

LOOKING BACK

My Psychic Experiences in company
with the late Ernest Meads

by

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“Write of me as one who loved his fellow man.”

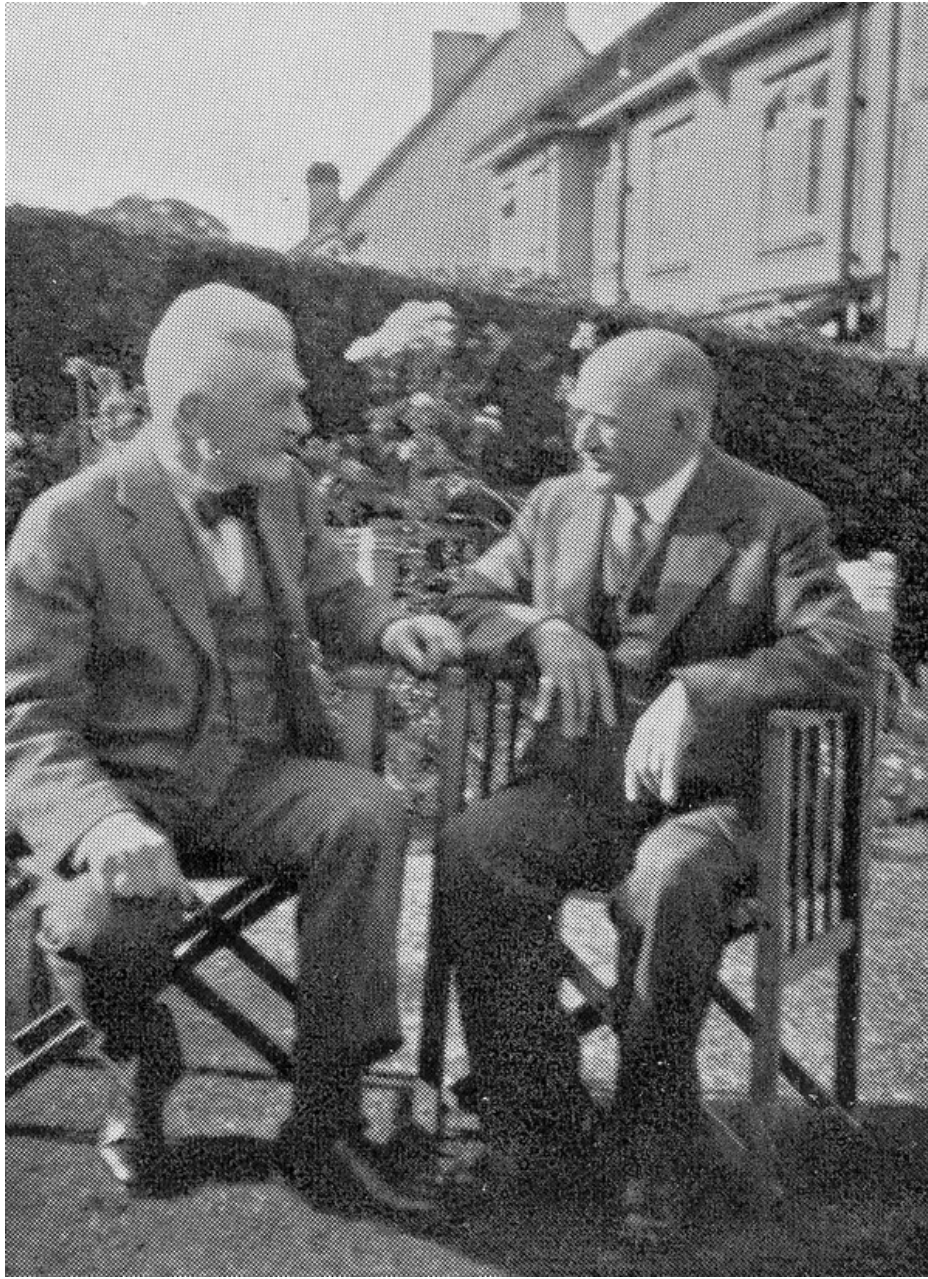
These lines of Longfellow put the character of Ernest Meads in a nutshell. Giving out affection so generously, it is not surprising that he aroused it in others, and, perhaps, in no one more sincerely than in Percy Johnson, the author of this book; for it is the outcome of this affection which has caused him to go to the trouble of putting on record some of their experiences together. We know this proof of continued regard is valued at its true worth in the higher life.

OLIVE MEADS

FOREWORD

My pleasure in reading my friend's book, **LOOKING BACK**, is greatly enhanced by my feeling of confidence in its proving not only of great interest to the thousands who assuredly will read it, but also the certainty of its being a perfect and even necessary companion to **THE WHITE LOTUS**, by his colleague Ernest Meads, in the great spiritual, missionary and rescue work which they carried on with such devotion and success for upwards of thirty-five years. Each book is the complement of the other, and I commend **LOOKING BACK** as invaluable to earnest Spiritualists and to all with open minds.

H. A. HOOD-DANIEL



Percy Johnson & Ernest Meads

*Go thou thy way and I go mine, apart yet not afar:
Only a thin veil hangs between the pathways where we are.
And God keep watch 'tween thee and me, this is my prayer;
He looketh thy way, He looketh mine, and keeps us near.
I know not where thy road may lie, or which way mine will be,
If mine will lead through parching sand and thine beside the sea.
Yet God keeps watch 'tween thee and me, so never fear:
He holds thy hand, He claspeth mine, and keeps us near.*

Introduction

Few people who set out to write a diary keep it going for long, and most of them, on looking back, find dates which are blank, hopes which have not materialised and aims which have not been achieved! Some entries, however, remain stored in their memory to be used for future guidance though life. The experience of hopes deferred is not unprofitable to those still young and with a world of adventure and opportunity in front of them!

For myself, however, the youth stage belongs to the far away past, as I have already lived man's allotted span of three score years and ten. Nevertheless, on looking back I have decided to record some of the events of my life in the hope that they may be both interesting and helpful to those who read.

I am a Spiritualist of many years' standing and my varied experiences may be useful to some who are just on the threshold of the Great Storehouse of Truth and Enlightenment as I once was. One thing has been amply proved by my experiences, and that is that "God moves in a mysterious way His wonders to perform" . . . a way mysterious to us all at certain times, until the Future reveals to us the plan and the object of it all.

You may not agree with my views, you may not accept my findings, but I present them in the hope that you will give them thought and will reason them out for yourself in your own way. Of one thing you can be assured: if you are a seeker after Truth and if you seek aright, you will surely find it! This has been my experience again and again.

Preliminary Work with Ernest Meads & Bob Barker

About the year 1907, when I was a Methodist and a steward of a Wesleyan Church, I became interested in Spiritualism and started my investigations by sitting in a private family circle. One night, while sitting in this circle, I became faint and wondered what was happening, only to discover that I was entranced! That was the beginning of my trance mediumship!

About this time, also, I became acquainted with a Mr. Robert Barker, a fine character and a good medium, but little known then. One morning, while we were walking together down Oxford Street, London, he suddenly exclaimed: "Why, here comes Mr. Meads; I must introduce you" I little thought, when I took his hand, that he was to be both my chum and my very dear friend for the next thirty-five years! He there and then invited me to lunch, and I found myself in the presence of a man of great sympathy and largeness of heart, which encouraged me to reveal some thoughts that were troubling me.

I asked him if he believed in eternal punishment, on which I thought the teaching of the Churches was wrong, for it was written "God . . . gave His only begotten Son"

that we “should not perish, but have everlasting life.” I thought that the teaching of the Churches was inconsistent and that eternal damnation or torment was not only illogical but untrue. He assured me that this subject had troubled him also, but that finally he was convinced that God's Love was given to all and was for all, free from reservations or conditions, and that there is hope in the Life Beyond for the most sinful who seek forgiveness and for guidance in their desire to progress.

