

TRAVELLERS IN ETERNITY

Geraldine Cummins

BEING SOME DESCRIPTIONS OF LIFE AFTER DEATH WITH EVIDENCE FROM SCRIPTS



Geraldine Cummins here with Neatrice Gibbes

Compiled by E. B. Gibbes

Psychic Press, 1948

Foreword by Eric Parker

Preface by E. B. Gibbes

FOREWORD

I have been asked to write a Foreword to this book, and I do so, trying to put myself in the place of a reader to whom all the characters named, or unnamed except by initials, are entirely unknown; and I would like to tell such a reader that each character lives and moves through the pages of this book in the life Beyond, exactly as I knew them in the life on earth. They are as alive to me in these pages as they were in the years before they passed, gay or grave, serene, critical, difficult, loving - each and all the same men and women, boys and girls whom I knew. It has been, it will always be, a happiness to meet them again. To me, of course, their surroundings today are unknown, but even as they themselves are here given back to me, so, I believe, the gardens, the homes in which they live, are shown to us all. And so, to unknown readers who may wonder, as I have wondered, and wonder still, what the surroundings, the scenes, the homes of the future world may be, I would commend this book.

Eric Parker

PREFACE

This book consists of a series of personal communications received over a period of four years or so through the mediumship of Miss Geraldine Cummins. They purport to come from my late sister-in-law, "Hilda," and are mostly in the form of letters

In addition, there are various communications which claim to emanate from her son, Nigel, to whom she was devoted, and from others connected with her. All, however, fall into line and form part of a "story" of the After-Life which is not altogether lacking in romance. And these letters would seem to show that "Hilda's" personality, characteristic wit and humor have survived death.

Some of the records here presented may seem mundane or occasionally fantastic - notably the account given of "Hilda's" attempts at building a house and in making a garden. Nevertheless, they are included because they illustrate how much the mind of an individual retains its characteristics in the life to come. In an ethereal world considerable difficulties would seem to be encountered when a heightened concentration of thought and serenity of spirit are demanded.

It should be realized that the life described in the following pages is, for the most part, concerned with the experiences of souls *in the immediate life after death*. Therefore, those who search for special "teachings" will not, *in the sense they mean*, find them herein. But the following narrative shows that, even in this immediate life after death, the individual soul is growing, developing through work and experience, through relationship with other souls in its pattern, these leading to a higher and more spiritual life. As for "teachings," what better can be found than those in the Gospels?

Numbers of books have described conditions in the Hereafter. But *Travelers in Eternity* is perhaps somewhat different from these in the sense that it is a connected, coherent biography of certain members of a family joyfully reunited after death. The characters, so clearly drawn and alive, convey conviction of the reality of their existence in Eternal Life. This book describes a life in the Hereafter such as might be expected by numbers of other families, who, on earth, have lived similar lives - chiefly in the country, where gardening and other country pursuits have been their principal occupation.

This biography therefore, presents a world in some respects not unlike the material world, for, if the history of evolution is taken into account, it is scarcely conceivable that we should be transplanted from this life into an existence where conditions are totally different from those to which we are accustomed.

The traveler is thus being prepared for the next step in psychic evolution - for that world of Eidos so dissimilar from the material world and one described by F.W.H. Myers in the *Road to Immortality*, and in *Beyond Human Personality*.

I hesitate to publish details concerning the survival of my sister-in-law and her son Nigel in a book called *They Survive*. Owing to the extreme devotion displayed in that case by the mother for her son, I feared it might be considered too sentimental. But therein lay the evidence of personality and the identity of the communicator. I submitted the whole typescript to Mr. Kenneth Richmond, late editor of the journal of the Society for Psychical Research, asking for his candid opinion. As this further book concerning Hilda and her son has developed, I think I can do no better than quote his words, for they are more than ever applicable to this present volume.

He wrote: "About Case II" (see *They Survive*, p17) "It does not seem to me that this record of highly personal and affecting material should not appear in print; readers are too seldom privileged to share the reality of the feelings involved in good cases of communication. And the emotional content of the record does not take the place of evidence, but gives it a background. A case like this carries weight against the common criticism of ignorance, that accounts of the After-life are uniformly smug and comfortable. . ."

I should like here to record that *They Survive* was compiled solely in an effort to present what seemed to be incontrovertible evidence of the survival of human responsibility after bodily death. Judging from numbers of letters received from complete strangers, this book would seem to have achieved its purpose.

In view of the many characters introduced in these writings, the accompanying chart of relationship may simplify difficulties in following the narrative:

Hilda Gibbes	My sister-in-law	died January, 1941.
Arthur Gibbes	My brother, her husband	died June, 1941.
Nigel Gibbes	Their son -	died of wounds, Lybia, May, 1942.

Harold M.	Hilda's favorite brother	died 1920.
Muriel M.	Hilda's younger sister	died 1918.
"Govy" M.	Hilda's father	died 1915.
Ruth Parker	Hilda's elder sister (wife of Eric Parker) - died 1933.	
Frank Gibbes	My second brother	died 1932.

Hilda's mother, who died in 1920, comes only occasionally into the following communications. Tony, the younger of Hilda's two sons, is still in this life and is frequently alluded to by his mother.

Earlier writings from members of the M. family received before the death of Hilda, are placed as Part II of this volume. Nearly all the persons mentioned in these pages were known in the family by nicknames, and these were given with unerring accuracy in each script. In order to facilitate reading, these nicknames are omitted, with the exception only of "Govy."

When I say "unerring accuracy" I emphasize the fact that it would have been easy for the psychic-writer (Miss Cummins), to have confused these names had her mind intervened to any considerable extent. To give one example: Muriel was the only member of the M. family who had a special child nickname for Nigel. This was always used by her during her earth-life, and only by her when she wrote of him through Geraldine Cummins. Thus fact was entirely unknown to the automatist.

Some learned men claim that correct facts given through a medium about a deceased person which are unknown to the medium, are due to E.S.P., clairvoyance, so are not evidence of the survival of human personality. But survival must, primarily, mean survival of the whole personality, i.e., faults, virtues, manner of expression, etc. This book presents not merely such "facts," but, to my mind, conclusive evidence of human survival through the conveyance of clearly recognizable characters in varied styles - styles that are accurately maintained throughout the writings.

When these communicators lived on earth, Mr. Eric Parker, the well-known author and late Editor of *The Field* - and I knew them intimately and we testify to this remarkable reproduction of character and style. So do other of their friends.

Geraldine Cummins is so well-known for her psychic books that it is unnecessary to do more than add that in her we undoubtedly possess one of the greatest, if not the greatest, writing-medium of our time. It is deeply to be regretted that serious ill-health and a major operation have, in addition to other exacting work during the last seven years or so, hampered her psychic work. This volume is not, therefore, so full of further detail concerning the Hereafter as it might otherwise have been.

I would like here to express my very grateful thanks to Geraldine Cummins for the help she has given me in putting together this and other books connected with my researches into psychic phenomena. Also, I would like to thank her for so unselfishly

putting at the disposal of these and other communicators and permitting them to write through her at various critical times.

One such communicator (Hilda Gibbes), describes the purpose of this book as follows:

“We are so anxious that news of true survival should be spread on earth. It is because we perceive more clearly than you can, the very great dangers men and women are open to through this spreading materialism. It dims all the lights of the soul. It gradually but surely destroys all happiness. And in this greater life we perceive the lower forces of evil all focusing their attention on the people of earth - at the present time seeking to induce far more terrible evil through a lack of faith, of knowledge of a hereafter . . . Life is everlasting. Goodness, truth and beauty must prevail, else the world perishes.”

Note. - The following “Prologue” is communicated by my late sister-in-law Hilda. Actually it was written in January, 1945. As it explains so very simply some of the things which numbers of people want to know concerning the Hereafter, it has been decided to place it at the beginning of this book. It may help readers more easily to understand what is expressed in the various scripts which follow.

Part I

“Death, the first human experience of a peace that passes understanding.”

(H.L. Gibbes, “Hilda)

February 5th, 1944

Note: The following “Prologue” is communicated by my late sister-in-law Hilda. Actually, it was written in January, 1945. As it explains so very simply some of the things which numbers of people want to now concerning the Hereafter, it has been decided to place it at the beginnings of this book. It may help readers more easily to understand what is expressed in the various scripts which follow.

PROLOGUE

Communicated by Hilda

I want what I have to say to be understood by almost everybody. So clever and learned people won't believe any of it. I don't know the meaning of the long word scholars, professors and philosophers use. I shan't, therefore, use them. When on a few occasions I tried to read the books they wrote about the riddle of life and death, their words always gave me mental indigestion.

So do not proceed further with your reading, and send this book to the paper-pulp merchant, if you want a convincing answer respectably clothed in the proper terminology to the oldest riddle in history.

But if you want to hear about Alice in a supernatural Wonderland, you can proceed with a certain measure of confidence. In other words, my after-death experiences - with the exception of a few brief periods, have been surprisingly unexpected and on the whole delightful.

It may seem almost blasphemous for me to use the word “delightful” about a life which is usually spoken of in grave and solemn sentences. But I shall try to follow the example of George Washington and not flinch from telling the truth, however unpalatable it may be. There are so many grim associations about death and the sufferings preceding it, many people dare not believe there can be a good time or a happy time to follow it.

So, to conceal their fears of a Hereafter, they clothe the subject in solemn, vague or holy words. But to the thief on the Cross, Christ spoke of it as Paradise.

I do not call the immediate life after death by any Latin word of six syllables - it is the New World, which Christopher Columbus didn't discover and Hilda did.

My father, mother, brother and sisters met me at the Gate of Death. Because we were united by Love, which is the one thing that matters, I had that ineffable joy. It was a welcome Home after many years of separation from those beloved travelers who had made the Channel Crossing long before me. If you are inclined to believe in what I tell you, pray call Death by this name - a “Channel Crossing.” I had always been terrified of the inevitable experience of death. As it happened, I was entirely mistaken. He was no bogey, no creature of horror like Adolf Hitler. The experience of passing was, for me, exactly like a rough channel crossing - rather frightening at first, but really not more unpleasant and uncomfortable than that experience. But it was all made up to me by the immense relief of seeing my family on the farther shore.

Just as the channel crossing (i.e. death) is the experience of everybody, so is the “Day of Judgment.” So far as my knowledge goes, this does not take place on our immediate arrival here. The word “day” is incorrect, for the trial is not limited to twenty-four hours. It is not possible to talk of it in terms of earth-time. But there is a special period when we enter the Gallery of Memory and the pictures of our earth-life pass before us one by one. Then our own spirit is our judge. We face this time when we are fit for it, when the wounds received during our journey on earth have been healed. I haven't been up for judgment yet.

Accounts of this world are bound in some respects to contradict each other. For no two people have exactly the same experiences, because no two people's souls are exactly alike, are turned out on the one pattern. Each individual sees the world through a different pair of eyes; secondly, each soul has a pass that is its own, and is in itself unique. And the past makes our present here. So the many immigrants from earth who throng into the new world enter different mansions and meet with widely dissimilar experiences.

“In my Father’s House are many Mansions.” Each mansion is made out of the very texture of an earthly past. I have called in a “school-master” to write the difficult parts of this “Child’s Guide to the Hereafter.” He calls himself “Mr. Everyman.”

Mr. Everyman says that the Americans erected a statue of Liberty at the entrance to their New World. I don’t know whether it has an effective deterrent in preventing greedy people from snatching away freedom from others. But that statue is symbolical of the conditions that prevail in the New World I am about to describe.

Mr. Everyman says: The pilgrims who come trooping here from the world meet what is, to those who realize it, a most embarrassing measure of freedom. As a rule on earth their body: its appetites, its instincts, seem to control them to a considerable degree. In the New World they have the power to control their bodies. Consciously or unconsciously their minds shape these bodies. At first they are scarcely aware of this creative power and don’t know how to use it. Incidentally, it is all nonsense to call us “disembodied spirits.” We are nothing of the kind. Each one of the newly dead has a visible appearance which is the expression of his memories and his soul. There is often a half truth in an incredible statement. That fact may explain the seemingly impossible pronouncement in the Prayer Book about the resurrection of the physical body.

You will ask: “Of what is the New World made?” My school-master collaborator is giving me the following reply: Mr. Everyman says:

The immediate world after death is of the nature of matter, but consists of waves that vibrate more rapidly than the waves known to human beings. To differentiate it from matter, I shall call it “substance” or “ether.”

When they come out of the chrysalis of death, the newly dead are, as a rule, greatly relieved to perceive that they have bodies that are outwardly similar to those they inhabited on earth. But being of substance not matter, this body travels or vibrates quicker than the physical body. So the human eye cannot perceive it. Death simply means a change of speed for the form or soul-expression of man. He is unable any longer to live in a body of matter. He assumes in its place a body of substance. He arrives in this new world with his personality quite unaltered. But this mind has greatly increased powers. Only slowly he realizes these - realizes that he has made a jump in the evolution of his soul.

The New World might indeed be named “the world of creative life.” Some of us go so far as to call the human being “mechanical man,” and ourselves, when we have learned how to use our increased mental powers, “creative man.” We appear, indeed, to have come into the very presence of the Statue of Liberty when we realize this fact. But every man and every woman can only create according to the limits of their nature. Death does not bestow on them a real increase of knowledge. They have only the memories of earth and their own personality and outlook. Death presents them with a larger freedom. But if a man is undeveloped and perverted by the evil he has

committed during his earth-life, he may for a long time be quite incapable of using that freedom.

The family-unit becomes the group-unit for the average individual in the Hereafter. In the majority of cases we gravitate towards those to whom we are akin fundamentally. They make our circle, our environment. The New World is only one step forward. The undergraduate is promoted to graduate. There are further worlds, further states of being varying widely in character before the traveler in eternity. But he cannot proceed to them until his soul has grown through his experiences in the immediate world after death - in World Number One. I shall call the planet earth, "Zero World." Zero means the point from which the thermometer is graduated.*

**It certainly was "Zero World" in the winter of 1947, when, two years after this was written, this book was being put together! (A remark made by Geraldine Cummins).*

"We are such stuff as dreams are made on." We make World Number One out of our earth dreams or nightmares. Dream well on earth, and you will meet with happy experiences in the Hereafter. Dream ill, and you will enter a nightmare, a veritable universe of fear. But after the period of adjustment in Hades, the average man or woman who does his "small best" passes into surroundings with which he has been familiar on earth. These surroundings have been created out of the stuff of memory by the members of his Group, by kindred souls. In time he learns to play his part in creating locality and environment, with the sharpened weapons of his mind. But at first he is an infant, that is to say he is dependent on others for everything.

In the case of sudden or violent death, particularly if the full term of earth-life has not been accomplished, he may enter the New World and not for a while find his kindred souls. Many of us employ our abilities in succoring and giving shelter to such lonely travelers until they find their own people.

The primary facts to realize are:

- (1) That the individual mind has a far greater and direct control of form. We gradually learn that we are in a mind-universe and not in a material mechanical universe.
- (2) In the Hereafter, every man creates out of memory and personality in conjunction with his Group - or even for a time singly - the town or country or the void in which he is to live.
- (3) The period passed in World Number One is appointed for the digestion and assimilation of experiences obtained in a long or short life spent on earth.
- (4) On a finer scale our surroundings often reflect as in a mirror localities we inhabited when we were human beings. Most pilgrims have experienced either the slow decay of their faculties or increasing illness rising to a peak, or at any rate terror and loneliness before the last crossing. Their souls are shaken to their very roots,

however easy and simple the final release from the material body. Any intelligent physician or nurse has observed some of these facts again and again. The soul is therefore not fit to face completely altered conditions of life. It would lead to disintegration of the mind and the whole make-up of man, if he at once became disembodied spirit.

Indeed, he is quite incapable of such an immense jump. Evolution, materially and physically, is slow and thorough. The baby is only gradually weaned from mother-earth. The average person desperately needs, after that rough channel crossing, the familiar town, country, the streets or the landscapes to which he is accustomed. The law of evolution grants him these in a greater or lesser degree if he is normal man, if he has done his "small best." Thus the world to come is often a reflection in a mirror of the world left behind.

(5) But the spirit, the higher part of our nature, the super-conscious, is our judge. Abnormally selfish or evil, brutal and cruel people meet with experiences of a different character. The consequences of their own acts come back upon them like a boomerang.

Mr. Everyman has told you what I can't explain. I want to destroy the bogey Death. As Mr. Everyman says, it is quite untrue to say the last enemy is Death. Write instead: "The Last Friend is Death," and that statement will be true of the final experience of the human being. I called in Mr. Everyman because, as I told you, he will write sense where I may write nonsense. He says that each Group makes its own locality, each individual adds something to it according to his desire or fancy. There are certain memories common to all. Amongst them are the sun, moon and stars, the soil of earth, the seasons, the rain. All these familiar things are ours. We imagine sun, moon and stars, the lights and colors to which we are accustomed, so we perceive them in these localities. In the majority of cases we remain in such familiar condition until we are capable of perceiving things that are not of the stuff of our earth-memories.

Mr. Everyman says: The greater number of souls remain in the memoried reflection of the earth until those human beings with whom they were intimate have entered the Hereafter and lived with them in World Number One. But when the circle of contemporaries is complete, it is the beginning of another exodus to World Number Two, where outward appearances are different from any they have known on earth.

Each locality in the New World has its own time. But the newly dead cling to what is familiar, so the greater number measure time according to what they are accustomed, by the seasons, by night and day. Then, as they grow wiser and more experienced, they make excursions into a different time. They become emancipated from their memories and become capable of perceiving what no human being has even seen.

I like using plain words. In my Victorian childhood church people spoke of the future life as heaven, hell or purgatory. I shall now use those old-fashioned words in their literal sense. Nearly every man and woman wants to go to Heaven. It is their heart's desire. Some, indeed, arrange for large sums of money to be spent on charities or on masses and prayers in order to get them there. Oddly enough, God isn't interested in commercial transactions. All these bought prayers, praise and homage are an entire waste of money. The Kingdom of Heaven is within, not without. The truer words were ever spoken. The condition of heavenly happiness depends on yourself and is also partly dependent on your Group - on those intimates who travel with you in Eternity and are directed by one guardian spirit.

But I must return to my theme: most people long to go straight to Heaven as soon as they have recovered from the effects of the last channel crossing. Strange to relate, they usually go to the heaven they desire for themselves without any great struggle. But if they are not in the right state of grace, it becomes purgatory or Hell to them. They are given their hearts' desire and sometimes find it extremely undesirable. That is usually their own fault.

But Mr. Everyman tells me that the average man and woman are for a long time, with some exceptions, very happy in the New World. Freedom from physical pain, from money worries, the pleasure of work in making or helping to make homes and their surroundings, all create for them what Christ called "Paradise."

For some of them, one of their keen pleasures was food and drink. If they apply their minds with sufficient industry they can have their three or four meals a day through their own individual mental efforts, singly or severally. I know a certain General who left the earth many years ago. He still ruminates over his nuts and port and is by turns abusive or ecstatic about the savory. But, as little boy gets no more fun from his rocking-horse and his tin soldiers when he has grown into a youth, so after a while the pleasures of the table no longer amuse.

People gradually come to realize that they live in a world of Light and are nourished by light. More and more, as their soul grows, they come in and out of Paradise. They tire of the old pleasures. The heaven of their desire is no longer heaven, for they have grown out of it.

I haven't outgrown mine yet. But then for me it is the creation of a beautiful house for others, and an even more beautiful garden. I haven't made any of them by any means perfect - far from it - and you may learn why when you read my letters. Heaven, as described by a Jew long ago, has been ridiculed by many people. It was a town built of precious stones, and in it he spent most of his time singing hymns and psalms. In the twentieth century there aren't many who believe such a heaven ever existed. But it did, and does still. For it is the heart's desire of a few emigrants from the earth. It isn't an ignoble heaven like that of the epicurean General I mentioned. The mistake lay in believing it was to be everybody's fate. Convinced that they were doomed to such a heaven, millions of devout people preferred to put the unpleasing

thought of a future life out of their minds altogether. The Hereafter became taboo as a topic of conversation. I was such a mistake. For there are countless heavens, and it is the easiest subject in the world to discuss.

Don't be afraid of the Hereafter, particularly if a beloved son or sons of yours have been killed in this war. Think of their characters, tastes and personalities. And if they were ordinary boys, with no horrible traits of character, if they are no warped souls, you will be able to picture (once they have risen from Hades), with some degree of accuracy, their present life and its normal, happy conditions. Please, don't imagine for a moment that we all live in a delectable country and spend our time in indulging our tastes and fancies. Men and women who are fearless, or have a wakeful conscience, come to regard their heaven as they did their country cottage, or Margate or Brighton - a place in which to spend weekends. It is their haven of rest and happiness after hard and sometimes distressing work. They come and go to it.

Particularly at present discarnate men and women remember that hell reigns on earth. They face difficulties and suffering even, and go back to the shadows to help to release their dying comrades from their physical bodies, or they even wait in the darkness for dazed, lonely travelers, and, on their release from the experience of wounds and horror, they lead them away into the world of Light, or they find their friends of their circle for them.

Cleverness, cunning in making more money than your neighbors, isn't of the least use here. Life is dependent on your state of grace or disgrace. Mean cleverness, cunning, craft and selfish absorption are all hindrances to well-being and to true happiness. Your surroundings, your environment, are the direct creation of yourself and your circle of intimates. Slaves or servants can do nothing to improve matters for you. We learn here, often with great difficulty, what we were, for the most part, incapable of learning on earth - that we are members one of another.

CHAPTER ONE

1941

"THE TURN ON THE ROAD"

First I should explain that it has been my custom for many years, when Miss Cummins was in Ireland, to send occasional letters to her addressed to various dead friends or relatives, asking her, through automatic writing, to get into touch with them and to obtain their replies. This practice was adopted in the following communications.

* * *

When my sister-in-law, Hilda, died suddenly at her house in Sussex on July 16th 1941, Geraldine Cummins was at her home in Ireland. She had no idea that Hilda's death had occurred. The fact that her sister had joined her family in the Beyond was

conveyed to me in a veiled manner by Muriel M. Writing at the end of another communication she said: "Just tell Bea," (myself) "please, that Hilda is really resting at last - that she mustn't worry about her. All is well with her. She will enjoy her flowers soon."

Geraldine assumed that this remark inferred that Hilda had, to some degree, recovered from the worries and anxieties attendant on the death of her husband on June 20th, 1941, after a long illness, and the departure of her elder son Nigel, four days later, for the Middle East. But to me it was a conclusive evidence of the safe arrival of my sister-in-law in the next world. I rightly concluded the reason for this obscure remark. Geraldine's mind was not prepared for the shock of receiving such news when in the psychic state into which she falls for obtaining these writings. She was very much attached to my sister-in-law.

On August 4th, 1941, Astor, addressing Geraldine, explained this incident. Astor is Miss Cummin's control or guide. He first writes his name and then introduces the waiting communicator. He wrote as follows:

Astor comes: I want to tell you that, at that first writing when told you about Arthur, your own mind was set firmly against the idea of Hilda's passing. It was because you loved her. The thought, therefore, of her death, which would have been easy to convey if she had been a mere acquaintance, was utterly painful to your subconscious and therefore entirely unacceptable. With my help Muriel forced it through at the end of the writing - but only in the form the subconscious would accept - one that might have applied to earth-life. Then, when your subconscious knew and had to accept it, it conveyed fear about it to your consciousness, which was an unsuitable condition for writing. . . It was a psychic situation of delicacy, which had to be treated with care, because of the reaction of sorrow and shock which you felt.

In a covering letter Geraldine told me how I had given her the impression that Hilda was alive and carrying on bravely - as indeed she was when I wrote previous to her death. She added that she had tried to get Muriel or "Govy" to write again, but that the automatic writing revealed that they were unable to come at that moment.

In answer to a letter from me to Muriel concerning Hilda's passing into her new life, Muriel wrote that Govy was watching by his daughter, who was "resting after the exhaustion of her life on earth." She said that when Hilda woke they had arranged that Harold would "take her to the garden and bring about her the healing, youthful memories of 1900." As this script is published in its entirety in *They Survive*, it is necessary only to outline this communication in order to carry on the continuity of this story. . .*

** (Note: The passage is published at the end of the first chapter in the Portuguese translation.)*

It should be noted that the M. family were keen gardeners. Having died some years ago, "Govy" had, according to previous communications, already made a replica in the Beyond of the beautiful garden he had created in Sussex, together with the house in which he had lived. Therefore, when she left her body, Hilda was first taken to the home of her youth.

The following account of Hilda's awakening in the world beyond death was written by Muriel on August 4th, 1941:

My dear Bea,

We have had to be very tender, very careful with Hilda. She was so tired, so worn out. She had suffered such pain. Also she had such a longing for Nigel and to live for him and be with his little boy.** So she did not want to leave the earth. She ought to have passed to us some months before Arthur's passing. It was the immense strength of her love for Nigel that kept her from slipping away to us. She had been until (in your time) a few hours ago, resting in a deep sleep, without dreams of the evil of the earth. She has had only dreamy visions of her garden and flowers. These softened the abrupt moment she had to face when she woke up and learned that she was parted from Nigel by more than miles of land and sea. She has taken it very well. For we arranged that Harold should be beside her just as he was in youth, before any of the troubles or sorrows came. So he brought with him the memory of the happiest time in their lives when they were together long ago, before her marriage.

*** Michael, then aged five, to whom she was devoted. He was living in the house at the time of Hilda's death.*

It became more than a memory, she lived it again. You should have heard her delightful greetings, her excitement, chaff and gay teasing. You see, Harold has learned completely to forget himself, so that he could be to her exactly as he was when we had fun and happy parties together in London. Do you remember them now at the old house where you were often one of the party? For the time of waking, Hilda lived those wonderful days. And slowly I watched the chrysalis of sorrow, fears, crushing disappointments, the agonies of mind in the last days about Nigel, fall away from her.

The tragic garment of sorrows, the moments of bearing up as she did so bravely with Arthur; all these went away from her. And then the old, lovely, youthful Hilda stepped out from the ruins of that chrysalis. Harold took her arm and helped her in her first faltering steps. For a few moments there lingered the memory of acute pain that such movements often gave her. But suddenly she realized that she had no arthritic hip, that she was young and strong. Then, arm in arm, she and Harold walked in the garden we had prepared for her. She gave little cries of delight when, one by one, she discovered her treasures - flowers that wouldn't come out for her, plants that would not grow, and others she had always loved. I think all she had

been through was worthwhile because of the ecstasy for her of that first walk in our garden.

There was Harold chattering, Govy looking on, faintly smiling, and myself bringing up the rear - Govy, of course, scolding me at intervals for this and that. His teasing made Hilda laugh as she hadn't laughed for many years.

Eventually, Harold, took her away to rest, and when she had rested he told her very gently and gradually that she was what was called "dead." Of course for a little Hilda was very distressed. "My darling Nigel and my poor Tony, what will they do?" she cried. After a while she became calmer and Harold dried her tears. He has now taken her back to her garden and she is much better in herself. Govy is hanging round her and is too absorbed, too moved to come and write today. Her new-found youth and strength, and Harold especially, will make all things right for her. Together, we are more to her than even Nigel. So you mustn't worry about her, for she has reached the turn on the road and is coming into the good days at last.

Arthur is with his mother and is being kept away from Hilda. I do not know when they will be permitted to meet. He would not be good when they will be permitted to meet. He would not be good for her just now. You must be glad and not sorry, Bea, that Hilda has come to us. You need not be afraid or anxious for her anymore. We will make her happy, and she is at home with us now.

Love from all of us,

Muriel

CHAPTER TWO

1941

"LAUGHTER IN HEAVEN"

Knowing the disturbed state of mind in which Hilda had passed over, I refrained for some time from writing direct to her through Geraldine Cummins. I did not wish to remind her too vividly of her last few weeks on earth, which contact with me would inevitably recall. I thought it better to leave to her happiness, confident that those by whom she was now surrounded would keep her amused and contented. I was right in my conjectures, but wrong in not sooner getting into touch through Geraldine Cummins. As this chapter shows, Hilda was anxious to hear news of her two sons. From her letters it appears that her family evaded her questions concerning them, knowing perhaps that Nigel would be wounded, and that this fact would upset her. It may seem strange to some readers that this was so, but all those who pass over obviously vary in their mental make-up. The delicate state of Hilda's "psyche" required caution in treatment. The following scripts denote this.

