séances was invaluable. It made it possible for me to study the word-for-word transcriptions of what was said. The result, however, was curious, for the verbatim accounts, as I read them, produced a feeling of complete detachment from the events described, even though I was so intimately concerned in them. Quite often, however, verbatim records have not been available (the present-day use of the tape recorder has solved this problem) and so no one has been dependant for facts on reliable eyewitnesses.

I have always been fortunate in those who have testified to events that took place while I have been entranced. Often they have been distinguished men and women from many walks of life, frequently well-known writers and journalists whose names are widely known and whose integrity is unquestioned. Such people, knowing that Spiritualism is a controversial subject, bring balanced and inquiring minds to each new manifestation they witness. They accept nothing on trust, and when they write on the subject they do so from close experience and not from hearsay.

It is because I appreciate the value of an eyewitnesses account that I asked Maurice Barbanell’s permission to use the following extract from his recently published, deeply-absorbing book ‘This Is Spiritualism’. It concerns the case of Bessy Manning, of whose existence none of us had heard until she was introduced by Red Cloud in the course of a sitting. It is remarkable, I think, not only in its evidence for survival after death but also as an example of the answer to prayer. It is remarkable, too, in that it was extended to include

not only Bessy and her brother, but her mother too. This is how Maurice Barbanell describes the case of Bessy Manning in his book:

My most moving experience in Estelle Roberts séance room came when I was addressed by an unknown spirit communicator. About halfway through one sitting, Red Cloud said to me, almost casually: "There is a girl here who has approached me to get in touch with her mother on earth. She will give her own evidence."

"Do I know her?" I asked.

"No," the guide replied, "but you can help her."

The trumpet slowly moved towards me and a voice, obviously belonging to a young girl, said: "I will, All right. I will . . ."

From long experience I knew that the way to get the best results was to encourage the communicators to speak, not to ply them with questions which could have a rebuffing effect. "Come along," I urged, "you are going to try to give me a message. Come and talk to me."

The voice replied: "I will if I am allowed to talk. A kind man brought me here."

Then, very slowly, but distinctly, she declared: "My name is Bessy Manning. I died with tuberculosis last Easter. I have brought my brother, Tommy with me; he was killed by a motor car. My mother has prayed because she reads your paper, and has asked that some day the great guide, Red Cloud, would bring me here."

In the psychic journal which I edited at the time, I had described some of these voice séances, and Bessy was indicating that her mother had read what I had printed. "I will send a message to your mother tomorrow," I told the girl.

Bessy expressed gratitude and continued: "Tell mother that I still have my two long plaits. I am twenty-two, and I have got blue eyes. Tell her I want her to come here. Could you bring her?" Very wistfully she added, "She is not rich – she is poor."

"I will see if I can bring her" I replied.

"She is so unhappy," Bessy went on. "She says she lost both of us. You will help her, won't you? God will bless you if you help her. Thank you . . . thank you thank you . . ."

"Before I can send a message to your mother," I told Bessy, "I must know where she lives, for I do not know her."

"Bessy's reply came without hesitation. "I will tell you," she said. Slowly and distinctly she gave the address, "14, Canterbury Street, Blackburn."

"Red Cloud," I said, "there must be thousands who pray for comfort like her mother."

"I have only one instrument," he answered, with a note of sadness in his voice.

"Will you invite her mother to the next séance?" I asked her. "Will I?" he replied. "Would you?"

I had never heard of Bessy Manning. I did not know whether there was a Mrs. Manning, or whether there was a Canterbury Street in Blackburn, but my confidence, built on years of experience with Red Cloud, was such that I knew the spirit information was correct.

On the following morning, without the slightest doubt in my mind, I sent this telegram to Mrs. Manning at 14, Canterbury Street in Blackburn: "Your daughter, Bessy, spoke to us at Red Cloud's circle last night." I received no reply, so I telegraphed again. Two days later, on the Monday, there were two letters from Mrs. Manning.

The first one read: "I don't know whom I have to thank for the great joy you have given me. I thank you with all my heart and soul for the telegram I received last Saturday. I wanted to shout it from the house tops. I laughed and cried all at once. What a wonderful spirit Red Cloud is, and how good and kind you all are! I feel sure you will carry your kindness further and let me know what my Bessy said.

"Oh, the glorious happiness to me and mine! In my next letter I shall defray the cost of the telegram. Please don't be offended. It is only fair. How can I ever thank you enough? That bit of paper is more to me than untold gold. I will pray with all my heart for all of you, and especially for Mrs. Roberts. You will tell me, won't you, if she sent me a little message. It is a wonderful, glorious truth, and again I thank you so much. Also my husband and my other two daughters thank you."

In her other letter Mrs. Manning wrote: "I have received your second telegram. I am sorry to have caused you to have to send a second one, and I am thankful for your wonderful kindness. You must not have received my letter which I posted on Sunday. I was very happy to have been able to send you a return telegram, as things are not very bright at present. I want you to understand how grateful we all are. We would do anything possible to repay your great goodness. You don't know what it means to us.

"My daughter passed on last Easter Monday, and my son was killed nearly nine years ago. Had it not been for getting in touch with the Spiritualist family, I would have been raving mad. I am longing to know what Bessy said. I want to comfort others as I have been. We don't get real good mediums here. It must be great to hear Mrs. Estelle Roberts and the other great ones. I wish I had the glorious gift. Again, I thank you so very much."

I regard Bessy Manning's return as flawless evidence for the after-life. No theories of telepathy or the subconscious mind can explain it away. No suggestion of collusion or any other kind of fraud can be entertained. Mrs. Manning had never met Estelle Roberts, or corresponded with her or any member of her family. Neither had she written to me or anyone who attended these voice séances. Yet her daughter's full name and address had been given, accompanied by a complete message which was accurate in every detail.

Later, when I met Mrs. Manning, she told me that she had prayed night and day for evidence that her daughter lived beyond the grave. Her prayer had been heard and answered. How a prayer uttered in Blackburn can produce a response in Middlesex, I do not know. All that I do know is that it happened. This séance communication proves that

some requests are heard, and that there is an organization in the Beyond able to provide the answer when conditions are appropriate.

I arranged for Mrs. Manning to come to London for the next voice séance. Her husband was unemployed. It was obviously a time of difficulty for her. I met her at St. Pancras Station, on, this, her first visit to London. She was full of excitement as I showed her some of the sights of the city before driving her down to Teddington, where the séances were held.

It was not long before Bessy, speaking through the trumpet, addressed her overjoyed mother. "Ma," she said excitedly, "it's Bessy speaking."

"Yes, Bessy," replied the mother.

Her daughter was so full of excitement that half way through her conversation the trumpet dropped, a sure sign that she could not hold the "power."

"Bessy," her mother said, "this is wonderful. You know how your mother loves you, don't you?"

"It is wonderful," Bessy replied. "God bless you, Ma. Tell Father not to worry. Tommy is here too." She added. "We are here together. Tommy is also anxious to speak to you, Ma. It is so wonderful I don't know how to talk . . . I am so excited."

The Lancashire dialect was obvious in the mother's voice when she answered: "Don't get excited, love. Talk to Mother. Do you come into the home, Bessy?"

"You know I do," she replied. "I'll try to talk to you there. Day after day you talk to my picture. You stand in front of it, you pick it up and kiss it, and I watch you all the time."

Later Mrs. Manning assured me that this was true. Often, in her grief, she would take her daughter's photograph, kiss it and talk to it. Bessy, to show that she knew what was happening in her own home, said to her mother: "You were telling Father about his boots this morning, weren't you, Ma?"

"That is quite right," replied Mrs. Manning.

"You said they wanted mending, didn't you, Ma?"

"I understand what you mean Bessy," was the answer.

"My Ma, I called her Ma," said Bessy. In repeating Bessy's words to enable the stenographer to record them verbatim, I thought that Bessy once said "Mother." She instantly corrected me by saying "Ma," which was her usual greeting for her mother.

More evidence followed as Bessy referred to the beads that her mother was wearing, saying that these were once her property, and that she had worn them before she died. This, I later learned, was accurate.

"It was a big shock for you when Tommy was killed," were Bessy's last words to her mother. Red Cloud followed and said, "She brought the boy, Tommy, with her." Then, as he so often

did, he slipped another item of evidence into his next sentence: "Tommy is named after his father."

When the séance was over, Mrs. Manning was weeping, but they were tears of joy, not sorrow. "I am the happiest woman in the world," she said.

The following morning, before she returned to Blackburn, Estelle Roberts gave Mrs. Manning a private sitting at which, I later learned, Bessy continued to prove her identity with detail after detail, none of which the medium could have known. She sent messages to other members of the family, and one to her fiancé. "Tell Billy," she said, "that I still remember the ring he sent me – the one I wore when I was buried."

A few days later, Mrs. Manning sent me this letter, doubtless so that I could have her own testimony:

"I am writing this for the comfort of others, knowing I shall be ridiculed by some, laughed at by a few, but blessed by many. My only son, whom I adored, was killed by a motor. He was a dear little chap, who loved me very dearly. I was frantic – utterly crushed. I lost all hope. All my ambitions lay buried in his grave.

"Eight years later, my daughter Bessy passed on, one of the most lovable and sweetest girls who ever lived. Just before the end, she said, 'If it is possible at all, I will come back.' I knew she would keep that promise. She has come in the most unexpected manner. I had often heard of the Red Cloud circle.

"It came as a big surprise to me to receive a telegram from Mr. Barbanell telling me that my daughter had come through, asking for her mother and telling them where she lived. I was astonished and overjoyed at the news. Through his kindness it was made possible for me to go to London and attend the circle. It was a great experience. Everywhere I was met with kindness. I heard many spirit voices and all were recognized. It was most amazing.

"I heard my own daughter speak to me, in the same old loving way, and with the self-same peculiarities of speech. She spoke of incidents that I know for a positive fact no other person could know. I, her mother, am the best judge, and I swear before Almighty God it was Bessy. She told me she had brought her brother with her, told of him being killed and gave his name. She spoke of many things that have passed in our home, things that were far from my mind at the time.

"I thank God, with all my heart and soul. He answered my prayers, and I have prayed, long and often. I have no fear of so-called death. I am looking forward to the glorious meeting with my loved ones."

The years went by, and I forgot about Bessy and her mother. The war had intervened, and there was so much to do. Estelle Roberts decided to renew her voice séances in the new home to which she had moved. I was delighted to find that her mediumship was as powerful as ever, and the results equally as impressive.

At one of them, Red Cloud said to me: "I have a visitor for you. Hold on." Through the trumpet, smeared as usual with its luminous paint, I heard the word "Hello" uttered three

times. As this seemed to be a communicator making the first effort, I spoke words of encouragement. The woman's tones that came through the trumpet said: "I know that voice. You helped me very much by enabling me to talk to my daughter."

Quick as a flash, before she gave her name, I guessed it was Mrs. Manning speaking, though I had not heard of her passing. She had returned to complete the story, to say "that the glorious meeting with my loved ones" which she had anticipated was now a reality. "I have got Bessy and Tommy here," she said through the trumpet. "Can you tell my family? Just give them my love and tell them I am helping. My dear ones would like to know."

I sent a copy of this spirit message to the old Blackburn address, but my letter came back with the envelope marked "Gone away." I was disappointed that Mrs. Manning's family could not have the mother's message. Then, to my surprise, I received a letter from another address in Blackburn. It was written by a Mrs. J. Smith, who described herself as a daughter of Mrs. Manning. Someone had seen a printed reference I had made to her mother's return and had sent Mrs. Smith a copy of it.

"I am her youngest daughter," she wrote. "My sister and I are the only remaining ones of the family on this earth. I can't tell you the joy and gladness the message gave me. I felt I wanted to run out and tell the world. Instead of which I sat down and cried. I felt humble and ashamed that I had begun to doubt and despair that I would ever hear of that beloved person again."

Her mother, she added, had suddenly died without the chance to say farewell. She was alone when she had a seizure. By the time the daughters reached her side, it was too late for their mother to speak.

"It was a cruel blow, for, with her passing, the sunshine of life went," wrote Mrs. Smith. Years had dragged on and she was beginning to despair. Now she had received the answer to her prayers. "It is the grandest thing that can ever happen to me," was her summing-up.

There is an amusing sequel to the Bessy Manning story which Barbanell does not mention in his book but which I have many times heard him tell against himself. As examples of superb spirit proofs and of direct answer to prayer, he recounted the case of Bessy Manning in the scores of his lectures up and down the country. It was never omitted because it was the perfect case. At last, reluctantly, he decided that for his own sake, because he had wearied of its constant repetition, he must delete it and refer to newer material.

After the first meeting at which he introduced the changed matter, he was approached by a woman whose face seemed vaguely familiar. But where had he met her? A public lecturer meets thousands of people in the course of over thirty years.

"Do you remember me?" the woman asked.

Barbanell looked at her again but had to confess that he could not place her.

"I'm Mrs. Manning," the woman said, adding disappointedly, "I thought you would have told them about my Bessy."

Poor Barbanell! There he was in Blackburn, in Bessy's home town, and he had not told her dramatic story. With many of the audience having known Bessy in life, it would have created a sensation!

Maurice Barbanell has a keen sense of humour and I know that he would be the first to appreciate this story, told to me by one of the sitters in a voice séance. The greatest drawback to any good direct voice communication is tension. Once Red Cloud had brought a poor soul who was trying desperately hard to speak but the atmosphere grew so tense he had to abandon his effort. John, as Red Cloud calls Barbanell, said "Red Cloud, we will pray for him." Renowned for his repartee and wishing to uplift the sitters Red Cloud laughingly replied, "John, charity begins at home!" In the laughter that followed the atmosphere was relaxed and after a short while the communicator tried again and was able to make contact.

There have been in my experience many cases like that of Bessy Manning which are the direct results of prayer. One occurred at a Royal Albert Hall meeting when Red Cloud gave me a message for a man with a name I thought I recognized. As the message was of a delicate and private nature I made no mention of it to the audience but noted it for later attention. After the meeting I inquired about the name which had sounded familiar and was not surprised to learn that it belonged to a prominent Member of Parliament.