I am aware that there are many who will not accept this, but it is my firm conviction after many years of study and seeking. Spiritualism asserts this truth; and all communicators from the Spirit World, without exception, state this, not as their opinion, but as a fact which anyone who seeks in the right spirit and with sincerity can prove for himself. Whatever your faith, belief or creed, I would say: “Be reasonable and prove all things, holding fast to that which you have proved to be good!”

After this discussion, Meads and I had many heart to heart talks, and often our hearts burned within us as we talked by the way. One afternoon in particular stands out in my memory, when, while sitting with him under the trees in Hyde Park, I solemnly dedicated my mediumship to The Master's Service, in the words of the well-known hymn:

*Forbid it, Lord, that I should boast
Save in the Cross of Christ my God;
All the vain things that charm me most,
I sacrifice them to His Blood.
Were the whole realm of nature mine,
That were an offering far too small;
Love so amazing, so divine,
Demands my soul, my life, my all.*

It is impossible to give more than a few of my experiences as my friend and I tramped London, North, South, East and West, and also many parts of the countryside.

I gave myself up to the control of many poor souls who had sad stories to tell of mis-spent lives and lost opportunities. Others were tied down by the love of material things, such as the possession of great wealth or the desire to acquire it; and yet others had had earthly fame and were still seeking applause. It is astounding how some in the Spirit World still cling to titles, gold lace, medals and other emblems of earthly power and position!

There were other and much happier visitants, however, and beautiful and uplifting discourses were delivered by Nonconformist Ministers, Clergymen, Priests and Cardinals of the Roman Church, amongst them being John Wesley and Cardinal Newman. Also, many a poor man or woman came with messages of comfort and

help, showing us the way to that which is brightest and holiest in life. Often, before leaving a cemetery, after hours of strenuous work for the Master, when our power was waning John Wesley or Cardinal Newman, or both, would come to our aid and address those souls we were unable to touch, and with marvellous eloquence and beauty of language would appeal to these souls to leave the things of earth and look above to Him Who loves them with an everlasting Love. The depth and beauty of these addresses are beyond my tongue or pen to describe.

About the year 1910, Meads, Barker and myself used to meet in an A.B.C. restaurant for morning coffee, occupying a table at the far end of the basement smoking room. It was at such times that Barker was frequently controlled by many exalted spirit entities who were in close touch with the Master. Although notes were taken on these occasions, I am unable to trace them now; but I remember we considered that these discourses were the real foundation of our future activities, and for our education rather than for public use at that stage, when Spiritualism was not so widely known as it is to-day. Furthermore, to announce the fact that these discourses (regardless of their beauty) were delivered by spirit entities to us three mortals in an A.B.C. smoking room, would certainly have caused the public to ridicule the messages and label us as fanatics or madmen, as was St. Paul, and many another before his time and since.

I should here like to give a few details about Bob Barker, as we called him. He was a man before his time - a splendid medium who lived and worked for others, yet who passed on known only to a few. Both he and his work, however, will ever live with those of us who were his friends and knew of his work for and love of his Master.

Bob was not connected with any sect and had no creed, as he had had no religious training but was entirely self-developed; yet he possessed a humble child-like faith and confidence in his Father God. Early in life, he entered the Army and was a good shot and boxer. He had also seen something of circus-life, and was well known among circus folk; and later on his hobbies were billiards and fishing. So you see he was a man of many interests and much experience, through all of which he had lived a clean life, respected by all who knew him. He had had little education - the World was his University - but the result as expressed by his life emphasises the fact that education and special training are not the Alpha and Omega of Spiritual Progression, but rather clean thinking and doing, and striving for things spiritual before things material. Service not Self.

That was Bob as we knew him, a worthy instrument or medium, used by St. Francis of Assisi and other exalted spirits to give forth some of the most beautiful and uplifting discourses it has been my privilege to listen to. He passed into the Higher Life in 1916, at the age of eighty-four years and six months. A great pioneer in the battle for truth - the truth that will prevail!

So Bob passed on, leaving Meads and myself to follow in his footsteps by trying to spread the truth as he did. His is the vanished hand and the voice that is still, so far

as human eyes and ears can tell, but Bob still lives and works in larger fields with unlimited scope. This is the reward of all who sincerely strive to walk the path which leads to eternal day and everlasting activity in the Master's service. Thus we continued our way, with the full assurance that Bob was, in spirit, still walking with us along the path.

Regent Street and Brompton Cemetery

In looking back, I notice that Regent Street was often the scene of my early experiences in Spiritualism. It was after one of our meetings for morning coffee at an Oxford Street A.B.C., when friend Barker, under control, had been at his best, giving us one of Cardinal Newman's fluent and impressive addresses, that we turned down Regent Street, leaving Meads at Oxford Circus.

A short way down on the left-hand side, I found my friend again going under control. He turned to me demanding me to stand still, at the same time himself turning and walking into a jeweller's shop. It can be easily understood that I felt nervous and anxious as to what would happen to him, at the same time knowing that the good spirit friends would look after him. So I obeyed his orders and stood still. It was no small joy to me, however, to see him return safe and sound. On joining me (and remember this was happening on the pavement in the middle of Regent Street), the control seemed stonger than ever. I noticed that in his hand he held a cardboard box which, I learnt later, contained a small silver cross. Laying his hand on my shoulder, he spoke in a loud deep voice, which I recognised as that of Cardinal Newman, saying: "I hand you this emblem of the Master's dying Love. Let it not leave you by day or by night. May the Holy Presence be with you in your going out and in your coming in!" That silver cross has hung round my neck for over thirty years and I trust always will!

What the general public thought of us on that occasion as they passed by, in large numbers, it would be interesting to know, but, strange as it may seem, no one touched us or appeared to take any notice of us.

On that same morning, after my friend Bob had left me, without even saying good-bye, a very strange thing happened, an incident which it is hard to explain. Continuing my walk down Regent Street alone, thinking of what had happened, I noticed an old deformed woman tramp, rather dirty and bedraggled, with loose grey hair hanging round her shoulders. As she came towards me she suddenly stopped, curtsied in front of me and made the sign of the Cross. Being taken by surprise, I took no notice of her, much to my subsequent regret, as I have no doubt she was clairvoyant and saw someone with me. I made special journeys to try and meet that woman again but without success. I had lost my opportunity!

Again in Regent Street, Meads and I were standing at the corner of Conduit Street at about 11 o'clock one morning, with the crowds and busy traffic around us, when,

much to my alarm, I felt myself being controlled! In a circle this would be quite in order, but in the middle of the pavement of busy Regent Street it unnerved me for a moment. However, Meads's hand and voice reassured me.

The control was an old woman, who for many years swept a crossing at the spot where we were standing. Meads asked her why she was there, as the modern roads of cement and wood produced no mud to be swept away, and he tried to direct her thoughts to things higher and now of more importance to her. She replied: "I have stood here many a long earthly day. I have felt the warmth of the sun in summer and shivered in the wind and snow of winter; and through it all I have tried to keep the pathway clean, receiving occasional pennies from the passers-by; but there is still mud in Regent Street to-day, friend! And here I stand with my broom, not to collect pennies as of old, but to help some poor soul on his or her way home; and it may be that Old Ann has helped to make the road a little cleaner and easier to lead not to an earthly home, but to one the Master has gone to prepare. There is no mud there, friend! Good-bye!"

And so we were left alone again. "God bless you, Ann!" said my friend Meads. "You have done my heart good. Sweep on!" And with a teardrop marking the spot - the Holy Ground - on which we had stood, we passed on our way after an experience I shall never forget. God bless Old Ann! I have since often wished that there were more "Old Anns" in the world, doing their humble tasks in the service of others. We then realised that our duty was to try to follow in the Master's footsteps and do the things allotted to us, not to pick and choose to suit ourselves.