In view of the succeeding communications I must mention that in scripts written by Geraldine Cummins some years before Hilda's death, it was claimed that she and Harold had been supremely happy in a life lived together in Egypt many centuries ago. If this statement is accepted, it may explain Hilda's extreme love of that country, so often displayed by her on earth.

Geraldine had been very rushed with much work and in attending to the needs of an invalid mother before and after Hilda's death. I had stayed on at Wickenden (Hilda's house in Sussex) during August. However, on September 4th, 1941, Geraldine received the following communication:

Astor is here. (Geraldine asked for Muriel.)

Yes, I will call her.

Muriel: May I write to Bea? Thank you.

My dear.

The news is good on the whole. You will be surprised to hear that Harold has worked marvels. You remember him so depressed, you would imagine he was the worst person of all for Hilda. But it is quite the contrary. He sees himself in her, the same way of worrying, excepting the worst, so he knows how to cure it now. He is much more understanding than Govy, and Ruth is not able to be much with Hilda, for she is occupied with her own family, watching and looking after them.

Of course as you can imagine, Hilda was fretting about the boys - even the lovely garden we had made for her did not, after the first joy and wonder, remove her fears and thought for them. So Harold came to her and said he must throw himself on her mercy. He wanted a place of his own. I was too occupied with Govy. He said he was quite alone and badly needed help about it, that he had no ideas and she had plenty of ideas and must set to work at once to plan out a house and garden by a great river. He himself could manage an English house and garden, for he had all his memories to work upon. But he had not what she had - the vivid memories she is now in touch with of her long lost life in Egypt.

You know of all her lives on earth that one was the most wonderful - the one in which she had the greatest joys and pleasures. Then Harold taught her how to get in touch with that old and vivid life. Gradually the memories in the night of that far past were lit up for her. But she had to make an effort, to concentrate, and that took her mind completely off Nigel and Tony. Then the surprise, the staggering discoveries of one scene after another, of one treasure after another, in ancient Egypt, became all-absorbing.

Your sad, brutal world of 1941 was obliterated for her by this old-time world, so remote, so different. There was healing for her in that blaze of Egyptian sunshine, in the flowers of the lady of Egypt's gardens, in the wonders of the palace and the Great River. She comes back from this memory-world gay, full of delight. She has

much to tell, to explain to Harold. And then she teaches him as if he were a small boy, showing how he may reconstruct here that grandeurs of Egypt, that loveliness which has for her such deep, happy associations, because it belonged to the best part of her earthly history.

The result is that she does not often get pulled back at present into the dark mood of anxiety for her boys. Don't think that Hilda is in a kind of coma, sleeping time away. That is impossible with her quick, lively spirit, with its intense feelings. But at present Harold and ancient Egypt are giving her the loveliness and happiness she needs so sorely in order to receive the spirit of youth and joy in her. Arthur of course, is not with her. She is not fit to see him. He would remind her of the dark days of suffering and so, unwittingly, draw her down to the earth-level and its darkness. Someday, when her psyche is stronger, she may be permitted to make the journey back to see her loved ones. Meantime you can be perfectly happy about her.

My love, from

Muriel

I replied to Muriel through Geraldine asking her, if she thought it desirable, to pass on some cheery and encouraging details, which I enumerated, concerning Nigel and Tony.

On September 18th, 1941, Muriel replied as follows:

Astor is here. Yes, I will tell Muriel you have a letter to read to her.

Muriel:

Please give me any news. But first of all I want Bea to know that there has been a meeting between Arthur and Hilda. When the old, strange Egyptian life had flowed into her soul and strengthened and refreshed it with its healing power, she felt that it would not distress her too much to arouse recent earth-memories for her by her seeing the one who had shared them with her. Besides, she had asked for Arthur. So his mother brought him to us, with Frank, of course.

You know Frank has been awfully good to Arthur. He had him at his own place. "Well" - something, he called it - and took away all the fear of the unknown by making everything seem natural to him. But he was continually asking for Hilda, even when Frank led him to what is called "the Fisherman's Paradise" here - a River Dee that fulfils the fisherman's dream. Fresh from this place, Arthur was his best and brightest self when he met Hilda. So the meeting brought back to them happier days when they went about together. And Hilda, hearing of his expedition with Frank and of his success on our River Dee, chaffed him, reminding him of an unfortunate expedition they made to Norway, when he caught no fish, and teased him about his failure as a fisherman then. They were so gay together, Hilda quite sparkling. Arthur mustn't be allowed to become too conceited just because he had

caught one prodigious salmon! We were anxious about this meeting, but it went off very well and at the end of it they were able to talk about the boys, and Arthur really tried to comfort Hilda about Nigel. But I am glad that you have this message for her, because, of course, always in her mind there is the lurking dread of his suffering hardship, shock and, worse still, wounds that may cripple him permanently.

(Here Geraldine read my letter)

Muriel continued:

Oh, that is all Hilda wants to know so much. She trusts me, knows I will tell her the truth, for I promised her, when she talked of Tony, that I would try and find out about him.

Here is an instance of a communicator who had never on earth seen a house called "Wellsyke," failing to recollect its full name when given to her by another in the Beyond. Yet Geraldine's subconscious mind could easily have completed the word. She had stayed there with me some years previously. My brother Frank had also reproduced this earthly home in the next world, having it ready for such time as his wife passes over to him.

The allusion to salmon fishing in Norway is of interest. It is true that on one occasion it had been a bad year for fish and, to his great disappointment, my brother, I believed, caught nothing. The expedition and its failure - so far as fishing was concerned - were completely unknown to Geraldine.

But this reference to my brother having caught "one prodigious salmon" while fishing on the next world river Dee is of interest, in that a certain amateur trance-medium (Dorothy K.) also referred to "one fish." This occurred at a sitting on September 24th, 1941, while I was staying in Lincolnshire. Hilda purported to speak and spontaneously said that Arthur had been with my brother Frank - fishing, and that "Arthur had caught one big fish." At this the medium (in trance) stretched out her arms very wide and laughed hilariously, adding: "only one, one big fish. All that trouble, and only one," and continued to laugh. Trying to draw her out, I asked if she referred to a big river in Egypt (vide Muriel's communication of September 4th) or to the river Dee? The medium answered excitedly, "Dee - River Dee - one big fish. So hot sitting among the flowers, yet they only got one."

I had received the script of September 18th from Geraldine that morning or the day before, so this described incident was known to me. But the subject came up again at a sitting I had with Mrs. Methven (also a trance medium). It took place on October 1st, 1941. By way of experiment, I introduced the matter myself. Hilda was purporting to speak through the control, and towards the middle of the sitting I asked if she could tell me anything about a big fish - "or perhaps her husband could say something about it?" The control then intimated the presence of my brother Arthur, and remarked: "Would you understand a very big fish like a salmon? "That

indicates what you are referring to,' he says. 'It is a salmon and he holds it up like that.' (Here the medium extended her arms wide as in the case of Dorothy K.) Mrs. Methven's control continued saying: "He is very proud of it. But he only caught that one." My brother was described as "laughing heartily."

It will be observed that Mrs. Methven immediately referred to the fish in question as a salmon. Thereby she confirmed the species as recorded in the Cummins script.

Evidently the fish episode was a huge jest and the subject of much merriment among these communicators in the Beyond. Recalling how my sister-in-law laughed over any rather ridiculous situation that arose, I can imagine the chaff which went on when my brother once again became a successful angler.

Dorothy K, is my late brother Frank's housekeeper. She had been in his and his wife's service since she was 14 years of age. While I was staying with his widow (Maud), in September, 1941, she developed remarkable psychic powers. We had seven sittings with her. On returning to consciousness after the first, she said she "had seen the Colonel and Mrs. Arthur Gibbes looking over so nice, walking about, not a bit crippled now, I saw them all, the Colonel in the middle and Mrs. Arthur Gibbes and major Gibbes on either side of him." Going into a deep trance and speaking aloud, she was entirely unaware of anything she had said. It is possible that subsequent references made by Hilda in these writings may also refer to these sittings.

To revert to the Cummins scripts:

On October 31st, 1941, Geraldine obtained the following writing:

Astor is here. . . Yes, they have asked me to let them know when they may send a message. Wait.

Govy:

We are protecting Hilda so far as we are able from the memories of earth. There is only one flaw in her happiness and that is the thought of Tony and Nigel. We have told her that all is well in regard to Tony. But we can't deny that Nigel is in a place of danger and is bound to be fighting and amongst scenes of horror, for she brought the knowledge of it from earth. But by giving her a variety of occupations and distractions we do succeed in keeping her mind to a considerable extent off Nigel. When I am free from my work I have her at my home, and we have pleasant times in the garden - occasional delightful hours for us both - when she becomes the child and I endeavor to break down a certain barrier that lay between us in life. She was always a little afraid of me, I think. I was the rather stern, extremely melancholy parent. I blame myself so much for this, as it helped to develop fears in her little mind. She always craved for sunshine and gaiety and hated melancholy.

It is an education for me to dispel and destroy that bogey "Old Melancholy" when I am with her, and she tries, on her part, as I have asked her, not to look on me as a father, but as the most loving of friends. But when I feel there's been enough of this self-education, I send her away to her mother, who shows her pretty things, and they play together happily. But the more she overcomes that child-fear of her father, the more she will overcome her anxiety - fears for her boys and her own tendency to dark depression, which she inherited from me. But Harold is the best tonic of all for her. Here he comes.

(Writing changed)

Harold: I am sorry I can't talk direct to Bea. It is so much easier. But I gather you can take a message to her. Don't let Govy make you think Hilda is unhappy. She is occasionally a bit off color when she thinks of Nigel. But so long as I am with her I can pull her almost at once out of that mood. It is on the occasions she goes to see Arthur that she tends to pick up the earthly mood of anxiety and fear for Nigel in which she died. He is cheery and tries to keep things on the light side with her, but, inevitably, his presence recalls the bad times they shared together - the night raids and all their anxieties about the boys. So we keep the two apart as much as possible on one excuse or another.

But Hilda and I have glorious times together. We are both keen on our Egyptian adventure. It's extraordinary the peace of spirit those grand old days of Egyptian splendor give us. We fairly revel in the beauties, and the vision which comes with the beauty we find in them - planning buildings, river-garden, and even a little temple for the worship of all believers in the Truth. We become really intoxicated with pleasure and happiness. I don't think it will hurt Hilda sometime to come and write a little note to you. You might pave the way by writing her a pleasant, newsy one, which Geraldine can read out to me, as I gather you can't be present. I think later she would like to know about her things at Wickenden, and how it is all being managed for her boys. That won't hurt her. But lately she had what I can only call a nightmare - a conviction that something bad had happened to Nigel. It took me quite a little time to get her out of that mood, but I soon had her smiling and gay again. I told her we had a post that went at uncertain times, and that I was going to write to you by it. "Then," she murmured, "I wonder if I could send Bea a letter that would make her know how happy I am, and how the fairy tales she told me really seem to be beginning to come true at last." Well, that's that, my dear.

Hilda's and my love, and keep the old flag flying.

From Harold

I found this last sentence quite by chance at the end of an old letter written by Harold to his sister some years ago before his death. It is not an expression that Geraldine Cummins has ever used. In the above we have the first indication that Nigel would be wounded - "a conviction that something bad had happened to Nigel."

It is interesting to note that this incident, which is again referred to before it occurred three weeks or so later, is already spoken of as *having taken place*.

CHAPTER THREE

1941

A PROPHETIC DREAM

My nephew Nigel, was first wounded in November 1941, four months after his mother's death and five months after leaving England. From this wound he recovered, and though we hoped he would return home, he was sent back to the Front and killed in May of the following year. It will be observed that these two events were foreseen by M. family, but the facts were withheld from the worrying mother. She had, however, obviously some instinctive feeling that all was not well with Nigel. The earthly conditions of fear had been over by the mother into her new life.

On November 7th, 1941, the following communication was received by Geraldine when on a visit to Dublin. It will be seen that Hilda, writing for the first time, spontaneously refers to the "fear" which Harold mentioned in his letter of October 31st.

Muriel: A message to Bea.

You know, my dear, I have been initiating Hilda into the ways and means of reaching you. Not long ago you put out a candle to light the way for us to you. I brought little Hilda with me. But it wasn't very satisfactory, in fact I really didn't work in her case.* But I think, in spite of that failure to reach you, a pen and a quiet hour here will make it come easily. You know what a letter-writer Hilda was. She will understand this milieu better. The venerable old Greek (Astor) will help her. Now wait, and she will try.

(A lot of wiggles appeared on the paper, and the words "silly, silly" were written, then more wiggles.)

Is that Geraldine? I am learning copybook again. A letter, you say? Muriel promised me. Must try harder.

(Here, apparently Geraldine changed the pen to a thicker one.)

**During the autumn of 1941 I had three sittings with trance-mediums at which Hilda, Muriel and others purported to speak. This was then unknown to Miss Cummins. They were in addition to those recorded above with Dorothy K. The last sitting before the above was written was with Mrs. Nash (November 4th). I also had a sitting with Mrs. Dowden (November 6th.)*

New pen. . .

Nothing comes off except buttons, but I shall and will make this come off. Oh, Bea dear. I want to hear more - please, more about Nigel and Tony. It is just as if I were in Arabia for all I know about them Here the family are so lovely, so good to me. But they change the subject when I talk of Nigel. They don't understand. They try some new diversions when I speak of him, and they don't realize I see through them. Do send Geraldine a letter for me. This is a bright light. I can read without glasses and with both eyes now, isn't that wonderful. It is a miracle to me to be able to see all the beautiful things here.

I didn't believe you, but much of what you said is true. Even about my baby girl. I have had one glimpse of her. Later I shall have her more with me, and I shall learn how to make pretty frocks for her and I shall dress her up and make her all I wanted her to be. I shall enjoy that. And what about Zellie and Wick and Peggy? Poor Wick, it was just a wick guttering out, I am afraid. But *Nigel*, please write about Nigel. They keep telling me he is all right. But I had such a fear about him. I am finding it hard to do my copybook today. Please, teacher, may I get down? Write Bea. They tell me so little, and they mean so well. All my love.

Hilda

(Scrawled across the paper.)

The foregoing remarks need some explanation. "Nothing comes off except buttons" was a frequent expression of my sister-in-law's when things went wrong! About two years before she died Hilda woke one morning to find that she could only see with one eye, a small blood-vessel having apparently burst in the other eye during the night. With her customary wit and pluck she immediately spoke of her eye as having "clacked-out." She never regained the complete sight of his eye. When - which was not often - I could speak to her of my communications from her family, I had told her that someday she would have her little baby girl for whom she longed on earth.

In her early married life she had had a miscarriage. This child who had failed to be born to her was, I had been told, waiting for her in the next world. She merely smiled when, one day she was rather depressed, I had mentioned it. I felt sure she did not believe me. There was of course no proof of its continued existence, only an assurance from a communicator in June 1934, that it was a fact. (See part II.) Also in some trance-medium sittings I had before Hilda's death, Muriel was frequently described as having a child with her.

"Zellie" is the old French governess who brought up the two boys. "Wick" is the affectionate abbreviation for "Wickenden," the name of the house that was built for Hilda in Sussex. The reference to the house being "a wick guttering out" is a typical remark which she might have made on earth, thinking its best days were now over. It had been recently requisitioned by the War Office. Peggy was Nigel's wife.

"Please, teacher, may I get down?" is another of Hilda's joking remarks. When she became rather bored with something she was doing she sometimes made use of this

phrase. Originally it was said to her when she was officiating at a local Sunday school treat, by a child who had partaken a little too heartily of the abundance of cakes spread before him.

It had been Nigel's custom to cable each week to Peggy that he was well. But I gathered that nothing had actually been heard of him for about three weeks, though we knew that he was no longer in Cairo. There might, therefore, have been some cause for the mother's anxiety, and the evasion of reference to Nigel on the part of the M. family. However, on receipt of this anxious message from Hilda, on November 13th, I wired to Geraldine in Ireland, asking her to get into touch with Hilda, to reassure her immediately and tell her that Nigel cable each week that he was well. I added some cheery message concerning Tony.

At a sitting for automatic writing on November 14th, 1941, Geraldine Cummins wrote as follows:

Astor is here. Yes, Muriel comes with Hilda.

Muriel:

Hilda is anxious to her the wire. Please read it to her when she comes.

Hilda Gibbes:

Now, isn't that good. I can write my own name as clearly as Michael can. Do read me the wire.

(Geraldine read the wire.)

Thank you, my dear. Will you read about Nigel again?

(Re-read message.)

Tell Bea I am very grateful to her for the wire. It means so much to me that my darling Ni is well. I had such bad dreams about him. I dreamt he was wounded, that he lay out on a battlefield in great pain. That Peggy said he was missing. That he did lose an arm or a leg. Oh, I can scarcely bear thinking about it. And now you tell me it is all fancy. That, my darling, is well. Oh, it is wonderful. I won't believe those dreams if they come again. But I wish Nigel were back at Wickenden. Of course I shouldn't grumble. It is good to hear of Tony shooting there at the weekend. . . Will you tell Bea how sweet I think it was of her to send the wire? I hope that you will see her soon. I can see into your mind how much you miss her. Isn't it strange that one can get peeps into people's minds? Sometimes it's like a page of print, and sometimes it is a picture. . . I shall write more another time - hard to hold on now. Much - much love to Bea and my Tony and - oh dear - can't. . .

Hilda

Sending the above script to me two days later, Geraldine wrote as follows:

“I was able to get Hilda in the quiet. I did get a feeling of excited happiness when I read aloud the wire. She seemed to write more easily than the first time, only rather suddenly she faded out.”

This letter from Hilda was considered longer. Where gaps occur in these writings, remarks concerning Tony or family affairs are indicated. For obvious reasons these are omitted.

CHAPTER FOUR

1941

HILDA DESCRIBES HOW SHE SAW PICTURES IN THE SITTER'S MIND

Some curious remarks recorded in this chapter indicate that the control or communicator is sometimes able to obtain information from pictures of thoughts in the sitter's mind. The control either passes these thoughts to the communicator, who replies suitably or assumes personal responsibility and answers according to his own judgment. For instance, my family and I constantly spoke of Nigel's return from the war. I was most anxious to hear that this would be the case with both my nephews. Through two separate trance-mediums, the control assured me that “they would be protected” and would return. Concerning Nigel, these remarks proved quite incorrect. Tony saw no fighting. He spent a few weeks in a hospital in North Africa and was invalided home.

However, this form of mind reading does not always take place. Information is occasionally demanded by the communicating entity when the required knowledge could have been obtained by “looking into the mind” of the medium or sitter present at the time. An instance of this is reported on page 30 (not this copy). Innumerable cases are recorded when facts unknown to those around have been given at a sitting and verified later. Miss Cummins and I have had vast experience of this phenomenon.

Also, in order to spare the sitter from being rendered unhappy, it appears that the control may sometimes endeavor to gloss over certain events connected with those who pass to the other side, and the manner in which this passing takes place. This contention would seem to be borne out by an experience related by the Rev. C. Drayton Thomas, in his book *From Life to Life*.

This volume was reviewed in *Light* (June 1945), and the following extract is taken from it. A sitting was held with Mrs. Osborne Leonard, and the control, “Feda,” merely reported that the man had “died quick.” But a definite conversation between the control and the communicator was overheard by the sitter. The conversation recorded runs as follows: “Get it correctly; you are making it out other than I mean. Say that the man was hurt and then recovered, but later on got left in a very difficult position where no one could get at him.”

The curious remarks to which reference is made at the opening of this chapter concern a sitting for automatic writing which I obtained with Mrs. Dowden on November 6th, 1941 - *a fact of which Miss Cummins was entirely unaware*. I had no communications through other mediums between that date and *November 22nd*, 1941, when the following was written by Geraldine Cummins. (Through the latter I wrote to Hilda confirming the information given in my telegram concerning Nigel.)

Muriel:

Hilda is with me. She is pleased to hear there is a letter. She says she will believe only if she reads it with her own eyes in your handwriting (presumably meaning mine). She will use Geraldine's, of course.

Hilda Gibbes:

Muriel said Bea had written me a letter. Yes, read it and then if I keep quite still in my mind, Muriel says, I shall see it.

(Geraldine read letter.)

Yes, yes, I can tell her scrawl anywhere. It is true then; can't quite understand why. But, my dear Bea, why were you in a London fog, and I had to talk to that funny person? Of course I understand now, but it is hard to explain to you. I saw you, Bea, and two other people. One was like us, but Bea and that hunched-up person were in a cloud. The stranger told me all about Wickenden and Nigel and Tony, and you said things too. Just at the moment I believed it as you do a dream. Afterwards I felt sure I had invented it, for I couldn't believe that things would ever go right because they had been going wrong for so long. And after all, Bea dear, if you saw two strangers and one sister-in-law in a pea soup London fog, and they talked so quickly, you would feel doubtful. But I can't doubt my eyes. There is no black out now, you know, for me. I have two quite obliging eyes. . . Oh, I must copy out: "Nigel cables every week that he is all right." But you know, Bea, you were always promising me wonderful things that didn't happen and when you showed, like a cinema, pictures to me of Wickenden in that fog, I just thought you were at it again. You had pictures of Marion, Peggy, Zellie and Tony walking about the farm and the woods, all dancing about your head. It made me amused and happy, but I didn't, I couldn't, believe it; it wasn't real. But I would know your writing anywhere. Please, Geraldine, let me read it all over again.

In my letter I said that I have tried to speak to her through other channels, and that the Government had requisitioned Wickenden and the gardens. "Other channels!" she wrote, "I only remember the Channel Crossing" (a typical remark of Hilda's.)

I don't believe any Government ever takes care of anything - and Government gardeners! I am sure they will have everything in rows. There must be military discipline in gardens, you know. I hope they will be kind to my dear little cyclamen. They don't want to form fours. But I shall tell Arthur all about it. He is sure to be delighted. At any rate there won't be those awful weeds. Yes, I'm really

pleased. My darling Ni will have his Wickenden in some kind of dreadful order anyhow when he comes home.

Mrs. Dowden on November 24th, only two days previously. Moreover - an interesting point - Hilda, writing through Mrs. Dowden on that occasion, had said: "Arthur will come now, I think, and ask you questions and *come back to me and say it was just like a dream and utterly unreal.*" (My italics)

The above is recorded not only to illustrate the similarity of this remark through the two mediums, but to show that some individuals who pass over may be unwilling at first to believe in communication between the two states of being. There is much in the Dowden sittings which confirms various others remarks made through Geraldine Cummins. These are omitted, as this book deals primarily with life in the next world, as given through the latter.

Continuing her letter through Geraldine on November 26th, Hilda said that they all had bodies as light as air and they hadn't any ache or pain in them. "In fact," she added, "we are all improving here. It is just because we are happy. There is nothing so good for one's morals as happiness." She ended with the following remark: "I liked our last conversation but I won't be hustled."

This postscript is a direct reference to the Dowden sitting of two days before, in that Mrs. Dowden had abruptly ended it when Hilda had barely finished a sentence (a fact Geraldine did not know). This sudden cutting-off certainly had left Hilda somewhat ruffled, for there were none of the usual farewells. In her life on earth she distinctly disliked being "hustled."

CHAPTER FIVE

1941

THE "DREAM" IS CONFIRMED

We now come to the confirmation of statements made on October 31st, November 7th and 14th, 1941, by both Hilda and Harold, that something "bad had happened to Nigel."

The following few words were written on December 2nd, 1941, and included with another script which Geraldine sent to me some days later. Geraldine had been giving a sitting to a certain investigator in Dublin.

Astor comes. Though you have been talking to Donald X you must let Hilda write one line.

(Writing changed.)

Hilda:

You will tell Bea I was right and she made a mistake - my poor darling Ni - he has been wounded, or was I dreaming? No, no, it was real. But tell Bea I am happy

about him for it wasn't or didn't seem as bad as I thought. A part of the dream was talking to Bea in a funny room somewhere. It is hard to write. You are tired, my dear, so good-bye.

On December 5th I received a letter from Peggy dated December 4th saying that she had just had a cable from Nigel to the effect that he had been "wounded in leg, nothing serious. Now in base hospital. . ." So before the news reached any of us in England, Hilda was aware that her fears had been realized. *Nigel had been wounded on November 21st, 1941.*

In confirmation of Hilda's communication on November 14th, 1941, the following letter written to me is inserted here. It was written from hospital on January 5th, 1942.

"I have just received your two airgraphs, dated December 5th and 11th. Thank you very much. The information received from Mother via Geraldine is most interesting. I don't think now there can be any harm in giving you the information and dates, as it is so long ago. We left the Metropolis and moved into the Desert on October 8th. The battle started on November 18th, and I was wounded on November 21st about five o'clock in the evening. I lay out all night by my tank, which was burning, and was picked up about seven o'clock the next morning, November 22nd. My leg was operated on at an advanced dressing station the same evening, and I finally fetched up here about seven p.m. on November 29th. I was operated on a second time on December 1st, when they removed a fairly large bit of shrapnel from my leg, and that, I think, Auntie Bea, is the whole story. I am up and about again now, but walking is slow and somewhat painful still, as the wound has not yet healed. . ."

It is of interest to note that this information, given through Geraldine on December 2nd, concerning Nigel being wounded, was contrary to that I had been assuring Hilda through her. In this instance the theory of the intervention of the medium's mind does not apply. Nor can it be explained by telepathy from anyone in England connected with Nigel at the time, as the fact was not then known here.

Attention should be called to a curious point in Hilda's few lines written in December 2nd. She wrote: "A part of the dream was talking to Bea in a funny room somewhere."

This would seem to refer to a sitting I had with Mrs. Bedford at the London Spiritualist Alliance. It took place on *December 1st, the day before Hilda wrote her few lines* through Geraldine in Dublin. The room in which the sitting was held would have seemed strange to Hilda, and it is curious that she should have mentioned this as a part of her "dream." *For on that same day* Nigel in his letter stated that he was operated on for a second time in order to remove shrapnel from his leg. One wonders if Hilda had been present in some manner with Nigel at the time of the operation

and had also spoken to me through Mrs. Bedford; for both incidents are described as being in the nature of a dream.

It would have been exceedingly interesting to ascertain at what hour Nigel was operated on, but that is now, impossible. My sitting with Mrs. Bedford began at 2:45 p.m. About half way through the control said: "She" (Hilda) "says you have worried about someone returning to you. Don't worry, he's coming back sooner than you think." This could either be an example of "wishful thinking" or, by saying "sooner than you think, Hilda or the control had tried to convey to me the idea that Nigel would be sent safely home. As already stated, I was then unaware that he had been wounded.

On receipt of information from Peggy concerning Nigel, I telephoned to Geraldine that evening (December 5th) and said that if she had any further indications that Hilda wanted to enquire about Nigel, to tell her that he had cabled saying he was "safe in hospital with a wound in leg, not serious." I added that it was the best thing that could have happened as we hoped he would soon be home again.

The following script from Geraldine Cummins, dated December 7th, 1941, was received by me on December 15th. Being censored in those days of war, letter took from one to two weeks in transit to and from Eire.

Muriel: Hilda is with me. She has been worried about the question of Nigel losing his leg. But I said NO, of course not, to her, and I think she has taken it all far better than we expected. But of course she is up and down about it. She has her dark and bright hours where Nigel is concerned.

Now she wants to write.

Hilda: Yes, please read me what Bea said.

(Geraldine read my telephoned message)

It is very much what I gathered from her already. Let me re-read. Yes, my poor Ni. It is the best thing that could happen to you to be hurt and in pain (said ironically). Just a line to Bea.