I asked the stewards whether this gentleman or his wife had been present, but nobody could tell me. In a quandary I telephoned Maurice Barbanell. He volunteered to tell the people concerned of the existence of this spirit message from their daughter. In less than ten minutes the wife was on the telephone to me and I delivered the message. Thanking me for it, she confessed: "My husband and I were in the auditorium. I prayed every minute we were there, prayed with every fibre of my being, that we might receive a message from our child. Thank you, oh thank you, for what you have done."

Another communication within this category came at a public voice séance I gave at the Kingsway Hall, London. The details came from Mrs. Gertrude Brooke of Cricklewood, who was present at the meeting and directly concerned with what happened afterwards.

During the séance Red Cloud announced that a young nurse in the spirit world would give her own evidence. A voice was then heard to say: "My name is Olive May Mann. I was a nurse at the Leicester Infirmary. I was killed on my bicycle while riding with other nurses. My mother lives at Tansley, near Matlock. Please tell her I live on still, but that I cannot be happy until she stops grieving. She has been to a Spiritualist church and has prayed that I will give some sign of my survival."

The trumpet then fell to the ground with the fading of power.

After the meeting Mrs. Brooke and some friends, over coffee, discussed this striking spirit message. They all regretted that the girl's mother or some friend or relation had not been present to witness the nurse's spirit return. For several days Mrs. Brooke deliberated, unable to make up her mind whether she might not be meddling with things which did not concern her if she took some positive action. At last she decided that no harm could come from checking part of the spirit evidence with the secretary of the Leicester Infirmary. She

wrote a brief note asking if a nurse of that name had ever been employed in the hospital. She made no mention of the source of her information.

The reply she received was that this nurse had been engaged in the mental wards up to some eighteen months earlier. Regrettably she had met with an accident and had died in the hospital.

Without much difficulty Mrs. Brooke obtained the full address of the girl's mother in Tansley, and wrote giving the full details of the communication. A grateful response came by return of post, expressing an immediate intention of coming to London to call on Mrs. Brooke. The mother was as good as her word and the two had tea. Afterwards they sat at a table in the hope of receiving a message. They were not disappointed, for the table spelled out: "Mother, you have made me very happy. My love to all. Olive."

It was inevitable that my mediumship should bring me into frequent contact with Sir Arthur Conan Doyle. He regularly attended my meetings at the Marylebone Spiritualist Association and more than once spoke from the platform with me at the Queen's Hall. I also knew his wife and family, his sons Adrian and Denis being occasional visitors to my direct-voice circles.

After Sir Arthur's death, Lady Doyle and her family heard his voice at one of these sittings. At a later séance, when they were not present, he came and spoke at some length. On this occasion the circle comprised some of the best known figures in Spiritualism. Bluntly, Sir Arthur's voice broke in on the gathering.

"Doyle speaking," it said, "I asked permission to come for a minute to offer congratulations on the new paper. (This was a reference to a new psychic paper that had just been launched.) Go forward. Stand always for truth and fear no man."

Hannen Swaffer then thanked him for speaking to a home circle of which he was a member and said he hoped he would come again.

"I will come whenever I can," Doyle replied, "but it is not as easy as it would appear. Is Mr. Craze here?"

George Craze, President of the Merylebone Association, who had often presided for Doyle at public meetings, said he was.

"Take care of this medium," Doyle urged him. "She is doing wonderful work. And you, Swaffer, watch our interests in the battle for truth that is now taking place. Great forces are opposing us, yet we must go forever forward."

He continued in this vein for some time. Before taking his leave he sent a message to his wife with "all my love and affection" and one to his son Denis, "tell him to go forward in his work."

On another occasion Sir Arthur returned and asked to speak to Shaw Desmond. Although Desmond did not doubt the genuineness of the communication he thought that nothing would be lost by asking the spirit speaker to prove his identity.

“If you are Conon Doyle,” he said, “tell me where we last met.”

Instantly the voice replied they had last met by accident in a doorway in Victoria Street, to which each had run to escape a sudden downpour of rain. Desmond recalled this incident.

Six days after Sir Arthur Conan Doyle left this life, a Spiritualist memorial service was held in the Royal Albert Hall which was packed from floor to ceiling. Many of those present hoped that Sir Arthur would dramatically come back and thus fulfil a promise he had made. He did return at this huge gathering, but not in the sensational manner hoped for by his audience.

Lady Doyle sat in the center of the platform. By her side there was a chair deliberately left empty as a symbol of his physical absence but an indication of his hoped for spirit presence. All around was a great concourse of spirit people anxious to communicate with their friends. For half an hour, by means of clairvoyance, I relayed their messages to individuals among the mass of people in the hall. But there was no sign of Sir Arthur. I kept looking about me, hoping he would appear. It was not until the audience stood for two minutes' silence as a tribute to him, that I suddenly became aware he was standing beside me. With this realization I became momentarily flustered. He saw it at once and quickly calmed me. “Carry on with your work. Go on, child,” he said reassuringly. Then he went and sat in the “empty” chair by his wife.

I carried on transmitting spirit messages until Sir Arthur got to his feet and came over to my side. Slowly and deliberately he gave me a test message for Lady Doyle. It was an intimate one concerning another member of the family and referred to an event which had occurred only that morning. It convinced Lady Doyle that it must have come from her husband, as only she and the other member of the family were aware that the small incident described had happened.

While giving clairvoyance that evening a strange scene presented itself to my vision; one that had a striking sequel some years later. I was led to a man, wearing an open necked shirt, who was sitting near the platform.

“There is a woman here who was killed by a horse,” I told him. “Her name is Emily Wilding Davison. She says she told her friend in the hall that she would appear tonight.”

The man got slowly to his feet and cleared his throat. “That is correct,” he said. “She told me she would communicate tonight. Emily is the Suffragette who in 1913 threw herself in front of a Derby horse and died from her injuries. As a spirit figure she is well known to me.”

Nine years passed and I was demonstrating clairvoyance at a public meeting. I had brought a message to a man in the audience from a soldier. “Did the woman at your side accompany you here tonight?” I asked him.

“She did.”

“She was at sometime connected with the women’s suffrage movement,” I said.

Turning to this woman, I said: "The soldier who was here a moment ago was accompanied by a Suffragette. She is here now. She says she knew you well before she died on the racecourse. She tells me you have a brother on the Other Side. Her name is Emily and she sends you this message: 'I fought for a cause; fight for yours. There is much yet to be accomplished . . .' Now she was mentioning a name, a Mrs. Despard. "Are you acquainted with Mrs. Despard?" I asked.

"I can get a message to her."

I gave her the message and the women told us that the recipient would be the militant Charlotte Despard, heroine of the Suffragette movement and now ninety-five years of age.

Emily then sent a message of inspiration to the man and the incident closed. It was not until some time later that I learned who the man was. His name was Harold Sharp; he was a medium, and the man I had singled out nine years earlier at the Conan Doyle memorial service.

CHAPTER TWELVE

FURTHER COMMUNICATIONS

It is now more than thirty-five years since the world was startled by the publication in a psychic newspaper of a series of automatic writings entitled "My Life After Death" by Edgar Wallace. Although I had no part in the origin of this script that came through a medium in Wales, I was concerned in establishing its authenticity.

During the last years of his life Edgar Wallace was always in the news as a novelist, journalist and a playwright. He was also a "character," rich in eccentricities the public loves and, either by accident or design, he contrived brilliantly to live up to the reputation he had built up around himself. Indeed, so firmly was Wallace entrenched in the minds of the public, he continued to live in the memory as a popular legend long after he had made his physical exit from earth.

It is therefore not surprising that when Maurice Barbanell received a parcel containing spirit writings attributed to Wallace, he should take every precaution to establish their genuineness before publishing them. Publication, Barbanell knew, would subject them to the severe scrutiny of the sceptics, with each seeking some point by which to discredit them. How then, he pondered, could he be sure of their authenticity?

He submitted them for the examination of Hannen Swaffer, an intimate friend of Wallace in between the intervals when they were "enemies." These intervals were due to their respective roles as dramatic critic and playwright. Swaffer's verdict was that the script gave evidence of having been written by a trained reporter, which the medium was not, but he could not say that Wallace was the post-mortem author. Then Barbanell had a brainwave. He would consult Red Cloud, which he did at the next direct voice séance. The guide's reply was to tell Barbanell to proceed no further until he, Red Cloud, had consulted Wallace himself. At the following voice séance Red Cloud reported that he had asked Wallace, who

confirmed his authorship of the automatic writings, so Barbanell was free to go ahead with publication.

The publication of the spirit script, with its detailed description of life after death as Wallace had found it, produced the anticipated furore. Soon one of the major Spiritualistic controversies of all time was raging, with plenty of hard knocks taken and given by both sides. Robert Curtis, for fifteen years Wallace's private secretary, was one of the leading antagonists, condemning any suggestion that the manuscripts could have emanated from his old chief. While the storm was raging, Wallace returned again to join the battle with a further psychic exhibition, typical of his self-assertiveness, that fanned the flames of controversy to new heights. He caused his spirit portrait to appear on a plate exposed during a test séance of psychic photography.

The anti-Spiritualists scoffed at the bare idea of a spirit picture. Nothing, they asserted, was easier to fake than a photograph. This is undeniably true, but what they conveniently chose to overlook were the test conditions under which the picture was taken. The plates used at the séance were provided by a Fleet Street Photographic agency after having been secretly marked by one of its representatives for identification purposes. They were loaded into the camera by the same representative. Two representatives of the agency were present the whole time the exposures were made. They personally removed the plates from the camera and took complete charge of their subsequent processing. From beginning to end the spirit photographer had no hand in taking, developing or printing the pictures other than to be present in the room and indicate the moment each picture was to be taken.

The likeness of Edgar Wallace which emerged from these stringent conditions was an excellent one and, because it was like no other photograph of him taken during his lifetime, even the scoffers could not maintain it was a copy of an old print. Fleet Street, and Wallace's relatives, were challenged to produce a copy. They were never able to do so.

Meanwhile, at my direct-voice séances, Wallace was a thrusting and determined candidate to speak through the trumpet. But at first Red Cloud held him back. "He is not yet ready to speak," he said. "He does not know how to use the power. We cannot have him harming our medium, however fierce his impatience. He will speak when I say he is ready and not before."

In the event we had to wait only two weeks. At our next sitting Wallace came through. It was a truculent Wallace, who made it abundantly clear that he did not suffer gladly the fools he had left on earth.

"I wrote the script," he said. "I sat for the photograph. What more do they want? It is damnably hard to be disbelieved when all you want is to make them understand. They can laugh, they can scoff, but I'll show them where the truth lies." He continued in this vein for some minutes, ending his censure of the world's follies with a pointed reference to his secretary's denial of the spirit writings.

"Tell Bob Curtis not to be so silly," he said with disgust. "I'll give him something to think about. You see if I don't."

And Wallace certainly did! He caused a replica of his unmistakable voice to appear on a Dictaphone cylinder for Curtis' benefit. Try as Curtis would, and despite the willing assistance of experts of the Dictaphone Company, he could find no other rational explanation of how the voice came there than the straightforward one that Wallace, though dead, had recorded it.

Shortly after the passing over of the talented young actor-manager Dennis Neilson-Terry, his actress wife, Mary Glynne, and his actress sister, Phyllis, started to attend regularly at my direct-voice séances. The first time that Dennis' voice was heard it was faint and feeble as it called his wife's name.

"This is Dennis," it added. "Can you hear me? I've got to get accustomed to this."

"I can hear you," Mary Glynne said, encouragingly.

With obvious effort the voice went on to give short messages to friends and relatives. Then it said: "This is terribly difficult but, don't worry, I shall do better next time."

My two visitors were present at the next sitting, anxious to renew their communication with Dennis and hopeful that he would be able to manage the trumpet more expertly. But when the trumpet eventually poised itself in front of Mary Glynne, it was not the voice of a man that emerged. It was a woman's voice, cheerful, calm and confident.

"This is Aunt Laura," it said.

"Oh, I was not expecting to talk to you," Mary Glynne said, somewhat taken aback.

"Dennis brought me, dear. He's with me now."

"Aunt Laura," Mary Glynne said, suddenly remembering something. "I thought of you earlier this year. Do you know in what circumstances?"

"Of course, dear. When you were in South Africa, you went to Port Elizabeth especially to find my grave. You put flowers on it."

"Yes, I did. Did you say Dennis was there?"

"He's here and ready to talk to you. Give my love to your mother, and tell her I'm very much alive."

"Hallo, darling," came Dennis' voice almost immediately, and there followed a conversation typical of such reunions. When it was over, Red Cloud addressed Mary Glynne.

"You see, little lady," he said, "your man makes progress. This time he managed better, but still he is too tense. But each time he will improve; each time he will get better."

"Red Cloud," she said. "Please tell me. Why did you bring aunt Laura to speak?"

"For the greater proof, little lady. Everyone knew of your famous husband, even Medi here. Nobody knew of Aunt Laura – not even Medi here."

On the next occasion that Dennis Neilson-Terry spoke to his wife he had immensely improved his speaking technique and was able to sustain an almost perfect conversation

with her. In the course of it, he made a comment that was apparently irrelevant to what they were saying, yet it had a profoundly moving effect on his wife. "I have brought some flowers for you," he said.

At the end of the séance Mary Glynne explained the significance of these words. She told us that she also sat with another medium through whom, a few days earlier, she had received a communication from Dennis. Ever seeking greater, more convincing, proof she had asked him for a text message, a few words only that he would repeat at her forthcoming visit to me.

"I will say," he had promised, "I have brought some flowers for you."

Emma Cunliffe-Owen was one of the most vital and kindly women it has been my good fortune to meet. She attended my voice séances over a long period and followed with the greatest attention all that transpired. She had considerable psychic gifts which, had she had the time and inclination to develop, could have made her a powerful medium.