As I have mentioned before, friend Meads and I frequently had lunch together in the West End, and on one of these occasions, while partaking of coffee, I looked into my empty cup, for some reason that I cannot explain, and began to see therein a picture of a burial ground with a railway running down one side of it. My friend, seeing what I was doing, asked what I saw. Having explained to him my vision, he felt quite convinced that I was seeing Brompton Cemetery, with the West London District Railway which passes down the side. "There is no doubt," he said, "that we are wanted there to do some work."

With all my love for Spiritualism and desire to work for the Master, I did not at that moment feel that my nerves were in a fit condition to face control in a cemetery, and I did not want to fall in with my friend's idea, and inwardly wished I had not told him what I had seen. Therefore, for some time I tried to dissuade him; but no, he felt we were to go and go we must at once!

So asking my guides for help and protection, we got on a 'bus at Piccadilly and off we went to West Brompton, getting down at the gates of the cemetery. It would be hard to explain what my feelings were at that moment, but I had a very strong desire to run away!

However, I am pleased I overcame that desire, as it turned out to be a most wonderful and eventful afternoon! Some of the incidents of that visit are recorded in Ernest Meads's book 'The White Lotus' and these I refrain from giving here, but there were others, notes of which have been handed to me since my friend passed over.

On entering the cemetery, I suggested it would be wise to go into the chapel and spend a short time in prayer. This we did, and I have no recollection of leaving that place of prayer; but I am told that I took Meads by the hand, and for two hours walked him to this part and that as I was controlled first by one and then another of the distressed spirits there. Some pleaded for help, others confessed sins they had been able to hide in their earthly life, whilst yet others were anxious to impress us with the might of their worldly position and possessions.

There was, at the time of our visit, a round piece of open unused ground, at one corner of which was a large bed of evergreens. It was on the path beside this bed that another spirit controlled me. He spoke in broken English, and my friend thought at first that he was of French origin, but he turned out to be an Indian.

His complaint seemed to be that we were walking on his earthly body, and he requested us not to do so. I have learnt since that the Indians consider the graves of their dead to be very sacred, and anyone walking or even putting a foot on one of them is looked upon as insulting the memory of the one whose body is buried there.

My friend explained to this visitor that we were standing on the public path which had been recently made beside an open space, and that only the evergreens were near us. Again he requested us not to stand on his grave, and again my friend pointed out that we were not doing so, nor would we wish to stand on any grave. "But," said my friend, "why are you standing about a London cemetery guarding your body? Surely there are better things for you to do than that?" And so Meads pointed him to a Higher Life, telling him that the medium through whom he was speaking had with him a Red Indian named Black Hawk, who would help him to find the Great White Spirit. Then there followed a conversation between the two Indians in their native language.

After this my doctor control requested that I should be taken to a seat to rest for a few moments, as the last incident, following on the earlier ones, had somewhat depleted my strength. While I was thus seated, my friend Meads returned to the evergreen bushes, and, on pulling one aside, he found a tombstone on which was written: "To the Memory of Lone Wolf"! And then came a statement that he had been a member of Buffalo Bill's Circus and was a Mexican rough-rider. There seemed every possibility that the grave did extend under the path as the stone was some years old and quite overgrown.

I have previously pointed out how frequently spirits are earthbound by pride of worldly position. One such came to us as we walked through Brompton Cemetery.

We were taken, after one or two minor cases, to a part of the cemetery where some of the richer families have their graves. It must be remembered that this cemetery, being so near the West End of London when it was quite a residential centre, was often used by very wealthy people; and so one finds not only beautiful and ornate tombstones, but in some cases little chapels over the graves, which are built of solid white marble and have doors to them and stained glass windows, and inside shelves supporting the coffins.

It was while passing a beautiful chapel of this description, with marble angels keeping guard each side of the door that a spirit controlled. He informed us that he was Lord . . . , and that his body was within. "What think you of my monument?" he asked, "which I built myself, and the cost ran into many hundreds of pounds!"

He was very anxious to impress us with the high standing of his family, and with the fact that he had been an officer in the Army, a Lord-in-waiting to the Crown and a representative to Foreign Courts. It seemed money had been left to keep the chapel as we saw it, and to have it cleaned and repaired when necessary so as to keep up the honour of the family, and so on . . . but Meads stopped him.

"Now, friend," he said, "let us talk a little sense. I quite realise that your family was highly born and greatly respected, but what has that to do with your position now? Do you realise that you have passed through the stage called death, and that you are now speaking through someone else's earthly body? Now listen to me! What you are telling me only shows that you are very proud of what were once your earthly possessions and that you are being held down by them. Forget them! They are no good to you now! Meads then talked to him at some length, pointing him to a Higher Life. We finally left the spot, feeling that we had talked not only to this Lord, but to many of like mind and in like position.

Before we left the cemetery, we passed the poorer section of the ground. Many mounds had no stone or mark to denote whose they were, and it was in this part and by one of these mounds that a control spoke as follows: "See these little mounds of earth? What do they signify? Only mounds mark the places where the humble poor lay. Oh, how I love those little mounds of earth! No stone or cross marks the spot where lies all that was mortal of those who had their trials, temptations, disappointments, vanished hopes and failures! Think not that these have lived in vain. Some love emanated from their lives, some influence on which to build the foundation of our own lives and of those coming after us. It may be that some seed of love planted by them will germinate in far distant lands and develop among strange surroundings away from the smoke and turmoil of a busy city, and so help those who see it to look up to that which is holiest and best! Beneath these mounds lie the bodies of loving mothers, who have worked hard to protect the children they loved, and who have stitched far into the night making and mending clothes for them. They have counted life not dear for those they loved, and the world is the

better for them! No! They have not lived in vain! Oh, how I love these little mounds of earth!”

As my friend and I drew near the gates, tired, worn and sad, John Wesley offered prayer: “Oh, Father, at the close of this earthly day, may we feel Thee nearer! May no earth-born cloud arise to hide Thee from Thy servants’ eyes, but in the sunset of this day may we see the emblem of Eternal Life! Bless the lonely, be near the poor and remind us all of the glory of Thine everlasting Love! Amen.”

So the day ended. It was indeed an experience never to be forgotten.

The Haunted House

Those who knew Ernest Meads best will remember him as a lecturer and platform speaker, a work he was well fitted for, being gifted with a marvellously clear, strong voice, and having had early training in elocution and experience as an actor.

Sunday after Sunday for many years found him speaking in different parts of London and the country. One of his delights was to answer questions put to him from the audience, and anyone in doubt or perplexity always found in Ernest Meads a friend ready to help. Not only was this help given from the platform, but also in his response to the many letters he received at home.

It is to one of these letters that I wish to draw the reader’s attention. Meeting him one morning, as was my custom, I noticed he seemed preoccupied and worried. On asking the reason, I was shown a letter that he had received that morning, and being requested to read it, I did so. It was from a woman at Wandsworth, and told of her house being haunted. She said they heard strange noises in the house at night and sounds of things being moved about in the loft! But worst of all, when they came down in the morning, they found the kitchen table had been moved against the door so that they were unable to get in that way and had to enter by means of the garden and window! “You will easily understand,” she wrote, “that no servant or anyone else will stop in the house. To make things still worse, I am an invalid with rheumatism, and apart from the fact of a charwoman coming in for a few hours, I am alone all day, as my husband is in business in the West End.” The letter closed asking if anything could possibly be done as the situation had become unbearable.

“Well, what do you think of it?” asked my friend. I found it hard to reply at the moment. I had never heard of anything like it. Then I said: “The first thing that occurs to me is that there must be a physical medium in the house. Second, I would suggest that they are in an old house with many evil associations. Or thirdly, it may be that some spirit objects to their living there. At any rate, I said, and whatever the cause, it is very trying for this poor woman. One could think of many reasons and be no nearer the truth!”