It is slower here and so easier for me to grasp things in this light. Thank you my dear, so much for speaking to Geraldine. Don't think I am fretting or unhappy about poor Ni. It is a strange thing that all my unhappiness for this wound to Nigel came before it happened. I have got that all over. You see, Harold and Govy have been explaining things - making me see that, Nigel being so very near and dear to me, my being unhappy about him will only hurt and harm him. Harold has made me sit in the garden among spring flowers and talk about Ni when he was a baby, and when he was a little older. All the lovely hours I had with him when he was a small boy. And you know, after a while that talking brought me a deep, delicious peace, and then Harold, feeling that peace about me, said: "You look radiant. Now

fix your mind and send him, in a long, loving wish, all that radiance, and it will help to take the pain away, and he won't regret being knocked out of things.

I did that and I am going to go on doing it at intervals. For at the end of my thinking of him in this way, I saw his face, and he was peacefully sleeping, with such a boyish smile. Then Govy told me that this experience would make a fine man of him, and that's how I knew that it was God's will and all for the best.

So you see Bea, you needn't worry about me. I know that, at present, Nigel's happiness depend on my keeping happy. So I am going to try my hardest to keep all the bogies away.

All is well for me. Try to be as cheerful as I am, dear Bea, and you will be quite a social success.

Love, always your

Hilda

The opening remark from Hilda in her letter of December 7th (taking up my words), that "it is the best thing that could happen to Ni, not to be hurt and in pain," is exactly the manner in which she would take up some remark of mine made when, in a frantic effort to cheer her up about something, I only succeeded in saying the wrong thing! In this case Hilda's *thoughts* of Niguel appear to have been unintentionally impressed on the paper through Geraldine.

Curiously enough, in a letter to me dated *December 29th*, 1941, Nigel wrote: ". . . I am so thankful in a way that Mother was not still with us when I got wounded, as I know how much she would have worried, although there has been no need to worry *and I've felt fine after the first fortnight. . .*" (my italics).

On December 20th Peggy had written to me as follows: "I have had letters from Nigel saying he has a broken leg, broken ear-drum, and has had two operations to remove shrapnel from his legs, and he was hurt about the face. *But he sounds very cheerful in hospital and is not in any pain.* I've had several cables about different things, *but he doesn't say much about his wounds now, so I presume he is all right. . .*" (my italics)

It will be recollected that Nigel was wounded on November 21st. Hilda wrote through Geraldine two weeks and two days later (December 7th) saying that she had been trying to take Nigel's pain away. The above extracts from letters received by me, therefore, are of interest.

CHAPTER SIX

1941

HILDA AGAIN SEES NIGEL'S FUTURE

When one grasps the apparent fact that, for a while, the next life resembles this life, it seems that there is no reason why Christmas trees, Christmas parties, and so on, should not continue to make part of the Hereafter, as they make part of our earthly existence. The following extracts from Hilda's experiences in that festive season may therefore be of interest.

On Christmas Day, 1941, Muriel was the first to write:

Muriel: Please give Bea our love and best wishes for the New Year. Tell her we have a most marvelous Christmas tree for Hilda. She hasn't been allowed to go near it. Ruth and I arranged it together. There are all kinds of presents of the prettiest and absurdist kind on it. Nannie and all the old retainers will be there. Hilda will be Queen of the Christmas party, and Govy the Court Jester, Ruth and I Hilda's ladies-in-waiting, Harold her handy man and attendant slave. I think we can guarantee an afternoon for Hilda that will make up for all her sorrows and illness in the last ten years. One moment now before she comes.

Then came:

Hilda Gibbes: Good morning, good evening, or is it good-night? - to you, my dear Geraldine. I don't know what your clocks are telling you. I know that ours are striking ten on Christmas morning. May it be happy and peaceful for you. Yes, please, I would like to write a letter to Bea. You say you have a message from her. Do read it, or let me read it, at once.

Unfortunately, Geraldine was here disturbed by the entry of her mother into her room and later she had to go to church. Interruptions occurred only too frequently during these writings in those days of hectic work, anxiety and responsibility. However, the sitting was continued in the evening of the same day.

It is particularly of note to observe in the following script a further example of foreknowledge concerning the fate awaiting Nigel, and to remember that it was written when he was still in hospital, recovering from his first wound. The communicator actually claims to have seen "the date" of an event which took place *five months later*.

Hilda enquired for my letter, writing that "The pen was whisked from my hand. . ."

What a nice newsy message! Perhaps it is the most wonderful thing that has happened to me since I was supposed to die - that I should be able to send letters to Bea, and that Bea should give me news of my darlings. It takes the sitting out of the parting with them, you see. A broken leg! (Nigel's injury.) That isn't so much I wish it were more, because they won't send him home. They are going to cure him and send him to the Front again. But I shall pray and pray that the Russians will

beat the Germans before the date I see Nigel will be sent to fight again. Poor darling, the pictures tell me he isn't finished with fighting. Yes, I know he goes back to it, and it may be on another front, and he will be wounded again and perhaps lost for a while.

That's what I saw on my screen lately. But when I was beginning to worry, Govy said the pictures were my fears photographed for me. So, I won't look at my Egyptian career again. These pictures came on a most beautifully carved Egyptian piece of work. Harold said this screen was mine when I lived in Egypt long ago, and I looked into it or at it every morning, just as people look at the newspapers in London every morning. But as, like the newspapers, it gives only bad news, I've had it put away. Don't think I am worrying, for I really do believe it is as good at lying as *The Daily Rag*.

Thank you for your thoughts today, they meant more to me than any of the gorgeous presents I have been given this Christmas over here. Of course, best of all were Ni's thoughts. They were like the first bouquet of spring flowers and thrilled me as I have never been thrilled before. They were all I wanted to give me a perfect Christmas. . .

Our Christmas tree was a great surprise. You see, it was exactly like the old days, but with a difference. You will say it couldn't be different and the same. Well, it was the same old tree - just as it used to be long ago at Nymans. But the difference was that Ruth brought all the little children who had been driven out of the world by the raids - funny little Cockneys, absurd little Poles and precocious French mites, and they all jabbered together, with Dutch, Belgians, Scotch and Norwegians. We were in a Tower of Babel. But the Tower didn't fall down, as it does in the Bible. . .

Oh, didn't I write quite well for you in that room with the flowers in it - much prettier than the other place where there was so much talking. But for all its prettiness that writing-room had too many things in it. I looked out of three windows on to the London street. I don't think I was ever in that street. But it was nice and quiet, and you were more real to me there than in the other place. You seemed to know each other write (right) well. . . And now I'm losing hold, and I haven't given you Govy's, Ruth's, Harold's and Muriel's messages, or told you anything about my Christmas party or the carols and the walk with Govy in the morning in the grounds, and nannie and all the old people - the wonderful welcome they gave "Miss Hilda." Fancy my being "Miss" and Arthur there! He said we should have to have another wedding day. But I said that the first meant a proposal, and I mightn't accept him this time. But marriages aren't made in heaven, and I am in heaven now. It is really true that there is such a place. I have been in it all today.

Much love always,

Hilda.

Pen won't go on. . .

The above letter is characteristic of the manner in which Hilda's mind jumped from one subject to another - often forgetting things she wished to say. It is characteristic also of Ruth in bringing numerous children with her. This fact Geraldine would not have known.

The reference to the pretty room with the flowers in it, etc., obviously describes Mrs. Dowden's drawing room and my sitting with her on November 24th. Though in a letter to Hilda I had referred to speaking to her through "other channels" *Geraldine did not know that I had any sittings with Mrs. Dowden*. The reference to "the other place where there was so much talking" is probably an allusion to a sitting I had with Mrs. Taylor, a trance-medium, at the London Spiritualist Alliance. At this sitting, which took place on December 17th, 1941, the control referred to the "elder boy in the East," adding that he had "been through a dark tunnel, but she feels that he has come out of that darkness." She said: "There is been illness around him. . . she thought he had come out of danger now. She does not see him getting home yet awhile." (My italics.)

In all these psychic writings the name of the earthly home of the M. family was written phonetically, i.e., "Niemand's," instead of Nymans.

CHAPTER SEVEN

1942

"NIGEL WILL COME HOME IN MAY"

Early in the New Year I sent a letter to Hilda, giving her news of the family. I said I had no further details of Nigel, but that evidently her thoughts of him were doing good.

On January 7th, 1942, Hilda wrote through Geraldine as follows:

Astor comes. The lady from Egypt is near. She came and used your eyes for a few minutes and was amused.

Hilda Gibes: How nice of you, Geraldine, to be at home to a traveler! What a funny house you live in! I couldn't live in it for an hour - so untidy. But I love the view from your window. It reminds me the view of the Wickenden outlook - the valley and the far-off hills. But you have the river. How brightly it sparks today between the trees! I am longing to hear and read and feel the letter from Bea. Yes, I feel it all, and it does me good. The writing is quite clear. There are no more blackouts for me now.

It is sweet of you, Bea, to remember the baby at the beginning of her first year. When Govy wants to be crushing, he reminds me that I am only about six months

old, at least if we count by the Big Ben's ticks. But we don't, for all the clocks have stopped here. That is one of its blessings. . . The best wish I can send you is that, before next winter comes, Geraldine will be your occupation; and the book, which you can only complete in peace-time, shall be the work of each day. I haven't forgotten it, see. But I know now why it wasn't allowed to be finished sooner. Until people learn by experience the meaning of the Crucifixion, they couldn't read it so that it would seem real to them. And all the life before it which your book will tell, will have meaning now in the coming time for the builders of the new and finer line. You see I have been thinking about you and planning out your future so nicely without by your leave or with your leave. I prefer to think of you in that restless peace ahead and not now. . .

What a lovely letter you have written me! I only get bits and scraps in other ways. I can go over and over this kind of letter. My darling Ni! Yes, I have worked hard at my thoughts, and I know I have helped him, for I had a wonderful reward. But the work was worse than going to school again at first, and you know I hated schools. It was so difficult trying to keep my thoughts in a pocket and my mind on one star over the desert. But at last I could fix and hold that star for what seemed ages. Then when I was still, really still, Harold told me I might let go, and I sent all the love of my heart, all my wish to help my boy. And, do you know, my going to school again was all so worthwhile - I had a Christmas present from Nigel. His love brought him to me. He came in what St. Paul called his "Celestial body," and so there was nothing wrong or strange about it. He was just his boyish self, as he stayed in my arms for a few heavenly minutes. I live in that wonderful memory. . .

I am losing the power, and I haven't said half of what I wanted to say to you. All is well with me now. Harold says I am to tell you that I am the little Hilda you knew long ago - perhaps I am and perhaps I am not - a little of both. For I have the family and all the lovely things of long ago, and Harold, Muriel and Ruth are making me incurably selfish, so Govy says. But I haven't a pain or a care, and I am happy. So goodnight and all my loving thanks,

from Hilda.

The book to which Hilda alludes is *The Manhood of Jesus* (shortly to be published). She had read it so far as it was then written in 1939. It is a sequel of *The Childhood of Jesus*.

The following extract is taken from a script written by my brother Frank, through Geraldine Cummins, for his wife Maud. It contains a spontaneous reference - the first in this series of writings - to the "Memory Gallery" to which every newcomer to the future state is apparently introduced sooner or later. It is included here because it carries on the continuity of this story. It is dated January 20th, 1942.

Hilda met my brother, and they got on very well together. . . Arthur spends much of his time with the Mater, who put him on to the Family Library, which has vastly

intrigued me. It's an odd place from your point of view, hard to describe - a series of pictures of past scenes on earth in which our various ancestors played their part, "a film of memory" might be a good description. But it has enchanted Arthur. He spends much of his time browsing in it - finds it rather a priceless joke. But wait until his own memory-film is presented to him. Then I think he will be quite as startled and disturbed as I was.

Always interested in history, my brother Arthur read with avidity a vast amount of historical literature. This and other spontaneous allusions, therefore, to his continued attention to the subject is evidential of him.

The following script written by Geraldine indicates once again that, as in the writings on Christmas Day, 1941, Hilda knew of the "coming home" of Nigel in the following May. It was communicated on January 25th, 1942.

Astor is here. Harold comes with the young spirit today.

Harold: Tell Bea we have been making an exhaustive study of azaleas. It is now Hilda's fancy that Nigel will come home in May, so I began to teach her our method of gardening. How with our minds we painted pictures of our desires on the ether and lo, they appeared if we have enough love and the creative imagination with which to hold and maintain them. She said "ether" was such a horrid word, always associated in her mind with tooth-ache and the boys' operations. So I called it by Shelley's word, the Empyrean. She thought that a little ponderous too. But she has caught on to the idea of painting a picture of the Wickenden azaleas here, to be ready in her garden at the time of Nigel's home-coming. Now I must give place to my little Egyptian priestess, as I call her when I want to tease her. Hilda imagines, by the way, that Nigel will be back at Wick in May, so she is determined that over here she will be looking at what he is looking at - the azaleas. . .

From Harold's last remark it would seem that, realizing what he had indicated, he endeavored to hide his meaning from me by representing that he referred to the earthly Wickenden.

Hilda: I can see that you have a letter from Bea.

Bea dear,

You will be surprised to hear that I have been so busy I don't know where to turn. You will say the dead have no business to be busy. But we are, because we are so much more alive than you are. I have so many people to see, so many lovely things to do. And I am generally doing wrong. Arthur says he is the superfluous husband now - that I have married the whole family of M.s. But he isn't jealous, oddly enough. Because, as I told him, he is wedded to his fishing-rod and has found a most undesirable mistress - such a plain, dull woman - in his library of the Gibbes family records. He is either glued to this mistress or flirting with an enormous salmon at the end of his fishing-line. So you will be scandalized to hear that we no

longer live together. Though we are a devoted couple, we have mutually agreed to separate and meet occasionally, of course, to exchange news about Ni and Tony. Harold says that is what marriages made in Heaven mean. You meet and see the people you love only when you have something you love in common to do. So Arthur and I are the best companions to each other. He has all the fishing he gave up for my sake, and I have all the things I suppose I gave up for his sake - here of course, they are extraordinarily varied. Harold is a kind of magician with a magic carpet. He transports me in a moment into the strangest, loveliest places. Someday I shall describe them to you. Then, so that I shall not be utterly selfish, dear Ruth shows me her poor little children who were tortured or murdered by the Germans. She looks after such numbers of them. But I am not allowed to stay long with them, as they say their sad memories might be like an infectious illness I could easily pick up. So Govy snatches me away for a walk in the garden. Then he said I must learn to work, so Harold has started to give me painting lessons. But it isn't painting with a brush. It is throwing out colored webs from one's mind, and then, with what Harold calls "the fingers of the imagination," one shapes and molds them into bits of landscape, flowers, trees, plants, hills, sunsets, all that one remembers best. It is wonderful and extraordinary work. I am very stupid at it, because, they say, I have a butterfly mind. I go like a butterfly, tasting one perfume after another, from flower to flower. No sooner have I one bit of landscape arranged that I dash on to another piece. And then suddenly it all most aggravatingly collapses like a house of cards. . .

After some further references to remarks I made in my letter to her, Hilda ended with:

Love to Tony and to all who understand I am alive, and, Bea, I am so unbelievably happy, sometimes I become afraid. It seems far too good to last.

Always my dear,

Your, Hilda.

When sending me the above script, Geraldine wrote: "So sorry enclosed was delayed. I got a feeling of real happiness from Hilda, as if the world's care had all dropped away."

Replying to a letter from me, Geraldine obtained the following on March 17th, 1942:

Astor comes. Yes, Hilda likes writing a letter through you. She says it is an old habit and she feels she can say things this way she wouldn't care to say the other ways. But she wants Bea to realize that there are always "leave-outs," (omissões) because she is excited and the pen runs away with her. Now wait.

Hilda Gibbes: My dear Geraldine, alone in your little blue room. Oh, and my photograph beside you. How amusing to see that worrying old woman! I am a new woman now - not the blue-stockings (intellectual e educada) kind, or the girl in the ugly uniform, but someone who lived about 1906. I have been looking at very

different selves, you see. It is like going to a toy cupboard and taking out a lot of old dolls and remembering how much each one mattered when it was new. There's the Christmas Hilda of 1900, and there's the funny little Hilda of 1888, and there's the sad Hilda of 1919. I just had a look at them all as you are looking at my photograph. But Harold says I am 1906 and growing younger every day. Soon I shall be at the age when we first knew Bea. Ask her, does she remember our parties in London, when Govy and mother were in the country, when Arthur was just Bea's brother? And then the time when we were to Malta to O. - all the excitement when her baby was born. I didn't like Malta, too many barracks about. But those lovely London parties with Harold and Bea - to the theater, and the silly jokes we had. And that was the time Bea was quite the smart lady of the party. Who have thought then of the awful clothes she would wear in thirty years' time? Now I am saying unkind things. But you see I have just been talking to her mother about it, and I described to her some of Bea's dresses and hats - those she wore in the nineteen hundred time, or the lovely nineties when we were all so happy and had such a wonderful time. Mrs. Gibbes was so pleased at my remembering them. That was because I have been looking at the 1899 or 1900 doll that was the Hilda of those days. She made me remember.

It must not be inferred from these writings that Hilda was old and decrepit. She was extremely young in mind an appearance and was very active until hampered by arthritis.

An extraordinary accuracy is shown in the mention of the dates - 1899-1900. My mother died in 1898, and it was not until after this occurred that Hilda and I became great friends.

All that Hilda says in the first part of this letter is characteristic of her. She loved playing with dolls as a child, and the allusion to her being sad in 1919 is not without foundation. Owing to the war of 1914, Wickenden was only partly built and had had to be left unfinished, with attendant difficulties, until the end of 1919, when work was restarted. Muriel, who had arranged to live there and carry out the making of the garden, died of influenza in December, 1918, and Hilda was herself very ill not long afterwards. Harold's wife had died suddenly in 1918, and his health caused Hilda constant anxiety in the ensuing years. My brother had rejoined the army; Tony was a small and delicate baby. "Govy" had died in 1915, and Hilda's mother had become bed-ridden, much thought and attention having to be given to her and to her household. Troubles and anxieties of many kinds seemed to assail various members of M. family at that period. So it is not to be wondered at that, with her worrying nature, she saw "the sad Hilda" of 1919 when looking through her "toy cupboard."

Hilda's letter of March 17th, 1942, continues as follows:

What? You say you have a letter about Ni and Tony? Oh please let me see it at once. You know, Bea, my mind has been at rest about Ni lately, and I think it is partly because he is not now sad about me. He knows I am near to him and, what

is better still, when he was asleep he met me twice in a strange, cloudy place. But the place didn't matter. I made him understand that I had no more pain and was happy, as only in my best moments. I have been happy on earth with Nigel. And though Harold told me he wouldn't remember our talk together when he woke up, he would at least take back the fragrance of my happiness - just as one remembers the fragrance of a flower. . .

Oh Bea, dear, I am pleased that you rescued some of my cyclamen from those dreadful soldiers. It doesn't matter if they are smutty in London. I know the care you will take of them. You will feel as I do when the flowers come, that they are little exquisite people, so much nicer than many human beings. I hope that they will lift their little heads in your garden and won't have their spirits dashed by black-outs, fogs and soot. I don't like your living alone in wartime and in that lonely little house. Why can't you get Geraldine to come over to you? . .

It is very sweet of you to take that view of my passing - to have grieved for me because I was ill and in pain - and to give up grieving for me when you knew I was well. I never thought you would be so wise and sensible. But it would have distressed me very much if you had continued to grieve for me - because, like echoes, we pick up those sorrowful feelings from the people we love on earth. If only people wouldn't mourn their dead, if they would believe the Churches' teaching - that there are no dead - it would help us so much! Ruth told me that the most wonderful thing that happened to her after her passing was the sudden change in Eric. At first she felt so terribly his heartbreaking grief, and then when she let him know she was there, all that sorrow went from him. It made such a difference to her.

For she could never be happy when he was deeply unhappy about her. She works so much among the small children who have been and are being suddenly killed in this awful war, that I am not with her as much as I should like. But she never allows her work to interfere with her communion with Eric. She wants him and Mary to know that she is often with them, even in their busiest hours, when they don't even know she is there. It is very wonderful to me that their lives can be still a part of her life. I wish it were permitted that I should be as near to Nigel and Tony. But I am not allowed to be with them like that. . .

Mary is the younger daughter of Ruth and Eric Parker. After a few further remarks Geraldine was, as usual, interrupted. She sat again for Hilda the next day, March 18th, 1942.

Hilda; May I go on with Bea's letter? But first will you ask her to apologize to Eric. I used to think that he was a little mistaken and foolish about his talks with Ruth. But now I understand. I know that he was right. Do tell him about the Bird Paradise Ruth has been preparing for him. Oh, I don't believe I mentioned it before. How stupid of me! There's so much to tell, so little time. Ruth has made a special garden with pools and a stream in it, fruit trees, flowers and a woody

nearby. It is really a wild-flower garden - a little heaven for all of birds - the common starling, the rarest birds with long, unspellable names, live in it. All Eric's little feathered friends are there, and a great many more besides. He will hear every song in it that he has ever known, and as well, many strange birds' tunes that will quite startle him. If Ruth has been able to go on with her Bird World have become as complete an aviary as the one in Noah's Ark.

But when the war broke out and the poor little tortured Polish and French children came crowding into our world, Ruth of course left her Paradise and gave up everything to work among them. Only someone as true and tender and strong as Ruth can help these poor little souls and work among them. Harold and I would break all to pieces. Govy says, if we tried to help these poor boys and girls who come over to this life all clouded in nightmares of terror. Whatever the language, she can make them understand. The little Russian children she is helping now call her the Holy Mother, and one of them even asked if he could make a little statue of her to which he could pray when she had to leave him. For, in spite of Dictators, so many of these small Russians have their religions secretly taught them by their mothers. I expect Eric would be very proud of Ruth and her courage in facing the awful scenes of horror that accompany these small mites - the last things they remember of earth, which are like painted pictures about them - painted by their imaginations.

Ruth and other workers' first task is to dispel these and draw the little children right away from the dreadful web of cruelty and hate about them by their murderers. I asked to be told about these things, because I wanted to try and cure myself of one bad fault. I learnt I had this fault by looking at those in my memory gallery. Since I was a little girl I couldn't bear to hear of horrible and brutal cruelties; even of unpleasant things I was afraid. I know my weakness now, and I try to take a dose of this bitter medicine occasionally. Zellie, on doctor's orders, never gave me anything so unpleasant.

Oh, my azaleas still fall about and flop or fade out in the most absurd way! But I have at least one beautiful corner, quite perfect, that I think is going to be really permanent. I blow over them, I shine for them. I am their sun, rain, wind and stars, their little Providence; and in the evenings, when I visit the azalea corner, they all bow their little heads and say "Thank you," so prettily.

Muriel, Govy and Harold come and tease me about my gardening efforts. Ruth is the only one who takes them quite seriously and prophesies that someday I may really make a garden worth looking at.

Geraldine again records "interruption here," but continued the sitting later. After her signature, Hilda wrote: -

P.S.: I am even allowed to P.S.! I don't understand this letter-writing. It is just to tell you that this wonderful happiness goes on - it may become a habit I shall never get rid of, Harold says. Fancy Harold saying that!!

It is interesting to note that, in this communication Geraldine roughly describes Eric Parker's garden near Godalming, which she had never seen. He and Ruth made it some years before she died, with stream and little pools, and it was bordered by a wood which has eventually absorbed into the garden. All birds are encouraged to nest therein. One more point: from my memories of Ruth, she is the only one of the family who would have taken Hilda's garden efforts seriously, encouraging her, and, though amused, would not have chaffed her unmercifully over her failures. This is a characteristic little touch which may be of no interest to the general reader but which gives added proof to me of the identity of this and the other communicators.

CHAPTER EIGHT

1942

HILDA'S EXPERIENCE AT THE TIME OF NIGEL'S DEATH

In the spring of 1942 I had a bad attack of influenza and bronchitis which, in a minor degree affected my heart. Geraldine C. came over from Ireland to me in London and stayed for two weeks. During this time we had three sittings; on May 26th, June 1st and 4th.

Sitting beside my bed on Tuesday, May 26th, 1942. Geraldine wrote as follows:

Astor: There is a curious swirl of the ether here. I see near you two groups; one of your own family, the other of your adopted family. Muriel comes forward and near her is Hilda - the three sisters, for behind them is Ruth. Frank is here, too.

I asked Astor to let Muriel speak first and Hilda later. After some preliminary conversation Muriel wrote:

Hilda is still very busy with her Wickenden garden. You know, Govy and I made appalling mistakes in it, and she has been making all sorts of changes and has even dared to quarrel with Govy over it - not a real quarrel, a lover's quarrel. . .

Then my sister-in-law wrote through Geraldine for the first time in my presence. She made allusion to my illness, expressed pleasure at seeing Geraldine and myself together, and remarked that she had seen that Eric was not very well: "It may have been one of those stupid pictures we sometimes see about people here," she said. On my remarking that, as she had referred to seeing pictures of Eric, could she tell me more about how she correctly saw that Nigel had been, or would be, wounded?

Hilda made the following reply:

It came to me when I was resting and sending my thoughts to him. Slowly there appeared a light and I saw that it was really a mirror with curious Egyptian figures

carved on its gold frame. And I knew then that had I lived with it before. You know, Bea dear - or perhaps you don't know - we have lived before. It was quite a surprise to me, but I shall tell you about that another time. I saw my poor Ni in that mirror, wounded and in such pain. He was all bent up, and his face was very white. It seemed to be either his leg or his arm. Only I felt his pain as if it were my own as I looked. It made me quite miserable until Govy told me that mirrors only made pictures of our fears. I was glad to hear that because, later on, I saw another picture when he seemed to be a prisoner or cut off from his own men, and he was again hurt. I wouldn't follow that picture. I turned my back on that mirror and wished Egypt were - anywhere, but not connected with me. For you know, Bea, the frame of that mirror was the most beautiful thing - I loved it and I knew it was my treasure when I was very happy once by the Great River. The mirror swept me right back to when Harold was my prince, as they called him, and, oddly enough, you were a tall man, my slave. But you had a brown skin. Such a funny thing - I said in my dream to Harold, "Bea has gone to Elizabeth Arden."

(Loud laughter from me.)

He said: "You can believe anything of Bea. Perhaps it's the new War Regulations, to frighten the Hun."

(More laughter.)

Other remarks followed and messages from Tony were given. "The years won't separate us," she wrote. I shall be just the same when, as an old man, he takes his journey to us." With a further joking remark that I should make up my face every day, the sitting ended.

A delightful touch of humor is conveyed in the remarks that I might have gone to Elizabeth Arden, the beauty specialist, to have my face browned in order to fulfil possible war regulations for frightening the Germans. It is typical of both Hilda and Harold. With their witticism and quick repartee in former years they could keep a room full of people rocking with laughter.

We now come to a further vision concerning Nigel, described by my sister-in-law at the next sitting, on Monday afternoon, June 1st, 1942, indicated at the previous sitting and on Christmas Day, 1941. Geraldine again sat beside my bed.

Astor is here. I see that today Ruth and Muriel come with Hilda. Ruth has been talking to her, reassuring her, but Hilda particularly wants to write today though she may not tell you what worries her.

B. Gibbes: Do you know?

Astor: Yes. She will tell you if she wants to. Wait.

After some preliminary conversation about a family matter, Hilda wrote as follows:

I've been in my garden. Bea, dear, and I really had some rather lovely roses out, made by my own hands and mind. I was so pleased. I was just going to pick one red one for Tony * and a cream one for Ni, when there came a cloud of smoke and then sounds like guns, and I saw those dreadful tanks rushing over the corner of my new garden. Out of one of them, Ni looked so white, so exhausted, and he was in his battle-dress. I felt a great pain in my head, and so hot, so choky. There were clouds of dust about me. I tried to reach Ni between those terrible monsters, and I knew my headache was his headache, and my shocking was because he couldn't breathe properly. Just as I came beside his tank and my arms went out to my darling, there was an explosion. I saw nothing more. I found myself back among the roses, the bees humming among them, and no other sound. Do you mind my telling you this, Bea dear? They don't understand over here. They are so far away from all that. But you and I went through a little of it, so you know what I feel. Is my Ni in great danger?