There was one occasion when her father spoke through the trumpet and, in doing so, showed himself to be one of those communicators able to manifest with a perfect reproduction of their remembered earthly tones. With gay and cheerful abandon he reeled off the names of those of her family who clustered around him. There were her husband, Edward, and Grandfather Charles. There were Agnes and Jenny and Dorothy; Alexandra, and Henry and Frank and little Clare. To him it was just a grand family party. He talked a little about each one, and then he suddenly exclaimed: "And here's someone else you know well. Tommy Lipton. Come and speak to Emma, Tommy."

A new voice sounded from the trumpet as Sir Thomas Lipton, founder of the chain of grocery stores bearing his name and many times contender for the America's Cup in his yachts Shamrock I to V, took over.

"I'm glad of this opportunity to thank you for remembering me," he said.

"It was little enough."

"It was a great deal." Then, addressing the circle at large, he added: "She decorated the carriage in which they brought my body home. Purple cloth, green laurels, and yellow chrysanthemums."

"You did so much for others," Emma Cunliffe-Owen said. "It was time someone did something for you."

"I did something for you, Sir Thomas," Hannen Swaffer interjected with a chuckle. "They got me out of bed to write your obituary notice."

"Did they?" came the delighted reply. "Well, you can make it your business to tell them I am not dead after all."

"Dorothy's still here, waiting." It was Emma Cunliffe-Owen's father interrupting these pleasantries on the girl's behalf.

"Mother, this is Dorothy," came a girl's voice. "Yes, darling."

“Mother, you have wonderful psychic gifts. Why don’t you use them?”

“They are not sufficiently developed, darling. There is so much one needs to know.”

There followed a long exchange of the kind you expect between mother and daughter, a conversation of no consequence to anyone but the two principals concerned.

When it was over Mrs. Cunliffe-Owen acknowledged it had been one of her most rewarding evenings.

Shortly after the events I have just described, Lord Northcliffe, the founder of the *Daily Mail*, and the man who transformed Britain’s newspapers, came as a spirit visitor. He refused to give his name and, though his voice was clear and firm, nobody could at first fix his identity. It was Louise Owen, his former secretary, who guessed. As soon as she mentioned his name, Hannen Swaffer and Shaw Desmond, who were present, both knew that she was right.

“Lord Northcliffe,” Louise Owen said.

“Alfred Harmsworth,” he corrected her. “No use for titles here.” “I thought it might be you,” Desmond said.

“Being fey, you doubtless would,” Northcliffe returned quickly. “What a dreadful mess you people have got the world into!” he went on despairingly. “Nothing but war and starvation and futility. Why can’t you all get together and achieve something?”

“You haven’t changed. I’ve had to listen to many a lecture from you,” Swaffer said.

“The whole world must band together to stop war,” Northcliffe continued, ignoring the interruption. “This gathering into rival groups is plain suicide.” He went on at great length, periodically teased and baited by Swaffer and Desmond, but never bothering to rise to their challenges.

A close relative of Canon “Dick” Sheppard, one of the most famous and best-loved of all clerics, visited me for a private séance for clairvoyance. He returned to give her this message: “I did not realize I was about to die. I sat down at my table feeling no more than tired and when I woke up I was in this other world. I grieved only for the shock of my passing on those around me.”

Later he came again to my séance room and spoke this time in the direct voice. Dick was upset and his voice came with great difficulty. He was worried because of a claim that he had spoken through a medium at a public meeting. This, he said, was not so. He then asked that a message be given to his daughter, urging her to go ahead with the plans for his memoirs, and giving the name of somebody who was opposed to their publication. He sent affectionate greetings to George Lansbury, adding that he and Lansbury’s son were firm friends. He rounded off what he had to say with the words, “God’s blessing be on you all.”

Dick spoke for no more than three minutes, yet during the brief time his command of the trumpet increased beyond belief. He began more haltingly, and with greater effort than any other spirit communicator the circle could recall, yet he finished almost eloquently.

Questioned on it, Red Cloud Replied: "He was anxious and distressed when he started, but these things passed with the delivery of his message."

Among the twenty people in my Teddington séance room one evening was the well-known geographer, E. A. Reeves. For over fifty years Mr. Reeves was on the staff of the Royal Geographical Society. During the greater part of that time he was Map Curator and Instructor in Surveying to the Society. In this capacity he had known the leaders of all the major expeditions of discovery to leave the shores of Britain during the first half of the century. Men like Scott, Shackleton, Fawcett, and Watkins had been his friends as, indeed, had been many other explorers and scientists.

Reeves, a frequent visitor to my séances, spent a great deal of time in the study and investigation of psychic phenomena, invariably making a thoughtful and intelligent contribution to each problem that arose. On the particular evening I have in mind, his brother, who had been drowned, nearly fifty years earlier, had just spoken to him, when another was sounded from the trumpet.

"This is Watkins, Mr. Reeves, Do you remember me?"

"Gino, my dear boy," Reeves replied, taken aback by his unexpected visitor, "of course I do."

"You know the story, I expect. I was drowned in the Arctic. I was out seal-hunting, went under the ice and that was that. Please tell Sir William I have spoken to you." (Sir William was the current President of the Royal Geographical Society.)

Reeves knew the story only too well. Gino Watkins had led an expedition to Greenland, where his death occurred as the result of an accident. How it happened had not been definitely established. All that was known was that he had gone out alone in his kayak canoe and that the tiny craft had capsized.

To this brief spirit return there was an unexpected sequel. Some days later, Reeves, walking in Hyde Park saw a horse and rider approaching him. When they reached him Reeves noticed that the rider was a man he had known slightly in days gone by, one who had no small reputation as an Arctic explorer. The rider halted his horse and said surprisingly: "Ah, Reeves, I was keeping an eye open for you. I understood you have been in communication with Gino Watkins."

"Yes, that is so. But how did you know?"

"He told me so last night - in a sort of dream, I suppose you'd call it. Did Watkins tell you what happened?"

"He said he went under the ice."

"Ah, quite likely. The same thing once nearly happened to me."

"I'm interested in that dream of yours," Reeves said. "Do you often have dreams like that?"

"Now and then. I'll tell you something else. I knew before I left home this morning I should find you walking in Hyde Park."

“Well, I’m glad I didn’t disappoint you,” Reeves said with a smile. “It’s not often that I come this way.”

The Watkins story does not end there. Nearly two years later John Myers, whose mediumship was responsible for the Edgar Wallace spirit extra, had held a séance at the British College of Psychic Science. The face of the “extra” on one plate bore a remarkable resemblance to Gino Watkins. Indeed, so strong was the likeness that Reeves and others to whom he showed the picture had no doubt that it was Watkins. A few months passed and Reeves arrived at my voice circle bringing his son, who had recently returned from abroad. During the sitting the son enjoyed a lively conversation with his departed but now present elder brother which ended with the significant words, “Tell Father that Watkins has got his photograph through.”

One of the most intriguing of the world’s unsolved mysteries - unsolved, that is to say, by material evidence - was the disappearance of the famous explorer, Colonel P. H. Fawcett, in a South American jungle. Expeditions have tried to solve the riddle, books have been written on it and explorers have debated it, but nobody as yet has been able to advance a solution that meets all the facts in terms of material evidence. But what of spirit proof? Here we stand on much firmer ground - so firm, indeed, that we can speak with certainty where others can indulge only in speculation.

Fawcett was a remarkable man. A fine soldier, an experienced surveyor and intrepid explorer, he was also a mystic of a high order. His last expedition began in 1925 when, with his younger son and one other companion, he penetrated the Brazilian hinterland. It was a journey from which he never returned - in the physical sense. Several explorers claimed to have met him, or found traces of him, but none of their claims stood up to searching investigation. With the passage of years there could be only one logical conclusion - that Fawcett and his party had perished in the forests. But of the date and manner of their passing no real evidence has been found.

E. A. Reeves numbered among the many friends Fawcett left behind him. The two men had many interests in common, which included a life-long study of psychic matters. When Fawcett was reported missing, Reeves had a growing conviction that the explorer would find some means of getting in touch with him, even though the normal channels of communication were closed. No such message reached him, however. Eventually he concluded, as had the world at large, that he had heard the last of his old friend.

Then he recalled a pocket aneroid barometer that Fawcett had used on a previous Brazilian expedition, and which the missing man had left in his keeping. It would be an interesting experiment, he thought, to include the barometer, without disclosing the reason, among the objects submitted at my next demonstration of psychometry. Some clue, he argued, might be provided in my delineation. Accordingly the barometer found its way into the heterogeneous collection of articles that invariably clutter my tray on such occasions.

Presently I picked it up. I had, of course, no idea of it or whence it came. I must confess that I even failed to recognize what it was. At such moments the medium is less concerned

with the nature of an object than with its vibrations. From its general shape and appearance within its little leather case I assumed it to be a travelling clock. This error, however, in no way detracted from the clear-cut picture it revealed to me. I spoke at once of distant travel, of steaming forests and of primitive peoples running around naked. I could see a man wearing a broad-brimmed hat and around his waist was a belt to which a similar "clock" was buckled. I said that because of the strong psychic force exerted I believed the man to be dead.

At the end of my reading I inquired who was the owner of the "clock."

"I am," said Reeves.

"The man who owned it before you is sending you a message," I said. "He asks if you remember his injured leg and wants you to know that it is now quite well."

"I can't recall he ever injured his leg," Reeves said thoughtfully. "You say the man is dead?"

"I think he must be. The psychic forces are so strong. Who is he? Do I know him?"

"Colonel Fawcett."

In saying that I believed Colonel Fawcett was dead, however, I was wrong. Some weeks later Red Cloud was delivering a trance address, and at the end he spoke to Reeves about Fawcett. He told him that Fawcett was alive. He said that Fawcett's psychic powers were now so highly developed that he could indulge in astral projection and travel without permanently taking leave of the body. This, in fact, had occurred on the occasion of the earlier psychometry reading and accounted for my believing him dead. Red Cloud's words made a great impression on Reeves, who had long acknowledged Fawcett to be one of the most highly-developed mystics of his time, and particularly so because the message I had transmitted concerning the injured leg had recently taken on some significance. It had had no meaning for him at the time, but he had since recalled Fawcett describing him, shortly before he left for South America, how his horse had been brought down beneath him and, in rolling over, had injured the muscles of his leg.

Twelve months after Red Cloud had made this disclosure, Reeves brought a woman to see me. Following the invariable practice when a newcomer was introduced, he made no mention of her name for her reason for coming to see me. The three of us held a séance and I was not kept waiting for an intimation of my visitor's identity. Red Cloud at once addressed her as "the little Fawcett lady." He told her that the two young men who had accompanied Colonel Fawcett to South America had passed over from fever, but that her husband was still alive. He described Fawcett as "an advanced psychic who had learned great occult wisdom. Men would give kingdoms for the knowledge that is now his."

He mentioned a necklet the Colonel had given his wife, and assured her that nothing was to be gained (it was now eight years after the start of the expedition) from further searching for Fawcett. He confirmed that the white man whom Stephan Rattin, a Swiss explorer, had met in a native village two years earlier had really been Fawcett. This was particularly

interesting because Rattin's claim had been carefully investigated by the authorities and rejected.

At intervals during the next three years Reeves had private sittings with me in which Fawcett's name was often mentioned. Then, on July 14th, 1936, Red Cloud said: "I have something to say now that will interest you greatly. Your friend Fawcett has come over to our side." He made no mention of the precise date, probably because time as we know it has no meaning in the spirit world.

The Fawcett story might well have ended there as far as I was concerned but for the action of Maurice Barbanell. Reeves had kept Barbanell closely in touch with each new development and Barbanell, as an editor, was profoundly interested. He came for a special sitting in the hope that Red Cloud would fill in the gaps in the strange Fawcett story. And, as usual, Red Cloud did not fail him. He described Fawcett's life in the fever-ridden jungles of south America; how he had been held prisoner in a tribal village, watched over benevolently yet jealously by his captors; how he had learned their magic while he practiced and extended his own great mystic gift, and how from time to time he was sick with the fever which, in the end, drained the last of his earthly strength.

"How long ago is it since he passed over?" Barbanell asked.

"Your time is difficult for me," came Red Cloud's reply, "but this I can tell you. It was at the time of the showing of his portrait."

This was a reference which enabled us to place the time of Fawcett's death almost to within a few days. In the summer of the previous year John Myers had been experimenting as usual with his spirit photography and among the "extras" had been one of Fawcett. This meant that Fawcett had passed over sometime during the early summer of 1935, a date which, as Barbanell already knew, though I did not, had been independently established for Reeves by two other mediums.

Perhaps one day all the circumstances of Fawcett's disappearance and his eventual fate will be established from the material evidence to which this world attaches so much importance. Should that day ever come, I am certain the facts will be as related by Red Cloud.

An unusual incident occurred one evening at a direct voice séance. Among those present was Mrs. Hutchinson, whose husband and son had both been doctors before passing to the spirit world. Mrs. Hutchinson was no stranger to psychic phenomena. On several previous occasions she had had a number of conversations with her loved ones, especially with her son who had met an untimely end on a motorcycle. On this particular evening she arrived carrying a small parcel wrapped in brown paper and tied with string. She brought it into the séance room, placing it on her lap when she joined hands with her neighbours.

During the sitting she again conversed with her son, though neither made any mention of the parcel.

The séance ended and, I was coming out of trance, I became aware that there was something on my head. "What is this?" I demanded, and put up a hand to find out. As I did so the lights were switched on and I was revealed draped in a beautiful Spanish Shawl.

Mrs. Hutchinson quickly looked down at her lap. There was the brown paper folded exactly as before and held in place by the knotted string. She picked the parcel up and it was as hollow as an empty eggshell.

"I don't understand," she said. "I brought the shawl as a present for you. I was going to give it to you afterwards. It was a present to me from my son. You have brought us both so much happiness, I was sure he would want me to give it to you."

"It seems he has forestalled your kindness and given it to me himself," I said.

"This, of course, could be the only explanation. Somebody must have placed the shawl on my head. None of the sitters present could possibly have done so. Apart from the fact that no responsible member would break a circle in the midst of a séance, it would have been impossible for anyone to have done so and to be undetected. All hands had been linked and had remained so throughout, as was testified by every member present.