“I agree with you,” said my friend. “We might talk all day and be no nearer a solution of the difficulty.” Then he added: “Now something has to be done. Being known as a teacher on Spiritualism, I cannot put the matter on one side - neither do I wish to. I want to help them. I want to ask you: would you be afraid to enter that house?”

“No, certainly not!” I replied. “Right! Then the way is clear. I am going to write to this poor woman and ask her if I may come to see her, and if so, would she object to my bringing a friend with me. If we receive a favourable reply, you and I will go, and God will see us through.”

A day and time were eventually fixed, and my friend and I, after a light lunch, started out for Wandsworth. It was a beautiful summer afternoon, for which we were very glad as the address proved difficult to find. At last we discovered it on the other side of the Common, near Earlsfield. All the time we had been looking for an old country mansion, but you can imagine our surprise when our destination proved to be a modern villa in a row of houses newly built! In fact, the road was not made up, nor the street more than half finished! So my suggestion of an old family residence was no good!

We looked to see, however, if there were any foundations of such a house, or remains of a park. But no, it had been a market garden for years and there were no signs of its having ever been anything else. So with all our ideas fallen to the ground, we knocked at the door. This was opened by the woman herself, who was hobbling along on two sticks.

We both felt keenly sorry for her as she repeated to us the story she had written in her letter. The impression I got from the appearance of the drawing-room in which we sat was that the woman had seen better days, although every comfort surrounded us. So there we sat, the old lady in an upright armchair, holding on to her sticks, and with two large dogs sitting by her side, which her husband had got for her protection.

Still thinking I might find some clue to the mystery, I asked permission to look round the garden. “Certainly,” was the reply, “go anywhere you like. I only regret being unable to join you owing to my stiffness.” My reason for wanting to see the garden, which was only a small one, was to ascertain what was beyond the back fence, for there must assuredly be some cause of all this unpleasantness. All that we could see, however, was a vast cabbage field, which was soon to become streets of houses, as they were opening up a new district here.

“This is a mystery,” I said to my friend. “I can’t get the slightest clue, or feel anything to start on.”

He suggested that the best thing to do was to return to the house, and give myself up to control. That was all right in a way, but I remembered that there were two big dogs in the room, and the fact has been proved many times over that most dogs are

clairvoyant, and, for that reason, often dangerous to have in a room where spiritual phenomena are going on. Looking at it all round, I felt it would be as well if we put on our hats and went home again! Just as I was going to suggest this, I saw behind the old lady the form of a man, whom I described to her. With a bright cheery smile, she at once recognised him as her father!

She was very pleased, and went on to tell me what a good man he was and how he was loved by everybody.

“Yes,” she said, “but the end of his life was clouded by a great family trouble, and we ourselves are brought to reduced circumstances in consequence . . . all through the evil deeds of a relative.”

We both expressed our sorrow as she told of the money that had been wasted on women and wine by the relative just mentioned; and how, with her health broken down, she felt the need of the comforts she would have had, instead of being alone in a haunted house shunned by all!

While we were listening to her trouble, a strange, cold, numb feeling came over me, which I could not account for; and at the same time, I saw the face of a man under a chair. Apologising for interrupting the conversation, I told her I wanted to describe a face I had seen, and that I felt I must do so at once.

No sooner had I described the man than the old lady flew into a most violent passion!

“That is the man who has brought ruin on our home!” she cried, time after time. “He is the man who hastened the death of my father! Tell him to clear out! I hate him; I don’t want him near me!”

Knowing little of medical affairs, I was afraid for the woman's heart; but Meads came to the rescue, and taking her by the hand, explained to her that she really must not speak so unkindly of the poor man, however bad he had been. He was suffering for his past deeds by seeing the distress caused by his evil life. I interrupted by asking if she was in any way religious.

“Yes,” she said. “When I was well enough, I never missed attending Church with my husband. I was always brought up to it from a child.”

“Then,” said Meads, “you have frequently repeated the Lord’s Prayer in form, but never really prayed it.”

“I fail to grasp your meaning!” she said.

“Well,” he continued, “what about: Forgive us our trespasses as we forgive them that trespass against us?”

He had hardly got out those words when a most violent control took possession of me. It was the relative who had done so much harm by his wasted life. Falling on my

knees, I buried my face in her lap and, with tears running down my face, called: "Mercy, mercy! Forgive me, forgive me! I'm in Hell!"

My friend Meads talked and prayed with him, and tried to lead the man to Him Who could forgive to the very uttermost. Thus he brought peace to the unhappy soul.

On coming out of my trance, I found myself lying on the floor at the woman's feet, but on regaining my normal position a very gentle control took me - I believe it was John Wesley, who often controlled - and offered up a beautiful prayer. Then he stretched out my hand and, taking the old lady's in it, said: "Let us say the Lord's Prayer together." This we did.

A neighbour kindly helped the old lady to bed, and never again was a ghostly sound heard in that house!

On our way home, talking of the events of the afternoon, Meads told me how nervous he was at the presence of the two big dogs! He felt that if they saw Black Hawk (my Indian guide), there was sure to be serious trouble, but, he said, a strange thing happened.

No sooner had I become clairvoyant and started to describe the old lady's father, than the dogs lay down on each side of her and went to sleep. They slept all through the excitement, and even when voices were raised almost to shouting, they never once opened their eyes! At one time I nearly trod on their paws, but even this did not awaken them. When, at the end, I fell prostrate on the ground, I only missed the biggest by about an inch! Only when I was on my feet again and had become normal did they wake up.

My friend agreed with me that this fact needed careful thinking about, for it proved the truth of the promise: "There shall no evil befall thee . . . for He shall give His angels charge over thee, to keep thee in all thy ways." (Ps. 91, vv. 10,11)

*I do not ask, O Lord, that life may be
A pleasant road;
I do not ask that Thou wouldst take from me
Aught of its load.
I do not ask that flowers should always spring
Beneath my feet:
I know too well the poison and the sting
Of things too sweet.
I do not ask my cross to understand,
My way to see:
Better in darkness just to feel Thy Hand
And follow Thee.*

On the Towing Path to Hampton Court

Ernest Meads and I often spent our holidays, both short and long, together, and as music releases the spirit from the trammels of the flesh, so the contemplation of Nature, resplendent in the sunshine, helps the soul to aspire and so awakens our better nature. We enjoy a foretaste of Heaven, and feel grateful to God for the gift of life!

Something of this is my feeling as I recall a happy day in early June with my companion, on the Thames. It is long, now, since State Barges were rowed on its surface, but for generations the river Thames has been a holiday resort for all sorts and conditions of people, who have visited it in varying moods. Some of these visits, unfortunately, do not always end happily, as in the case of a man my friend Meads knew, whose boat was capsized over a weir. He was saved, but his son, who was with him, was drowned! I knew nothing of this at the time, but this young man was the first to control me on this June day of ours.

He said: "I'm getting on. It's no use skulking about the old spot. Alas, such carelessness! Such larking about, and looking at the girls! I would like to have lived longer, but I can't help it now. There are one or two things I would like to have cleared up before passing over, but it's too late now. It was the outcome of carelessness!"

As we were passing the Lock, another spoke. "I am Mary, the Lock keeper's daughter. Mine was a sad life. I spent much of my time standing upon the lock, watching the boys go through. It was very lonely in the winter and I ran away after the boys. I left home and came to town with a young fellow who came for me. I was ashamed to go back home again, and so I broke my old people's hearts! Many a time I wandered down the back streets of Whitechapel and Blackfriars and often looked at the river! It was the same stream as I saw at home, but oh, how dirty, how defiled! I often longed to go back - but no, I could not! I was lost! The fact that I never returned killed my old Mother, and Dad thought of me to the last! As a happy girl, I used to stand in my pink frock on the lock gates, and pull them open amid the cheers from the boys as they got their boats through. The river still rolls on, the flowers grow on its banks and the birds sing; but where the mud is thick and the stream dirty, it makes cold the dark room of a fallen woman!"