**Recently I ascertained from Tony that, when possible, he always wore a red rose or carnation in his buttonhole. I did not know that this color was his special choice.*

Recollecting the accuracy with which Hilda had described Nigel's first wound, some three weeks before the event occurred, I was disturbed at the above description of what appeared to be another vision - or rather, in this instance, a real experience. Obviously she appealed to me to set her mind at rest and, as I had so often endeavored, to do this in her lifetime, I avoided a direct reply by telling that we did not actually know where Nigel was, that he might be near any fighting, and that she might unconsciously have picked up the thoughts of other people who had sons and husbands in the fighting-line and confused them with her own.

Hilda: Ah, that was it, I expect. Then I needn't worry any more about what I saw?

B.G.: No, though we have, of course, all been thinking of him.

Hilda: "Well, never think of him again like that, please."

(written quickly)

B. G.: No, I didn't mean I'd been thinking of him like that, because I have not. He may be in the Caucasus - right away from the fighting.

Hilda: Yes. I shall believe that. If I could have Nigel coming to me without pain I should, though it is selfish of me, be very happy. I am afraid of pain for him; but as he is in the Caucasus he is quite alright.

B.G.: Possibly he is there. I hope so.

Hilda: I should like him to be away from the Desert and see Russia. It is Russia, isn't it? Mountains and sea. I shall think of him in the mountains seeing lovely views. Yes, he will enjoy seeing Russia. I think I can go on with that corner of my garden now. I couldn't before. I was making a herb garden, all the lovely perfume,

rosemary and rue, and then, just as I was succeeding with them, the perfume went wrong. The rosemary smelt of garlic, for instance.

B.G.: (Laughing) Oh, you're ragging (zombar).

Hilda: No, it is quite true. Harold said I thought of garlic at the wrong moment; it is in making the picture of it. I thought "I mustn't have any unpleasant thing like garlic near my herb garden" and so, of course, the perfume of it came. So tiresome, I had to start all over again.

I sympathized suitably with her difficulties, and after some further conversation concerning the possibility of Nigel being in Russia, she asked about the second son, Tony. She enquired if he were not too miserable in his soldier's life. I replied that, though he hated soldiering, he was the best of it. She answered:

I am glad he feels like that. I don't worry about Tony, I feel that he is quite safe somehow, and I shall now think of my Ni in the mountains and drinking vodka in Russian inns. . . I hope Zellie is managing all right. I saw her for a moment the other day. She was talking at such a rate about food - so upset because she hadn't been given some ration. So like old Zellie to pay me a visit and only grumble the rations or something or other. I was so pleased I hadn't to do anything about it. I said to her: "In heaven we have no rations." But she didn't seem to hear me.

B.G.: No, I expect not. Now will you let Ruth write for a little?

Hilda: Yes, I shall. I have other things on my list, but I have lost the list (a familiar touch). No matter.

My dear love,

Your's, Hilda.

(Pause, and a slight change of writing.)

Ruth Parker: I like the pencil. Hilda is quite happy again since writing to you. She was worrying and you have put her mind at rest.

B.G.: Yes, but I fear that Ni *is* in the thick of this fighting. However, I tried to reassure her by saying that he might be in the Caucasus. . .

Unfortunately the telephone rang at this moment and the writing stopped.

The information that Nigel had died of wounds on Wednesday, May 27th, 1942, was given by the war office to his wife, Peggy, on Tuesday, June 9th. The sitting recorded above (June 1st) indicates that his Mother was in complete ignorance of his actual death, which had already occurred four days previously and thirteen days before notification was received by Nigel's relatives.

We cannot tell if Ruth already knew of this event, but it is probable that she did. Evidently, if this were so, they did not wish Hilda to know it. But a curious thing happened: I rang up Mary Parker, Nigel's cousin, on Monday night, June 1st, and spoke of this vision Hilda stated she had had in addition to the previous one when

she described his wounds. Mary made no comment. It was only when, telephoning again on Tuesday night, June 9th, to tell her of Nigel's death, she said that she and her father had been conducting their weekly experiment with the Ouija board on Sunday 31st. She told me that, on that occasion, the board had spelt out "Nigel, Nigel. Nigel is here. Nigel is here," and some reference was made to her brother Christopher. She said it was all very distressing, and, as they could get nothing else, they stopped the sitting.

It is of interest to note that this vision of Nigel occurred at a moment when his mother was thinking particularly of him and gathering a white rose, as she describes it. If one may speculate it would seem that Nigel's subconscious mind knew a few moments before he was hit, that he was going to die and it sent out an imploring thought which drew her to him. For she wrote: "Just as I came beside his tank and my arms went out to my darling, there came an explosion." That explosion gave him his mortal wounds.

Nigel had, of course, been much in all our thoughts, as we knew the Eight Army, but a picture of him or of such an incident had not come to my mind or to that of the automatist.

With regard to Mademoiselle worrying over her rations; it is characteristic of the way she behaved when with Hilda on earth. Moreover, I received a letter from Mademoiselle on June 2nd stating the fact that she had no rations for her chickens or for her dogs, and very little for herself.

My third sitting with Geraldine took place on Thursday afternoon, June 14th, 1942, Geraldine beside my bed as before.

Astor is here. I see near you your own friends and Frank. Now the M. family are near. I shall let Hilda write and, if there is time, Harold may write later.

Hilda Gibbes:

It amuses me to scratch my name on this glass - such a big pencil. Bea dear, I have so many things to tell you. Govy has been punishing me. I rather enjoyed it. He said that I was thinking far too much about my two very ordinary children! (Oh!!!) I was furious. "Ni is different from everybody else," I said. "He is," said Govy, "but the fact remains that he is not remarkable enough to hold your whole attention. You are wasting life here."

You see, Bea, we don't waste time over here, all the clocks have stopped. But we can waste life. So Govy said: "I shall put you back to the bottom of the class, to your nursery years when Nigel and Tony had not even been dreamt of by you." And here the extraordinary thing, Bea, he did send me back to the nursery. I saw Harold as a little boy, and there was I (with old Nannie, who looked quite young), as a little girl. And I saw O. . .* with a pigtail, strumming the piano. She was the big girl, and Harold and I rather disliked her then. We thought she was too bossy, and she teased me one day and made me cry. Then Harold hit her, and someone, a

governess, came and smacked them, and Harold and I retired and sobbed together. So you see, here was I, the elderly grandmother, seeing little Harold and myself as I was - and "Grannie" cried too. It was all so touching! Then there was the Queen Victoria doll's house given me at Christmas - that was a wonderful time.

"Grannie" was herself, and the little girl playing with that marvelous house, all the chairs and tables in it. I took them out everyday and dusted them. That why I always loved old furniture, I think, for the happiest times I ever had were when I played with my doll's house. I see that now. I and myself simply crowed with delight over that quaint old Victorian toy. I and myself are Hilda the Grannie and Hilda aged seven.

I saw her, growing up, going round the garden hand in hand with Govy. He told me the names of flower and then scolded me because I never could remember them - a butterfly or a bird would catch my attention and I couldn't think of anything else. That was why I became a little afraid of Govy. I was a naughty girl and wouldn't attend to his flower lessons. And when he explained that, I felt so much nearer to him. I am not afraid of Govy now, Bea. The the wonderful days in the garden, and playing in the nursery. I have been so happy enjoying my punishment, until I saw myself at school. There I hated all the mistresses, all the girls, and I was afraid every night and cried myself to sleep. That part made me sad, but it was good for me, Govy said, to see it, because it will help me not to be afraid. And it is all past and over. So now I can see how silly I was. Govy said that, after I came back from nursery and school time, I was not to be frightened any more than the school-girl was - I mean about Ni, and it is strange, but I feel quite calm and happy, as if he were quite safe from real pain. . .

From this last remark it would seem that Hilda was conscious that Nigel was safe and out of all suffering, and yet apparently unconscious of the fact that, according to present day medical knowledge, he had already passed into the Beyond.

Hilda then referred to my health. I told her that this was the last time we could write together, as Geraldine was going to Ireland the next day.

Hilda: Tell her to ring me up, N° 2070 round the corner of Paradise. That is Harold's number. It has to do with Egypt, Harold says, something to do with a date we had in Egypt. But it has a meaning as a number for us here. I think it must have been the year we were in Egypt, "B.C.ing" Harold said. "We B.C.ed before we A.D.ed," he said. So we are quite a long way ahead of the people who never owned to be B.C. initials. We are in two groups, the people who hadn't B.C.ed, and the people who have. But I should have to explain much more to show you what all this means in connection with Heaven. Oh, I met Mr. Gardner lately, the Rector; he sent his best regards to you.

On reading this script later it occurred to me that Hilda referred to Mr. Gardner, the late Rector of West Hoathly, Sussex. He knew my sister-in-law well and was keenly

interested in The Cleophas Scripts. The introduction of his name came as a complete surprise to me.

I did not read these three scripts to Geraldine, nor did she seem to have any idea of what she had written. She left for Ireland the next day (June 5th).

Referring to Hilda's experience of Nigel's death, it may be of interest here to introduce the following communication.

Writing through Geraldine Cummins many years ago (July 12th, 1927), Harold described a certain incident in connection with his son. He wrote:

I had a queer sort of dream lately that rather worried me. There was a sound in my ear - I have to use your terms - I mean, of course, I heard a thought that came up from the earth, just as I have heard your thought time and again when you intended to give me a chance of speaking to you. But this call was something quite new and yet something very old and familiar. It moved me very much. It was like some old song one had loved, or rather the emotion from it was of that kind. The call was repeated, and this time there was something rather horrible in it. I put myself very rapidly into the special state necessary when one tries to see your ghostly people and speak with you. As usual, the mist closed round me, and as usual I waited for it to clear - I waited to see the light. After a time I became aware of a rather dingy looking street, of what seemed like twilight, and then, as I fell more and more into the drowsy state that is necessary in order to perceive men and women I saw two men. . .

Harold went on to describe an incident that had happened to his son on earth. He had been knocked unconscious and robbed some weeks before. Harold continued:

I was helpless. Then I heard him speak - I mean, I heard his thought: "It's all right, I'm here. Help me."

Harold then related how he was able to help his son on that occasion. This episode is recorded as it would seem to illustrate the fact that it was Nigel's subconscious mind that called his mother to him, as suggested in the above case.

As, at my last sitting in London with Geraldine on June 4th, Ruth has been cut off by the ringing of the telephone bell, I wrote to Geraldine in Ireland, asking her to sit for Ruth when she had time. I did not even then tell her of the news I had already heard concerning Nigel.

On June 16th, 1942, Ruth wrote as follows:

Astor: Here is the serene lady, as we call her, for Ruth has gained already that calm which is far beyond the reach of her contemporaries on this side - the calm peace of the Eternal Spirit.

Ruth Parker: Your friend here (Astor) tells me you will give Beatrice Gibbes a letter for me.

Bea dear,

I know you want news about Hilda herself - all the things she doesn't understand, so can't tell you about them. This is a rather critical time for her over here. It is important for her to hear news of her boys occasionally in this way. But it was equally important that she should be cut off from meeting them when they are out of their body in sleep, or in any state of unconsciousness in which she was liable to meet them through the force of her great love. And Govy and I both know that these are going to be formidable and critical months for Tony and Nigel. It would never do for her to have direct meetings with them, for she would then get all their emotions, their fears, excitements and other things they can bear but which would be insupportable to her. So we have wafted back into the world of her childhood on earth, when Nigel and Tony had no existence for her. She is learning and advancing through it, and it keeps her little mind happily occupied. You must send her any news of her boys and the world. If it is bad, it is still better to tell her. She can easily bear bad news about them, so long as she herself is not meeting them in the world between. This is what we are trying to prevent, though we cannot be sure of complete success yet. All we are aware of is that Tony will be sent abroad, but will be all right, come through and live his life. But there is a cloud over Nigel. He may eventually come back to his family, but it is uncertain as we see it from here. That is all I am allowed to say. Be careful of yourself, Bea dear. My love to Eric and Mary if you are writing, though they hear from me in other ways; and to you love also.

Ruth Parker

Two points emerge from the above script which seem to interest: (1) Ruth says that she and Govy know that there are going to be formidable and critical months for Tony and Nigel. For the latter the other side of death may be inferred. (2) That there is a cloud over Nigel and he may eventually come back to his family, "but it is uncertain as we see it from here." It would seem, therefore, that at this juncture they were unaware that Nigel had, so far as we understand here, already passed over to the other side. "Critical months" for Tony certainly occurred. Apart from the loss of his parents, his brother and his home within eleven months; after much worry and anxiety, he also lost his young wife. A possible reason for Ruth's veiled suggestion, recorded above, is discussed at the end of this chapter.

On June 17th, 1942, Geraldine obtained the following writing from Hilda:

Hilda Gibbes: So you are back in your blue room, Geraldine. I wish you had stayed with Bea.

(A remark from Miss Cummins.)

I see, you have to be with your mother. Well, you must go back to Bea when you can. Now I shall write her a note, and you will be postman.

Our life, dear Bea, is so different from anything I ever expected. It isn't a long sleep, it isn't heaven or hell, but it is nearly all happiness, and so I feel that I ought to let you know about it. It is quite the reverse of a long sleep - so many things happen in it. I can't remember half of them to tell you. I am darting about from one place to another - not because I need; it is that there is so much to see and do that I don't get tired. That is one of the lovely things here - no weariness, no aches, no fatigue; though I do take rests occasionally, just to sort my thoughts and impressions. Harold says it is the time for me to gather up impressions, that it is a great mistake for me to think at all. I must just enjoy myself. I said I thought it was wrong - in this world one ought not to be just amused, so I am having what Ruth calls my lessons. They have put me back to the bottom of the class. Year by year I am seeing myself as I used to be. First infancy - Oh, I was such a cross little baby - ugly too! Michael and David * were beautiful compared with me. This seeing oneself is extraordinarily and sometimes rather painful, because I am partly the baby and partly myself. Baby Hilda woke up in the dark, and there was a big dog in the room that came over to the cot. Oh, the baby was so frightened, too frightened even to scream, and I became just as frightened as the baby. How I hated that part of my lessons! It was a dreadful terror. Ruth has explained to me since, that that baby's fright, always, as a child, made me afraid of sleeping by myself without anyone near me. Some day, but not for a long time, I shall have to learn to be alone.

* Baby grandson (Tony's child)

Oh, do you know I am getting those perfumes right in my herb garden. At least I have driven away all the ugly smells. I was so proud just before I came to write, I made lavender actually smell like lavender. Allspice, too, gave me its natural fragrance. I wish Michael and David were here, it would be so amusing if they met little Hilda - aged five. We have been taking her year by year, and now we have arrived at five years old.

Oh I tried to see Ni with the Russian peasants and up in the mountains in Russia. But it was all a failure. I saw nothing. I can't find Ni now. I have tried and tried. That is my only worry. I told you we had met or I had seen him several times before. Now I have a feeling he wants me badly, and I can't get to him. Govy says it is because he is safe and quite happy that I don't meet him or even feel his loving thoughts. Do you think Govy really knows? But though I don't meet Tony, now and then his thoughts do reach me. It is just as if he were talking down a telephone from a long distance. When I am resting I suddenly get a call, and I hear his voice for a short time, as if he were telephoning from the North to Wickenden ** it is all very quick and hard to hear, but it is lovely to get scraps from him like that. Some of it is quite absurd, about his dogs, Zellie, Marion, David. It comes in a jumble with love to me, and if only I were there! Then suddenly it all huts off.

But I have nothing whatever from my Ni, so, Bea dear, do send me any news you can when you have time, and perhaps Geraldine will tell me.

Now Harold is going to show me his Egyptian palace as a reward for my time at lessons. Much love to Tony, if you write, and tell him I get loving thoughts and that I am so well and happy in this wonderful life. . .

****** In the months before Hilda's death Tony constantly telephoned from the North, where he was stationed, to his mother at Wickenden. In fact, he rang her up nearly every evening. This was unknown to Geraldine Cummins.

It is pathetic, though not without interest, to observe in the above communication that, in spite of her efforts Hilda affirms that she could no longer find Nigel. Neither does she now receive his thoughts - from this world - as she claims to be the case with Tony.

The foregoing two scripts were received by me on June 25th through Geraldine. Hilda seemed unaware of what had happened to Nigel. Therefore, as Ruth had suggested I told her, I rang up Geraldine that evening and asked her to give the following message to Hilda: that I wanted to prepare her (Hilda) for the greatest happiness of her new life, that I had reason to believe that Nigel would be found in her world. Though he might still be unconscious, perhaps Govy or Ruth would help her to find him, and, if she did, she need worry about him no more. It seemed cruel to leave Hilda in this apparent uncertainty, when she was obviously conscious that something had happened to her son and that he needed her.

Geraldine replied on the telephone that she was very distressed about Nigel; she could only conclude what had happened, as *she had already received further writings of a rather distressing character* which she would send the following day. It should be emphasized that Hilda's last letter through Geraldine was written on June 17th, received by me on 25th, and in the *interim* I had told Hilda through Mrs. Dowden (on June 20th) that Nigel had already passed over. The account given at the Dowden sitting confirms Hilda's anxiety at this time concerning Nigel. (*See Appendix*).

The following short communication sent by Geraldine was subsequently received by me. It is dated *the same day as my sitting with Mrs. Dowden. Neither Mrs. Dowden nor Geraldine was aware that the other was sitting for automatic writing on that day*; nor did I know when Geraldine would get a communication from the M. Family.

June 20th, 1942.

Astor is here. Yes, wait I will call Muriel. (*Long Pause*.)

They none of them can come tonight, but they have sent one who spoke before.

(*The writing changed completely, to a large, round hand*.)

Annie M.: You will give a note from me to Beatrice Gibbes?

(Yes.) Thank you.

My dear,

Muriel asked me to write to you; she cannot come. I am told that there is a darkness over the earth, and I am troubled for you and O. . . . and L. . . .^{*} I can't reach them. They shut me away. You will read this, I am told, so I want to know that Hilda is being taken care of and is happy at present as a child, occupied just with what she sees and hears. And my message for you is that light comes suddenly after this great darkness. And you needn't be afraid of the world that is to be.

My love, my dear,

Annie M.^{**}

Astor added: Muriel has sent a message that they are trying to help Nigel. He is unconscious. I can't tell you anything more. I do not know whether it is life or death for him.

^{*} Her two last surviving children.

^{**} Hilda's mother.

With reference to the above brief messages, is it possible that, as a result of the information I gave Hilda concerning Nigel through Mrs. Dowden, a situation had been created which prevented any of the usual members of the M. family from writing through Geraldine that evening? Muriel could not come, but sent a message which referred directly to Nigel, indicating what had occurred. At the same time it will be noted that, in her writing on June 4th (a few days after Nigel's death) Hilda explained that her father had put her back to her nursery days at that very critical period. She wrote as though she had already re-lived some of those earlier times. From this it can be concluded that the M. family were fully aware of Nigel's death, in spite of Astor's strange uncertainty on June 20th, and in the inconclusive remarks made in the writings of June 22nd which follow; though the indication is definite.

This doubtful manner of reporting Nigel's death through Geraldine may be due to a desire not to shock her unconscious or conscious mind. From the manner in which the information is conveyed in these writings, this may well be the real explanation. It is analogous to the incident recorded at the opening of this book. In this connection, Govy's statement at the end of his letter of June 26th, which follows, is of interest. The pronouncement of Nigel's actual death was only to be made through Geraldine, *after* she had been informed that it had occurred. This news I gave her on the evening of June 25th, as related.

CHAPTER NINE

1942

“DELIVER US FROM SUDDEN DEATH”

Whether or no I am right in publishing these records of the passing of my nephew, Nigel, from the battlefield in Libya, I cannot tell. Some would want to know what is apparently the truth - others might prefer to remain in ignorance of details which cannot fail to be distressing to those who have experienced similar losses. I have the option, of course, of omitting certain passages and inferring that death in terrible circumstances results in immediate peace and happiness. It will be apparent from the following pages, however, that this is not always the case. As I have pointed out the control or communication may represent that all is, and was, well with those who pass over from some sudden shock; and it is their natural desire that the sitter should not be unduly distressed. Those in the Beyond are very human in their feelings for us who are waiting here. How little we realize the potency of the words: “Deliver us from sudden death”!

Readers should remember that every case must vary according to the nature and temperament of the one who passes suddenly from this life. The circumstances of the death, and the surroundings of the individual at the time, largely create the atmosphere in which the departing spirit finds himself after leaving his physical body. Moreover, TIME, as we know it here, apparently does not exist in the future life. In the case of Nigel, it would seem that three or four weeks elapsed before he was entirely freed from his body. But to those in that other life it may have been merely a matter of a few hours. So, if readers are disturbed by the disclosures herewith recorded, the above fact should be remembered.

Regarding the automatist: Geraldine Cummins is one of the gentlest, most considerate of human beings. Consciously she would be utterly averse to writing anything likely to distress me or anyone else. One has therefore little alternative but to believe that these details were given in good faith through her mediumship. If her other writings are accepted as true accounts, so far as it is obtainable, of the continued existence of certain individuals in the After-life, the following can hardly be discarded as an exaggeration or an invention of the subconscious mind.

In a script written in 1944, the state in which the so-called dead (who are living their full share of life) remain for a time after death is described as:

A pleasant one without pain - one in which they dream and sleep. The length of that sleep is not governed by our time. Sometimes, if they are badly hurt, by losing someone they love, who is everything to them on earth, then they have to go on sleeping and dreaming for a long while to keep them from the torture of loss. . . .

On Monday, June 22nd, 1942, Geraldine again tried to get a communication from the M. family.

Astor comes. Yes, I think Harold will speak

Harold: I am afraid I haven't what Bea would call good news. Things has had been very bad for Nigel. He has had a terrible time - dust, thirst, incessant and shattering noise; sights that would shake the bravest man. It is partly in his mind, it is not all visual. It is the valley of the shadow of death. Mercifully, he is asleep now, but he is haunted by dreams of the battlefield. Govy and Ruth are trying to break through the scenes of the battlefield that come between him and them. I think Govy has made a mistake in taking Hilda back to the child-world, for she could reach Nigel and drive away those pictures of the battle that so disturb and shake him and destroy that sleep. It is true that love is stronger than death. But only her love would be strong enough to release him so that he could rest. On earth that was always Govy's mistake. He tried to protect us by providing us with wealth, but he failed to keep unhappiness from us, for there is no happiness save in the cultivation of one's own self-forgetfulness, courage and love. That is what I have learned, Bea, since last we met. I went through hell to learn it, but it has been worthwhile. Meantime, I can only tell you that Nigel has lost consciousness, and I am not permitted to say more.

Love, Harold

Astor: Here is Muriel. It is better not to call Hilda tonight, as you are tired.

Muriel: I shall only write a line, as the guide tells me I must be brief.

My dear Bea,

You must not pay attention to what Harold says, Govy knows best. There are terrible shapes and thoughts round that desert place, where hundreds are dying. Hilda is still so young, so lately come to this world, they would shatter. Nigel has been badly wounded, but he is out of his body now, and at rest, so far as we can tell. I am sorry, my dear, to have to tell you this, but be assured of one thing: Hilda is not going to be hurt. She suffered enough on earth, we shall look after her. And now I must close.

Love from Muriel

It will be observed that no direct allusion is made to the fact that I had broken the news of Nigel's death to Hilda through Mrs. Dowden. On the contrary, Muriel writes as though she thought she was informing me of Nigel's passing, in spite of the fact that she purported to be present at the Dowden sitting two days before. At that sitting all except Hilda appeared to be aware of the fact of Nigel's death.

In his letter Harold states that he considered Hilda should have been told earlier of her son's death, as she alone could drive away his bad dreams. On June 17th, Hilda writes that she was unable to find Nigel, *yet was conscious that he needed her, and she could not get to him.* (My italics.)

Enclosed with the scripts of June 20th and June 22nd Geraldine sent the following note:

I am so sorry and so concerned for you and also Tony. In spite of everything, all along I hoped and believed that the cloud they spoke of simply meant that Nigel would be taken prisoner. Perhaps that was why, when I tried the writing on Saturday and Monday, I could get so little. But it was so depressing in the inference to be drawn from it. I didn't dare send it to you, for it had been wrong and Nigel was just missing and a prisoner it would have been cruel for you to have had it. At any rate, I felt Hilda's happiness this morning (June 26th) when she was writing. I didn't try last night, for I was rather tired. From Tuesday afternoon to Thursday I was too busy. . .

Geraldine

In the same letter she forwarded a further communication which she had received *after* I had telephoned to her, as related on June 25th.

The following scripts are dated June 26th, 1942:

Astor: Yes, Govy will speak today, and then Hilda will come.

Govy: Your friend on this side says I may dictate a letter for Beatrice Gibbes.

My dear,

First of all your mind can be set at rest about Nigel. We have succeeded in freeing him completely from his body, and he is now with us at Nymans and at peace. Though he passed quickly from his physical body, because he was young and vigorous, he was still bound for a time to it by the etheric threads. He remained, therefore, for a while in the hell of the desert. We could not reach him in a way that would break up the bad dreams of that time. But others, who have greater knowledge than we, lifted him out of that between-world which is neither life nor death. They took him into what he believed was a hospital, then later your brothers Frank and Arthur were permitted to visit him. The sight of them made him realize he was dead. It is always a shock to the young and shakes their souls to learn that they have been cut off from living and loving - from the only life they know. Muriel and then Ruth talked to him and promised him his mother. She has just been with him at my home, and now he is in a deep sleep while his new body is being knit to his soul. Hilda will write now. I should like you to understand that we were not permitted to pronounce the sentence of death before it happened. We could only warn you and, by telling you of our care of Hilda, indirectly, what may seem utterly cruel for all of you on earth, but is the best for Nigel.

Govy

Hilda:

Bea dear,

I am very touched by your message and your loving thought. Yes, it is for me the greatest happiness. I have seen Ni for a moment, as it seemed to me. But it was enough. For I am knowing now a peace that I never had before, even in this wonderful life. Oh, I have been amused and happy here, but there was always behind it all the ache, the longing for my darling. I know it was wrong to wish him to be separated from poor Peggy and from Michael, and yet I couldn't help myself. I was very distressed when I woke up from that strange world of my childhood, and they told me that all alone poor Ni had to make the journey to us. If he was to come, I wanted to be near him and with him in that awful time. But Govy has explained things to me, so I have forgiven them You will give Tony my very dear love. Tell him that he mustn't grieve for me. I want him to feel that he has with Nigel an equal share of my love. He has a long, full life to face, I am told, and I know that he will be brave, and I shall be proud of him. And, above all, he has to remember for his mother's sake that it was best that Ni should come to me.

I have always been a doubter, Bea, and I always believed the worst would happen. Now I am cured of that, now at last I believe in the infinite mercy of God. I should always have been afraid for Ni while he was on earth. Now, together, we shall build a real Wickenden here. He is going to see my azaleas after all! You know, I thought I had failed with them here, but I have just seen them and they all are blooming. So when Ni is well we shall build a home for you all here. Be happy in my happiness; the worrying Hilda you knew is finished with.

On June 28th, 1942 the following short communication was written:

Muriel: All is well now and Hilda ecstatically happy. You know we had great difficulties about dear Nigel, for though he was physically dead, owing to the suddenness and those awful surroundings he was, for a while, still attached to his physical body. I shall not easily forget the surroundings of that battlefield. I made several attempts myself to reach Nigel and got lost in the cloud and had to struggle back out of that stifling atmosphere. But here is Hilda. I told her she could send a line.

The above was written in small writing. Then Hilda, seemingly very excited, inscribed in a large hand the following few words:

Hilda: Just to tell you I am Ni's nurse now. I am allowed to be with him as much as I please. It is such wonderful happiness. . . .