My husband Charles, who was a wonderful healer, with a fine record of cures achieved by his work in the House of Red Cloud, was intrigued by an incident which occurred one evening at a direct voice séance. Earlier that day he had given healing to a woman he had been treating twice a week for a long time. Recently the sufferer had shown great improvement. She was so delighted that she had suggested to Charles that it might be sufficient if she now came only once a week, thereby enabling him to treat a new patient. Charles replied that he would have to ask Red Cloud.

That evening, recalling this incident, he told Red Cloud he wished to ask a question.

"And I will tell you the answer before you ask the question," Red Cloud said with a chuckle. "The little lady need come only once a week. There's a little bit more evidence for you, Zebedee."

Zebedee was the name by which Red Cloud always addressed Charles - he had his own names for all his intimate friends. As he said it now, he tapped Charles lightly on the knee with the trumpet. The evidence he referred to was that nobody but Charles and his patient had the least idea than any discussion of her treatment had ever taken place.

"And Zebedee," Red cloud went on, "tell the medium that the little McKenna man will be coming this evening. He will bring a photograph of his grandfather for her."

This information came as a complete surprise for everybody. Terrence McKenna was the grandson of Sir Morrell Mackenzie, now one of Red Cloud's spirit doctors, but once an illustrious member of the medical profession. Terence had given us no warning of his intended visit so that everyone was agog to see whether he carried out Red Cloud's promise.

We need not have wondered. He arrived just as Charles was seeing a member of the circle to the door. Under his arm was a flat parcel, and the circle member, enjoying the moment, said: "I know what you've got there."

Terence, somewhat taken aback, replied: "Do you indeed; and what have I got there?"

"It is a photograph of your grandfather. You brought it as a present for Estelle."

For a few seconds Terence looked dumbfounded, and he said: "I don't have to ask how you know. Red Cloud of course."

"Yes, Red Cloud."

"But what I don't understand is how he knew. I was setting off to come here and I only thought of it at the last minute. It just occurred to me Estelle might like it."

He was quite right. I was delighted to have it.

As I have already pointed out, Shaw Desmond was a born investigator. Never would he accept any claim at face value if it offered an opportunity for further research. He was therefore the ideal person to check some unexpected details given regarding strangers.

Red Cloud told the twenty members of one direct voice sitting in my house that he was concerned for a man and woman living in a small Yorkshire village at an address which he gave in full. He said that on specified days the couple spent regular hours each week on private conversation in memory of their much loved son. The boy was, known to them by a pet name, and he too had his own nickname for his father. Red Cloud gave each of their names. Nobody in the circle had ever heard of these village folk. Red Cloud added that the mother was suffering from a painful internal ailment which could and should be cured.

"At this moment," the guide said, "the woman is writing a letter to the little man Desmond. It will reach him in two days time. It will tell him the things I have told you and will ask for guidance which he will gladly give."

Two days later the letter arrived. The name, address and pet names were exactly as described. The woman even made mention of the internal trouble from which she was suffering. It was astonishing, unsolicited evidence which Desmond investigated down to the last detail and in doing so he was able to give the help for which the couple had asked. I have always thought this to be a remarkable instance of the so-called dead watching over the living, instructing them how best to meet the troubles that beset them, and where to turn for help when the burden becomes too great.

Only three or four times have I encountered the psychic phenomenon known as "independent voice." This is a spirit voice which is heard not through the trumpet or through the mouth of the medium. It emanates seemingly from mid-air, sometimes at a considerable distance from where the medium is sitting. Curiously enough this rare phenomenon occurred on two separate occasions with the same sitter.

He was a man named Sumpter who had come for a private sitting for clairvoyance. We sat together in broad daylight. I was transmitting spirit messages to him when I was

interrupted by a strong voice coming from near the ceiling in the far corner of the room. Astonished, we both sat silent, listening. The voice stopped as abruptly as it had come, and Mr. Sumpter said to me, "That was my brother."

For the next fifteen minutes we discussed what we had heard. I had never known of an instance of independent voice taking place in daylight and readily agreed that he should bring his wife on his next visit, in the hope that it could recur and convince him he was not the victim of hallucination. I reminded him that it was unlikely we should get a "repeat performance," but he was most anxious to try.

He arrived with his wife some days later and the pattern of the previous sitting repeated itself like magic. The voice came from the same corner of the room, just as though a physical being was speaking, and was clearly heard by all three of us. Though we tried again on other occasions, it was never repeated and these two instances still remain my only experiences of independent voice in daylight.

In a darkened room it is not so rare. I recall an occasion, for instance, where a voice emanated from the region of my hips, and not infrequently at direct-voice séances Red Cloud seems not to bother with the trumpet. His voice may sometimes be heard well away from the trumpet, particularly when some inexperienced spirit communicator is struggling to make himself heard.

CHAPTER THIRTEEN

WAR

In October 1938, Red Cloud made one of his rare predictions and it was wrong. He said there would be no war. I have been many times asked how Red Cloud could have been thus in error, and have never had difficulty in giving what seems to me a satisfactory reply. Indeed, the answer is to be found in Red Cloud's own teaching. Always he has taught that there is no such thing as destiny, that nothing in this life is pre-ordained. It therefore follows that any prophecy that is dependent on the actions of men for its fulfilment must be an expression of probability rather than certainty. It could not be otherwise in a world in which events are shaped and re-shaped by man with each day that passes.

Man has complete freedom of will and action. It is how he uses these freedoms that determines the course of his life, of the community in which he lives and, ultimately, the course of nations. Neither man nor spirit can say with certainty that on a given date certain things will come to pass, because the future is dependant on man, and the exercising of his free will is always an unknown factor. Ninety-nine times out of a hundred he will always react to a given set of circumstances in the same way. The hundredth time, for some reason, or even no reason, he will depart from it.

It is because he teaches these principles that Red Cloud will rarely commit himself to predicting future events. Explaining this to us he once said he could gaze upon the future, with all its diversity of possibilities laid out like a landscape at his feet. He likened the prospect to being seated on a hilltop whence he could look down into the valley below. Winding along the floor of the valley is a road leading to a village. At intervals along the

road, hidden from the wayfarer but visible to Red Cloud from all his all-seeing perch, are many turnings. Looking down, Red Cloud can see that if the wayfarer keeps steadfastly along the road, he must eventually reach the village. But if, pausing at one of the side turnings, he is enticed by the distractions it offers to leave the main road, he will arrive at an entirely different destination.

The decision whether or not the wayfarer turns aside rests with the man alone. There is no unseen force acting on him, compelling him to conform to a pre-destined pattern. Sloth, greed, lust for power, any one of a score of temptations, may determine the direction he takes. The decision is his and nobody, not even the man himself, can say in advance which way he will go for certain. The prophet, therefore, can base his forecast only on probabilities, on a knowledge of the facts and a careful weighing of them.

It was this that Red Cloud did in October, 1938. He could see the direction in which mankind was heading. He could see the temptations and the dangers. Yet he believed man would keep to the path that would steer clear of war. The choice of direction was man's and he chose ill. Eleven months later Europe was plunged into a chaos of man's making; one which was soon to encompass the whole world.

After war had been declared Red Cloud said: "There would have been no war if each of you had accepted the responsibility that lay on your individual shoulders. War came because man could not raise his thoughts from the abyss of fear to an acknowledgment of the Godhead that is within him. I said there would be no war because there should have been no war, and to have prophesied otherwise would have been to cast down man's mind to the lowest ebb from which there could have been no return. Mind molds matter - matter does not mould the mind. Man alone must work out his salvation. I can but show the way and bid you keep ever watchful at the door of your mind."

As the war got into its stride my psychic career continued undiminished. In 1941, I married Charles Tilson Chowne. Shortly afterwards, our home was bombed and we moved to Oxford where I held a number of public meetings and gave many private sittings. We returned to London after twelve months. My work became intensified as the casualty lists grew bigger and more and more war victims wanted to communicate with those they had left behind.

Among these were four young men who had died in action. They were David White and Arthur Heath of Royal Navy, and Bill Castello and Clive Wilson of the Royal Air Force. These four youngsters, having proved their own survival, were determined to help others to achieve similar success. Because of their dedication to this task, we started a private circle for the direct-voice communication. It comprised the parents of the four boys and friends and relatives of other spirit communicators who had been able to prove their identities. The sittings were free of payment to all who attended.

One of the most distinguished visitors to this circle was Air Chief Marshal Lord Dowding, head of Fighter Command in the Battle of Britain. He first attended in October 1943 at the express invitation of its four spirit originators. The séance began by the trumpet tapping

out the “V” sign in Morse code on the floor. Then a girl’s voice was heard gaily claiming, “Ladies first,” suggesting there was keen competition for possession of the trumpet. She achieved only a few sentences before Clive Wilson’s voice was heard talking animatedly to his parents. After a brief exchange, Clive asked: “Please introduce me to the Chief.”

The introduction was affected and Clive said: “I was on reconnaissance when I bought it. I went down in the drink and my body was washed ashore later. But, as you see, I’m still very much alive.”

“I understand you had a strange nickname in the R.A.F.,” Dowding said to him. “Tell me what you were called?”

“Big Feet,” came the unhesitating reply. “You can check on that. Look, sir, the boys and I want to thank you for passing on spirit messages to where they will do the most good.”

“It’s wonderful to be able to help.” Dowding replied.

At this juncture good-humored protests of impatience came from the trumpet as others clamored for possession. It was David White who triumphed. He had ended his earthly life at the age of twenty-two when the submarine Olympus was lost off Malta. He spoke first to his mother, giving her messages of love for members of his family. “Dad is with me,” he assured her. The father had passed on a few months after the son.

“Oh, it’s nice to talk!” David exclaimed with boyish enthusiasm. “Can you all hear me?” he demanded.

“Yes,” chorused the sitters.

“That’s grand! I hear we’ve got Lord Dowding with us tonight, and somebody else who has done no less for us, Hannen Swaffer. I’ve met a pal of yours here, Mr. Swaffer. He’s a journalist who has not been over very long.”

“A. B. Austin,” Red Cloud interposed. “He was killed in Italy.”

“He was a friend of mine, too,” Dowding said. “He was a war correspondent on my staff and a very fine officer.”

“He is a very fine officer,” Red Cloud corrected him gently. “Hold on! Here is someone else.”

A voice said: “My name is Jenkins. Are you there, Dad?” “Yes, I’m here.”

“Well, stop fretting about me, and don’t keep bothering the Air Ministry for details. They’ve told you all they know. It was nobody’s fault that our old crate fell to pieces in mid-air. When you have to use every plane that will fly, there are bound to be times when somebody has to go around gathering up the pieces.”

“I’ve got one of the pieces at home.”

“Yes, I know. A bit off the tail. Look, Dad, try to make mother understand that I’m not dead. Tell her there are thousands of us here and we’re all mother’s sons. I’m fine as long as she does not grieve for me.”

The next voice announced: "This is Arthur Heath. I went down in a destroyer off Crete. But I'm fine now. I've been to Palestine and seen my brother."

"Does he believe in survival?" his mother asked.

"No. But he'll learn. He thinks I died, but it would be hard to find a less 'dead' man."

"You haven't changed," his mother said. "You're just as you were; you look so well in your uniform," "I still do look well in my uniform," came the indignant reply.

At this point Red Cloud intervened to enlist the help of the sitters, from which those present guessed that the next speaker would be making his first attempt at direct voice. There was a pause and then came the words: "Dick Stevens here. I want to speak to my wife."

It was Flight-Lieutenant Stevens, D.S.O., D.F.C. and bar, better known as "Cat's Eyes" and the subject of a notable painting in the National Gallery. The picture, entitled "Portrait of a Night Fighter," is by Eric Kennington. For some time prior to this meeting, Mrs. Stevens had been coming to me privately for sittings in clairvoyance. Her husband had earlier identified himself by recalling trivial incidents in their domestic lives and once surprised her with the promise that she would soon be paying a visit to Buckingham Palace - "Going to collect a medal for me," he had told her. And he was proved right. Some days later she received an invitation to the Palace to be decorated with the D.S.O. her husband had won just before his plane crashed. She had known nothing of the award until he had told her through my mediumship. It made me very happy when she admitted one day to a friend: "I think I should have gone mad had it not been for Spiritualism; I was in utter despair before I went to Mrs. Roberts. Now things are so very different."

Now her husband Dick was speaking to her by direct voice for the first time. He spoke eagerly of their daughter, Frances, who at the age of two had been an indirect victim of an air raid. His wife mentioned their son, John, the twin of Frances. Stevens laughed: "He keeps pencilling on the walls, doesn't he? he said. "You shouldn't let him do it."

"It's just a passing phase," she said. "He'll grow out of it."

"I dare say he will. You know, this is wonderful, talking like this. I'd like a word with the Air Chief Marshal. Do you remember me, sir?"

"Of course, I do?" Dowding replied, and they discussed service matters for a few moments before a new voice took possession of the trumpet.

"Lindsay here," it said and the trumpet moved to an R.A.F. officer in uniform sitting in a circle. "It's a long time since we read all those books together. Remember how we used to sit up until the early hours arguing about the philosophy of that gloomy pair Nietzsche and Schopenhauer? What a lot of nonsense we talked!

This is the true philosophy - the truth of survival. Death is not the end; it makes a man of you."

The trumpet moved to Lord Dowding and the voice said: "You know, sir, I was one of the fools who thought that death was the end. I was a Communist, a follower of Karl Marx, if you please! It wasn't until I ditched in the drink that I realized how blind I had been."

The voice stopped as abruptly as it had begun and in the silence that followed, Red Cloud's voice was heard quoting the words: "Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends."

The fourth member of the quartet was Flight-Lieutenant Bill Castello, D.F.C. On earth he had been a keen racing motorist and his war service covered raids on Germany, occupied France, Libya, Albania, Iraq and Greece. In all he had made over fifty operational sorties and the citation for his D.F.C. spoke of "outstanding skill, courage and devotion to duty." When he was posted missing after a raid on Hamburg, his parents visited his air station, where they were handed an envelope marked, "Please post this if I fail to return." It was a moving little letter of farewell, rounded off with a phrase that was characteristic of the writer - "Keep the Castello flag flying."