My friend reminded her of the Love of Jesus and of His invitation to her to come to Him, for she was certainly weary and heavy laden, and He would give her rest!

In a bright and cheery manner, the control then broke out into song: " 'It's only a penny to Twickenham Ferry!' "That was my song," said Mary, the Lock keeper's daughter. "I was attracted to the spot again by your kind thoughts."

Friends, life is similar to the river, which is bright and gay in the sunshine, with flowers and birds on the banks, but dull and dirty in the shadows and slimy backwaters! At last, however it empties itself into the boundless sea, and is purified.

As we continued our walk and drew near to Hampton Court, Cardinal Wolsey controlled and spoke at some length. I have the notes which friend Meads took at the time, and among other things, he said:

“My life is already recorded with its sins and mistakes. I climbed to a ledge at a giddy height from the ground, but the foundation crumbled beneath me! How much I regret that I did not use my power, and that of the Church which was behind me, to rebuke the vices of the Court! If I had, I might have lost my life, but better for me had I done so. What was the popularity which I sought? It was like a feather upon the river, at which the boys throw stones! It is blown hither and thither only to be lost at last in the great sea of time. It was so with my life, much to my regret. England and the Church might have been in a better condition now, if I had not failed in life and forgotten my God!”

Cardinal Wolsey's talk, of which the above is a brief outline only, was followed by an address and prayer by John Wesley, as was usually the case after mission work. This I give in full, as I consider it one of his best; and please bear in mind that it was uttered on the towing path close to Molesey Lock, near Hampton Court Palace. John Wesley closed the day thus:

“Friend, time, so called by man, is passing, and physical strength weakening, but at the close of an earthly day, I say to thee as to those gathered around: Why stand ye gazing into the sky? Why? A cloud has received Him out of our sight. Oh, friends, the chronicle of His Life is written; His words of peace are with ye! He said: I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly.’ (John 10, v. 10). Why gaze then at the cloud? Is He there? No! You are imagining a vain thing. Lift your thoughts above the clouds, which like the wind at the close of an earthly day are gone. He is not gone! He is with you even unto the end! Stay your gazing, He has risen! Hear what He says: Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world.’ (Matt. 28, v. 20). Let us realise Him as One who is not above the clouds but ever with us!”

Then Wesley prayed:

“At the end of this day, O Lord, hold Thou Thy Cross before my closing eyes, and point me ever upward, not with gazing eyes, but with eyes that look from earthly to spiritual things. Let me realise that Thou art ever near! Amen.”

That same evening, after returning home, I was sitting with my friend Meads in his study at the top of his house. It was twilight, and in the dimness I saw upon the horizon the church of St. Michael, Highgate. The Rev. H. F. Lyte then controlled, and said:

“Change and decay in all around I see,

O Thou Who changest not, abide with me!

“The garden, once so bright, is now darkened in the shade; the trees so speckled with light, showing white beneath their leaves, are now dark. Change I see, and yet methinks, on yonder hill I see a spire that points upwards to the sky! The day is ended and the evening shadows fall, but the last thing seen in the dying glory is the pinnacle made by man, that points to Him Who has given all the glory. Stand, O spire, and remind us, when the day is dark and the flowers have lost their colour, that on yonder hill a pinnacle points upward to the sky. So, O Lord, hold Thou Thy Cross before our closing eyes. Amen.”

Surely Christian Spiritualism is a Pearl of Great Price! And does not one such holiday justify that word's original meaning and prove it a Holy Day in very deed?

In writing of these things which are so full of interest to me, and I hope to you also, I am rather handicapped by the number of confessions made to us, which are private and sacred. My friend and I look back on many pleasant hours spent in Hampton Court Palace, where many sad stories were told and confessions made by historical characters, which as I have said are sacred and must be withheld from these records.

Also, during two weeks spent in the Isle of Wight, we again touched on much that must not be told.

In Ventnor Cemetery, to mention one place only, we had many spirit visitors who wished information to be passed on to their friends and relatives, but as we knew nothing of them, it was impossible for us to do this. Others came with the same pitiful stories of wasted lives and spiritual ignorance. Also, Ventnor being a great sanatorium for consumptive cases, there were many who had been cut down in their prime, and who felt they had been badly dealt with in not being allowed to continue an earthly life, so as to enjoy the prospect of not only marrying those they loved and had left behind, but also of having the experience of a home and family of their own. Mothers who had left their babies behind to the care of strangers, to these again we listened, and to many who were sad.

Brighton and Rottingdean

To give a few of the other places we went to in the Master's name, I would mention Dover, Folkestone, Ramsgate, Margate and Brighton, visiting the last many times.

In the Pavilion of the Palace there, we found many tied down through the follies and gaieties of the Court life. Ladies of title and Army officers came asking our help to lift them from their surroundings.

Again at Black Rock, we came in touch with those who had taken their lives by jumping from the cliff into the sea and were thus tied down to the scene of their last earthly remembrance. We found it hard to judge who was to blame in many of these cases, as it seemed to us that a little more love and sympathy from friends would have saved the catastrophe.

A London servant girl came to us in tears and anguish as we stood at the end of Brighton Pier one day, telling us how one dark night she had dropped her new born baby into the sea and was now gazing at the spot. I say again, it is hard to feel who is to blame. Surely someone forgot a little loving and sympathetic help!

Oh friends, and all of you who read these lines, if you had only heard the sorrows poured out to us! What a different light would be given to Spiritualism today! You would find out that the little word LOVE has, in many cases, never yet been learnt, although the Holy Master came to teach it over nineteen hundred years ago! "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself." (Mark 12, vv. 30-33.)

It was at the Pavilion Palace, Brighton, that Meads frequently gave lectures to a Spiritualist Society, and on these occasions I generally joined him.

A small number of the company usually met at tea after these lectures, when I was often able to give some clairvoyant descriptions.

It was at one of these tea parties that Meads introduced me to Mr. Hood-Daniel, who will be remembered as a contributor to 'The Greater World'.

On one visit, Mr. Hood-Daniel asked us to break our journey home and stay at his house at Plumpton Green. This we were pleased to do, and we remained until the next day. During a walk in the lovely country surrounding his house, we received a beautiful trance address, and I don't feel I can do better than give you Mr. Meads's own notes taken at the time, and which were eventually meant for publication in 'The Greater World':

"H. A. Hood-Daniel, Percy H. Johnson and Ernest Meads stood upon the spongy soil produced by the accumulation of the dead leaves of many years, in a copse by the side of a pond adjoining what had once been an ancient British road. Around us was the tender green of spring, at our feet were clusters of anemones, wood violets and primroses. The silence was broken by the intermittent notes of the nightingale and the distant voice of the cuckoo. The exquisite beauty of it all appealed to the better nature of each of us, and we felt that it was good to be there! Johnson passed into trance.

"Now, oh man of the world, I have something to say! Thou hast seen to-night that the keynote of life and of all experience is the development of love in the soul: that love should be a love for the Divine Unseen Redeemer! He lived as we live and we must live as He lived, with the desire for something holier and better. When the Law was given: 'Thou shalt keep the seventh day holy,' it was meant to provide a break from worldly toil, ambition and gain. Man has misconstrued that and has made the Sabbath a day of obligation and routine. It has not been a day of spiritual uplifting, a day of rest, an opportunity of seeking something that shall uplift the soul, but rather a day in which to sit comfortably in churches, to save one's soul! Men are like grass, no two blades of which are alike. All must find a path which will lead to our Maker.

It should not be only on the seventh day that we endeavour to uplift the soul to higher thoughts!