On July 8th, 1942, Geraldine Cummins received the following communication (she was in Ireland, as usual):

Muriel: My dear. . . Harold saw, as we all did, only dark cloud about Nigel so long as he was on earth. Now all the news is good, as you can well imagine. But great

care has still to be taken of Nigel. We let Hilda sit with him sometimes, but until he has quite broken through the chrysalis she can't be with him all the time. She is quite content with her share of him. The chrysalis is all that belongs to the earth and attracts the memories of earth. He occasionally gets pictures of those last scenes. They are like nightmares to a sleeper. He spoke of a storm of shelling, or orders to counter-attack. He said what was so difficult was to think at all, and act, the noise was so stunning, the awful heat made his head ache and ache. As far as I can make out from his broken words, he was in a charge. In the face of appalling fire they had to attack. He went forward in his tank, knowing it was almost certain death. He said he wasn't afraid, only what did rather knock one endways was the sight of other fellows wounded and dying. Then his turn came. It was indeed an enormous relief to get on the move. The waiting beforehand was absolute hell. He was with others and, as far as I can gather, he was wounded in several places. He had a sickening feeling of helplessness, unable to move. At first no pain, then intense pain. I may be wrong, but from my fragmentary talk I gathered they were able to move him back and get medical help. I think then he must have been unconscious, but while unconscious he was still thinking - half in, half out, of his body. He wasn't long laying wounded, I think it was only a matter of a couple of hours between the time of his being wounded and the moment he was described as being dead. It may have been four or five. We cannot yet tell, as we are only going on his rambling talk, the talk of one who is dreaming back over his experiences. . . . Govy said that what Hilda saw in her mirror was a general impression of his suffering in that short, sharp time when he was in the valley of the shadow of death. He had to tell her it was a lie, as she was so emotionally shaken by it. She loves Nigel so much, he saw it would be courting disaster, dragging her into hell, if she were not cut off from all that and taken into a state right away from earth. Her psyche is still frail; her capacity for immerse fears is still there. She couldn't have borne the days of Nigel's passing and gradual resurrection after it from earth. It could have meant madness for her. So she was wafted into another time-state - the childhood world where Nigel was not. These things are hard to explain, but she was too near the earth, too near the horrors of the present time, to accompany Nigel when he was on his pilgrimage to us. Govy told Hilda at the right moment that her boy was with us, but he could only do it when it was possible for her to see him. Because of course it was her instant demand and longing to go to him. Now she will write. My love dear Bea, and remember there is nothing to grieve about anymore. Hilda's earth-story has had a happy ending, for it didn't, couldn't end, until Nigel was with her. If he hadn't come, you see, she would have gone back to him, and would have got lost to us in the darkness of the earth.

I am being brutally frank with you. Astor allows me to say what I know. Other guides, trying to be kind, often, he says, will not pass on such details, when they

tell what we say to the living. But I think you would rather have the truth. At any rate, my dear, all is well now with them both, thank God.

Much love from

Muriel

P.S.: I have only pieced together Nigel's dreaming talk for you. It may be accurate, or I may have misunderstood his broken phrases and thoughts.

Nigel's great friend, who was able to get to him just before he died, wrote to Peggy telling her that Nigel was the only one hurt by a direct hit on the side of his tank. He was so badly injured that, had he lived, his legs would have had to be amputated above the knee. He was one of the first to be wounded. They managed to drag him from his tank and give him blood-transfusion. But, though conscious and just able to speak, he died of shock an hour or two later.

After receiving the above communication from Muriel, Geraldine enquired if Hilda would like to write. The following is her response to the suggestion. (July 8th, 1942, continued):

Hilda Gibbes: Yes, please send a note to Bea.

Bea dear,

I like to write to you because you shared all my sorrows, so I like you to share my joys now. To begin with, Ni is still kept a good deal in bed. That may seem strange to you. You will say, "Heaven isn't like that." But Govy says everything must be natural, rather like what Nigel left on earth, until he becomes accustomed to things here. For my darling mustn't be frightened by anything too strange. So he is living at present as if he were a convalescent recovering from an illness on earth. We have our mornings together, when I sit by his bed and tell him all about this wonderful world. And he looks at me and gives me that lovely smile of his, and he lights up and laughs and makes jokes. Only now and then he is sad and says "What will poor Peggy do?" There is no father for Michael now. . . ."

I told him he could send messages to Auntie Bea, and he sends love to you and Tony, and he wants Tony to know that he is going to look after me when he is stronger, and to tell the old fellow to have as good a time as he can, and not to be sorry because he, Ni, isn't there. That he ought to be glad, for my darling Ni hated the fighting, though he was so brave. You know it would have broken his happy, gay spirit if he had much more of it, if he had been crippled. All the time I was afraid of that, and I prayed and prayed he would escape it, and God has so wonderfully answered my prayer. Never have I been so happy, it is all incredible - too good to be true, Ni and I safe at Nymans, able to walk together in its garden, escaped from worry, pain and death. . . .

Happiness, safety and my Ni are the medicines that have cured me. You will find a new Hilda when you come to us. You will like her ever so much better than the old one, and she isn't old any more. All my love to Tony and you.

Hilda

By a curious coincidence, while reading through this book in typescript, I had also been tearing up some old letters. Among these I found one from Michael's Nannie, dated November 2nd 1943, and written to me. In this letter she says; "Altogether, I am glad that Michael beloved Grandie is not here. She would have been so grieved at the loss of her 'darling Ni,'" (The writer's quotes.)

I mention this in order to show that, though to some readers Hilda may appear to be rather possessive, had I deleted this characteristically endearing term for her son, her personality might have been less recognized by any friends who may read these pages. It would have been utterly unlike my sister-in-law to allude to Nigel in any other manner.

Replying to a letter I sent to Hilda, Geraldine received the following communication on July 24th, 1942. She was staying at Drishane with Dr. E. OE. Somerville, sitting in the studio where she and her cousin, Violet Martin (Martin Ross), had written some of their well-known books.

Hilda Gibbes: There is such a charming woman who calls herself "Violet" here. She has been talking to me while I waited.

Let me see the letter. I am listening.

Bea, you are quite right, I pretended to Govy and Harold, and even to myself, that I was wonderfully happy. It seemed so ungrateful not to be, especially as Harold was working so hard to make everything delightful. But all the time there was an ache in my heart, and I couldn't tell anyone about it. It hurt too much to speak of it, then they wouldn't let me away from them to find Nigel, and I admit I was amused by all the wonderful things they showed me. But what do things matter? That is the one blessing, I think, I have learned over here. Things are of no account - beautiful works of art, lovely gardens and landscapes, treasures of every kind, are ugly and dead when one knows that a loved one is suffering hardship, privations and almost certainly living through scenes of horror and pain. When I have tried to make my garden here, everything went wrong, as you know. The perfumes didn't fit the herbs, the azaleas wouldn't stand up, the colors didn't fit the flowers. That was because my mind was only half attending, and the best half was away looking for my darling. Now, since my Ni came, in the times I am not allowed to be with him, I work in my herb garden, and the herbs are beginning to grow where there was no growth before, and the perfumes are coming right. Such a lovely whiff of rosemary and allspice from my last creation. But of course I see it will take time to build up my Wickenden garden, and I am only beginning in a small way with the herbs. I am in and out of Ni. We have so much to say to each other, so

much to tell. . . . He is my baby again, depending altogether on me. . . . Nigel does at moments regret his Peggy, and Michael, and all the joys that might have been his later on. But those moods visit him less and less, and the rest of the time we are superbly, wonderfully happy, sharing every thought as we used to in the old days.

Ni and I are only anxious about one matter, and that is Tony. . . . I could never in my wildest dreams have planned anything as lovely as Ni and I together here. For Ni now knows a mother who is young, strong and gay. Instead of his having to cheer her up, she does the cheering up for him, but it is only needed for some bad moments. He is really happy otherwise, content to let the time drift by in my company as he gradually gets his strength and powers back and shakes off the regrets and memories of the earth. . . .

In reply to a question from me, Muriel wrote as follows:

Yes, we got information that Nigel had passed over, was out of his body, before you told Geraldine anything. We knew it for some little time. We were all trying to reach him but didn't want to write of it until we could give you the reassurance that we were with him and all was well. You see, it was a very critical and anxious situation, for he was so psychically bound up with Hilda. . . .

I had put this question to Muriel through Geraldine in an effort to obtain some direct allusion to my sitting with Mrs. Dowden on June 20th. But, as will be seen, my object failed. The strict censorship of letters passing between England and Ireland during the war caused some aggravating confusion and delay in obtaining satisfactory replies.

CHAPTER TEN

1942

CHRISTMAS IN THE HEREAFTER

Aware of the fact that Geraldine was very much overworked during these months, I did not often write to Hilda. She and Nigel were happy together; that was all that I required to know at the time.

At the end of August, 1942, however, I wrote to Hilda *via* Geraldine, giving her some news of Tony. I asked if she and Nigel were still at "Nymans," her father's home, and enquired about houses and clothes - what were they made of, and by whom, etc.

On *September 9th*, 1942, Geraldine obtained the following reply:

Hilda Gibbes: A letter from Bea. I am so pleased to hear it.

(The letter was read.)

That is a lovely letter. Yes, Ni and I are having a wonderful time together. But I long to have news of Tony. . .

And commenting on my letter, Hilda, continued:

Yes, we are still at Nymans. It is very good for Ni to have the family about him. They come and go and they are so gay and loving to him, they are rapidly curing him of the sorrow of leaving earth; Michael and Peggy, while he had still the best years before him. But, you know, Govy, Harold and Muriel treat us as if we were small children. They won't allow us to go far from Nymans yet. Aren't they ridiculous? Govy gave me quite a scolding when Ni and I wanted to take French leave lately. He said I would only try to get near Tony and that I would get into barbed-wire entanglements as there are such violent thoughts about the world at present. Ni looking for Peggy and Michael, and I looking for Tony, would get lost in the darkness. Govy put me into quite a bad temper with him, because of course he is right. Only it was Nigel's idea to "break camp," as he called it, and slip away. And I hate refusing him anything. There would have been real rebellion and riot at Nymans if Muriel hadn't settled our quarrel with such a wise plan. She said that he must build a home for his mother. That he should build the real Wickenden as it should be, and not the makeshift it was on earth. He was delighted with the idea. But it means a great deal of training and hard work. For building here is quite different from building on earth. It is hard to explain, but it will help to answer your questions.

We have bodies in the likeness of those we had on earth, and the clothes we fancy. But I look about twenty-eight now and Ni about twenty-one. He says that I am the youngest-looking mother there ever was. But as in my happiness I feel like twenty-eight, I am twenty-eight. And Ni at last free from all pain and anxiety about life feels he says, like his twenty-first birthday. So he is the lovely boy he was on that day. You see it is like a fairy-tale, we get our heart's desires about ourselves. We are what we have always wanted to be, twenty-one and twenty-eight, with the appearance and clothes we thought charming. It always distressed me that I was so much older than Ni. I longed to be of his generation - for years and years I wished it. So, like a miracle, I became a mother of a grown up son at 28! That sounds very complicated. But it means I am much nearer to Nigel. And for years he wanted to be back at 21, when he hadn't a care in the world. Oh, I really began to tell you about the training we needed to build Wickenden. Though that is a heart's desire, it won't come at all easily. We get our heart's desire about ourselves, for we are what we imagine ourselves to be over here. But X, when he comes across, has such an ugly imagination, he will remain the peevish, ugly old person in looks that he was on earth. You see, he has no power to love in his nature, so he has no power to make himself youthful and good-looking in his imagination. Ni and I, for all our faults, love people and life so strongly that we become our young earth-selves without effort, and I think we are quite pleasant to look at - certainly we are not a blot on the landscape as X will be.

Now your question, "What are our clothes made of?" Of the plastic substance of this world. Only mine are all in the materials I couldn't have on earth. I have answered who they are made by. By myself, of course, so at last they are a perfect fit. They certainly seldom were on earth. And Ni is an immaculate tailor's model - that is partly to please me. But he isn't rigid about it. When he wants to loaf in old clothes, he does, but he always looks well in them. But when X comes here he will, I am certain, wear hideous city clothes, very badly cut.

We have our three meals a day because we enjoy having them. But we have them in a different way from on earth. We draw our food at certain times from wind and sun. We have them out-of-doors at the usual intervals.

Now I began to tell you about our training for building. Well, Ni and I haven't started yet, and I also shall leave it to the next time.

The writing ended soon after this with the remark that she had much more to say, but that she could no longer hold the pen. It is quite true that Hilda was never very satisfied with her clothes on earth. Owing to her arthritic hip latterly, this often caused her some annoyance. As it happens, Geraldine had rather an admiration for the manner in which she was dressed and was unaware of her feelings in this respect. Whenever possible at Wickenden meals were served outside in the "loggia." This custom is apparently carried on.

On October 14th, 1942, Hilda wrote again. The early part of the script contains nothing of particular interest. Towards the end Geraldine was again interrupted, but continued the writing later on. Referring to this incident, Hilda said:

No, I don't mind the interruption. It was just like home. It reminded me of when I sat down to write and old Todd came for the fifth time asking the same thing. Oh, tell Tony I have painted a lovely picture of David playing with his dog. We don't have paint brushes here - painting is thinking, and seeing, and sorting, in the drawers of your memory. Such large store rooms and cupboards we have in that memory! And when Nigel is away (I sometimes send him away to amuse himself), I go and rummage in a very large cupboard in which are all Tony's toys. Now you will ask what are his treasures? They are little bits of memory that fit into each other like children's blocks that make maps; I have lovely games piecing them together - Tony as a baby, Tony in a temper, Tony all smiles. I remember him year by year, step by step in the ladder, of his life. It gives me such happiness, playing with Tony's toys. Painting a picture here needs a great deal of thinking about, and seeing and dipping the threads of one's mind into all sorts of colors. I was really proud when I finished my first picture of little David and "Captain" (a spaniel) playing together. So, though my sweet Tony is absent, he is much with me, for I have only to go to my toy cupboard and find him, and I spent hours there. You see, Bea dear, I am trying to be wise about Ni. Because I love him so much, I won't keep him tied to me, even though I am longing to keep him with me, and he is longing to stay. I often make him go off by himself to other people - to Arthur and

new and old friends. The way to keep love is to meet and part again; never to tie the one you love to your side. In that way I hope to be always new and fresh to my darling. Of course he is never very long away, he always insists on coming back quite soon to his mother. Then my being separated from him turns into a wonderful joy. Poor Peggy, how terrible her loss is! It's just the sunniest day in all the year when my Ni comes back to me after a time away, with his bright smile and his laughter. . . Much as we should like to have here, you have Geraldine to look after. Besides, I have set my heart on your finishing that book. You can't leave the world until that wonderful Life is completed.

Hilda

The foregoing is of interest in that it records a small piece of evidence unknown to Geraldine. I refer to the incident of the interruption. Todd, the old butler, was continually coming to my sister-in-law with questions when she was endeavoring to write letters.

The above details concerning Tony are recorded, as they may be of interest in illustrating the fact that our "memory cupboards" in the Hereafter seem to retain every incident concerning ourselves and those associated with us.

These scripts are very reminiscent of the manner in which Hilda spoke of Nigel and Tony. Of our numerous communicators over twenty-five years or so, no other has expressed herself in such affectionate terms.

On December 14th, 1942, Hilda wrote through Geraldine Cummins in Ireland without having heard from me:

Hilda:

Bea dear,

Even when you didn't come for Christmas, you were always such a part of it. I wish you were with me now; you could help with planning so much. You remembered all, or at any rate some, of the things I forgot! But as I haven't got you to be a memory for me, I shall just have to do without you. You see, I am rather afraid Ni will be very homesick for the old Wickenden Christmas - for Michael and Peggy this year. So Muriel and I are planning something very gay and lovely for him at Nymans. It has to be there, as I haven't even started to make another Wickenden. We shall have my special Christmas tree, of course, and all the family and friends, however busy they are, will come to it, and of course the old people and the children Ruth has collected, who come over, poor dears, so suddenly killed in the dreadful air raids. But that is not quite correct. Muriel will have a special tree for them, and ours will be just for ourselves. Even Arthur has promised to come. You know, we don't often see him; he has got so tangled up in

history. There are such miles of history - like moving pictures in this world, and Arthur is so happy looking up the truth about everything and finding out all the mistakes the generals made, he doesn't even want to go out with Nigel - stupid of him, isn't it?

However, he is going to be good at Christmas. We are going to Church together, and Mr. Gardner is taking the service. We have arranged the most lovely surprises for Ni on that tree, and Ni has been quite busy with me thinking of presents for everyone. He and I have been having a most wonderful time getting them. That's quite a novelty to him. He was always stuck in that horrible office before, and, as it turns out, it has all been a waste of time. But we don't waste time here. Harold has taken Ni and myself to a lovely Egyptian town, where I bought all sorts of pretty things. I didn't pay for them in money; I paid for them in working hard at wishing. It is very hard to explain. But that's how we get the things we want to here. Nigel was a little bored with my fairy town, so Muriel drove Harold away and took charge of us, and back again we were in London, but the kind of London Ni knew when he was a boy. It amused him so much - all the people in the old-fashioned costumes, like a fancy dress party, and everybody was so much happier than in those last few Christmas before the war.

Just near Christmas-time this new, strange world is a little frightened to him, so he has become, though he says himself, like the small boy he was, wanting me all the time. I think he wants to shut out the Christmas of the earth and the memories of Tony, Peggy and Michael are having of the Christmas they remember with him. So you see, we are going to live in a Christmas quite a long way back, when Michael and Peggy didn't exist for him, and when Tony was tiny and I was Ni's mother and everything, or almost everything, to him. Of course, Zellie is missed, as she counted a good deal then - and he talks of Auntie Bea, too, and what a sport she was, wearing Arthur's uniform one Christmas! It is all fun with Ni thinking of those old times. You see, we have been having such a good time looking them up in the long memory-gallery here. It's the most enchanting theater for us, seeing those Christmases of long ago. . .

I am losing hold now.

Hilda

I wrote a few lines to Hilda in time for Christmas, giving her news of Tony, and so on. On December 19th, 1942, she replied through Geraldine. After some conversation concerning Tony, she continued:

Arthur will be with us at Christmas, but, as I told you, he is so absorbed in the picture gallery of history, and in catching monster salmon, we don't see much of him. Ni sometimes goes fishing with him. But he says he finds it rather dull to be a successful angler, though it never palls with Arthur. . .

On December 27th, 1942, there came a further reference to my brother and the Christmas party.

Arthur is getting rather bored with our Christmas, he wants to go back to his absurd military history in pictures. He has just been trying to argue about Julius Caesar's - or was it Napoleon's? - campaigning mistakes, and Govy put him in his place, saying such matters aren't of the least consequence. . . Besides Ni we had, you know, an addition to our Christmas party - freed, as Govy said, from the prison of the world, and everyone was so glad. Even when the young come to us, everyone is glad. What is your sorrow is our joy.

"If only," Govy said in his Christmas speech, "Earth folk would realize that we are the living and that they are the sick and the half-dead." For even if they are well and strong, they are sick with some apprehension, some fear. I am losing such a number of my fears - but not all yet. It is like dropping so many heavy burdens. Of course my principal fear, for Nigel's suffering in that dreadful war, has gone for ever. He was the life and soul of the party here. But sometimes his face was very sad, and I knew he was thinking of Michael and Peggy then.

The "addition to our Christmas party" undoubtedly refers to John Parker, second son of Eric and Ruth Parker. He was lost in the flying boat "Clare" off West Africa in September, 1942, when returning from some special work in which he was engaged. Geraldine was quite unaware of his death - in fact, she knew nothing about him.

CHAPTER ELEVEN

1943

HOUSE-BUILDING DIFFICULTIES IN THE BEYOND

I sent a few lines to Muriel, asking for news on various family and other matters. The following extracts from her reply, dated January 4th, 1943, carry on the story of Hilda and Nigel in the Beyond.

Muriel: Yes, please post a letter to Bea Gibbes.

My dear, how nice of you to give me a special audience now that Hilda is here. Harold still has a small share of her, and it will increase later on when Nigel needs her less and begins to make his own way in this life. At present Harold has a rather important piece of work - perhaps the last he will have in connection with the earth. He is working on the minds of certain British authorities as regards the future of England after the war. It's going to be a difficult corner for Britain, he says. . . So Harold is helping in a big plan which would save England from being absorbed by either of two great powers - which would keep England as the center of the British Empire and still be a great power. He asked me to tell you this, so I pass it on. He is very happy, keenly absorbed in this work and just getting glimpses of Hilda when Nigel is not with her. . .

You ask about Hilda's little daughter. She filled a gap for a short time here in Hilda's career. She was particularly useful when Nigel was passing into the shadows. You remember we had to keep Hilda from him, as she was beginning to see and feel too much of her boy's experiences then. But as soon as Nigel came over, her connection with Hilda was no longer necessary in the design of Fate, and her time had come for birth. So she was taken away to the sphere of Youth, where she is being prepared for her re-entry into earth-life.

You ask me about my knowledge of Tony. Well, this may be in the future, or it may be in the present, but I get a cloud about his wife. I have been so busy I really haven't tried to find out or to penetrate the cloud - I can't get your time. It is more likely to be in the future than in the present.

(This "cloud" is of interest. She died a year later. - EBG.)

Hilda is only allowed to have news of earth through your letters. They are considered good for her, so are allowed. But it wouldn't be good for her sensitive soul to be let seek the earth and get directly in touch with the influence round Tony. All sorts of alien and unpleasant things of the earth would present themselves to her, as she doesn't know how to keep them out. It was nearly disastrous when she began seeing what was going to happen to Nigel, for she was getting all the battlefield influences about him at the time. So she knows nothing about Tony beyond what you tell her, she is happily absorbed in Nigel. She doesn't even realize the nervous shock Tony suffered from. I could tell you more of what I saw, connected with his wife, but I don't like to be a Cassandra - that is a prophet who sees the troublesome things in the future. . .

Other letters from the M. family during these months concerned family matters. In one of these Hilda wrote that she and Nigel were "mapping out the Wick gardens."

On March 11th, 1943, the following came through Muriel:

My dear Bea.

Thanks to Nigel and Wickenden things have been going well with Hilda. She was distressed by what Govy said to her. He severely criticized Hilda's attempts to grow rhodies at her new home. But they became the best of friends, quarreling over some of the amusing and absurd mistakes Nigel and she are making in creating Wickenden out of their memories and imaginations. . . Govy made them, as if it were a pack of cards, pull down the house they were building and begin all over again. . . Only Govy has the long patience that can teach Hilda to train her own fanciful mind so that it doesn't jump so much from one thing to another, which led her and Nigel putting slants on chimneys and all the rooms in the wrong places. He has put the two builders back to A.B.C., set them a task first of making a miniature Wickenden about the size of a large doll's house which must be perfect in all its proportions before they start on the task of building the big house. All this fun about her mistakes as architect and builder has broken down the barrier of her

old fear of Govy and made her so much happier. She delights in his adverse criticisms of her building efforts and takes from him what she would not accept in that respect from anyone else.

Now I will talk about your letter. She has been asking often if there was any news from you.

Hilda then wrote at length about Tony, ending with:

But life is still wonderful for me here. Now Geraldine's hand is getting heavy, so I shall close. Oh, Ni and I have gone to school again, and Govy has put us at the bottom of the class. We are very happy in that disgraceful position!

On April 25th, Hilda replied to a letter from me:

So you remembered my birthday. That was sweet of you. Here every day almost is a birthday, because, it brings some fresh and often lovely surprise. . . I could never be blasé about birthdays. At present I feel as I did on my twenty-first birthday. . . Ni and I work at Wickenden. We keep talking of what Tony would like in the home we are slowly building here. Ni has started making a special duck-pond for him. Of course we have a great many failures. I painted and planted a lovely almond-tree, all in blossom, below the tennis courts. All vanished after I had been away a few hours. I could have cried, just seeing emptiness, and Harold saying that, until I had acquired a permanent mind, our new Wickenden would go on being like the vanishing lady. He says I still scatter my mind all over the place, just as I did when I was ten years old.

Ni has been asking me if he might try and scrawl something. I shall explain it to him, but you mustn't expect much.

Nigel Gibbes:

This is pretty tough. Can't spell, can't think of words. I am on low gear. Oh help! Wish you could give my wife a message. . .

What! You want to hear the last days when I said goodbye to all that. It began marvelously. I was pretty fagged out, but the excitement was fine. In a way we all knew we were for it. But somehow we didn't care. I cared most awfully afterwards, thinking of my Peggy left behind. But once we got going we got quite crazy. I was grand until I was hit. But I tried to hold on. The noise, the pace, the dust, the blood, the pain - it has all got mixed up like a queer, awful nightmare now. My God, I was thirsty! I would have given all Wickenden for a drink. . . .

Some messages to Peggy ended this communication, which came which difficulty and was written in a large, scrawling hand-writing.

CHAPTER TWELVE

1943

“WHERE DREAMS COME TRUE”

Geraldine again came over from Ireland for ten days, and on May 15th, 1943, she sat for automatic writing. Astor announced that members of my family and the M. family were waiting to speak to me. He added: “Even your brother Arthur has come to take a look at you and says it is surprising; it is the identical Bea he used to know. But he won’t believe in you though Hilda comes forward now and says she has much pleasure in making the introduction - “Miss Gibbes and Major Gibbes” - now I must let her write.”

Hilda Gibbes:

How good to see you in your little room in the house I disliked so much. I never thought I should be so pleased to be in it again. You know I had all my conceit taken away from me since I last wrote. I got into trouble. Govy says Ni has all the pagan virtues and I have all the Christian vices. I quite deserved it. It was about Ni. I wanted to stay with him at our new Wickenden - so much to do, with everything falling down just when we have built it up. But Ni said he felt “the Call” one afternoon. “Is it the Salvation Army?” I asked. “Oh no,” he said, “it’s our own damned Army.” Well, we disagreed. He wanted to go with another pal of his, he said, to meet the Victory Airmen coming across to us from Africa. I said, “You will only be hurt again. Some of them will come over in such pain and unhappiness.” Ni said that was all the more reason for him to meet them. Govy could have prevented it, but all he said was that he was very pleased and proud of his grandson.

Anyhow, Ni went, and I was very cross and pulled up all my new rhodies that hadn’t vanished. But I found after all Ni was right. . . He brought three boys with him. I have called them Tom, Dick and Eric. They can’t remember their own names and were scared and frightened at first. But Ni told them all the naughty stories he could think of. Some quite shocked me!

B. Gibbes: You will have to let him tell them to me.

Hilda: They are quite unrepeatable, even to a hardened old aunt. But we are now having great fun with Tom, Dick and Eric. I like the name “Eric,” it has such nice associations with E. senior and junior. Now the peace of my Wickenden is curing these poor boys, they all call me “Mother” and I am so teased that I simply have to keep away from Nymans and devote myself more and more to these boys. Ni has re-christened Wickenden. He calls it “The Crèche for Infant Airmen.” In this world they are babies, you see. They don’t know a thing, and it does make me a little sad when the first person they talk of is their own mother on earth. It is a strange thing. You would imagine some girl’s name would be talked of by them. I think it

is because they come to me in quite a lost state. They were like small lost children - these big men.

After further conversation concerning Hilda's second son, Tony, and other matters, she remarked:

"You and Geraldine have that book to finish."

B. Gibbes: Yes. Alas, it has been held up on account of the war. We can't work at it now.

Hilda: I asked a Wise Man here about it who is from the East and near to you. He said it could not be written until peace came. The darkness of the evil things from the underworld is about all of you as long as the war continues. . .

After Ruth had written on May 16th, 1943, she was followed by Nigel. This communication shows considerable difference in style of writing and choice of language and is very typical of my nephew.

A lot of scribbles and scratchings first appeared on the paper.

Nigel Gibbes: Gosh, this is tough! Hullo Auntie Bea, it is great to see you.

(Here followed some remarks and enquiries about his wife.)

It's a bit thick being cut off from her completely. . . You know, it pretty well shook me - the feeling that I should never see her and Michael again. She doesn't send out any wireless call as you do. She thought me rather an idiot when I once said I thought there was something in old Bea's spookeries. It's a pity, but can't be helped.