Shortly after he had been shot down, Mrs. Castello, who was evidently a natural psychic, saw him walk into her room at home and sit in a chair opposite her. It was her first experience of psychic phenomena and not unnaturally she was greatly impressed. Her husband, she knew, had no time for the "indulgence of such fancies," and so she sought out a friend who, though Mrs. Castello did not know it at the time, had long been interested in Spiritualism. The friend listened to her story and then came to see me.

Bill Castello must have been very determined to make contact with his parents because as the friends entered my room, he came in with her. I described him closely to her and said: "He says his mother came to see you because she saw him sitting opposite her in their home."

Before she left that day, the friend had made an appointment for me to receive Mrs. Castello on the following week. In the event, however, it was not Mrs. Castello who presented herself at my home but her husband, Colonel Castello. From his watchful and guarded behaviour I guessed that he was not a willing substitute. He told me he had agreed to come at his wife's insistence only because she had been unexpectedly taken to hospital for an emergency operation. He placed in my hand the pen with which his son had written his last letter and silently dared me to do my worst.

Unconcerned, I took the pen and I was immediately conscious of its strong emanations. I told Colonel Castello: "You have your son's diary in your possession. Pressed between its pages is a flower. If you examine the diary entries on the pages on either side of the flower, you will find they refer to when your son was stationed in Greece. He says the flower was given to him by an old woman one day when he was admiring some gardens near the Acropolis."

"Your son was a keen amateur mechanic. When war was declared he was engaged in building a sports car, to his own design, from parts he had bought from a great variety of sources. He says that without any blueprint to work to, these parts are of little value. You

must find the Red-Covered notebook in which his plans for assembling the car are set out in detail.”

Despite himself, Colonel Castello was interested. He readily admitted that he had his son's diary and that there was a pressed flower between its pages. But he could not say off-hand whether the pages which enclosed it referred to the boy's stay in Greece. (This proved to be the case when the Colonel checked it on his return home.) Of the building of the car he was, of course, well aware, but he had no knowledge of the existence of the red notebook and subsequent searching for it during the next few weeks failed to produce it. Yet in the end it was this same notebook which finally convinced Colonel Castello that survival of the spirit was more than just a feminine fancy. Several months after his first visit to me the book was found in a little-used drawer. It contained the full plans and details for assembly, exactly as the son had described.

From that day, both the Colonel and his wife became regular members of my direct-voice circle, where they enjoy many conversations with their son. Bill, it seemed, delighted in giving proof of his continued existence, for he made it a practice to furnish new items of evidence. For instance, he confronted his father one day with the information that earlier that day the Colonel had gone to a drawer at home in which were two steel precision instruments. He had taken one of these and placed it in his pocket, where it now remained. At the end of the séance Colonel Castello put his hand in his pocket and drew out the instrument for all to see.

Nearly always Bill Castello ended his messages to his parents with the cheerful exhortation with which he had concluded his last letter: “Keep the Castello flag flying.”

Thus it was that Colonel Castello changed from rigid scepticism of all things psychic to a complete acceptance of Spiritualism. He described his conviction in the words: “Bill has given such remarkable evidence that my whole outlook has been changed. After living in many parts of the world and mixing with people of all religions, and including so-called heathens, it fell to Bill to point out the true way. When he was on earth I was his guide and mentor; now he is mine.”

Father and son are together once more, the Colonel having passed a few years ago. Mrs. Castello continued to sit with me, receiving abundant evidence from them both. For a short while Bill was his father's guide and mentor, but with the knowledge he had gained the Colonel soon readjusted himself to his new life.

At all this direct-voice séances, it was Red Cloud's invariable rule that no spirit communicator who on earth had been a celebrity should be allowed to speak unless it was to a personal friend in the circle. It was therefore with some surprise that the sitters heard Red Cloud announce one night: “Hold on! Here is a visitor who has not been before and is not personally known to any of you tonight.”

This was followed by a boyish voice issuing with difficulty through the trumpet. “Hullo, there! Can you hear me? It's ‘Cobber’ Kain.”

Everybody present knew who “Cobber” Kain was. From the earliest days of the war this young New Zealander had been flying with the R.A.F., and by shooting down many German machines he had become one of the great aces. Tragically, on the eve of taking a spell of well-earned rest, he fell victim of a flying accident.

“We can hear you, Cobber,” the circle replied in chorus.

“Segrave brought me. He told me I would get through here. I want to send a message to my mother and fiancée. Tell them I have been back, that I send them my love and that I am quite all right.”

The trumpet returned to the floor.

Iris was curious to know why Red Cloud had allowed this famous airman to speak to the circle when no friend of his was present.

“Because he was a very gallant gentleman,” Red Cloud replied. “And because he was so anxious to send his message of love.”

The message was promptly delivered and gratefully acknowledged.

One of the great cruelties of war are the agonizing hours, which often stretch to days, weeks and months, that had to be endured by those at home when a loved one is reported missing. I saw much of this facet of human anxiety because so many parents and wives, unable to stand the suspense of waiting for official news, came to me for help they hoped I could give them.

Once a sweet young woman came to see me accompanied by a newspaper reporter. I was not told her name, or anything of her background. There was nothing in her dress, no mark or mourning or regimental badge that might give a clue to the reason for her visit. She had obviously been carefully schooled in advance not to give anything away during the exchange of preliminary pleasantries, because most of the time she did not speak at all, but only nodded her head.

As the three of us sat down together she handed me a small packet, which she afterwards told me contained one of her husband’s civilian ties. Its emanations were strong, flooding my mind with a stream of changing impressions that were neither visual nor audible, physical nor psychological, yet I was certain they were right.

“I get the initials B.N.” I said. “Now I get the name Nicholls. He’s your husband. You are Mrs. Nicholls. Now I am getting another name. It is Nicky. He is calling you Nicky.”

“Then it must be true,” said my visitor, speaking as if to herself. “He really is dead.”

“It was on a ship, at Dunkirk,” I told her. “The ship was sunk by a bomb and he was one of the many who could not get to the boats. There is something else - an old infirmity of your husband’s.

He walked with one foot turned in slightly as a result of a football injury. Last night you spoke to him; you said out loud. “Buddy if you are really dead, come through tomorrow and prove it.”

“Yes,” she said in tears. “Last night as I was going to bed I used those words as a sort of a prayer.”

“Is the other evidence correct?” I asked her.

“As far as I know, absolutely. I called him Buddy and I was always Nicky to him.”

“There is a message,” I added. “He says, ‘Don’t be unhappy.’ He will come back in spirit form again.”

“I’ll try not to grieve. It’ll be easier now that I know. It was not knowing that was so dreadful.”

Another instance of a man reported “missing, believed killed” was the young airman son of staunch Spiritualists. As soon as they received the official notification, the parents came and asked me to try to get some information from the spirit world. Without difficulty I established contact with their daughter and other members of the family who had passed on, but all declared they had not seen the missing boy. They knew his aeroplane had crashed in the sea, but from the moment of its hitting the water they had lost all contact with him.

This was obviously a problem for Red Cloud. He accepted it with his usual imperturbable good humour. He explained that the young man was probably lost between the two worlds and promised “to lower his own vibrations” and go in search of him.

Another sitting with the parents was arranged for two days later and at the outset Red Cloud said he wished to entrance me. I complied and Red Cloud explained to the parents what had happened after the crash. It seems that their son had not realized that he had “died” and had returned in his spirit form to his base with every intention of carrying on his duties.

When Red Cloud had got into touch with him, he had at first refused to leave, unconvinced that he could do no more on the aerodrome. But Red Cloud at last persuaded him, on the promise that he should have the opportunity of speaking with his parents.

On emerging from the trance and being told what had transpired, I remarked that it was strange that a member of a Spiritualists family should, of all people, find himself earthbound. In agreeing, his parents said this might perhaps be influenced by the fact that their son was the only member of the whole family to reject Spiritualism.

Later, assisted by Red Cloud at a direct-voice séance, the boy spoke through the trumpet, and gave conclusive evidence of his existence in the spirit world by referring to documents he had left on earth and his knowledge of the manner in which his parents were dealing with them.

Our war-time direct-voice séances were significant for the youthfulness of the majority of the voices we heard coming through the trumpet. Only on a few occasions could the parents or friends positively identify a voice from its individual quality, but nearly always the characteristic accent was discernible. The soft cultured tones of Stephen Cohen, for instance, were quite distinct. Stephen passed over in a hospital in India and, when

speaking to his mother, he regretted that it should have been a “bug” that ended his span on earth. “Not a very soldierly way of dying,” he concluded, rather ruefully.

The Irish brogue of Michael Hughes was unmistakable when he jokingly remonstrated with his mother for persisting in brushing his hair long after he was capable of doing it for himself. And then there was the North-Country accent of Stanley Burgess, a young soldier of twenty-three who had been reported missing in 1941. There was no particular fame or glamour attaching to Stanley but, like thousands of other brave men, he gave all he had in the service of his country.

The circumstances of his introduction to our circle were not unlike those of Bessy Manning some years before. It was December 1943, when Red Cloud said at a direct-voice sitting:

“I have here a young man whose parents and friends are not present. He wants to reach his mother. He seeks your assistance because she is not a rich woman and cannot travel the distance which separates her from this circle. Hold on!”

There was a momentary pause and then a voice was heard issuing from the trumpet.

“I am Stanley Burgess. I was a casualty in Crete. My mum cries and cries. She reads your paper and I hear her begging me, ‘Do try to get through.’ I have tried, but I cannot make contact with her. I want her to know that I am well and doing what I can to help my brother in the Navy.”

Maurice Barbanell, editor of the Spiritualist newspaper to which the spirit speaker had referred, interposed: “We will help you, but you must tell us where your mother lives.”

The reply came with difficulty. “The address is Grange Road, Rudheath, R U D H E A T H.” Here the message came to a stop while Stanley summoned help. Then it went on: “Northwich, Cheshire. Tell her not be sad. Tell her I will be happy if she is. Thank you all very much.”

The next morning Barbanell sent a telegram to Mrs. Burgess, briefly outlining the facts and telling her he was writing to send full details. He received a telegram in acknowledgment and, some days later, a long letter confirming the information, her son had given us.

“I really cannot tell you how I feel about it,” she wrote. “It is just wonderful. The suspense has been awful, but the load is lifted now. He must have seen me weeping and talking to his photograph. We were all the world to each other and I have prayed unceasingly that I might be enlightened as to where he is. Now that I know he has passed over, I shall grieve no more. I do so want him to be happy.”

On receiving this letter Barbanell generously arranged for Mrs. Burgess to come to London. He bought her to me, and Stanley spoke to her in the direct voice. His accent was very North Country.

“Mum, it’s wonderful to talk to you,” he said. “You can see now I didn’t die. None of us die.” He went on to tell her of the manner of his passing, not in harrowing description, but cheerfully as a matter of family interest.

When it was all over, Mrs. Burgess said: "I shall never forget it as long as I live. Today will remain as one of the happiest memories of my life."

One of the great war leaders paid us a spirit visit when an unknown man visited my séance room and placed a well-smoked pipe in my hands. I said, "The vibrations from this pipe are strong and revealing. The man to whom it belonged passed suddenly and unexpectedly to the Other Side. He sends a message. He says: 'We're both together. Do not mourn for us. When the end came it happened fast like this (I snapped my fingers). We heard it come but did not feel it. We are grateful that we are together.' "

There followed some personal evidence which revealed to me that my visitor was the spirit speaker's son. I asked the son: "Why does he show me a mountain?" but before he could reply, I knew the answer. "He was in an aeroplane," I said. "It crashed into the side of the mountain. He had your mother with him. He gives no name, but I think he was a well-known man. The next message is for me. It is to say that on earth he experimented a little in Spiritualism. He addresses you again. He wants you to know that he and your mother tried to communicate with you but failed."

"How did they try?" the son asked.

"By knocking," I replied, "by striking the knocker of your front door."

"When?"

"Within one or two days of their passing."

My visitor nodded. "There was such a knocking," he agreed. "I live in a flat," he explained, "and just before the newspaper published the account of their death there was a continuous hammering on my door. I went to see who was there, but there was no one to be seen. Do they say where they were going in the aircraft?"

"To engage in new work; to take up a new appointment overseas. Now there is a message for Lord Dowding. It is to tell him that your father will speak to him soon in the direct voice."

"I will pass the message on."

"Here is a message from your mother. She says: 'Give my love to my little girl. On the anniversary of our passing we will come to talk again.' "

When the sitting was over I learned from my visitor who he was. He was Thomas Leigh-Mallory, son of Air Chief Marshal Sir Trafford Leigh-Mallory, Commander-in-Chief of the Allied Expeditionary Air Forces under General Eisenhower in the Normandy campaign. He was later appointed to direct the Allied Air Forces in South-East Asia Command under Admiral Lord Louise Mountbatten, and was flying to India to take up the appointment when his aircraft crashed into a mountainside in the French Alps. I was particularly interested in Sir Trafford's reference to his own experiments in Spiritualism, and was told that twenty years earlier he had been to a medium in order to communicate with his brother who was lost in a snowstorm in an attempt to climb Mount Everest.

Thomas Leigh-Mallory published an account of his sitting with me, which he summed up in the words: "I am convinced that survival after death is an accomplished fact and not a fallacy as so many people believe . . . I had the clearest evidence that they (his parents) still live on the Other Side and are the same today as I knew them then."

There have been many, many instances in my long mediumistic career of proof that we live after passing through the veil of death. In writing a book of this nature the difficulty is to know which of these instances to include and which to leave out because all are illustrative of this eternal truth. There is one which I cannot omit, however, because, apart from the undeniable evidence it offers, it describes the sequence of events so much better than any words of mine can do. For permission to use this independent account I am indebted to the well-known authoress, Barbara Cartland, who a short while ago wrote an enchanting biography entitled Polly - My Wonderful Mother. In this book she describes a visit her mother made to me at Esher during the war. I remember the occasion well, though I did not then know who my visitor was.