“Here and now, where you stand, lift up your soul to the Highest! I stand in the body of a mortal, at the close of an earthly day, and under and around me are decayed leaves, which in the past have brought joy and gladness by their beauty. They have fallen and have mingled with the earth. Where would this beauty of nature have been but for them and for the summer suns gone by? Let us be uplifted to see God in Nature. He has given it to us to train us to look higher. Where would be the joy and beauty of the present day without the fallen leaves of past ages? It is thus in human life. There the bodies lie beneath the ground, whether good or bad they lie there, withered and crumbled. They have made a surface and provided soil on which other souls may live in the present day. We see the trees and twigs point upward to the skies: what are they but the result of the death of ages gone by? It is even so, our lives do not die but serve as fertilizers for future generations. Good-bye!”

We have never been sure who this control was, but a few paces along the road John Wesley spoke:

“Many have trodden this path before, weary and hungry. It is now full of swamps and weeds, trees lie across the path and it is beset with obstacles. In days gone by large companies walked this road, and to-day we walk along the path where many a weary one has tramped.

“So the road of life may be covered in places with weeds and slush, and have many pitfalls in which some have slipped and fallen; but though rough and rugged it ends at last by the fireside in the comfort of Home!

“ ‘He shall give His angels charge over thee, to keep thee in all thy ways. They shall bear thee up in their hands, lest thou dash thy foot against a stone.’

“O Father, at the close of this day, may thine everlasting arms uphold us, and may thine angels sustain us until we reach Thy House where there are many mansions; if it were not so Thou wouldst have told us!

“Go thy way! He hath loved thee with an everlasting Love! Amen.”

H. A. Hood-Daniel remarked later that, when going along the road with us, he felt very conscious of the presence of his mother. He had no sooner told us this than the medium (P. H. J.) suddenly turned round and kissed him and said: “Of course I’m with you!”

All those of my readers who have been to Brighton will have paid a visit to the lovely little village of Rottingdean. They will remember the winding village street, with its picturesque old cottages, that leads to the beach.

My friend Meads and I loved this spot, and have spent many enjoyable hours there. We would wander about among the old thatched dwellings, many of which were showing need of repair, some of them nearly falling down. We would picture in our

minds the fishing village of years ago, and so trace our footsteps across the village green, past the horse pond and into the churchyard, the place sacred to those who had lived and died in past ages.

I find in my friend's notes that many controlled me there. First there was the old woman who said: "Was that the bell that I heard?" (The clock had just struck.) "How well I know the sound of that bell! I heard it in the grey morning dawn and I heard it in the evening sunset. I heard it calling me to prayer, and it helped me to think of God with love. I pray that when the maidens of to-day hear it, they may recognise it as a call to prayer, and that it may inspire them to an effort to lead a good life. I lived in the cottage in which you had tea, and was known as 'Old Fanny'."

Another control told of how he knew Burne-Jones, the well-known painter. We understood that the beautiful stained glass windows were his work and that he gave these windows to the church. They are noted for their beautiful colouring.

William Black, the novelist, who is buried in the churchyard, spoke at some length. He said: "I did not actually live here but often came to this place when I wanted to be alone, in order to think. I used to draw up my tales here, and I often had good and noble thoughts while sitting here, which I now regret not having written down. I had great opportunities of doing much good, but I let them slip." The rest of his address was of a confessional and private nature.

We then had a visit from an old rector, who controlled me at the foot of his tomb. He said: "Yes, it is an old church, I don't know how old, but I have heard its bell ring out on many and various occasions. No dramatic incidents are associated with this spot: it has been always a quiet and peaceful place.

Youths back from their duties on the sea have whispered and exchanged vows of love that shall live for ever and ever. They have lived and experienced the vicissitudes of life, and many tears have been shed over the open grave when their bodies have been brought home to be buried side by side. The bell has heralded the smiling mother as she came forth from the porch with her newly baptised infant, and many others who have gathered there in joy and sorrow."

He then addressed the spirits that surrounded us: "You who stand around now, come with me and let us gather in the porch once more and hear the bell summon us to prayer. I have heard it in the rustling leaves and heard it in the rich glow of the sunset. Listen and we will hear it again now!"

The date on this rector's tomb told us he was buried one hundred and seventy-eight years ago. This goes to prove how little time counts in the everlasting life!

As we left for home, John Wesley pronounced the benediction at the lychgate: "The Blessing of the Lord Jesus Christ be with you for ever and ever. Amen."

So we left Rottingdean Church with the feeling of that peace that passes all understanding!

Reprints from “The Greater World”

By the introduction of my friend Meads, it was my privilege to be one of the visitors to a circle under the early mediumship of Miss Winifred Moyes, from which tiny beginning has evolved the present world-wide organisation known to you all as ‘The Greater World Christian Spiritualist League’, with Miss Moyes still on very active service therein for the Master and Leader, Jesus of Nazareth. Who, among the members of that first circle, could have visualised such rapid growth and widespread results from such a small beginning? This indeed is something to urge us on to greater effort!

It is with Miss Moyes's permission that I repeat here two incidents that have already been reported by my friend Meads and published in ‘The Greater World’. The first is a beautiful talk on the Love of God by John Wesley, and the second a homely story of “the true spirit of charity.”

Beautiful Messages from John Wesley

Among those who strove earnestly to lead the spiritual life, a high place must be given to John Wesley, who, throughout the greater part of his long life of 87 years, was conspicuous for his undaunted courage and enthusiasm in the service of his Master, which he would naturally continue through the opportunities offered by the use of a medium. Nor would such a leader and lover of men be confined to one medium or to one circle, but might be expected to avail himself of any circle or medium with whom he found himself in tune.

The secret of attracting such a spirit is devotion to The Master, since love for Him is the core and centre of the life of the saint. On a radiant afternoon in late springtime, Percy Johnson sat with me upon the top of Box Hill. We watched in silence the trains and cars coming and going to and from the busy town of Dorking in the distance, and strove to absorb something of the exquisite beauties of Nature by which we were surrounded. A sense of well-being stole over us, and soon my friend lapsed into a state of trance; it was John Wesley who spoke:

“Friend, this is a lovely spot, one that excites the poetic nature and brings about conditions of a superior quality. You are right to come to spot like this. It is part of the Divine order that His children should come to such spots. Have you thought, friend? - and it is a big thought: in the present day people criticise, argue, and doubt the theory of the love of our dear Master (and there is in the Spirit World sympathy and forbearance in such feelings and arguments) and men point triumphantly to the city with its turmoil, strife, jealousy, hatred and competition, and ask: ‘Where is proof of Divine Love?’ I want you to imagine whence the answer to the thought ‘God is Love’ would come from but for spots like this.

“Men, perplexed and worried, have sat here and looked around. The question then with them is not ‘is God Love?’ - for they have the feeling that God is Love. They hear the birds twitter, they see the land with its ruts, valleys, and hills, beautified by

the rich foliage of the trees; they sit here and say: 'There is no doubt that God is Love; has He not inspired those who possessed land to give to those who are weary and heavy-laden?' There is a restfulness about this spot and a sense of peace. We sit upon the hill-top and gaze into the valley below; we see the homes there of those with trials and sufferings which have to be faced. A small amount of that turmoil and strife we may see as we sit upon the hill-top, but we ourselves are at peace and feel in our hearts that God is Love.

"Life is a school, and for a few moments we emerge from the school-room. Why do we go to school? Because there are problems to be worked out, often with tears and anguish, and we have to face examinations that perplex us. We look out of the window of our schoolhouse and get a glimpse of our heavenly home and of conditions beyond the grasp of the human mind as we sit on the hill-top - the grass at our feet forms a carpet, given by Nature, representing to us something of Heaven and its beauties; trees are around us to keep us from the mid-day heat; the sweet fragrance of blossoms fills the air. What are these for, but to supply a peep through the window of the school of life? There may be perplexing problems, but here love is supreme.