B. Gibbes: Perhaps she will believe some day, but possibly you can get into her somehow, if you try.

Nigel: What? Sort of parachute into it?

B. Gibbes: Well, not exactly! You ask how it's done.

Nigel: Did you try the parachute game in your researching?

B. Gibbes: Not quite!

Nigel: Funnily enough, a chap said here that was how he did it with his wife. Well, I had a shot and only had a sickening feeling of emptiness - the feeling that a fellow gets when he hangs upside down from a swing. It was a nasty feeling, and I won't try it again for a while. It's Michael I sometimes worry over. . . I will look round and see if I can get any information about getting at Michael. Govy is pretty shrewd. He may know the ropes. Apart from this, Auntie Bea, it's a grand life here - I've hit a good spot. *

** Unusual language in which to describe Heaven!*

Of course, I am a bit wobbly, semi-convalescent. Going so suddenly gave me a bit of hang-over - the morning after feeling, it's hard to explain. But I have been

working that off by nose-diving. Do you know what I mean? Probably that is the wrong word for it. But I mean I nose-dive down into North Africa, near where I went west, looking for some poor beggars like myself who had been killed suddenly. At first I made some misses and nearly got knocked out in the darkness. But I have been more successful lately - fished up three heroes.

B. Gibbes: But, you know, our army has passed on beyond that part, right on to Tunis.

Nigel: Have we got it all? I don't know a thing.

B. Gibbes: Yes, we have swept on from El Alamein, the place we were driven back to, near Alexandria, past Tobruk (here the hand gave a jump on the paper) to Benghazi, on to Tripoli, and last week a smashing victory - we have driven the Germans out of Tunis. There is not a German in the country except prisoners. We have taken thousands and thousands of them.

Nigel: I know you are not a liar. But it's amazing! Gosh, I had no idea. These fellows I fished out are still too dazed to tell me much - said we were going ahead, but it seemed to upset them to talk of it. It does at first. But now I'm crazy to hear. My heavens, that's great! It was worth while my being done in - going through that hell of pain. . .

Auntie Bea, you have done me good. I have felt mad, hating and hating the Boches for all they did to me. But now, somehow, the hating is going because I feel the swine are down. You don't know what filthy brutes they are.

V. - that's it now, and our tails up. I can enjoy our new Wick now. Thanks awfully, Auntie Bea. Let me come again. . .

Yours ever,

Ni.

The writing then changed from a rather large back-hand scrawl to my brother Frank's usual small writing, slanting the other way. After sending some messages to his wife, my sister-in-law, Maud, I asked if he knew anything of the African victory. He replied:

Of course I do. But Hilda has been jealously guarding Nigel, keeping him under her wing at Wickenden. We all had orders not to speak of the war to him. She wants to protect him from everything ugly and terrible, she said. So of course we let her have her way. I think so far it has been a wise way. Nigel's etheric body was hurt by the violence of his death when he was in his prime. It was just as if a baby were born damaged into the world. Nigel is nearly cured now, but he needed all Hilda's care and love. He could not have been told things with advantage in the last six months. But Hilda would like to keep him in the cradle for ever, if she could. He broke barracks recently, you know. But it has been a success, after a good deal of fuss and bother. . .

On May, 19th, 1943, Geraldine and I had another sitting together.

Astor announced that an old friend was waiting who had not communicated for many years. She was quite unexpected. Also that Hilda and Nigel were again there.

Astor continued: "Nigel is very interested in the extraordinary sight of old Bea. He says he never thought that you were a wireless operator combined with television. Now Hilda will write first. I shall let her in, for there is a song in her heart today."

Hilda: I thought there were limits to happiness, but it is an unlimited company. I have come to tell you that this is the world where dreams come true. We have our setbacks, of course, but we are right about it, and I was mistaken in thinking that nothing would ever come right, even in heaven. The problems, you see, have disappeared. This is a world where the unconventional is beautifully conventional - where wives are on pleasant visiting terms with their husbands, and so everybody is contented. Arthur has taken a little house near a lake and river in Scotland. He has Ni there occasionally under the Lease-Lend Bill, and I don't feel any longer that I am terribly selfish in not having chosen to live in the Highlands. He visits us occasionally and is very happy teasing us about our building of Wickenden. You see, all sorts of strange things happen in it - things that would have infuriated me when I was on earth but only make me laugh now. For instance, the roof flies off at the most awkward moments. . . Ni had invited two girls for Tom, Dick and Eric, and we were all at lunch when it flew away, the dining-room ceiling slipped over and landed on the lawn. Ni and I, of course, when we had stopped laughing, left the others in the ruins and set to work. It means going quite still in your mind and seeing the ceiling in the right place and the forks on the table. We got it all back beautifully by working very hard, but Harold says it will be off again next week, as Ni and I are so feather-brained. "What poultry has to do with our brains I don't know," I said. But anyhow some of my rhodies, Harold admits, seem to have taken a 99 years' lease of the ground, and Govy paid me a call and was quite pleased with some of my garden-world. The house was always a worry to me. But somehow, as I paint my garden, all the love I had for colors seems to brim up and overflow, and I have astonished the family sometimes with all my flowers. Muriel says, for certain effects I have beaten her as a gardener. Isn't that a triumph. But Bea dear, I am talking of nothing but my own lovely life - so selfish. . .

Some remarks *re* Tony followed. Later the friend wrote and a request came from Muriel to let them speak once again before Geraldine returned to Ireland.

May 20th, 1943:

Astor is here. Hilda and Muriel have brought Nigel, and he will write first.

Nigel Gibbes (*scrawled across the page*): Damned bad pen. Oh, Auntie Bea, I have been thinking a lot about you and me and this wireless and Michael. When Michael is a little older you could let him know, couldn't you, that I am alive and

well, not a harp-and-crown martyr performing in a band that never stops, nor am I a sluggard soaking in bed in a swampy sleep until the end of the world, whenever that may be. I am awfully serious about this. I want Michael to think of me as a live man - at the moment I am in shirt and trousers, little more; that I fish a little and architect a bit and garden and all that. Just make me natural to Michael.

B. Gibbes: Later on we shall be able to talk to Michael, but he's too young yet.

Nigel: Oh, tell Auntie Maud that Uncle Frank cheered me up no end. You know my secret dream was to be an airman - I mean professionally. But for various reasons - Mother and Peggy both not liking it go in for it when War started, as I should have liked. (*Before the war he had obtained his pilot's certificate. - B. Gibbes.*) Well, Frank has told me all about flying here. It is a terrific thing, if what he says is true. I can't, until I have developed a lot more, go in for it, I gather. But it means one can circulate round stars, planets, travel by world after world, he says. We only require a certain finer quality in the ether he tells me, and our wings which we attach to ourselves, and then we shoot out into space. He has been most awfully interesting, and he says he will explain again more later, when I am able to follow it. Gosh, it has given me a great kick. All kinds of adventures I see before me here. . .

B. Gibbes: You know, I often think that you just had to join your Mother as you did, for she would not have been really happy and at peace without you, and would never have been free from anxieties.

Nigel: Yes, Auntie Bea, I worked all that out in my mind. My first job is to make her happy and keep her happy. That's why I spend most of my time at Wick with her. I love being with her, and I shall stay as long as she needs me. But now and then I hope to have a break on Uncle Frank's aeronautics, when I am older, of course. Gosh, who wouldn't be dead, if they knew what a grand life it meant! Well, I must make room for the others. I could write yards more about this amazing place.

Always,

Nigel Gibbes.

Hilda then wrote as follows:

I am leading a most absurd life with all these boys and Wickenden to look after. But the real truth is they are all looking after me. In fact, Eric and Tom both proposed they should look after the bills. But I said there weren't any. They thought that was merely my invention. Anyhow these young people are all so sweet to me, and I have my Ni to help in this lovely art of making a home for the young men who come hurt from the world. I think all my past life was a preparation for it - the years of pain make me understand their pain, and it is wonderful to see them brighten up and lose that lost, miserable look. But a great part of my time is spent with Ni at work, so you need not worry about me. . .

The sitting ended with my telling Hilda that this would have to be our last meeting, as Geraldine was leaving for Ireland the next day. She replied: "How stupid of her, can't you make her lose the train?" I exclaimed that she had to return in order that she could look after her invalid mother and see to other affairs. The pen was then seized by Muriel, who assured me that they considered their anxieties concerning Hilda were now at an end. She also informed me that Tony would go abroad. "He will, you know, this year," she wrote. "But there is no death." This was the first time that a definite statement had been made concerning the departure from England of my young nephew. At that time he had been informed that he would *not* be sent out of England. Two months later, however, he left for North Africa.

Geraldine returned to Ireland. The following is an extract from a letter from Hilda in reply to a note from me. It is dated August 27th 1943. After saying that her "landscapes didn't evaporate as they used to," she continued:

Ni has brought to Wickenden some nice boys from Sicily. So I am kept very busy with what he calls our infant school. And I miss my two errand girls - you and Zellie - so much at times. No one to do odd jobs for me, or finished what I haven't properly begun. It's part of my education here to do odd jobs myself. When our young soldiers come in hungry for a dinner, Ni and I just think one, and up it comes. Cleaning and dusting is all just the way you think of a thing here. Your mind is like a mirror, and if you keep the light of your wishes on it steadily enough, the room and the dinner-table are all spotless - not a speck of dust to be seen. But you must think in the right way (*for there is a wrong way*), or everything will get dusty and shabby. Govy says it's just a state of mind. Mine must have been in an awful state sometimes on earth. But here, by the grace of God, my having Ni puts me nearly always into the right state of mind. This all sounds rather complicated to you, I expect. But I don't know how else to explain it.

On October 11th, 1943 Geraldine received the following communication:

Hilda Gibbes: So here you are in your blue room, Geraldine dear. I have such a bright idea. Bea and you ought to print a little book about how we live here. I have been thinking a great deal about it. I might be your Foreign Correspondent and give you news of our Front, which may be dull, as it isn't a war front, and I don't know in the least how to write for a newspaper. So being in every way disqualified for such a task, I will at once begin on it.

Paradise, Purgatory and Dante's Inferno, Harold says, are all here, but they are so different from what people on earth imagine. On earth, possession is nine-tenths of the law. Nobody possesses anything but themselves in this life. That is Govy's first maxim. It made me think that poor X., who has such a shriveled, mean little self, will be in a state of chronic bankruptcy in this world. He will wear his ugly city clothes, because he only feels a really respectable and worthy citizen when he is dressed in them. You see we appear what we imagine ourselves to be. So he will wear the habit he is in the habit of thinking about. He can only imagine unlovely

things, therefore his appearance will be as unlovely as it was on earth when he makes his debut at the levee for the newcomers from the earth. He won't know how to set about making a pretty house or pretty place, because there's nothing in himself to make with. He will sit in a dingy, hideous club with a few of his old cronies, city men, and be utterly with them, abusing the Government, because there are no stocks and shares to watch, there is no money to make. The money-markets of the world are as dead as the Dodo here. I have a feeling that will be X's purgatory, and I am almost sorry for him.

Govy's second maxim, is that we are all members one of another. That's a text, though you may not know it, Bea, dear. I will try to explain its real meaning. For instance, we M's, in spite of all our faults (and we have quite a few), weren't mean or shriveled in our minds like X. So we were all able to combine together and make a very beautiful Nymans here, which is a home in every sense of the word.

One or two of us couldn't have made such a lovely place. But by being members one of another, by happily, peacefully working together, we have made a masterpiece. I say "we," but it was all done before I arrived. And because the family didn't build it only for themselves, but also as a resting-place for those lately come from earth, who have been starved of life and beauty there, it was, and is, a huge success. Even critical Muriel and Govy are satisfied with it.

Ni and I are doing our best with Wickenden. But it often gives us a lot of trouble by tumbling down in parts, instead of standing up, by coming to pieces in the wrong places. I think this is because I was so impatient of anything imperfect on earth. These aggravating collapses are making me learn patience, and I have every hope that, by the time you come over, there will be a permanent, solid Wickenden that will hold together and completely satisfy you. I don't want you to suffer from the effects of a small earthquake when you will be badly needing a rest after the long journey home.

About clothes, I shall write you a fashion article next time. But when I wrote about X. I think I explained that we are our own tailors and dressmakers. We think of and wish for the kind of clothes locked away in the wardrobes of our memories, and they appear. They are not always exactly as we liked them. But that is due to our own shortcomings. I have pulled out such a lot of pretty things from the drawers and wardrobes that belong to my mind. Ni tells me that there is a Nudist Club in our world, but, needless to say, we don't frequent it. Ni says the ugly apparitions in it would scare the bravest. To a great extent people dress according to period. Sometimes, though, they break out in great gaities of coloring and material. But we share memories, and the newly-dead bring over new ideas about clothes. So we keep the past generation up-to-date, and some of them look rather sweet in modern dress, when of course we have always thought of them in clothes of a past period.

I am losing hold of the pen.

Lots more to say.
My dear love to you,
Hilda.

The following extract comes from a letter written by my brother Frank. It is dated November 2nd, 1943. Referring to the Wickenden ménage, he wrote as follows:

Arthur visits Wickenden but doesn't live there. He finds it too boring. Hilda and Nigel are too wrapped up in each other. That's the plain truth of it. . . It is not that Hilda ties Nigel to the place. But she has made such a study of pleasing him that she holds him almost all the time. Arthur spends his time in catching the monster salmon of his dreams, or studying the long gallery of war pictures and then instructing anyone he can find who will listen to him. It is quite often the Mater, who is very patient and good to him. Hilda is not his pair. They will see less and less of each other because they were not really intended for each other at the start.

Readers will understand why I have recorded this remark when they read Part II.

CHAPTER THIRTEEN

1944

“CHRISTMAS - THE ARTISTS' FESTIVAL”

Writing to Hilda for Christmas, 1943, I enquired as to how she had spent the Day. I said that I was interested in her idea of composing a book with news of their “Front,” and that the “Foreign Correspondent” could go ahead whenever she liked.

On January 1st, 1944, Hilda replied as follows:

Hilda Gibbes:

My dear Geraldine,

I asked your grey-bearded friend Astor, to call me on Christmas Day-night, and now he tells me it is New Year's morning, in your world. So I have not sent my Christmas greetings to Bea or anyone else. I should have thought that dreadful a few years ago. Now, nothing matters in the least. That is the most wonderful thing about being dead. One is really alive for the first time. You see, nobody is alive when they are worrying - at least, as I used to worry - because they are not themselves. Their real self isn't there. It has just gone dead, and what is there is like some squirrel in a cage. Now I have found myself I never worry. Of course I have some ups and downs. But the little things don't matter anymore to me.

Ah, a Christmas letter from Bea! Do let me feel it and see it. Now your first question. Well, we had a mixed Christmas, for it was spent in three different places - Wickenden, Church and Nymans. And it was the happiest Christmas I

have spent over here, so the loveliest I have ever known, and I expect you can guess why. It is the first Christmas Ni has passed in this world, in which he is his real self, with no more regrets for being parted from Michael and Peggy and Tony and losing the life he had expected to live. For a long time he worried and wondered how Peggy would manage and how Michael would grow up without a father, and would Tony get into trouble. But behind it was really a grief of missing them, of not having them with him. Ni never used to worry. But because he was cut off before he had lived his full life he felt the break with the world far more than I did. That is why I had a perfect time. Now you want to know, as I am Foreign Correspondent, what Christmas is like over here. Well, I can only speak of what I know and, as Harold says, I am a shameless ignoramus. The big difference between Christmas in my world and in yours is that there is no money in Heaven. Heaven is in a state of chronic bankruptcy. That means there are no long hours spent in crowded shops, limping here and there, as I used to limp, and never finding the right presents for the right people. We have to make all our presents here ourselves, out of our imagination and with our two hands. Two hands, one mind: those three have to do everything. That is where the fun comes in.

There is a very fine plastic material here. Your mind makes a picture of what you want to make - a child's toy, a doll, for instance. Then you breathe on this plastic substance, and you mold it with your hands. Gradually it takes shape and your mind gives it color, and slowly the marvel happens: a large doll with frocks that come off and on, eyes that open and shut, legs and arms that move, and a sneeze if you sneeze it. I made several dolls for the Wickenden Christmas tree I had especially for Ruth's poor children who have come trooping from the earth, little frightened things, killed in raids or by hunger. I made them quite a number of pretty toys. Sometimes, of course, one makes the wrong article. Ni wished to give a fellow cigars, and he produced a row of leeks! His first attempt at a cigarette case for a friend of his was what looked like a turnip. I don't know why his mind ran on vegetables. Anyhow, we hung our Christmas tree with our mistakes and our successes. And we laughed and laughed at the old mistakes we gave each other. The Christmas tree was also for the young soldiers Ni rescued from no-man's-land of the dead. And of course they, as well as Ni, tried to make presents, so I received from them the oddest collection of gifts. I laughed until I wept. I was all so charming and so pathetic. These young men, who are babies over here, presented me with such a mass of absurdities. We dined at Nymans, and there I was given most beautiful presents. Love of the beautiful and love for me led them to produce the most ravishing things. Christmas, Harold says, is the artists' festival. But a clever earthly artist may be a fool and a bungler over here. For love, patience and faith are needed in this life, as well as other powers, to create a work of art. Oh, there is so much to explain, and it's so difficult to explain, and now there isn't time, as I want to talk of your letter.

After various remarks concerning the family, Hilda ended with the following words:

Now I must break off. I am helping Ruth in what she calls the “long vigil”. We are to watch and pray on this first of the year for the victory if peace on earth in the coming months. I shall send you more news later, whenever I am given a pen.

Hilda.

In reply to a letter from me, on January 29th, 1944, Nigel wrote that he and his mother were having the hell of a good time. That is one of the few things in which she shows her age, her choice of language. She does not talk like some of my girl contemporaries. Oh, Auntie Bea, I wish you could see her now! You’d appreciate her younger-self. She is simply glorious, hardly ever gloomy or worrying, and just as good fun she used to be. . .

The above remarks raise an interesting point in that, though we are told we grow younger until we have reached our earthly prime in *appearance*, according to this communication our memory of language apparently remains the same as that spoken at the time of our death.

Readers interested in *They Survive* may care to know that the Postscript ending that book was written by Hilda on February 5th, 1944. The reader beautiful “new definition of death” is quoted from it at the opening of Part I of this present volume.

On March 14th, 1944, after some preliminary remarks, Hilda made the following communication:

If I tell you how we live after death I shall shock all the clever and learned men - not to mention the clergymen. You see, life is so simple - at least for me - over here. As Govy says, it is neither a condition of misty mysticism (no east wing or fogs) nor is it Dante’s inferno, nor the Heaven of Revelations. It is - at least for me - what Christ called it, and His one word describes it better than legions of words - Paradise. You may ask what is meant by that word. Well, I can only tell you my experience of it:

(1) Work, struggle and failure to achieve, and even pain of the heart, play their part in our experience of Paradise. But when we suffer pain we suffer it gladly, for the sake of the joy and deep tranquility of everyday existence in Paradise. My happiness, my bliss here lies in making and building up a lovely house, garden and woods which are a real home for my Ni and his friends. I draw from my memories of what was beautiful on earth, and make pictures in my imagination like an artist, and then I shape, mold and create like a sculptor, using my celestial body for this purpose; and then my imagination, as Harold says, “breathes the breath of life” into my creation, and lo, it is there!

Of course I have my failures, and sometimes instead of a bed of lily-of-the-valley, or, shall we say, roses, I produce a mass of groundsel and other horrid weeds. That is because I haven’t worked hard enough and have allowed some irritating

memory of weeds at Wickenden to fill the mirror in my mind. Then I have to begin all over again, and it requires a real struggle and effort to produce beautiful flowers here. But how proud and deliciously happy I am when roses and lily-o-the-valley at least appear and the weeds vanish! Then one has a sense in all its joys of the Divine Power of Creation, of which one has received a tiny share from the Creator.

(2) You will ask for my experience of pain in Paradise. I help Ruth at intervals in her work among the terrified, tortured little children who die before their time, through this dreadful war. They cry for their mothers and can't find them. Often their little souls are injured, and they are so utterly helpless and pitiful. Sometimes it nearly breaks my heart to see them. Then Ruth gives me courage, and I help them all I can. But such pain as I experience in this work - which I rather dread - makes me all the happier when I return to Nigel and our Wickenden home. Oh, I have long times of peace that passes understanding there. For I have learnt how to be still, how to live in communion with nature, birds, the deep heart of life.

Perhaps you will say that it is all so like living on earth, it can't be true. But there is a great difference.

We do not need food, so no money is required in Paradise. We replenish our bodies and energies from the Great Light. To live here is to depend entirely on your own efforts. If a man is selfish, greedy and cruel, when he dies his mind and imagination are sterile. So it is as if these people were blind. They see only night and gloomy twilight - a desolate desert place about them. A sterile mind and imagination have no power to create. So the thoroughly evil people who have passed through death's gateway, live here in the darkness of their own selfish minds, or in a grey, somber world which in the case of cruel, brutal men, is peopled with their victims. They dream and dream again the tortures they have inflicted on people during their earth lives, and they experience their agony.

When I asked, after a long time of happiness here: Does Hell exist? I was told what I have just written. When I asked, Does Heaven exist? I was told: Not the jeweler's shop of Revelations, but God's jewels - birds, flowers, changing lights, the most wonderful colors imaginable, are all here for those who have heart and imagination - in other words, love and vision which is another word for faith.

We help each other in our creation of a world. My brother, my sisters, mother and father all strengthen and correct the defects in my love and vision which lead me into making numbers of stupid mistakes.

I suppose a scientist would say that our bodies are fed by ultra-violet rays of the sun. I prefer to call it "the great pervading light." There is a slightly denser essence than the air from which all forms are created. But the difference from earth is that, when we have gained experience, we make the forms, the landscape, etc., about

us. We have become in truth “thoughts of God,” so we are all little creators, like the one Creator of all. But our littleness or greatness of soul is shown in the beauty or ugliness of the surroundings we make. Everything, therefore, depends on ourselves as regards the external world, and we don’t, as in that gross, stupid earth I have left behind, depend on other people to any extent for the conditions we see around us.

Of course there are many undeveloped but not really evil people, for whom the more advanced souls create these conditions; and of course we create them for the children. But they all develop and learn in time how to depend on themselves for life in every aspect.

I am not a clever author, Bea. What I have written is partly what I know and partly what I have been told. It has been hard to write. But it has given me great pleasure, for I am so eager that people should lay the last ghost, Death, and should understand that what they call death is the gateway to the real life here, in contrast to the false and sham life so many human beings live on earth.

The Foreign Correspondent must stop now. I shall give all your messages. My dear love to you and Tony,

Hilda.

The sitting at which the foregoing script was written actually records no interruption.

On April 20th, 1944, Nigel replied to a letter from me concerning the family. He opened with the remark that that was the right kind of letter for me to write to him. Hitherto I had usually sent him chasing off to find missing officers, brothers of friends, etc., and had given little family news. Something I mentioned, however, this time elicited the following, which may be of interest:

I am ready to take a bet on it now with you. . . though what to bet with beats me. For there is on real property here except in yourself. You can make nothing of this life, or you can make everything out of it. It’s a bit staggering, isn’t it? You start from zero. This world after death is neither heaven nor hell, apparently. There is simply no stocks and shares in it - I am quoting Govy. He said he had the devil of a time when he first came over here, because, the secret passion of his life was stocks and shares. Fortunately he had a greater passion for gardening. He said that saved him from having a very thin time indeed, his love of the beautiful, as he called it. I told him the only time I considered I had wasted in my life was in Uncle B’s office and on the Stock Exchange. That may be why, though I started from zero here, I have made a pretty good score to date. Give that young fellow Tony an elder brother’s advice. Tell him after the war to chuck the Stock Exchange - go in for farming and cut out racehorses. The racehorses are another form of stocks and shares. . .

By jove, Tony as a company commander! What a lark, I expect there will be a good deal of larking in his company! I shall tell father and mother, and we must have a celebration. I suppose we shall end by hearing Tony is commanding the 150th Army, a veteran who, when he puts on all the decorations, will be quite unable to walk because of the weight of them. Tony is going to come through all right. Mother will be sorry to hear he is a company commander. She has been so pleased with the idea she has invented about him - that he is growing food for everyone on the farm. You put that bee on her bonnet, Auntie Bea! She made honey out of it. She saw Tony shouldering a spade, not a gun, killing weeds instead of men. Personally, I don't see Tony doing either! But I shall tell her that Tony is a Chester and has developed such organizing ability the W.O. can't bear to part with him and send him abroad. It is wonderful what she can be made to believe about either of us!

In response to a letter from me Hilda communicated the following on May 19th, 1944:

It may surprise you to hear that weeds can shoot up in our gardens over here. They are usually the result of ugly thoughts; or even worrying, anxious thoughts can produce groundsel, docks; all the horrid things one doesn't want in a garden. I usually do my gardening while Nigel is away shepherding his men from the earth, leading them from the darkness of death into light. But now I know I must quieten myself, invite a great calm. Then, when God's stillness is mine, I set to work and some lovely, wonderful flowers surprisingly appear, open out from their dear little buds, and bloom. . .

Yes, "Burglar" was my name for death. I always thought of death coming like a thief in the night. I couldn't bear the word "death." I had lost to him my dear ones, and you would all have called me morbid, if I had said the burglar was really Mr. Death. You would have said silly things and thought you were comforting, when you were hurting abominably all the time. That is why I said so little when you talked to me about us and your communications. I nearly cried out several times: "Stop Bea, I can't bear it. I daren't think of death. It makes me so lonely, so frightened. To me he was the thief of life, thief of everything I loved."

And if I had cried out like that you would have despised me and thought me a wretched little coward, which was the exact truth.

(I should, as a matter of fact, have thought nothing of the kind.)

Hilda always represented herself as being afraid of "burglars" at night. The above explanation had not occurred to me. It is true that many of those she dearly loved had been taken from her over the course of a few years. Her father and mother died in 1915 and 1920. The deaths of Harold's wife (1928), of Muriel (1918), of Harold (1920) and of Ruth (1933) were all tragic, sudden and unexpected, and before their ordinary span of life had run out. Ruth passed away in a few hours in a London

hospital without regaining consciousness. She had been taken suddenly ill in the train to London. When she died I knew that Hilda felt that, she had lost her greatest friend and helper in all times of trouble. As stated elsewhere, Muriel had been going to live at Wickenden and superintend the planning and planting of the garden. Harold already had a country house in the neighborhood. So, when Wickenden was completed in 1921, Hilda's plans for having those she loved near her had been already frustrated by a cruel fate. No wonder she looked on death as a "thief"!

CHAPTER FOURTEEN

1944

"CONSCIOUSNESS AT THE TIME OF DEATH"

Whether or not some part of the mind of a person, under an anesthetic or lying unconscious before death, is aware of what is going on around him, is a matter which often comes up for discussion. The general consensus of opinion is, I believe, that, to all intents and purposes, the patient knows nothing. In some cases, however, he may be fully conscious of his surroundings and of people close at hand. In this connection it is interesting to note that, on three occasions when Miss Cummins was under an anesthetic for over two-and-a-half hours during three operations, she had no conscious memory of people or of her surroundings

The following extract from Hilda's communication of May 19th, 1944, is therefore of considerable interest. Geraldine was writing alone in Ireland and was entirely unaware of the incidents recorded.

In reply to a question from me, she said:

Yes, when I was dying I heard your voices, faintly in the distance, now and then. You were terribly worried because you could not get a doctor, and I longed to say "It doesn't matter, it's good-bye." I hear Tony's name, and something about wiring to him or telephoning. I don't remember the exact words. I think I heard things said I couldn't have heard in the normal way. I tried hard to say, "No doctors, but send quick, quick for Tony." But that effort only made you get farther away and the darkness deeper. I remember distinctly your white face, Bea, and I wanted to make a feeble joke, "If my body is paralyzed, your brain is paralyzed." I could tell you weren't able to think in your usual clear, connected way. I could see a little into your mind in that queer time, as I suppose I was then partly out of my body.