Looking back, I realize what a sad and tragic moment this must have been for "Polly." Her son, Ronald, a brilliant young man with a distinguished parliamentary career before him, had shortly before been killed in action. Meanwhile her younger son, Tony, was reported missing. There was, however, reason to believe that Tony had not been killed but was a prisoner-of-war and, mother-like, Polly clung heroically to this hope.

These were the circumstances which led to Polly's visit to me. For the details of our sitting I quote Barbara Cartland's own account:

There was still no news of Tony. Polly had written to every Lincolnshire man who was a prisoner; she was in constant touch with the Red Cross; and Jim Thomas, at the War Office, was doing everything possible - but they could learn nothing definite. There was still hope - in fact several men wrote that they had heard that Captain Cartland had been taken a prisoner.

Perhaps - Polly thought - he was wounded, too ill to write. She would lie awake at night hearing the roar of the German aeroplanes overhead and torturing herself with visions of Tony in hospital, Tony being badly treated, Tony unhappy and in pain.

Barbara begged her to go and see a clairvoyant. She had been to a medium who was absolutely certain that Tony was on "the earth plane," as she put it.

"She says he is in a German hospital," Barbara related. "But do go to one yourself. It will be much clearer with you because you are his mother."

Polly was persuaded and made an appointment with Estelle Roberts, the famous medium, who had astonished many sceptics by her amazing powers. She lived at Esher. Polly did not give her own name - she made the appointment as a Mrs. Hamilton. Estelle Roberts received her in a charmingly furnished, flower-filled sitting room with windows opening on to the garden. They sat down in armchairs opposite each other and talked for a moment of the weather and the journey from London. Suddenly Mrs. Roberts said:

“You have come to consult me about your sons - they are both here beside me.”

“Not both,” Polly said quickly, “One is a prisoner.” Estelle Roberts shook her head.

“No, they are together. The youngest one - he is wearing a button-hole - tells me that he was killed the day before his brother. Now they are both talking together; they have so much they want to say to you.”

But Polly wouldn't listen. It couldn't be true that Tony was dead - everyone was sure he was a prisoner. Mrs. Roberts had made a mistake! She had been stupid to come. She went home - angry that she had wasted her time going to Esher and yet at the same time very depressed.

At Littlewood there were so many little things which had to be done which hurt her almost unbearably. Ronald's clothes to be put away - the black suits with a white stripe which he had always worn in the House; the tweed coat he had gardened in at Littlewood; his shoes - always so beautifully cleaned because he polished them himself. There was also his car. It was black-and-white because he had felt it a good thing to be distinctive in the constituency. People could recognize it and know he was there among them as he drove through the streets. Ronald had been so proud of his Austin, but now it must be sold. Polly paid to have it sprayed a different colour before she let it go.

All her life Polly had kept photographs and cutting books. For each of her children she kept a separate book, and when Ronald and Barbara got well known and had so many newspaper cuttings, she was kept busy sticking them in. She had, immediately after Dunkirk, added another book to her collection. If Ronald was a prisoner he would not be able to see the newspapers and would hate, when he returned, to be out of touch with all that had happened during the war, both as regards the fighting and in Parliament.

Everyday, however rushed she was, Polly cut out the main items of interest and put them in her “War Book.” Now that Ronald was killed she went on doing it for Tony; but on February 7, 1942, the cuttings ended abruptly. There was no longer any hope!

Jim Thomas had learned from the American Embassy that Tony was buried at Zuidschote, north of Ypres, and a letter from a prisoner-of-war gave the final details of his death.

Left to hold the rearguard trench, he was surrounded and part of his Company were killed. The German officer asked the survivors to surrender - Tony's answer was to seize an automatic gun and open rapid fire. He was wounded and again asked to surrender. He replied: “I will fight to the last man and the last round.” He continued to fire from an automatic rifle. He died shortly afterwards. Estelle Roberts had been right - Tony had been killed on the May 29th, the day before Ronald.

CHAPTER FOURTEEN

THE OTHER SIDE OF THE STORY

In the pages you have read I have tried to give a picture of the life of a practicing medium. For reasons I have already explained - because I have no recollection of what transpired during trance séance, and because I deliberately try to erase from my mind after sittings for

clairvoyance or psychometry and personal messages I have relayed - comparatively little of what I have written is founded only on memory. I am fortunate, however, in possessing, a vast number of newspaper reports, magazine articles, and bundles of private correspondence, dealing in details with my many psychic experiences and cases. I have drawn on these in writing this book.

It was not easy to decide which cases to include and which to omit. My first thought was to select only the most remarkable instances, wherever and whenever they occurred. It was, I suppose, a natural inclination. Then I was reminded that Spiritualism in the view of the general public is, to say the least, a subject of controversy, and that the inquiring layman, and more particularly the stubborn sceptic, would be satisfied with little less than positive proof of every claim I made. On reflection it seemed to me that this demand for proof was not unreasonable. After all, why should I expect anyone to accept unchallenged my personal assurances, however honestly and sincerely they may be offered?

I therefore gave preference in my selection to those cases where the facts have been vouched for by people drawn from all professions, occupations and varying strata of society - a cross-section, in fact, of humanity. For this reason many of the episodes described owe their inclusion as much to the names and integrity of the witnesses as to anything particularly out of the ordinary in the phenomena that occurred. Similarly I have introduced a number of striking incidents where the details were described in the national and psychic press at the time of their happening, many of them subsequently finding their way into other author's books. In some cases I have used these accounts only in part. In others I have reproduced them exactly as they were printed, because the written testimony of the independent witness is not lightly to be discarded.

It is on this note of the independent witness that I propose to close these pages. Some years ago a book was published entitled 'Why I Believe in Red Cloud'. It comprised a series of brief essays by people from all walks of life. One of its chapters was written by Dr. A. G. Thompson, M.B., B.Ch. I reproduce part of it here, not because it makes an impassioned appeal, but because its reasoned and thoughtful phrases present the case for Spiritualism with both clarity and reverence. It also serves a further purpose in that it gives "the other side of the story" - not of Spiritualism as seen through the eyes of a medium, but as seen by a watchful member of one of my own circles. Here is Dr. Thompson's account:

My first meeting with Mrs. Estelle Roberts was some years ago when paying a professional visit to her house. Subsequently I had several very interesting conversations with her on the subject of the spirits that she claimed to see.

As a medical man, of course, one not infrequently comes across people who are the victims of hallucinations. No doubt I ought to have at once suspected some mental derangement. No such idea however entered my mind. Mrs. Roberts was altogether too sane and sensible a person and not in the least worried by her visions, which she took as a matter of course. Soon I began to realize that it had been my good fortune to meet, for the first time in my life, one of those strange people called mediums, about whom I had so often read in books dealing with psychical research and kindred subjects.

Mrs. Roberts, seeing me genuinely interested, was kind enough to invite me to some séances with another medium, at which I had the opportunity of observing some very remarkable physical phenomena. Later on she informed me that her guide, Red Cloud, had given permission for me to attend one of her own direct-voice circles.

Naturally I jumped at the opportunity, and since then have attended many of these direct-voice circles as well as other sittings of a different nature. These other sittings are roughly of two kinds. In both, the medium goes into trance and Red Cloud speaks through her, no darkness being necessary. In the one the sitter is alone with Red Cloud, who talks to him and brings relatives and friends to communicate; whereas in the other Red Cloud gives discourses to an assembled audience.

In direct-voice séances the sitters form a rough circle with the medium who reclines in an easy chair. An aluminium trumpet, decorated with spots of luminous paint, is placed in the middle.

After preliminary prayer the lights are extinguished; the room being thus in total darkness, with nothing to be seen but the spots of luminous paint on the trumpet.

A hymn is sung, during which the medium goes into trance. Soon after, the trumpet begins to move about - touching various members of the circle. Very soon, the voice of Red Cloud is heard issuing from the trumpet, greeting the sitters. This is usually the time for the singing to cease and the gramophone to be turned on for the rest of the séance.

Among the various minor points that are deemed requisite for a good sitting is a gramophone record. A little tune from Rose Marie, played with a specially soft needle, has been found the best. The voices that manifest can thus be heard easily. After Red Cloud has greeted the sitters and conversed for a short time, he will exclaim, "Hold on!" This means that he is going to get someone else to speak through the trumpet.

Another voice is soon heard, usually calling a name. Sitters are warned before the séance not to give away evidence, so the voice is encouraged to give further particulars until recognition is possible by the friend or relative he or she has come for. Often, however, especially if they have manifested before, the voices require no such encouragement, and they greet their friends without delay.

The voices are of all kinds, ranging from the ones capable of a loud whisper and a few fragmentary phrases, to others full of tone and character and able to converse quite readily.

Now as to my personal experiences:

At some of the direct-voice circles various relatives manifested of whose existence, to the best of my knowledge and belief, the medium could not possibly have been aware, and in various little ways they have proved their identity to me.

At a trance sitting, a sister, deceased over twenty years ago, was brought to me by Red Cloud. She gave her full name and many other particulars, and referred to a living sister in a certain way that was quite peculiar to herself. She mentioned a book of hers that she said

was in my possession, the existence of which I had no conscious knowledge. Coming home after the sitting I found the book as described after a long search.

My own belief in the actuality of the direct voice is founded not only on my own personal experiences, but on the cumulative evidence provided by the other sitters, often newcomers and strangers to everyone, including the medium, who come to the circle and with whom one afterwards compares notes. Their relatives and friends manifest, often giving evidence of their identity in the most remarkable and particular way. I have listened to all sorts of voices - some speaking in the tone and manner of well-educated folk, and others who disregarded their aspirates and the rules of grammar. Others, again, possessed well-marked Scots or Irish accents.

I have heard a Scots sitter swapping reminiscences of the war with his erstwhile comrades in the trenches, the comrade reminding him of "what happened to old Ginger, the man with the long neck" and "how they greased the General's boots!" All this in broad Scots.

I have listened to the voices of old people and of children, and also of well-known public men, who have passed on, conversing in distinctive tones with their friends at the circle.

The popular explanation of these occurrences, as being due to fraud on the part of the medium and credulity on the part of the sitters, is obviously nonsense. It would invoke the ability of the medium, or possible confederates, to see in the dark - to be able to act all sorts of characters and ventriloquize in the dark, and at the same time to have a most prodigious memory for names and facts which would have to be collected by a sort of super-detective agency, the expense of which would be only equalled by the amount of blackmail paid to people from whom the information was obtained. Even this would fail to account for the phenomena, as many of the facts would be simply unobtainable.

I will pass on to something perhaps a little more reasonable; that is to the ideas of those critics, some of them men of high scientific standing, who while accepting the facts invoke the blessed words "telepathy, cryptaesthesia, and prosopopoesis" to explain them. Roughly their theory is that the unconscious of the medium can be split up into any number of secondary personalities, each acting its own part and drawing its knowledge not only from the sitters at the circle, but from what may be described as a kind of impersonal cosmic consciousness, in which, while personalities vanish, their thoughts and memories persist.

It would be quite outside the scope of this chapter to enlarge on these theories and criticize them in detail. At any rate, their authors do not take the easy path followed by so many contemporary men of science and ignore facts that do not fit into their particular scheme of things. But I must point out that, in the first place, we have no proof that the unconscious of any individual can be extended in the amazing way required, and, secondly, that we have no knowledge of any form of consciousness in which personality does not have a share.

To one who has had the opportunity of observing the phenomena of the direct voice on many occasions, these theories seem as unconvincing as they are fantastic. The sitters, especially newcomers to the circle, are not disposed to be unduly credulous. They are ordinary folk whose attitude is apt to be more critical than the reverse. It seems to be

inconceivable that a mother could be deceived as regards the identity of her son, or a husband as regards that of his wife, so readily and invariably by any such personifications.

These hypotheses fail to cover many other well-verified superphysical facts. Personally I feel that there is no other explanation for the phenomena of the direct voice than the plain and straightforward acceptance of the view that the spirit guide is what he claims to be and the voices what they claim to be.

It is perfectly true, as a speaker said on the wireless the other day, "when people meet in ordinary circles in the dark they cannot really observe what is going on," but it is the content of the messages which is the crux of the matter, not the supernormal lifting of the trumpet or the mode of production of the voices.

As regard the supernormal lifting of the trumpet, anyone who has studied the evidence knows that telekinesis (the supernormal movement of objects) and materialization are facts no longer capable of refutation. The careful scientific experiments carried out with such physical mediums as Rudi Scheider and Kluski leave no room for doubt. Now in these direct-voice circles Red Cloud tells us that the trumpet is moved by means of an ectoplasmic rod, and the voices are produced within the trumpet. I personally am willing to accept his statements. It would be foolish to risk possible injury to the medium by trying to investigate too closely.

The nearest I have been to direct confirmation was on one occasion when the medium was suffering from a very distinctive and easily recognized cough. I was sitting close by her and could hear her coughing going on at the same time that a voice was speaking about eight feet away from her, as near as I could judge.

Of course the Red Cloud voice circle is but one of a number of which similar phenomena occur. From all over the world similar happenings to these are being reported. New books are constantly being published dealing with the subject and relating personal experiences. The facts can be no longer denied, and are now being admitted by quite a number of men of science who endeavour to explain them on the lines that I have mentioned. I cannot help thinking that those who support these theories have not had sufficient opportunities for observing the phenomena at their best. Mediums of the first rank are extremely rare, and are prone to limit their activities to those people who are inclined to be friendly and really need them, and to avoid the possibly hostile attitude of the scientific investigator, an attitude which in itself may tend to inhibit phenomena.

In this connection it is interesting to note how easily a circle is upset if the atmosphere is at all strained. Red Cloud is always urging us during the sittings not to get tense. As a matter of fact, he often uses a little dance with the trumpet instead of telling us this, and experienced sitters know what he means. A too highly emotional atmosphere, whether hostile or the reverse, also seems detrimental to the ease with which the communications can be effected. Furthermore, it does not do to press for information as this seems to impede the power. For instance, I have heard a rather sceptical wife repeatedly demanding from her husband, who had been giving quite a good evidence of his identity, that he

should tell her the pet name by which he used to call her. The communicator began to falter in his speech and the trumpet dropped. She was warned not to be so insistent. Later, as the conversation picked up, the husband called her by the very name she wanted.