"Let us go back to the old saying: 'All those who are weary and heavy-laden, come unto Me and rest.' I will place thee on the hilltop, with grass under thy feet instead of hard roads, flowers for fragrance, and birds in the trees, whose songs go up to Thee, O God! Here we realise the meaning of the words 'Come unto Me, and I will give you rest'; there is no argument to the fact that God is Love. This is Thy gift to us which no earthly hand can withhold - ours to enjoy, to have pleasure in, and to find rest. Come, all may have rest and peace!"

Then Wesley prayed:

"O Father, in the noon-day of Thy love, we thank Thee for such a glimpse of Thy love, of Thy thought for us, for such a proof of Thy intense interest in us. Give us not only daily bread, but also a desire to love and serve Thee - the Manna from Heaven to strengthen us, to help us to realise that through the school-room window Thy love may be seen. Raise our eyes to the hills, whence cometh help and strength, and when we come to the close, may the sunset of Thy love keep ever a reflection to brighten us and to fill us with Thy love. Then there will be no school, no problems, essays or sums, but Thou indeed wilt be our Teacher, leading all to the side of the hill whence Thy love springs. Lift our eyes, O Lord, to Thee for ever and ever. Amen."

I realised that this was not addressed to myself only, but also to many others who were gathered around, attracted by the light which surrounds us all when seeking to serve The Master. These, crowding into an atmosphere thus provided, were able to hear the spoken words.

On another occasion, as we were climbing the steps from the greensward (in by-gone days the sea-level) to the town of Rye, in Sussex:

“Many have climbed up these steps, which, as you see, are worn on both sides by people going up and down, and each leaves an impression on the stones, though it be but slight, as you also will leave yours.

“What an emblem of life!

“We all must climb the steps of life; a few hasten eagerly up, some loiter on the way to gaze around, while some lose heart and go down again. Many climb in weakness and in pain, but, stumbling on, they find a friend at the top. The Master climbed the steps of life first, and has left the impression of His Feet that we might place ours where His had trod. Let this be our ambition - to place our feet in His foot-prints. See to it, friend, that you climb with strength; push on with courage, it is worth the effort. I climbed above the foliage and the trees - the shadows, difficulties and disappointments - and looked up at the blue sky above, and rejoiced in the radiant sunshine. So may you; and find at the top the Master’s Love waiting to greet you with ‘Well done, good and faithful servant.’

Thus we are taught to associate spiritual thoughts with natural things, and to recognise with the poet, Pope,

*“All are but parts of one stupendous whole,
Whose body Nature is and God the soul.”*

True Story of a Hawker

*Let not Ambition mock their useful toil,
Their homely joys, and destiny obscure;
Nor Grandeur hear, with a disdainful smile,
The short and simple annals of the poor.*

(GRAY)

It seems to me that the true spirit of charity is best found among humble folk, and I need offer no apology for telling the following story.

A friend of mine was working in his garden when a poor hawker of trifles stopped at his gate and asked him to purchase a box of matches or a pair of boot-laces. Being of a gentle and sympathetic nature, my friend entered into conversation with the man and learned that he had known better days, but fate being against him, he was reduced to this precarious state of living; most doors were closed against him, and after tramping for miles the result was usually only a few coppers. As he spoke like an educated man and seemed to be genuine, my friend believed his story and bought some laces and matches, spoke kindly to him, and filled his pipe with tobacco.

A week or two later the old man called again, and was received by the wife, who asked him into her kitchen, gave him some tea and bread and butter, and sewed some buttons on his coat. From time to time he called and was always hospitably received.

After a few months the calls ceased, and one day a notice of his death, with the time of his funeral, came from the workhouse. On going to the infirmary, my friend learned that the poor fellow had no relatives or friends, but had requested that Mr. and Mrs. Johnson should be told of his death, as they had been kind to him.

So Johnson walked behind the coffin and stood bare-headed by the pauper's grave as the only mourner.

A day or two later at their sitting, the medium was controlled:

“Where am I? They tell me I have passed through death. I don't understand it . . . I was told to come here, and am looking for a man named Johnson. Tell him how dearly I love him. He was kind to me. He gave me love and taught me love. At the last I thought of him and his good wife. She is a dear little woman, and was most kind to me. She asked me in, and sewed my buttons on. Oh, friend! if they had been sewn on with threads of gold, they could not have been more precious to me. They taught me love; and I thought of her kindness as I lay on my death-bed. I love them both dearly. They are the only friends I had, and now I will do all I can to help them. All is well with me now. The nightmare of my life is over, and I am intensely happy.

“God bless them both!”

Sweet are the uses of adversity! It humbles a man and teaches him to appreciate and respond to love, and so enables him to learn the greatest and most essential lesson of life!

This spirit has visited us again, after a lapse of some years, and tells us that he is now engaged in inspiring with faith and patience mortals who are “down and out,” and so is trying to lead them on to the happiness which is in store for them.

This homely story should encourage us to perform kindred acts of charity; for though only now and then, and to a few, is such recognition possible, the action of love is ever the same; for love is the greatest vital force in the universe, and sooner or later all - from prince to pauper - must yield to its power.

The Spiritualist creates no laws, but is privileged to realise something of their influence upon the whole human family, though the majority may be unaware of it.

Marylebone Cemetery and Little Sammy

I have often been asked why I became an enquirer into Spiritualism after my early training in a Christian Methodist home. My answer has always been to give the following experience that came to me at the age of nine years.

It may be that some who read this are acquainted with the West End of London. To those who are not, I must point out that there is a street called Paddington Street that runs from High Street, Marylebone, to Baker Street. It is a busy thoroughfare, and the middle portion runs through the centre of an old burial ground, said by some to be the old churchyard of Marylebone Parish Church. This ground is protected by a low brick wall with railings on the top, and in the centre of the wall, on each side of the road, is a gate open for a few hours every day, but closed and locked at sunset.

At the present time this ground is laid out as a nice resting place with seats and flower beds, and is a pleasant haven for those who want quiet; but at the time of this incident, about 1875, it was in a very rough state. It had been closed for some years for burials, but the gravestones were still standing though some were very old and broken, and the general condition was untidy and uncared for. It was really a most dismal spot, very different from the lovely garden-like condition of the present day since the Parish has taken it over.

My early life and home were near this spot in the days of its dismal appearance, and wishing to visit a school chum one day in early autumn, I had to pass down this street. It was some time after the graveyard gates had been shut and locked for the night, when I noticed an old woman, of about seventy years of age, looking at me through the railings. The expression on her face was unhappy and careworn.

Without hesitation, I went up to her to ask if I should find the keeper of the keys to enable her to get out. You can fancy my feelings when she vanished under the coping of the wall! I realised at once that I had seen a ghost! There is no need to say that the school chum did not get a visit that night, for I just took to my heels and ran home for my life as fast as I could! A record was no doubt broken if a timekeeper had been at hand to register it!

As I stood trembling and breathless in my home that night, it would have been a surprise indeed if anybody had told me that this occurrence was to play an active part in the course of my future life; but so it was, for I never forgot the old lady in the churchyard, and as I grew into manhood, the sadness and worn expression of the woman's features remained with me.

Questions such as these often arose in my mind: What was the woman doing in the cemetery? Why wasn't she an angel in Heaven?

Time passed, and as it does with all, brought its frequent journeys to the open grave, with the longing for the touch of a vanished hand and the sound of a loving voice now hushed in death. It was at times like this that I prayed to God for His help; and have I asked in vain? No!

It was after many years that I visited the old burial ground again, and this time with Meads as my companion. I cannot say whether we found the old lady, but I do know

that we found many others; and I have the notes of the story given by one control which I feel may interest my readers.

I had been having a busy afternoon, being controlled by first one and then another, and feeling the need of a rest. Finding a seat in the shade of a tree, we sat down. Presently, almost without knowing it, I was controlled by a young boy. It seems, from what he told us, he was an illegitimate child, giving us details which need not be repeated here. At first he had some difficulty in understanding his surroundings, but eventually told us this story, which I am giving as taken down at the time.