V., I think, came in with a horrid jar that hurt me. She wasn't quiet like you. I longed to say to Zellie, "Don't fuss," though she didn't worry me. But you were my great comfort when that awful fear, "I am dying," came to me. I somehow felt I couldn't be dying, as soon as I was aware of you near me. It was strange and wonderful and a great mercy to me that you were the only one of those near and dear who was there to say farewell to me. If I had seen Tony, the hurt to him

would have hurt me so much, after that first wild longing to see his face had passed. As for L., well, it would have been too cruel to have him there. Then all the fears and worries, the real burglars, ran away when I saw Govy, Harold, Muriel and Ruth, and I was in the Great Peace at last. . .

Now I am losing my pen. So good-night, my dear Bea, and it wasn't farewell, it was only au revoir, when you saw me off on that last journey.

Love,

Hilda

(Writing tailed off down page)

All the details given by Hilda concerning her last memories of earthly happenings are correct. The episode of "wiring or telephoning" to Tony, however, occurred almost immediately *after* Hilda had passed away. I had instructed little David's nurse to ring up the village Post Office and send a wire or to telephone through to Tony, telling him what had occurred. For this she used the telephone in my sister-in-law's bedroom. It is probable that, in giving the above account, Hilda not unnaturally confused the actual sequence of events. In any case she must have been "partly out of her body" during those last three hours of unconsciousness, for she says she heard things she "couldn't have heard in the normal way."

The reference to comparing my "paralyzed brain" with her own infirmity is quite in line with her little earthly jokes at times.

Perhaps the most interesting thing illustrating how conscious or semi-conscious Hilda was during her passing, is her statement that a certain person - giving the correct name - came noisily into the bedroom where she was lying. This incident occurred about an hour after Hilda was so suddenly taken ill. She had a stroke, and immediately became unconscious, dying three hours later.

How the doctor was fetched and other evidence has been recounted in *They Survive* (pages 22-24). So I will only record here that Muriel described this death-bed scene with amazing accuracy in a script written on August 9th, 1941, published in above-mentioned book. Geraldine was entirely unaware of the circumstances in which death had taken place.

CHAPTER FIFTEEN

1944

"LOVE ALONE GIVES LIFE"

During the first five or six months of 1944 there had come details from Nigel of how, at my request, he had traced and found three officers missing in the Second World War. One of these cases - that of Ian Maclean - has been recorded in *They Survive*. Another I did not follow up. The third extraordinarily interesting and evidential, and

concerned an officer in the ----- Guards. Writing alone in Ireland, Geraldine gave names of people and places concerning him and his family - entirely unknown to her and to myself. These I verified later at the Chelsea Reference Library. When, however, I approached two of the missing man's relatives, while acknowledging many personal details, they would admit nothing. They said that "Miss Cummins must have known it all," and showed no desire to offer their kindly cooperation. Therefore this very interesting case of proved survival cannot be published. I very much regret the time which Nigel wasted in tracing the man in question, and I regret still more the waste of Geraldine's valuable psychic power. It could have been spent in something more worthwhile.

Another case which developed during these months was included in this volume as an Appendix, but owing to paper shortage it has now been omitted. An abbreviated report was printed in the S.P.R. Journal for May, 1945.*

** (Transcriber's note: For the benefit of the interested reader, I decided to include this passage and other analogous passages from S.P.R.'s sources transcripts at the end of this volume.)*

These facts and personal matters discussed in these psychic letters account for there being little to record concerning Hilda's further experiences during these few months.

On June 10th, 1944, however, Geraldine wrote for Hilda as follows:

Astor is here. Little Hilda is close by.

Hilda Gibbes.

Yes, Geraldine, my dear, I overheard your dignified friend, Astor, calling me "Little Hilda" - quite appropriate - he is so tall. Is it like looking up at a rock at the top of a tree when I talk to him. But he is a white rock, with a long white beard and a white robe. Guides or guardian spirits wear white robes that glow or darken according to the mood and character of the man, woman or child they watch over. Ah, a letter from Bea. Let me see it. . .

Ian Maclean has been staying at Wickenden for a few days at my special invitation. He is beginning to piece his memory together. That is one of the difficulties these poor young men have to deal with when they have a sudden, violent death. For a time they only remember bits of the past. They usually have a clear memory of those they love deeply and those they hate. But the facts of their past life which are untouched by strong emotion are usually forgotten, or only half remembered, by them. Some men have even forgotten their own names. Ni asked me to tell you that, as it is one of the difficulties in tracing people over here at the request of their relatives. Govy says that one reason why they forget their own names is that when they are highly strung and in the dark horror of death as it closes round them, they are so inwardly frightened - though outwardly fearless -

sheer panic that they may let their comrades down makes them long to escape into nothingness, and so they make that escape by forgetting their own names.

You remember my short memory when I was on earth. That was because of my many fears, and these I used to try and hide, and so used to play hide-and-seek with myself and lose bits of myself. For memory is a part of oneself.

A part of my work for the young soldiers is memory-hunting with them when they stay at Wickenden. As you build up a wrecked house, so you build up a human being, for the foundations are always there. I know you want to know about us, that is why I tell you these things.

Nigel is away over France, and Arthur is staying with me to celebrate his birthday - the day he was born over here. He comes occasionally, but only stays a short time. Frank is here too for a few days. He sends his dear love to Maud. He wants her to know that he is busier than he has ever been at a new job - a very ticklish one, he says. He is watching over certain senior officers - colonels - during this invasion. He is part of a chain of minds that endeavor to impress these men at the crucial moments to make the right decisions in the fighting on the coast. . .

. . . And that reminds me to say to you that our messages aren't always right or correct. You see, we are still the people we were. Harold says that men and women often imagine that the dead are all Popes; that everything they write concerning the earth must be true because, like the Popes, they have become infallible.

And now Arthur is grumbling. He wants me, and says Bea is a confounded nuisance, keeping me from him. So I had better, my dear, say "Au revoir."

Give my darling Tony my dear love when next you write. Even though I am not allowed to be near him, my prayers and my loving thoughts are always with him in this cruel time for him on earth.

Hilda

In reply to a letter from me, on July 9th, 1944, Astor wrote as usual, followed by Hilda:

Astor comes: Yes, I shall call her to the pen. It amuses her to write. She likes to bring back news of the world to Nigel. She calls herself *The Sunday Times*. But Nigel says she is only the gossip column of the *Sunday Graphic*, because she brings him no news of the world war. Here she is, now.

Hilda Gibes: Good morning, my dear Geraldine. You say it is your mother's wedding-day. Sixty years married. And you say they are still married to each other in their hearts after twenty-one years of separation. Then they are true lovers. Tell her from me that she will have another wedding over here soon after she arrives. For, true lovers who have stood the test of time, Death's cruel separation over many years, are rewarded by a wedding not long after arrival in this world, and it is with the one to whom they have remained faithful. But this wedding in heaven

has a special beauty and holiness, a deeper significance than any earthly wedding. The two true lovers share an ecstasy on that bridal day unequalled by any corresponding earthly experience. Our next family wedding will be that of Eric and Ruth. For their love increases rather than lessens over the long, hard years of separation. Poor Eric is facing a cruel trial - God help him and keep him during this time!

A letter from Bea. Oh, why didn't you mention it sooner? Let me see it. . .

I am sorry Gwen's charming Ian has left Wickenden. Tell her that Nigel has led him astray. In other words, he enlisted him in his company, which is watching over the battlefields of Normandy and the battlefield of London. Nigel tries to hide things from me, but he let slip that fact that London is going through another ordeal. My boy and Gwen's boy are helping the deal out of the confusion and darkness of sudden death into the light. So my thoughts are much with you in this time of strain. (*Flying bombs were dropping on London in June, 1944. - E. B. G.*)

I understand many things now about which I took a wrong view on earth. Here, in this world of beauty and happiness, if our souls are to grow, there has also to be pain and regrets for ignorant mistakes. I put in a little time - not much - in my gallery of memories. I think I might describe the experience as going to school again. As you know, I detested school and disliked the schoolmistresses because they frightened me. It was unfair to them. But I hated their red-tape, or their blue-tape - at least, it gave me the blues. Anyhow, to turn to a later chapter. . .

I have found my guardian angel, and I call him "Methusaleh!" For he seems to be a treble or quadruple octogenarian as regards his experiences of men and women. He said rather a wise thing when I emerged from my memory-gallery, feeling decidedly depressed about my failure to recognize all Joan did for me:

"The life we live in others is far more important than the one we live in ourselves when we are on earth. The great teachers in the lives of their pupils produce an effect far beyond anything produced in themselves in the growth of their own self. The same may be said of all great artists, and especially great poets."

You may say I am no poet. But in one sense Joan was. I saw in my memories that for love of me she toiled day after day in my garden and so made poetry - that is to say, made beauty for me. Joan's hard work, her overwork, influenced me even then and now makes a far deeper impression on me. Worried and harried though I then was, I had glimpses of the lovely strain of unselfishness in her undisciplined character which led her to work like that for me. Those glimpses of her unselfish love helped me more than she or you would know at a time when I was hard pressed. The love I gave to my children was partly selfish, because it was possessive. After all, they were my children. But Joan possessed so very little of me in those days. So hers was a more unselfish kind of love than mine. I see it now in my gallery as a fragrant garden of herbs. It soothes and often takes away the

pain I feel as I see the many mistakes I made on earth and their effect on others. So the little poem Joan wrote in the Wickenden garden has been and is, of real importance to me.

Methusaleh says: "Love alone gives life. The truest life is not the one we live in ourselves, but the one we live in others."

In view of these remarks from "Methusaleh," it may be of interest here to introduce the experiences of a self-centered man who had recently died, as described by my brother Frank and by Govy.

Frank Gibbes: I did not know of Peter's passing. In different circumstances, of course, I should have been at the Terminus to meet him. But a soldier continues to be a soldier over here, and I was under military discipline. You may think that odd, but I, as a soldier in the last war (1914-18), had to be in this one - though it has been on a strange and gigantic scale here.

But I have recently seen Peter, and he assured me he is all right. The poor old chap had rather a thin time for the first days - days according to your time - after he left his body. He isolated himself from others in life and was too self-centered, so he was, for a while, in isolation - in a grey twilight, when he came here. Not even his mother was able to get through and meet him. Being so self-centered he was unable to send out the urgent call that it always picked up and answered. He kept thinking of his home and made desperate struggles to get back to it. He hovered about the place, I was told. He tried to rouse and reach his wife. Then later, he himself told me he saw his housekeeper, followed her, spoke to her, ordered her, begged her to listen to him, and she did not pay the slightest attention to him. He said he had never felt so exasperated in his life, he fairly blazed with rage. He even hunted Ann. She was a less misty figure than anyone. He shouted to Ann, but though there seemed at one moment something like a recognition - for she stopped and seemed to listen - still she ignored him and went on thinking of other things, not paying any attention. Later, figures on earth became a little clearer. He said nothing was more awful than the day of his funeral. He could hear the mourners and even his son and his wife talking; and they were all more or less saying that he was asleep and at peace, when he was neither asleep nor at peace, when he was most maddeningly alive. He said it was real torture to hear that kind of nonsense talked.

It was the loneliness of it that fairly knocked him out. For the alternative of being utterly ignored in his own home was that of drifting about in a grey twilight. There was no sign or sound in it, only an unearthly stillness. He could travel on and on, and still there was nothing. He hadn't known what the word "fear" meant before. But, he said, after a while he became absolutely terrified, lost every scrap of nerve, broke down as he had never done in his life before. Then he cried to his wife for help (he couldn't pray), and oddly enough that cry was his salvation. It was the end of his self-centeredness, his iron determination and pride not to give in an

inch, not to make a fool of himself. When at last he was “the weak fool” who cried like a child, help came, and there was an end to his misery in that twilight loneliness of his own making.

Ever yours

Frank

Govy: I have seen Peter. He had a rather trying awakening into this world. But for that he can only blame himself. We were aware of his passing. We knew he was in “no man’s-land,” in the only world of death, that is to say, the world of complete isolation. Peter always cut himself off from other people so though we knew what a comfort it would be to his wife if we met him, we could not do so, for he raised up impossible barriers. He might still be in that world of night if it had not been for his wife. Her prayers and love for him saved him shattered the barriers. You may not believe this, but it is true. When Peter broke down his wife’s thoughts and prayers linked him up with us. Only through them were we able to locate him. There is a prayer and a love - to put it into biblical language - that can shatter the gates of hell. That is what Peter’s wife did for him. Thanks to her the barriers came down and Muriel and I traced him and found him. Poor fellow, he was all to pieces, but we soon got him around. It was probably the only time in his life he was broken. It was absolutely necessary for his growth - if indeed he was to grow at all.

With the exception of his last illness he had on the whole a soft time on earth. He had to experience not only the hardship of physical pain, he had to know spiritual pain and terror. In a word, he had to be broken (as all men are at some time broken), in order that he might be re-made.

We talked to Peter, we reassured him, and then took him to a place of rest. There the invalid recovered, finding his poise. Muriel searched for his Mother and brought them together. He is experiencing the small boy’s happiness in her company: it is a kind of trustful, confident happiness which we could not give him. He went to her home and remained with her for a while. I cannot tell what lies before him, but he is at peace now and has recovered his normal outlook.

SOME RECENT COMMUNICATIONS RECEIVED
THROUGH MISS GERALDINE CUMMINS

(S.P.R. Journal 1943-45, page 130)

Miss Gibbes reports to the Society the following case of communications received by her through Miss Geraldine Cummins from a friend of Miss Gibbes, of whose death Miss Cummins, then living in Eire, had not heard. Several correct statements were made as regards facts unknown to Miss Cummins, some of them being also unknown to Miss Gibbes. Pseudonyms are used for the names (other than the Christian name) of this friend and of her family and her residence.

In December 1943 a Mrs Alice Horley of Brickhill near Longmead, — shire, died and her death was reported in the English press. Mrs Horley had been an acquaintance of Miss Gibbes, and a friend of her sister-in-law, Hilda, who died in 1941. From Hilda Miss Gibbes has received several communications through Miss Cummins, some of which are reported in the Journal for May-June 1942. The nephew, Nigel, there mentioned as having been wounded, died in 1942 of wounds.

Miss Gibbes had been in the habit, while Miss Cummins was resident in Ireland, of sending to her from time to time letters to various dead friends asking her to get into touch with them and obtain their replies.

Following this practice Miss Gibbes on the 21st December 1943 wrote to Hilda through Miss Cummins mentioning that her friend "Alice" had passed over, that she would remember that "she" did not particularly reciprocate "Alice's" affections for her, and requesting her, if they met, to tell "Alice" how sorry Miss Gibbes was not to have replied to "Alice's" last letter, as she was on the point of doing when she had seen "Alice's" death announced in the Times, after an operation.

On the 1st January 1944 Hilda replied that she would look out for "Alice". Miss Cummins (see her statement below) had heard of Mrs Horley from Miss Gibbes in 1938, but did not know that Alice was her name, or that she had died. She did not while in Eire see the Times or any English newspaper in which Mrs Horley's death was likely to have been announced. On the 31st December 1943 Miss Gibbes wrote to Nigel through Miss Cummins, without mentioning Mrs Horley. In the course of his reply, on the 8th January 1944, he said "I saw that old dame, Mrs Hawley, just for a moment. She isn't over here, is she?"

On the 29th January 1944 he wrote again, mentioning Mrs Hawley, and referring correctly in very characteristic language to the relations between her and his mother,

Hilda. It is to be noted that Nigel, when alive, had been well aware how Mrs Horley spelt her name. For several months no further allusion was made to Mrs Horley except a casual remark from Hilda saying that she was always rather shy of political women "even of Alice": Mrs Horley's husband had been an M.P. for several years.

On the 17th August 1944 Miss Gibbes sent a few lines to Hilda in which she casually asked "What of Alice?", and received a reply dated 26th August 1944, "... Oh, Alice. Well, I played hide and seek with her for a long time. ... I was a little afraid it wouldn't be a case of Alice for Short but Alice for Long, if we met. I used, if you remember, to find her at times too talkative. . ."

These remarks are extremely characteristic of Hilda.

With this message was sent a script, the last page of which ran as follows:

Astor [a control of Miss Cummins]. "There is a lady here with Hilda, a stranger - elderly I think when she passed to us. She wants to try and write." Brickhill. Is this Brickhill? It is so dimly lighted. I was looking for Harry, Henry. . .

Hilda says write to Bea [Miss Gibbes]. . . (Miss Cummins asked the writer's name). "My name? Oh yes, it's Alice Poole, no Pole, Longmead. . . Mrs Alice Pole (these words were followed by a scrawl, apparently meant for an attempted surname)."

The script went on to refer to Alice's death in a nursing home, and to the letter which Miss Gibbes had intended to write to her, matters stated or implied in Miss Gibbes' letter of 21st December 1943, and ended "I am the same old woman, but not so very old - well-preserved."

In forwarding these scripts Miss Cummins wrote, "The Alice lady had great difficulty in writing. I suppose it's the one you mention in your letter to Hilda or is it some other Alice? Or is she subconscious invention?" Brickhill was the name of Mrs Horley's house: this was not known to Miss Cummins, who however may have known of her connection with Longmead: see paragraphs 1 and 3 of her statement below.

Henry is her husband's name. The most interesting point, however, is the name "Poole", corrected to "Pole"; "Pole" was Mrs Horley's second name, a fact unknown to Miss Cummins, and also, at the time she received the script, to Miss Gibbes, but the family pronounce it "Poole". The final remark about being "well-preserved" is described by Miss Gibbes as characteristic of Mrs Horley.

On the 3rd October 1944 a script was written by Miss Cummins containing the following passage:

“Astor is here. Harold and Hilda are close by and I see Muriel with an elderly lady who passed over fairly recently. I think it is the lady, Alice, and with her now is a man and I catch the name of Draper. (Here Miss Cummins asked Astor to tell her about Alice.) Yes he is Draper or some name like that. He thanks Muriel for having brought him and the lady, Alice, together. ...”

In the latter part of the script further reference is made to the relations between Hilda and Mrs Horley. Mention is also made of Mrs Horley's love of flowers, known to Miss Cummins, and of Mr Horley's career as a public speaker and politician. At the same time Hilda wrote about Alice, saying she had been impressed by Muriel's gift for making a garden, and “At any rate Muriel did one real service to Alice: she found her father for her.”

After the end of Hilda's letter the writing changed, and the script proceeded:

“Alice Pole. My dear, have you seen my husband? He is very low I feel. I saw his mind or a bit of it and it told me he didn't at all like — as Hilda put it — the Beveridge England is going to be given. . .

What a pity you don't know him better for you could tell him he won't have to live in a Beveridged England. He will be here with me. Charming and kind Miss M found my dear father and brought us together. It has given me great happiness. Address to send this to, Miss Beatrice Gibbes 23 Jubilee Place..

From Alice Pole.

Harold and Muriel (Miss M) are a brother and sister of Hilda's. The error as to the number of Miss Gibbes's house, which is 25, not 23 Jubilee Place, is very curious, since the real number was well-known to Miss Cummins.

This group of communications is largely concerned with Mrs Horley's husband. Miss Cummins was not aware that he had survived his wife, and in view of his age, it was not an inference which could have been made with any certainty. The allusion to his political opinions is correct, but not in view of his position definitely significant. The most interesting feature of Alice's communication is the name Draper, which meant nothing at the time to either Miss Cummins or Miss Gibbes.

On the 14th October 1944 Miss Gibbes discovered from Who's Who (1925 edn.) that Mrs Horley was the daughter of P. H. D. Roe, the initials only of the first three

names being given. Thinking that the D was encouraging, Miss Gibbes wrote to the postmaster of the place mentioned in Who's Who as P. H. D. Roe's home, enquiring as to his full names. The postmaster forwarded her letter to a member of the family, who on the 22nd October 1944 wrote informing Miss Gibbes that his full name was Pole Henry Draper Roe. The relevant parts of the original scripts of 26th August and 3rd October 1944 have been seen by the Hon. Secretary.

The significance of this case obviously depends on the extent of Miss Cummins's normal knowledge of Mrs Horley. The Hon. Sec. accordingly put to Miss Cummins in March 1945, when she was back in England, some questions which, with her answers (dated 24th March 1945), are set out below. The questions were enclosed in a letter to Miss Gibbes who read them out to Miss Cummins.

Q.1. Did you ever know the Mrs Horley who died in Dec. 1943?

Had you ever heard of her before the 3rd Oct. '44?

A.1. I never knew Mrs Horley. But when I was staying with Miss Gibbes's sister-in-law [i.e. Hilda] some time in 1938 I remembered that Miss Gibbes had told me that Mrs Horley was a friend of her sister-in-law; was fond of gardening and lived in the neighbourhood.

Q. 2. Did you before that date know of any connection between her and any of Miss Gibbes's relations?

A. 2. I answered in above.

Q. 3. Before that date did the names Alice, Pole, Draper, Brickhill mean anything to you in connection with each other, or with Mrs Horley.

A. 3. None whatever.

Q. 4. While you were in Ireland in 1944 did you see any, and which, English newspapers?

A. 4. The Times Literary Supplement, The Irish Edition of the Sunday Dispatch were the only English newspapers I saw when I was in Ireland.

Q. 5. Do you think it possible you may have seen a reference to Mrs Horley in any newspaper, English or Irish, about the time of her death?

A. 5. No. None whatever. In fact until a few minutes ago I had no idea that Mrs Horley had died when Miss Gibbes told me.

In a letter to the Hon. Sec. accompanying Miss Cummins's answers. Miss Gibbes states that before putting the questions, she led up to them by a conversation in which Miss Cummins spoke of Mrs Horley as if she were still alive. It was on this occasion. Miss Gibbes says, that Miss Cummins first learnt that "Alice" was Mrs

Horley. When Miss Gibbes read the first question. Miss Cummins asked how the name Horley should be spelt.

This is of interest because at a sitting shortly before Astor had spelt the name correctly. Miss Gibbes adds "I think it quite unlikely that any mention of Mrs Horley's death would have appeared in the Irish Edition of the Sunday Dispatch. She had no connection with Eire as far as I know. . . the Eire edition deals only with what is likely to interest the Irish."

The London office of the Sunday Dispatch states that it cannot trace any reference to Mrs Horley's death in their Irish Edition of the time in question.

The communications received through Miss Cummins go beyond her normal conscious knowledge, as set out in her answers, in several particulars, and are presented in a dramatic setting which Miss Gibbes describes as highly characteristic of all the parties concerned, some of them not personally known to Miss Cummins, and as reproducing accurately the psychological situation between them. The appropriateness of the manner of presentation is, she points out, illustrated by such small mistakes as the mis-spelling of the name Horley, suggestive of the kind of error made when unfamiliar names are taken down from dictation, and the error as to the number of Miss Gibbes's house, an address much better known to the automatist than to the communicator.

In all cases where a medium has, or has had, some link with the communicator such as Miss Cummins had with Mrs Horley through Miss Gibbes and Hilda, the question of the extent of the medium's cryptomnesic knowledge raises difficulties.

Nobody can say with certainty what they have or have not been told about their friends' friends: they can only be certain as to what they remember.

But cryptomnesia will not account for the statements in Miss Cummins's communications, from Nigel's message of the 8th January 1944 on, as to Mrs Horley's death, since this was of quite recent occurrence (December 1943).

Telepathy between Miss Gibbes and Miss Cummins is not, of course, ruled out, and may have been assisted by subconscious inference on Miss Cummins's part from the terms of Miss Gibbes's letter of the 21st December 1943.

But telepathy from Miss Gibbes will not account for the names Pole and Draper which meant nothing to her in connection with Mrs Horley.

CORRESPONDENCE

Sir, - As a matter of general interest, not to say historical justice, I should like to put on record the fact that my Association, Theory of Telepathy, appears to have been anticipated, in outline at least, no less than some thirty years ago. I have before me an unpublished paper, written in 1914-15 by Mrs. Hugh Lewis, discussing the ideas put forward by Maeterlinck in his book *The Unseen Guest*. In this she adopts the hypothesis of what we should now call a Common Subconscious, or Universal Mind, or the like, of virtually unlimited knowledge and powers, with which the individual finite mind may somehow or other 'make contact'. There is nothing very remarkable or novel in this; but the author goes on to point out that such a contact might be liable to "overwhelm the finite mind with an access of knowledge too vast for it to grasp" - i.e. she clearly realizes the need for some selective mechanism enabling the individual mind to pick out the relevant items - and goes on "would not the psychological law of the Association of Ideas continue to operate in these subconscious realms and save the situation. . ."

This is pretty well the essence of the whole matter, so far as I am concerned, though I should rather develop the notion of a Common Subconscious from the facts of Telepathy, etc., than postulate it to begin with.

Dealing with phantasms and the like, Mrs Lewis writes "We may take as an example of the point of contact some such simple idea as the perception of the room or place in which the individual is at the time. Immediately the contact is made his idea of the room becomes enlarged by some addition from the Infinite Consciousness. This addition may be borrowed from the past or the future. . .

Thus the individual may become suddenly conscious of some scene formerly enacted in that spot, or he may have a prophetic vision of events that are to come".

Compare my own attempts to deal with Apparitions. She even goes so far, also, as to envisage (in her own terms, of course) the role I have assigned to 'objects' in psychometry. Referring to the case of "the medium Madame M. who ascertained the fate of an old gentleman. . . and discovered his dead body by handling. . . a scarf which he used to wear "she says" Here the point of contact was the idea of the scarf, and when communication was established between the mind of the medium and the Infinite Consciousness, the medium was able to describe in detail the appearance of the old man. . . and the actual position of his dead body".

I should not have put it quite like that myself, because I am a little shy of using words like 'infinite', but the anticipation, in all essentials, of the suggestions I have recently put forward is most remarkable. I should like to express my gratitude to Mrs Lewis for bringing this paper to my notice.

I am, Sir etc., Whately Carington

The Goligher Circle

Sir, - At the recent discussion group I was asked, if I could give any information as to what happened to the medium and whether she retained her powers. In reply I gave some information which I now find to be incorrect. I should be glad therefore if you would publish the true facts which may be of interest to our members. Miss Goligher married a Mr S. G. Donaldson and owing to her experiences with Dr Fournier d'Albe refused to sit any longer.

Mr F. McCarthy Stephenson always kept in touch with her and eventually through the good offices of her husband she was persuaded to sit to be photographed by means of infrared rays. The results may be seen in *Psychic Science* for July 1933, January 1936 and July 1936.

The first article is by her husband and gives a full description of the apparatus and controls used. The other two are by Mr Stephenson. In the January 1936 article it is stated that two lady doctors were present "who searched Mrs. Donaldson". In regard to the photographs taken by Dr. Crawford it appears from the extracts from his diary published in Dr Fournier d'Albe's book that when some at least were taken Miss Goligher came alone to Dr Crawford's house, was examined by a lady doctor, then dressed in the presence of ladies before being photographed.

I might add that the real cause of the breakdown of the Fournier d'Albe's experiments as alleged from the medium's side has never been published. It might be a good thing if this was placed on record but not for publication for some years yet.

Some of our members who are interested in psychical research would find a perusal of the earlier numbers of *Psychic Science* of great interest. They will be found to contain much of value. For instance, in the issue for April 1934 there are copies of four of the original photographs of "Katie King" taken by Sir William Crookes. A careful examination of them will alone go far to convince anyone of the reality of Sir William Crookes' experiences.

Yours faithfully, B. Abdy Collins

Sir, - In the light of the recent experiments of Dr S. G. Soal and Mrs Goldney, it has occurred to me that an explanation might be found for Rhine's "Terminal Salience". It arises as follows.

One would expect any percipient to cognize a mixture of direct and displaced hits, though the proportions of each might differ from percipient to percipient.

If the percipient is making a displaced "true cognition", it debars him from making a direct "true cognition" (as distinct from a hit) and vice versa. Thus a high percentage of displaced cognitions reduces the percentage of direct cognitions; if by some means the displaced cognitions can be avoided, one would expect a higher direct score.