Of course, this incident could quite easily be accounted for by telepathy, but the point I wish to make clear is that for good results it is best to let the voices give their own evidence in their own way. To accomplish this the conversation should be a natural one and its thread not abruptly broken by sudden demands or queries.

One must remember the condition in which these entities are supposed to be - a superphysical state from which their vibrations are "tuned down" to enable them to communicate with us on earth. One of my own relatives, manifesting for the first time, said to me that he felt it was like "taking a dose of your ether," and when questioned as to what he meant said, "Your medical stuff, of course."

Many of the communicators are very excited on coming for the first time. It is easy to understand how difficult it must be for them in their confused condition to be able to answer every question hurled at them by an irresponsible sitter. We know ourselves how easy it is in everyday life when suddenly asked for a name or fact usually quite familiar, for it to prove temporarily quite inaccessible. It seems to me surprising that under these difficult conditions such wonderful evidence of survival of personality after death can be and is given.

When Mrs. Roberts goes into trance her own personality simply disappears and that of Red Cloud takes its place. The personality of Red Cloud is a marked one. He is dominating and, at the same time, a very attractive character. Not only does he take charge of proceedings at the voice circles, speaking and commenting between the voices in a most intelligent and often humorous way, but on the occasions when he speaks through the medium in trance, he gives addresses on all sorts of subjects. At these meetings there is no darkness, the lights being only lowered during the few minutes the medium takes to go into trance and again when she comes out of it. The going into trance is an interesting process to watch. Mrs. Roberts reclines in an easy chair, putting herself in as comfortable a position as possible, closes her eyes and soon begins to breath stertorously. After a few minutes she sits up with a start. The expression of her face has quite changed. Her head is bent forward and her eyes are still closed. Red Cloud is here. He utters one or two words in a strange language and greets us.

A few questions may be asked or messages given and his lecture begins. In these discourses Red Cloud deals with many subjects, the meaning of life, the nature of our personalities, the survival of the soul and conditions in the spheres and their planes. He is never tired of exhorting us to do better. He insists that this life is a school for the soul and that each man must work out his own salvation. For the most part his teachings follow those of the great religions of humanity bereft of their dogmas. He emphasizes the great values of truth and love and our responsibilities to ourselves and our fellow men.

Difficult as it is sometimes to follow him as he attempts to convey his meaning, speaking with his quaint accent and a somewhat limited vocabulary, somehow there is always the feeling that one is in the presence of a great soul possessed of the inestimable gift of wisdom.

Some of his ideas, those that are concerned with the power of thought, for instance, appear to me to be quite original.

It is, of course, impossible to test many of these views of his. Some may appear fanciful or to clash with our preconceived scientific beliefs. But he is always ready to answer questions and is never at a loss for an answer. If one accepts him, as I do myself, as a genuine personality who speaks to us from a different sphere of existence, it is our duty at least to listen to his words. His ideals are very high ones and he is inclined at times to be dogmatic about them. Nevertheless he makes no claim to infallibility but to give us the truth as he sees it.

Take his view about free will, for instance. He insists that a man has complete freedom of will, this only being limited by state of mind to which he has risen, and that illumination as to what is right and which is wrong may come to him at any time. One is glad to have his support for our own intuition of the freedom of will, though psychologists mostly take the view that this freedom is very limited, and some are even now still wedded to the doctrines of strict determinism.

One very frequent criticism about these matters is that nothing of any importance comes through from so called guides. Now it seems to me that Red Cloud can, and does, discuss matters of importance that transcend the intelligence and abilities of his medium. He endeavours to convey to us ideas of conditions in the beyond, that of timelessness, for instance, which it is not possible perhaps for us to conceive. But at the same time he gives us the wealth of information about such matters as the nature and make-up of our personalities, and of other states of existence that we can at least grasp in some measure.

Professor Richet complains that no new idea in science has ever come through from the beyond. But surely it may be possible that science, as known to us which all philosophers agree is only an abstraction from reality, does not apply in the same way over there. Perhaps I am putting it rather crudely, but it may be as difficult for these super-physical beings to impart much of their knowledge to us as it is in our own world to convey to a person born blind any appreciation of the sense of sight.

In any case it behoves us to try and snatch at any fragments of other-world knowledge that such guides as Red Cloud may succeed in conveying to us. Such other-world knowledge, according to Red Cloud, was possessed by civilizations long since buried in oblivion. One is tempted to speculate that, if once again acquired, it might enormously widen, and possibly transform, our present scientific outlook, and we might begin to have some ideas as to our own place in the scheme of things. The study of transcendental problems is usually considered to lie solely in the province of theology and philosophy, but the one is so often weighed down by dogmas and the other by wordy obscurantism, that a direct method, such

as we possess in physical investigations and communion with a being like Red Cloud, affords a welcome avenue of approach to the solution of some of those mysteries of life and death and the hereafter that have so long puzzled humanity.

CHAPTER FIFTEEN

RED CLOUD

In setting down some of the experiences of my fourscore years, I have done so at Red Cloud's request in order to "leave behind for incoming generations a great reality to comfort the mourner." The reality to which he refers is, of course, eternal, that we cannot die because our spirits are immortal. For that reason the greater part of this book is devoted to examples of evidence of survival, for without acceptance of this central fact the whole edifice of religious faith must fall down.

The teaching of Jesus, Buddha and of all the world's religious leaders is meaningless if this concept is not upheld. Without it, the only philosophy open to us is "Eat, drink and be merry, for tomorrow we die," which is surely the outlook of grim despair. By contrast the truth of survival floods the mind with light and warmth. It opens up an endless vista of glorious life, a perpetual expansion of the consciousness, each advance bringing enhanced love and happiness as we travel along the road to Perfection. We no longer mourn for the dear ones who have left us, for we know that they live and we shall meet again. We no longer fear death and disease for ourselves, for we know these are but temporary conditions and that we shall re-awaken to a new life in a perfect body.

Many people fear the actual moment of the death of their bodies. Yet they have no need to do so. I have many times seen death occur, and know it to be no more than falling asleep. I sat beside my mother's bed when she lay dying. In her last moments she was in a semi-conscious state, and I knew she had something to say. Summoning up the last of her strength, she spoke and, in speaking died. Whether she realized it or not I do not know, but she completed in death what she had begun to say in life and I heard her last words by clairaudience.

Again, ten years ago, I was in the presence of death when my husband, Charles, died in my arms. Steadfast in the knowledge of his own survival, he had no fear of death and his last words to me were of gentle reassurance. A few days later his body was cremated. As the coffin slowly withdrew into the inner chamber of the crematorium, I saw him and his cousin, Dr. Charles Gordon-Moore, standing arm-in-arm, smiling at me. The truths of Spiritualism, which I have always striven to pass on to others who mourned, now brought me comfort in my turn. During Charles' long illness I had given up my public work in order to be with him, for he so hated me to be away from his side. Inevitably his passing left a great void in my life, but fortified by the knowledge that he lived beyond death I returned to the practice of my mediumship following an interval of only two weeks. After three years absence, I returned to the public platform, eager again to demonstrate to all who would learn the truth of life after death.

This book contains a great many instances of survival. Had there been the need, it would have been simple to increase their number by a hundred, or a thousand other cases. But, in the event, it is necessary to prove only one case in order to prove all. I have chosen the episodes quoted in this book because of the evidence they offered, and the absolute integrity of the people who were present to vouch for them.

I have worked with Red Cloud for nearly fifteen years, and during that time he has toiled unceasingly to demonstrate eternal spirit truth. He has never told us who he was on earth. When asked, he has always answered: "Know me by my works." We know that he passed this way before us, when he probably dwelt in Egypt. We believe, too, that he was either in this world, or very near to it, in the days of Jesus of Nazareth. Once or twice he has tantalized us into believing ourselves to be on the verge of discovering only to find the answer has again been denied us.

We know that his identity as a Red Indian is a cloak which is assumed in order to make receptive by us the very high vibrations that are naturally his because of his advanced spiritual attainment. He says he long ago reached the point in his evolution from which, had he gone on, there would have been no returning to this world. The choice was his - to go on, or to remain as a guide and teacher to mankind, bringing peace of mind and understanding of divine truths. He chose the latter course, explaining to us: "As your elder brother, which I am, your sorrows are my sorrows, your joys are my joys. When you fall back, I fall back with you. When you go forward, I go forward, too."

Always Red Cloud is loving and kind. I have never known him to condemn harshly any living person, though he will frequently gently point out our errors. He is ever ready to answer our questions, though not always as directly as some sitters could have wished. He is never dogmatic. In discussion and argument, he is tolerant, never laying down the law, and forever reminding his hearers that the final decision is theirs to make. God has given man a will of his own, he says, and man alone must exercise it.

In the many years that he has been my guide he has delivered score of lectures, both in public and private sittings. Some of them, particularly those having a scientific basis, have been too obtrusive for the comprehension of the average circle-member, though great scientists, such as Sir Oliver Lodge, read many of them with respect and understanding. His philosophical teachings follow closely those of Jesus of Nazareth, whom he invariably calls "The Nazarene." God, he tells us, is perfect mind, which is love, wisdom and power. God is not a being but a force of good which permeates the universe and is infinite. Evil is not a force, but an error in thought which has arisen in the world because of the misuse of free will. It is finite and can be overcome by concentration on good and on God.

As God dwells within each one of us, every individual is part of the Whole which is God. And because we are all part of the Infinite Spirit of God, we cannot die.

The gradual unfolding of the consciousness of the Mind of God within us is the process of evolution of our souls. In order to find God we must be "born again" into the realization that we are spiritual beings, and into the acceptance of our personal responsibility for every

action we commit. Thus the extent of our evolution depends entirely upon ourselves. As we desire, so we shall receive.

The universe is ordered by divine law. If we follow this law, it will lead to perfect harmony; if we go against it, the result is chaos. The first law is that of love. Love is the ability to see only latent perfection in our fellowmen. Love is the attribute of the Divine mind, whereas fear stems from the material mind. Love and fear are the two incompatible opposites, the one forever striving to cast out the other. Love is the complete negation of self; self-interest is the father of fear. The natural expression of love is service to others, not so much in the performance of great works as in doing that which lies nearest to hand.

To dwell within the kingdom of heaven is to dwell within the Mind of God which lies within ourselves. All must first seek this kingdom from which, once found, all else will flow. Prayer for ourselves is purposeless, for we already have all we can ever need. The only true prayer is the unceasing communion with the divine spirit within us. Never must we forget that God is within us, not outside us, that we are all individual parts of God, which is the Whole.

It is not to be expected that we can achieve perfection within the span of one lifetime. After death we go to the astral plane, in which there are many worlds of consciousness. After a period we incarnate once again on this earth, or some other inter-penetrating world, for the further progress of our souls. Eventually, and who can say how long this may take, we reach a state of evolution at which further reincarnation is no longer necessary and we pass on to higher realms of spiritual existence.

In all his addresses Red Cloud quotes freely from the Bible, sometimes changes the words of an accepted version to bring to them a different and more illuminating meaning. The words, "Lead us not into temptations," as they occur in the Lord's Prayer, for instance, Red Cloud will never accept. The significance of these words has many times been debated by theologians, but Red Cloud is unhesitating in his judgement. "How can that which is Perfection lead into temptation?" he asks. "God does not lead you there, for that part of you which is God does not know temptation. Only the carnal mind knows temptation and, too often, submits to it. Therefore, when you pray to God, say rather: "Leave us not when in temptation."

The power of love to cast out hatred has been a recurring theme in Red Cloud's trance addresses. To overcome hatred in ourselves we must try to see in others only that part of them which is God or good. And when our enemies seem to destroy us we must stand firm in the knowledge that good in the end must triumph over evil.

"God is there for all who have the eyes to see Him." These are the words with which Red Cloud began one of his inspirational lectures, and I don't think I can do better than to quote the words with which this lecture ended:

"You know, my children, in this day of life, the greatest aspect that you find within the jewel of your being is to see with far-seeing eyes the beauty of God's kingdom. See it in the

simple flower, its folding petals, its colours rare. In the heart of that small blossom, seeking peace, God will be found.

“Stand upon the hilltop and watch the setting sun, and in your heart be calm. Watch the blending of the colours as they fall behind the hills, and in that quiet stillness, God will be. Stand among the yellow of the buttercups in the open fields when the dew lies upon the grass. Watch the bird rise with a flutter of wings, its throat trembling in the beauty of its note. It is there God will be found. In the laughter of a child when it runs to its mother’s side; there, too, will God be found.

“May I always find within your world the beauty of God and the wisdom of His kingdom expressed in the one simple word - Love.”

CHAPTER SIXTEEN

FINAL CHAPTER

Hannen Swaffer, Swaff as he was affectionately called, worked with me on public platforms for many years. His connection with Fleet Street is well known; his interest in all the work that I did with the press was great. During the years, my mediumship has been the subject of several series, some lasting many weeks, in the *Daily Sketch*, the *Sunday Pictorial*, as it was then known, and *The People*, the paper for whom Swaffer himself wrote a weekly article. As a direct result of all this he paid me a compliment which I have never forgotten; he introduced me as “Estelle, the medium who made Spiritualism respectable.” I know there are many who still decry Spiritualism as fraudulent, fraught with charlatans but, generally speaking, they have never studied the subject in depth. All religions have their false prophets and those who are only too willing to gather personal gain from the sorrow of others. Spiritualism is no exception.

Over the past ten years attitudes have changed, Spiritualism is now freely discussed, and people in all walks of life are willing to express their opinion. Nevertheless, I have a great admiration for those, who having become well known, even famous, are still willing to have their conviction, which is often a very personal matter, expressed in print. Peter Sellers is one such person and in the book ‘Peter Sellers: the Mask Behind the Mask’, by Peter Evans, he leaves no doubt of his belief in Spiritualism. The author writes: “He (Peter Sellers) discusses the subject with respect that falls short of unctiousness, with authority that is not dogmatic; he speaks with care because it is important, but the care does not become caution, for caution is the defence of the weak, the first barricade of the uncommitted.”