“I don't understand this, nor do I know who you are.”

“We are friends,” said Meads, “two mortals trying to work for the Master by the wayside of earthly life.”

“I am only a little cripple boy,” said the spirit, “nothing to nobody!”

“Tell us all about it,” said my friend.

“They call me Sammy. One of my legs was twisted, and I had to get along on a crutch; it did pain so! I used to get so tired, and often could hardly get to my room. It was in a street somewhere near here (Paradise Street, High Street), and I often had to sit down on doorsteps or kerbs to rest.”

He went on to tell how some poor woman in another room would bring a big book (The Bible) and tell him about Jesus and how He loved little boys; and about the good angels who came to take care of and love little cripple boys, and also about her own little boy who was with Jesus, waiting for her to come to him. Then he told of one winter's night, when he returned to his little room so worn out and tired by pain that he could hardly get up the stairs, which he found so cold and dark, and had to rest very often to get breath.

But, suddenly, all seemed bright, and, standing on the landing was a Form all brightness, with outstretched hands, saying: “Suffer the little children to come unto Me, for of such is the Kingdom of Heaven.” It was Jesus!

Two silent men were later seen walking down High Street, Marylebone, with hearts full and tears in their eyes - and they were not ashamed to admit it!

The Waitress at Lyons' Restaurant

The readers of these pages will never quite understand the difficulty the writer has had in keeping away from all that is personal, and not only personal but even more private still, being in the nature of a confession. In doing mission work on the Spirit Plane, it is to be understood that such must be the case and all confidences must be respected and held sacred by those to whom they are confessed.

We are told that we must confess our sins, and my friend Meads and I, in our investigations of Spiritualism, have proved without doubt that this is true to the last

letter. There is no progression in the Spirit World until he or she has confessed his or her sins before God! The man or woman who has hastened the end of life may do so thinking that that is the end of all, but it is not so! Does not our Bible tell us that “No man liveth to himself”? That we have proved to be true, for the suicide only makes matters worse by the influence of the act.

My friend and I received instructions to go to the Thames Embankment. This we did on several occasions, but the things that happened there are too heart-rending to write about. The expectant mother, the thief, the undiscovered murderer, the professional man with University and Public School education, all of whom had fallen in the hour of temptation! We found many such who had tried to end all with one jump from the parapet, only to find they had made matters worse!

Oh friends, and all of you that read this book, let it be known to you that thousands are crying in this City of London alone: “Oh that I knew where I might find Him!”

I must draw the veil on these experiences, for, as I said before, they are too sad! Let our thoughts rather dwell on the old hymn:

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

As I have already stated, it is strange how my spiritual experiences were associated with Regent Street and the West End of London; and it is worth noting that not only did they start there but, as far as my fellow worker Meads was concerned, they also finished close by.

Ernest Meads, loved by many for his eloquence, personality, and talent as a public speaker, received his Higher Call while sitting in a ‘bus by the side of his wife, on the 25th January, 1937. It was only a few weeks before that date that I met him to have a talk as to the re-filling of two empty chairs in our home circle, caused, first, by the death of my wife and, later, of my sister-in-law. We realised that the strength of the circle needed fresh members, so an appointment was made to talk things over and consider the best thing to do. This meeting took place one Wednesday afternoon and we adjourned, as was our custom for such talks, to a Lyons’ tea shop close to Regent Street.

Having found a quiet and isolated corner, we ordered some light refreshment, and after it had been served, I started with my suggestions on the matter of building up the circle. I had not got very far, when I was interrupted by the waitress’s coming and standing by my side.

I waited a moment for her to go away, but as she still remained, I said: “Thank you very much, we have all we require!”

I was somewhat startled when my friend took my hand and asked me what was the matter. I replied: "Nothing that I know of, only we can't talk about Spiritualism in front of a waitress!" "To what waitress do you refer?" asked my friend. "Why, the one who came just now to see if we had all that we wanted," I replied. "But, my dear sir, no waitress has been near us since she carried out our order." "Pardon me, friend," said I, "but she stood by my side, you must know that." "No, I do not know that. No one has been near this table since we started. It seems to me that you are very clairvoyant this afternoon." "That being so, friend," I said, "it would be best for us to get out of here in case she controls me. I feel what you say is right." "Don't be in too great a hurry," he replied. "This poor girl may need our help. Let us just offer up a prayer for her, then we will go."

This we did and then made for the open street. The reader will clearly see that our talk came to an abrupt end with nothing done, for I got on a bus for home, leaving my friend to do likewise.

I little thought, that afternoon, that our earthly companionship in the Master's work was nearly at a close, but so it was. For two or three weeks Meads took his usual place in the circle, then left us, for the Master called him.

To each of these sittings came "Nippy" (the waitress I had seen at the tea shop), not saying much, but making her presence known. She soon gained strength, and was a great help to me in trying to continue without my friend.

Several times, in circles other than my usual one, she would come to my help. I remember once having to assist at a circle soon after Meads's bodily presence had left me, and I felt lonely. In my loneliness I prayed for help, and it was "Nippy" who addressed the circle, and so sweetly did she speak that there was hardly a dry eye in the whole room afterwards!

On another occasion, having some trouble with a haunted family mansion in Surrey, "Nippy" came to the rescue and put matters right, finding it was a servant girl who was the cause of all the trouble.

One night, whilst trying to have a sitting with the depleted home circle, "Nippy" took control and gave us a little of her history. It seems her name was Gladys, and she was the only child of a widowed mother. She had received Christian training and become a member of the Sunday School. At an early age she had to find work, which, through the influence of friends, she obtained at Messrs J. Lyons & Co. as a waitress. Never having been very strong, the work proved too much for her and she broke down.

"When my health broke down," said Nippy, "the firm was very kind to me and sent me to the sea. I was in a very nice home there, but I was feeling very bad and homesick, so I asked them to send me home; but I wasn't well enough for that, so they did the next best thing and got my mother to come to me. She used to sit by my bedside holding my hand, but even that didn't bring health to me. I got weaker and

weaker, and one night I seemed to be back in the old Corner House standing round my tables, when, looking up, I saw the door open and the Master come in! I went forward and said: 'Oh Master, what do You want?' And He said: 'There's only one thing I want, and that's you, Gladys.' And so -

*I came to Jesus as I was,
Weary and worn and sad;
I found in Him a resting place,
And He has made me glad.*

So "Nippy" passed into the Spirit World! At the same sitting, when she told us this history of herself, my guide asked her to close the meeting with prayer:

"Oh, the man with the feathers (the guide) says I'm to pray . . . I've never prayed in public, but I'll try!

"Oh dear Jesus, I'm standing in an earthly home and I'm thinking of the old hymn 'O God, our help in ages past,' and as I look round, I feel that Thou hast indeed been a help in ages past. As we look back on the way we've come, we see it's been a way that has had its rocks and stumbling blocks, but, O Jesus, I want us all to see that there are some very bright spots on the path too. I'm thinking of how the angels have helped us on our way, and, O Father, may we realise this night how they have upheld us. As we look back and see the dangers we have passed, may we find strength to face the future. I'm only a poor waitress, but, O Father, at the close of this earthly day, let me come to Thy table and wait on Thee! Amen."

Epilogue

As I lay down my pen, my mind goes back thirty-five years to when, holding the hands of Ernest Meads, I consecrated my mediumship to the Master's service under the trees in Hyde Park. Strange things have happened since then, but God has been my Helper in times of need, and He has given His angels charge concerning me, and they have held me up lest I dash my foot against a stone.

And now, like Nippy; I pray that I may wait at God's table, and that not only may I serve Him, but also pick up the crumbs as they fall!

*"There is a light that fadeth not,
It shines from year to year.
There is a love that never dims
But daily grows more dear.
There is a peace which comforts still
Though days may hold unrest,
So with that light and love and peace,
May our own lives be blessed!"*