My son, Terry met Peter at the outbreak of war when they both were in Ilfracombe, and they saw each other occasionally through the ensuing years. My life has always been preoccupied with work, my relaxation was gardening, and I doubt if I have seen a dozen films through my entire life. Therefore, when Terry asked me if I would give an appointment to Peter Sellers I must confess that it meant very little to me, because I had never seen him either face to face or on the screen. It must be about eight years ago that he and Anne, his first wife, came to my home at Esher in Surrey. Red Cloud, as always, was ready with the evidence Peter was seeking. He had brought from the spirit world a young

writer, Larry Stevens, who had died suddenly and had been writing some of the early God Shows. He was immediately recognized by Peter who told Peter Evans: "He sent messages that Estelle Roberts could not possibly have known about. He used words and whole phrases that we only used together, It was . . . convincing." Other messages and proof of a personal nature were given and Peter Sellers knew that they were true.

At a later sitting, some time after this, I told Peter of the presence of Dan Leno, the most revered comic of his age, and was able to assure him that he was guiding and helping Peter in his own career. Unknown to me, he had been personally aware for many years that he was being protected and led in his professional life by someone from the other side, and he accepted this information "with a sort of satisfied relief, not surprised because it figured somehow." Peter is convinced that Dan Leno is his guiding force. When his adored Mother, Peg, passed over, Peter again came to see me. She proved to him that she was very much alive, relating things known only to herself and Peter, which I will not repeat here because all communications between my sitters and their friends and relatives from the spirit world are no concern of mine. The author, Peter Evans, likens my affection for Peter, which has developed over the years, to that of a "childless aunt." This is not entirely accurate. I recognized in Peter those two states of mind which I have often experienced, loneliness and the desire to be a perfectionist. He is psychic and he is aware of it. Indeed, he would make a fine medium, but his metier is to bring happiness to millions in other ways. Because of his psychic potentiality he has the awareness of events before they occur; the knowledge of the spirit presence with him; a glimpse of that wider vision of what life is all about. In some inexplicable way this awareness makes one feel at times a person apart, thereby creating a great sense of loneliness. To be a perfectionist in an imperfect world often causes heartbreak because one cannot compromise.

Ginette Spanier lives in Paris, where she is connected with one of the leading French fashion houses, but to English people and Americans she will be known for her appearances on television, her many lectures, and her articles in the Press. I asked Ginette somewhat diffidently if I might relate her story about Nancy Spain. Nancy, of course, was one of the most famous journalist and radio and television personalities of her day. Her reply was a request that she be allowed to write it herself. And here it is:

Nancy Spain was killed on March 21st, 1964, when the private aeroplane in which she had gone to report the Grand National crashed beside the course.

A week later, friends of mine who were not very intimately connected with Nancy Spain received a cryptic spirit message saying: "Spain, tell Jenny live wire still." They knew me by my name, Ginette, but as they were not acquainted with any other friend of Nancy's, they telephoned and asked tentatively if she had ever called me "Jenny." I explained that, unlike almost all my other friends, she never called me anything else. Jenny, as a matter of fact, is my real name. And, strangely enough, I almost always called Nancy, "Spain", two details my friends did not know. They then felt the message must be for me, and passed it on.

After this, Nancy constantly came to them, giving messages for me, many of which they could not understand, but which made complete sense to me. She even sometimes used

journalistic terms: for instance, when stressing a point she said, "Beg, repeat beg," just as I had heard her do when dictating a story to her newspaper over the telephone. Then, on February 17th, 1965, she said to them: "Spain, tell Jenny I tried to help you on Tuesday" (they had visited Estelle Roberts), "but many calling. Polite Spain missed bus." A typical Nancy Spain quip!

At their next sitting with Estelle on May 17th 1965, one of them said to Estelle, "Could I ask about someone specific?" "So long as you give me a name only, without identifying the person," Estelle agreed. "Is there a Nancy there?" was the next query. And, smiling Estelle said, "Yes, she's been standing back and Red Cloud is bringing her forward. She died very suddenly didn't she? I am getting breathlessness and then a bang, a shock." Then, looking extremely surprised she exclaimed, "It's Nancy Spain! She says, I'm Nancy Spain."

There followed a very characteristic Spain kind of conversation with messages for me personally - though Estelle had no idea who "Jenny" was and my friends did not enlighten her. She spoke also about the two boys she had brought up and Estelle's comment on her whole way of speaking and behaving was, "My word, she's quick on the uptake!" She added, "She's saying, 'I never realized we had passed through death when we crashed in that field'." And then: "She's gone, but I think she'll come again."

On September 27th, 1965, when my friends again sat with Estelle Roberts, Nancy Spain came and said, among other things, "It's very wonderful here. That 'plane wasn't in good order. It should have been more completely overhauled. But one accepts one's fate." She then teased Estelle about her coming "over there."

Finally, on May 6th, 1966, I myself went to Estelle. The appointment was made for me in my married name, which would be quite unknown to Estelle. She had never seen me before, or I her. Indeed, it was the first time I had ever visited a medium, and I hardly knew what to expect, in spite of the fact that I was now deeply interested and very willingly accepted the messages which came through my friends. But there is all the difference between hearing about things and experiencing them oneself.

After Estelle had reported the presence of various members of my family she said, "Oh, Nancy Spain is here!" My friends had, of course, not mentioned a word to Estelle about my knowing Nancy. Estelle described vividly the excitement and eagerness displayed, and said, "She is so excited she has to be calmed. But she says she did not suffer at all. It was instantaneous." There followed unmistakable Nancy Spain type of talk and repartee, causing Estelle to laugh and say, "She's very quick and has great humour."

Then Estelle said, "She says you are wearing something of hers." I could not imagine what this was, thinking in terms of some article of clothing, and I answered, "No." "Oh, yes," Estelle assured me. "It's something round your neck." As I had only pearls which had no connection with Nancy I shook my head again. "Yes, yes," Estelle insisted. "She does this," putting her hands high up round her neck. Then I understood. "Of course! It's my ear-rings! She gave me the ear-rings I'm wearing. It was only when your fingers reached up to your ears that I realized what she meant."

On two other occasions I visited Estelle. Each time Nancy came and gave incontrovertible proof that it was really she, giving me private messages about her life, about our friendship, about the boys. She was also anxious to show she was often with me, giving small but telling details to prove this. At one point Estelle said, "She's telling me you have a jacket of hers which is hanging in your cupboard - in your flat in Paris, but she says you have only worn it about twice." This was quite right. She also commented on the fact that I had changed the place of her photograph, also in my flat in Paris. A minor detail which could not possibly be known to anyone in England.

Each time she came there was no mistaking the characteristic - almost unique - vitality and eagerness of Nancy Spain, coupled with her warm excitement at achieving the contact she wanted. About Spiritualism itself, she said, regretfully, "I wish I had known fully about it before."

Two other sitters whom I am delighted to have known for many years are Miss Louise Cook and her sister Miss Ida Cook, better known to the public as Mary Burchell, the romantic novelist. Their visits to me commenced some ten years ago, but I shall always remember them for their great courage before the war in seeking out Jewish people in danger in Germany and managing to get them out of the country. They also smuggled out refugees' jewellery, often at risk to themselves. On one occasion, a diamond brooch of great size was brought out by Ida wearing it quite openly on an inexpensive Marks & Spencer Jumper, thereby creating the impression that it was of no value, although its subsequent sale maintained its rightful owner for a difficult period before reestablishment in a new life. Eventually, they received official recognition from the Israeli Government for their work. They had no idea they were being heroines, and disclaimed being the James Bond type. Nevertheless, such bravery calls for quickness of mind and precision of thought, and it was armed with these two attributes that they approached Spiritualism. They are the friends referred to by Ginette Spanier. Their great and absorbing passion for Opera brought about the opportunity of helping Jewish refugees; it also created some of their finest evidence of proof of survival and spirit communication. To them, who have been kind enough to contribute the following, I offer my gratitude.

One of the most impressive of Estelle Roberts' many psychic gifts is her fantastic capacity for giving actual names of those communicating from the other side. The speed, the accuracy, the sheer brilliance of such a display can be compared to the passage work of a virtuoso violinist, as the names go out to be claimed and identified by the astonished sitter, one after the other. We particularly recall the time we took our mother, then 87, to visit Estelle.

The first name, understandably, was our father's William, but Estelle added immediately, "He says, 'Call me Will.' " - the name by which Mother called him when they were young. There followed in rapid succession Mother's own mother, her two favourite boy cousin's, an uncle, her grandmother, her great-aunt, and a cousin from the other side of her family, who gave his name as Horace, and said Ernest was with him. Mother quickly identified Horace, but it was not until later that she remembered Ernest was Horace's twin brother

who died young. Then came a dazzling succession of the friends of her youth, before Estelle returned to the subject of our father and said, "I think he had a will of his own,"

This made us both smile because, in point of fact, it was Mother who was the more determined of the two. But she said at once, "Odd you should say that. It was his favourite joke when we were engaged. As his name was Will, he used to say to me, 'Now you can never say you haven't got a Will of your own.' To tell the truth," she added, looking back critically over sixty years, "he made the joke rather too often. I got a bit tired of it!"

After Mother herself passed over, two years later, she came easily and frequently to speak to us through Estelle, bringing people and proofs too numerous to detail here. She even brought our favourite cat, saying, according to Estelle, "I've brought Iggy with me."

"Iggy?" repeated Estelle. "What a queer name, but I'm sure that's what she's saying. She says, 'That wasn't his real name, but it was what we called him.'" We explained that this was our cat Igor, who was always called Iggy, and Estelle said, "Yes, she has a big cat with her. She says, look at his tail! It's beautiful!" This was so much Mother having the last word that we both laughed. In his last years Iggy's lovely tail grew rather thin, but Mother never would allow anyone to say so. She used to declare indignantly, and quite incorrectly, "Nonsense! It's a beautiful tail!"

Fascinating though it is to every sitter to receive family names, sometimes less familiar names can provide even more striking proof. Once Estelle said to us, "a woman is pushing her way through to the front, saying, 'I am Nora Potts.'" We hardly had time to gasp out that this was Louise's music teacher when we were little girls, back in Northumberland during the First World War, when Estelle added, "She is saying, 'I am not alone. I've brought Miss Swann with me.'" And she was Ida's music teacher, the interesting distinction being that although we later knew Miss Potts well enough to call her Nora, Miss Swann remained forever Miss Swann. "There is," continued Estelle, "a Mark also belonging to this group; connected with the last lady." Miss Swann's brother was called Mark.

Our interest in music, particularly opera, has brought many fascinating personalities to demonstrate their personal survival through Estelle, who would herself be the first to admit that she knows very little about the musical world. On one exciting occasion she sighed and said, "Oh, here's another of those foreign names coming up! A man, speaking in a very deep voice, from a long way back, I think. It sounds something like, Lablache, La-blache." With unhesitating delight we greeted the greatest bass singer of the nineteenth century, Luigi Labloche.

Another tremendously welcome visitor once announced himself simply as Jackson. We racked our brains for a Jackson, even back to our schooldays. But the Estelle said, "He says he was the doorkeeper at a famous theatre." "It's JACKSON!" WE CRIED IN CHORUS. "Jackson who was the stage-door keeper at Covent Garden when we were girls in the gallery queue." And he went on to prove his identity by naming people who had been in the queue with us, even in one case giving the nickname.

The musical friend who most frequently comes through Estelle when we are there is the famous Viennese conductor, Clemens Krauss, whom we knew well on this side. He identified himself the very first time we visited Estelle, not by name but by action. Estelle said, "He wants me to show you this gesture." And she began to make the gestures of an orchestral conductor. She was puzzled herself and muttered, "Is he painting? No, he can't be. He's using both arms." One of us said, "You are making the right movements, Mrs. Roberts. You just aren't giving it the right name." To which she replied with characteristic briskness, "Don't tell me anything. I'm here to tell you." And later she got what he was, and provided incontrovertible evidence of his identity.

He remained a constant visitor, and one of the most remarkable pieces of evidence he provided was during the sitting of an American friend of ours, Norman Kelley, the gifted tenor who sang the part of the Magician in Menotti opera, "The Consul," when the American company first came to London. He was back in England a year or two ago, and we made an appointment for him with Estelle, simply saying he was a friend of ours from the States called Kelley.

She started by saying, "You have something to do with the public, but I haven't quite got what it is. I will later." She went on to give him evidential messages which, he says, were amazing. Unknown to Estelle, we had agreed to come and fetch our friends after his sitting and as this was ending we rang the front door bell. In his own words, "I don't think Estelle even heard the bell, but at that moment she said to me, 'Oh, how interesting! The conductor friend [Clemens Krauss] of the "girls" has just come in. And he tells me you are an opera singer, but you never sang under him personally, though he met you once!' "

This was right to the finest detail. Norman had never sung under Krauss, though we once introduced them to each other backstage at Covent Garden. It has always intrigued and charmed us beyond description that, though we had to stand outside the front door and wait, Krauss could go in and give Estelle the missing piece of information about Norman Kelley.

Two weeks before my 80th birthday I was honoured at a dinner given by *Psychic News* and *Two Worlds* and among the six hundred or more guests the young, middle-aged and elderly were equally represented. In his speech, Maurice Barbanell, Editor of both papers said, "I have lost count of the public platforms Estelle and I have shared during her fifty years service. Estelle is one of those rarities, a versatile medium with all psychic gifts. You mention it, she's done it. There is no record of better evidence given in Spiritualism than in her direct-voice séances. We live in an age of violence when we are seeing the results of materialism raging all over the world." I rejoice in the sure knowledge that my fifty years have been well spent serving that next world and this by establishing beyond any shadow of doubt, to those seeking to know that life continues after death, those who have gone before can return and prove their survival.