This occurs at the beginning and end of a “run” of card guessing. For at the beginning it is impossible for the percipient to score a retrocognitive hit (without going back to the previous run) and at the end it is impossible for him to score a precognitive hit.

Thus the number of displaced hits will be reduced at the beginning and end of a run, and the number of direct hits will accordingly rise.

This effect is precisely the effect noticed by Rhine which he calls the “Terminal Salience”.

Yours sincerely,

R. Wilson.

NOTE

Except during holidays, the rooms of the Society will as from June 7th be open every Thursday evening from 6.30 to 8 p.m.

SOME RECENT COMMUNICATIONS RECEIVED THROUGH MISS CUMMINS

(Journal S.P.R. v34 1947-48)

[Miss Gibbes (E.B.G.) has sent us the following account of veridical communications received during 1945 through Miss Geraldine Cummins, whose mediumship is well known to our members.]

Fictitious names of persons and places are used throughout, but the real names have been disclosed to the Hon. Editor. Miss Cummins spent the greater part of the war years from 1939-1944 in Ireland looking after an invalid mother and doing other rather nerve- wracking work.

After the death of her mother in October 1944 she returned to London in February 1945.

She did not seem very well but we had a few personal sittings for automatic writing before she returned to Ireland for the summer in June of that year. During one of these sittings (March 19th, 1945) the following announcement was made by her control, Astor:

“I must tell you there is a stranger here, a quiet grey-haired woman with a curious force. So I have been compelled to pass on what is her message. She says she died in Kensington. She shows me a foot, that is her surname, I gather, then a daisy; Yes, Marguerite Foote. She says she worked for a long time with an important public man - knew him well. She gives the name James. She says she wants to talk to Donald about James and that Donald hopes to come to this town in April. If so, she begs that

you see him for the writing, not to let anything interfere as she has something important to say about James.”

E.B.G. “I don’t quite follow all this, Astor.”

“You may know in April, as Donald is likely to want to see you if he has time.”

E.B.G. “I grasp whom you mean now.”

“That is all about her now. She doesn’t seem able to give surnames. She seems to have been over here about three years. She says her message is important in regard to future events.”

E.B.G. “Tell her I will remember and arrange.”

The above came as a surprise. I soon realized however to whom the reference was meant. Later I looked up the name Foote in the telephone directory but could find no one in Kensington likely to fit the name given in the script. After the sitting Miss Cummins said she recollected something about Donald X but couldn’t remember what, and asked if any allusion had been made to him. I answered in the affirmative and enquired if he might be coming to London. She replied that she thought it extremely unlikely. I made no reference to the stranger.

During Miss Cummins’s absence in Ireland, she had given an occasional sitting to a friend, Donald X. He had been much impressed by, and was very interested in, her psychic abilities. Through her he had received communications purporting to come from the mother of a well-known business man. Thinking there might be some interesting developments, I followed up this trail at the next sitting.

March 25TH 1945, at 25 Jubilee Place, S.W. 3

“Astor is here; Am I to call Hilda [my sister-in-law]? She and her family have been together today.”

E.B.G. “Yes, but I should first like to ask you a few questions.”

“I shall try to reply to them.”

E.B.G. “You remember the quiet, grey-haired woman stranger, you described the other day?”

“Yes, she was an interesting woman with a keen brain, extremely quick but quiet, like one who had very great self-control and grip of herself.”

E.B.G. “Had she spoken before?”

“No, she never communicated through my child [i.e. the medium]. In fact, it was her first visit. She knows Donald X. At least, she had seen him when she was staying with her employer whom she called James. When I asked her who James was, she replied that he was a man of affairs and did not seem to wish to give more information. I said was he in business and she replied that ‘he was a very important

business man' and smiled." "I said what kind of goods did he deal in?" She said, "Every kind."

E.B.G. "I wanted to trace her."

"She seems to have had a confidential post with James."

E.B.G. "She said she died in Kensington. Is there nothing more you can tell me in this respect? "

"She said she died in Kensington and that Donald would know her and that she did not particularly wish that you should find out who she was."

E.B.G. "Well, we will leave it at that."

"That was her habit in life - to keep secrets, and so she was always reserved with strangers."

E.B.G. "I tried to trace her name in a book here, but of course could not do so. It was too vague, as she might have died in any house in Kensington."

"She did not say she died here. I asked her. She said, 'There is more than one Kensington in the world' and smiled."

At a subsequent sitting the following spontaneous reference to Marguerite Foote was made.

25, Jubilee Place, Chelsea, S.W. 3

Saturday Afternoon, April 14TH 1945

"Astor is here. There is near to you the quiet grey-haired lady, but if she is quiet she is persistent. She has for over a week been pressing me to speak to you about her first message. Her name is Marguerite Foote. At last I have that clearly from her. She says I gave her message wrongly to you. She had said James is coming over here in April and that she wanted to speak about James to Donald. She wanted to warn him that James was coming over. I see now that this lady does not belong to this country but she is not French. She died in Kensington, New Zealand. She says she had retired there because she could not carry on her work any longer. She says she knows Sheila took her place lately with James; but it wasn't the same thing. Sheila is very clever but hasn't the experience of course. Do you want me to send this lady away? "

EBG. "I remembered, and would have asked Mr. X to come here in April if he had visited this country. But now, as you say the message has been misinterpreted, we can convey it to him. We have not heard that he is coming here."

"She says she was working for a long time in a confidential position for James and that it has given her the greatest joy to see him resting after the passage of death. He is with his mother, or rather, she came to him."

EBG. "Tell her that I will send the message as she wishes."

"Yes, I have told her. She is satisfied."

After the death of James, Miss Cummins wrote a letter of sympathy to Mr. X. She added something to the effect that, "A Miss Marguerite Foote had called here in March and that she was worried about something happening to a friend of his in April. She said she was from Kensington, N.Z."

Miss Cummins added that she hesitated to write to Mr. X as she knew nothing whatever about this lady. But she was a nice grey-haired woman. Also that she had called again yesterday.

A letter from Mr. X was received by Miss Cummins on May 1st, 1945. It runs as follows:

(Extract)

April 24, 1945. Dublin.

"Dear Miss Cummins, Thank you so much for your kind letter of sympathy. Millie and I are both grateful for it. What you wrote about Marguerite Foote is most interesting and evidential. You may have since learned that she was James's confidential secretary for many years and died about two years ago. What is most evidential is that she told you she lived in 'Kensington, N.Z.', which is not generally known; also the fact that she had white hair, though relatively a young woman. How did that come through? If I could have excerpts from the script covering these two episodes, I should be most grateful. Obviously, Miss Foote was hoping to get word to James through you and me to take care of his health. ... If you come over let us know. We not only want to see you but feel that some interesting things might come through. Please remember me to Miss Gibbes.

Yours faithfully,

Donald X."

Copy of letter sent by Miss Gibbes to Mr. X:

May 1st, 1945.

"Dear Mr. X,

Miss Cummins has read me extracts from your letter to her concerning Marguerite Foote. As I am anxious to collect any evidence of survival, would you be so good as to let me know a few more details concerning her? I take a few questions from the three scripts copies of which I enclose. Your answers would of course be regarded by us as confidential. Was Marguerite "quiet, grey-haired and with a curious force"? Did she "work for a long time with James and know him well"? In your letter you say she died about two years ago. Astor says about three years. But time is often a stumbling block in communications as you probably know, so this is near enough. Would you describe M. Foote as "an interesting woman with a keen brain, extremely quick,

quiet and self-controlled” etc. as described? She claims she knows you, or at least had seen you when she was staying with her employer. Is this a fact? “A confidential post” with James. Your letter confirms this. Was she “reserved with strangers” and “persistent.”

You affirm that she died in Kensington, N.Z. (A place, the existence of which was utterly unknown to Miss Cummins and myself). Was she “unable to carry on her work any longer and so retired”? Is it a fact that a woman named Sheila took her place with James and was it just lately? Is Sheila not quite so efficient as M. F. as indicated? Is Sheila “clever but not so experienced”? The script indicates that she was working for a long time as Secretary. I note your letter states she was confidential secretary for many years. In view of the fact that it was after the announcement of “James’s” death that Astor wrote he had misinterpreted the original message concerning him. It is interesting to note a few points which would seem to indicate that this statement is correct.

1. “She wants to talk to Donald about James. ... In April.” (Communication of March 19)
2. “Not to let anything interfere as she had something important to say about James ... you may know in April.” (March 19)
3. Her message “important in regard to future events”. (March 19)

With reference to the suggestion in your letter that Miss Cummins may have learnt that M. F. was his confidential secretary and died two years ago, I can assure you that neither Miss Cummins nor I have seen anything of the kind. Had we done so, we should have thought immediately of this communicator. In any case it is indicated in script of March 25th that M.F. held “A confidential post” with James. Also in script of March 19 that she worked for a long time with an important public man.”

Yours sincerely,

E. B. GIBBES.”

Copy of letter received from Mr. X:

(Personally typed)

“Dear Miss Gibbes:

As I have written to Miss Cummins I shall be very happy to work with you on this matter and give such assistance as I can for I think you have an evidential case of the first order. Answering your questions in the order in which you ask them I should say that:

1. Marguerite Foote could be described quite accurately as a woman with a “curious force”. She was gray haired even while a young woman and white haired toward the end.

2. She did work for a long time with "James" and knew him extremely well.
3. I will verify the time of her death. It may have been more than two years.
4. She was the kind of woman that could make herself interesting to anyone who interested her and whom she considered worthwhile. She never could have attained the position she held without exceptional qualities.
5. She knows me well. She was in my friend's household from, I think it was 1922.
6. Yes, most confidential. I doubt if anything went over his desk that she did not know about.
7. She never talked about my friend's affairs or discussed any public business to my knowledge.
8. She died in a Wellington suburb. I believe it was Kensington. I will verify this as it is important.
9. Yes, she was unable to carry on for several years before she died.
10. Yes, it is a fact that a woman named Sheila took over and she was not so experienced but is clever. I suggest that you try to obtain from Astor answers to the following questions which I shall be able to verify:

What illness overtook M.F.? What was the name that she was known by in her employer's family? This would be very evidential. What other name has Sheila? Describe color of hair, married or single (I can verify such answers out of my own knowledge).

Does Astor know of any kinsfolk of Sheila who have sent messages through him and Geraldine C. to me for others. If M. F. comes again tell her I am very anxious to receive any message from "James" who believes in communication. The dates and the misinterpretation of Astor's messages are most significant. . . I shall be glad to show you the scripts that G. C. obtained with me. They contain some extraordinary things.

Yours sincerely,

Donald X."

Notes of sitting held on the morning of May 16th, 1945 at 25 Jubilee Place, S.W. 3.

"Astor comes."

EBG. "The last time we wrote you said that the lady with grey hair, the stranger, was around but we had no time then to talk with her. Would she like to come now?"

"Yes. I can call her Here she is. She is very interested in you and it is because she knows Donald X. She says that James is with his own people and that he was delighted too, to catch up on Walter R. whom, he said, had beaten him on the post in the journey to this world."

EBG. "Who is Walter R.? The rest of his name?"

“He said Walter and there were two sick men together and they had a private bet as to which of them would live the longest. James lost the bet. James thought he would go first. That is what this lady tells me. Walter R., that was the name.”

EBG. “Has she any message she would like to send to Mr. X?”

“She is delighted to hear you will give a message to Donald. Tell him she says, that James is not only happy but so darned glad to be able to think about himself. For the first time for many years he has been able to have a good think about himself.”

EBG. “Does she remember if she was called by any special name in James’s family?”

“She says she was known by more than one name.”

(Here followed an attempt to write what looks like O or Q and Chap or Cheep.)

“I am trying to get her to write it.”

(Another attempt.)

EBG. “When she first came you gave her name correctly.”

“She showed me a large daisy and a foot, that’s how I got it originally. She may give it to Donald later.”

EBG. “But he knows the nickname so it wouldn’t be the same.”

“She does not say anything more about that.”

EBG. “I wonder if she can remember what other name Sheila had, and the color of her hair and if married or single?”

“Wait. I will ask her. She says Sheila’s name is Ship — no, it begins like Ship but it isn’t a ship. Shipton. That is the name she makes in signs to me. Shipton. It may not be quite correct because the signs are difficult. But the special name they called her seemed to begin with the sign C.”

EBG. “And was Sheila married?”

“She says Sheila was married, that she is a live wire and has a quick brain and is very attractive. Her husband, I think, is in the Army. Marguerite points to a uniform when she speaks of the husband who has some appointment.”

EBG. “Astor, do you know any kinsfolk of Sheila’s who have sent messages through you and the medium here, to Donald X.?” (Some names were here given which were later verified by Mr. Donald X as relevant.)

(EBG. “I wonder if she recollects what illness overtook her?”

“She does not know to which illness you refer. She was very ill at one time from anaemia, debility, but I can’t hold her longer. ...”

EBG. “Tell her I will ask for her again sometime Astor. Your child is tired. . . . Goodbye.”

(Note made after the sitting.)

Miss Cummins is not as strong as she used to be before the war and so the power does not, at present, last so long as formerly. After the sitting I asked Miss Cummins if she knew who had been writing?

She replied, giving the name of my relative, and then said she “saw a woman with grey, silvery hair - pale, at least her face seemed pale - and she looked puzzled or rather, she got the impression that she was puzzled, as though she didn’t quite know what to make of me,” – “a little suspicious, that’s all I got.”

Later she added “Didn’t we have Marguerite back? (yes) that must have been she then.”

Copy of Letter from Donald X, dated May 25 and received by Miss Gibbes June 1st 1945:

“Dear Miss Gibbes,

I was very much interested in your letter dated May 16th with enclosures. It only arrived two days ago. The last script is most extraordinary and convincing. I can tell you now that everything about Sheila is correct. (Mr. X then verified the names above mentioned.) The success in getting the name Shipton through makes me suspect the possibility that M. F. didn’t want to have her “pet name” come out. Possibly she tried to write “cheap” in protest though I see no reason for it.

Perhaps later she will give it so that I won’t tell you now. The bit about Walter R. staggered me. See if you can get the nick name by which he was generally known to his intimates. The reference is most evidential. I won’t give you the details yet but this was significant. Give our best to G. [Miss Cummins]. I can quite understand that she is worn out. Her devotion to her mother during her long and trying illness was extraordinary and the shock of the ending. If you get Marguerite again thank her for me and tell her I appreciate very much her news of James and that when there is a favorable opportunity I shall pass it on to those to whom it means a great deal. This has developed into a most interesting and evidential research.

Please keep me in touch with it and I will pass on any useful suggestions that occur to me.

Yours sincerely, Donald X.”

Copy of letter sent to Mr. X by E. B. G.:

“25, Jubilee Place, Chelsea, S.W. 3. May 21st, 1945.

Dear Mr. X,

We had a short sitting today for a relative. Astor at once wrote as follows:

“Astor is here. I have a word to say about a previous writing. There was little power near the end of it so I was not able to obtain all the answers clearly. You asked me to find out the Christian name the family knew and used for Miss Foote. I think that was the request. I got the name Alice from her in signs. So I presume that was the name required, Alice Foote. She made the signs that shaped this name I have written.”

(EBG. Thank you. I think the request was for the name by which she was known in James’s family). The name of my relative was then announced. And the writing proceeded on other lines. I hope the above has some meaning to you. Recently we had another communication of a very evidential nature concerning a woman of the name, Alice.

I hope there is no confusion. As it happens, I have not shown G. the last script. I told her bits of it but I carefully concealed the fact that there was any suggestion of a request for a name. Nor did I tell her that I had sent you the page on which the names were written. She is quite unaware that she had written any.

With kind regards.

Yours sincerely, E.B.G.”

Copy of letter from Mr. X received by EBG.

Dated May 30th 1945:

“Dear Miss Gibbes,

Thanks for your letter of May 21st. I do not know whether “Alice” was one of the names of Marguerite Foote or not. Probably it was not but I will enquire. Alice is not the name I was hoping to get. How would it be, when opportunity presents itself, to ask whether Marguerite Foote wished not to tell the name James called her by and which James’s family used in speaking to and of her.

G.C. and Astor are so marvelous in giving names that I suspect that there is a holding back on M.F.’s part. . .

I am waiting with interest to see what you get on the subject of Walter R. This is one of the most extraordinary bits of evidence that I have ever come across. With all best wishes.

Yours sincerely,

Donald X.”

Notes of Sitting, Wed. eve: June 6th 1945, at 25 Jubilee Place, S.W. 3. 6.17 p.m.

(GC and EBG)

Having received Mr. X's letter in which he said the name Alice was in-correct so far as he knew, anyhow it was not what he wanted, and as G. is returning to Ireland soon, I thought it advisable to endeavor to get replies to his letters as soon as possible.

"Astor is here. You wish to talk to Hilda or to others."

E.B.G. "Who is there besides Hilda?"

"There is your brother Frank and I think there is a woman in a mist and also I see two others not quite clear to me yet."

E.B.G. "Will you ask the woman in the mist to come and talk to me first?"

"This case was printed in Journal May 1945

"The woman is the one who was here previously. She won't write herself but I can report what she says. She is still a little distrustful of you and afraid to give away any really personal information. She says that, in connection with James, they always had to be very careful in their statements, as there was the danger of the Press getting hold of it."

E.B.G. "Tell her she need not fear us in that respect."

"She says you can't trust anyone when it comes to careless talk."

E.B.G. "There I agree. Will you say that Mr X thanks Miss Foote for the message re James and when the opportunity occurs will pass it on to those to whom it means a great deal."

"She is very pleased indeed. . ."

E.B.G. "Can Marguerite say anything more about Walter R.? He has a nick-name by which he was known to his intimates."

"Wait. . . She only calls him Wat. I don't know if she means that as a nick-name. She says, "Wat is right here and darned glad we are all together - the old trio." I don't know what she means by the trio."

E.B.G. "Can she explain the trio?"

"'We are going to get together' she says, 'and start working after James has had his rest in the holiday camp.'"

E.B.G. "I conclude that Walter R. was associated with James in his job."

"'My dear Robson', James used to say." That is M.F.'s answer.

E.B.G. "Astor, you gave the name Alice as connected with M.F. could she explain why she gave this name?"

"She seems to think she told you that it was a name associated with herself."

E.B.G. "It was not what Mr. X expected to be given."

"She says, 'The name is my property - at least - it was my first name so why should you object to my using it?'"

E.B.G. "Well, she is cautious and we are also. Mr. X wants to be sure of her, so we are all cautious!"

"She says she may have given away too much to you two. She is a little upset now because I have told you what she said about. . .

E.B.G. "Please tell her we won't give anything away. She hasn't given, I think, the name which James's family used when speaking of her."

"I have said that to her but she won't give it, in fact, she won't tell me anything more now."

E.B.G. "Well, tell her that I only asked her because Mr. X wanted to know and your child here is going over to Ireland very soon."

"She won't, I think, trust you with any further information. I led her on to talk and now she is distressed at realizing some of her remarks are written down and are in the hands of two strangers."

E.B.G. "Tell her it is all right. We often have confidential things written down and she need not be upset."

"Yes, I shall tell her, it is only a passing mood with her. I think the man who was with her told her that she was indiscreet in communicating with strangers on earth through an interpreter. It is the fault of this man. She was quite ready to talk until he spoke to her about you. He was also connected with James - worked for him

E.B.G. "Tell her to trust us, and now what about the other two you said were near?"

"Yes, this person has given her name as Pussy. She has a connection with M.F. They spoke to each other. Pussy has the symbol of fire near her now I see. I think she died through a fire. Wait I will ask her more. She would like Millie to know that she is more alive than she ever was on earth. Pussy has been over here a number of years it seems. She has gone now. She talked so quickly I don't know if I gave her message correctly. I think I picked it up, at any rate, something she wanted to be sent. . ."

Copy of letter sent by E.B.G. to Mr. X.:

"25, Jubilee Place, S.W. 3. June 6th 1945

Dear Mr. X,

Many thanks for yours of May 25th and 30th returning page of names belonging to the script. You say the name Shipton is correct. But to whom does it belong.' I am very interested in what you say about Walter R. In view of the fact that G. returns to Ireland in a few days, I decided that I would try to get in touch with M. Foote again

so as to obtain if possible answers to your questions and thus eliminate the influence of the sitter's mind. For you will be seeing G. in Dublin shortly. Herewith is the result. From it, do I gather that Walter R.'s name is Robson or is that the nick-name? And that he was also at one time a secretary or confidential friend? You will see that M. Foote says Alice was her first name. Can you verify this - also if she died in Kensington, N.Z., — if there is such a place? I shall be glad to hear if the name Pussy conveys anything to your wife? Geraldine told me her name was Millie in course of conversation a short time ago. Would you also let me know if the reference to fire is correct? Also, if she has been over a number of years and also if she talked very quickly when on earth? This is a small point but may have been a characteristic of the alleged communicator. In yours of May 25th you say "Everything about Sheila is correct." Am I to take it she is a "live wire" and has a quick brain and that her husband is in the Army and has some appointment? I asked G. later on, as she said she thought M. F. had been speaking, if she had ever had a Walter R. writing through her to you? She replied in the negative so far as she could recollect. She was very anxious to hear if anything of interest had been communicated at enclosed sitting. But beyond saying that it was very interesting I thought, I told her nothing as I didn't want to spoil anything else that might come through her to you by her previous knowledge of what had been said, etc. I shall be very intrigued to hear what you think of the enclosed. But it is unlikely that we have any more sittings before she goes, as she seems very tired and her "power" does not, alas, last as long as it used. I have assured her that you are delighted with the results of this experiment and that encouraged her. Please forgive typing errors, etc.

With kind regards.

Yours sincerely,

E.B.G."

Copy of letter from Mr. X dated Sunday, June 17th 1945:

"Dear Miss Gibbes,

I have been long delayed in answering your last very interesting letter with script enclosed.

This is your letter of June 6th. Shipton is Sheila's married name. She is James's daughter. Walter R. is Walter Robson. For many years he was James's close friend. He died on board ship when on a voyage with James. James always called him by a nickname as did all his circle. This I will not tell you yet. The trio might well mean Robson, James and Miss Foote. They worked very closely for years. To me this is very evidential. I shall find out whether Marguerite Foote's first name was Alice. I did not know it. "Pussy" is my wife's sister, that is correct. My wife is Millie. She, Pussy, was burned to death in her house. There are some details that might come through which would be evidential so I shall not say more at present except that she

was a very vivacious personality. . . We expect to see G.C. on the 20th and if she is up to it, I would like to have a short sitting, not over 15 minutes, as she should not get tired. But if this comes off, it might be well not to ask any questions regarding the things that have been coming to you. If anything comes, well and good. But since I know the answers to several questions, I think it is best to wait until you might take it up again. We have got hold of something very good and should be patient. Don't you think so."

Yours sincerely,

Donald X."

From enquiries made by Mr. X it was ascertained (1) that Marguerite Foote's middle name began with A, but it was not ascertained that it was Alice; (2) that she was treated at a hospital known as Kensington Hospital, but died not at Kensington, N.Z., but in a neighboring district; (3) that James and Robson both knew they were ill when on the voyage mentioned, but that nothing could be ascertained about any bet between them.

Further investigations in this case were ended after June 20th, 1945, owing to the severe operation and subsequent long convalescence of Miss Cummins.

Several points of interest would seem to emerge from a study of this case. One of the most important is that facts have been given in the automatic script which were not only unknown to Miss Cummins and myself, but also unknown to Mr. X.

The latter is the only individual who could reasonably be regarded as being in possible telepathic communication with the automatist while writing these facts. But this hypothesis does not cover the statement apparently indicating James's death, over three weeks before it occurred. So far as we know, we had never heard of Walter Robson. It is of interest to note that the characters of both Marguerite Foote and Sheila Shipton are accurately described. As these two women were entire strangers to us, it appears that these descriptions could only have been given by someone who knew them both. – "Astor" describing Marguerite and the latter describing Sheila. It is of interest to note that Astor appears to have acted as reporter of Marguerite's remarks at these sittings. If this is accepted as the manner in which the communication was conducted, it may explain the discrepancy between fact and statement when Marguerite is alleged to have said she died at Kensington, whereas she was in hospital in Kensington and died at another place not far off.

Perhaps readers will agree that this case is the more interesting because of the illustration in this case, of a very human failing - inaccurate reporting. When analyzing evidence one should always compare it with the behavior of human beings. So often the skeptical investigator appears to assume that the hypothetical communicator must be infallible. If he is fallible, that is to say, makes inaccurate statements, then the communicator is considered by sceptics to be an invention of

the medium's subconscious mind. If he is infallible and makes accurate statements, it is often assumed that the subconscious mind of the medium is wholly responsible for the alleged communication. Cryptaesthesia or invention accounts for all the phenomena, the communicator is never there!

E. B. Gibbes

EPILOGUE

THE PURPOSE BEHIND AN EARTHLY LIFE

Early in 1947 Hilda wrote as follows:

I have so much to tell. Harold has become my permanent companion - or, as he calls himself, my permanent pest, at Wickenden. You would be surprised at how much I adore my pest. You remember how I abominated insect pests in my earthly garden. Strangely enough, this human pest completes my happiness.

I did not like to speak of it before, I thought you might not understand. But Harold has been with me some time. He is not a mere lodger and I the landlady exacting a weekly rent for my services and keeping him in order. He is an adorable resident and just like what he was in the old days - gay, teasing, and only very rarely moody. He requires a great deal of attention, of course, for I am his assistant and we work together and have the greatest fun in our disagreements. Bea, dear, I am so wonderfully happy now. Every morning, after my time of stillness and rest, I thank God for the miracle of being alive - well, in my new and, to you, insubstantial body, and looking forward with joy to the lovely hours of creative work before me with Harold in the garden. You may say that such a life is incredible, or perhaps you will say it is very selfish of Harold and me devoting our whole life to making a beautiful garden - creating out of earthly dreams a perfect work of art. But all this happy labour has a purpose. Apart from our flowers giving pleasure to others, we are in this work like students, training for a distant and higher purpose. May I tell you what that purpose is?

Harold and I are making beautiful plants, shrubs, trees in this world after death so that sometime we shall be fit to become the Guardian Spirits of plants or shrubs or trees that grow on earth. You may not know that, as we travellers from earth advance into this Greater Life, we become more and more a part of the Divine Creative Spirit. It is like a vast sea, and we are as drops of water in that sea. This Divine Creative Spirit is behind the birth and growth of everything on earth. The smallest little clover - the tiniest plant is dependent for its breath of life on this Divine Imagination.

When Harold and I are much wiser and more developed we shall breathe the breath of life into earthly plants, and, working with many other souls, we shall give to your world the beauties that adorn each season. You may perhaps say I am blasphemous in suggesting that Harold and I may sometime do such work which belongs to God alone. But in each human soul there is the little flame like a candle flame, and this

flame is a thought of God. Sometimes, during the earthly pilgrimage, a man or woman is so wicked, cruel, that flame is blown out or damped out. But all those who preserve that light, however dimly, while they make their pilgrimage in Zero World, will go on here with an ever brightening flame and work in some capacity to create, maintain and conserve the vast universe.

But some of the pilgrims from the earth may have to be born again on earth in order that the little flame be vitalised and burn in greater purity, so that the soul is fit eventually for that second Creative World I have described. It might be called the "Great Laboratory" - for I suppose I ought to use scientific terms. Anyhow, I shall, in the distant future, work in that Laboratory of Nature, distilling and helping to produce that fine essence I call the "breath of life", which makes, for instance, the little primrose spring from its root in Sussex woods first, stretching out tiny leaves, then at last making yellow carpets with the flowers.

But before I am qualified to be a worker in the Army of God, Harold and I are to spend one more life on earth. For in it, as artist and sculptor, we shall learn all from that aspect we require to know for our task as Guardian Spirits of the Flowers. And while I am writing of this return to earth, I should like to say that people do not have great numbers of lives on earth. So far as I know they go back a few times if it is necessary for the growth of their souls.

I have had several lives on earth and shall go back to it only once more. My spirit, or higher nature, chose that I should have several journeys on earth - each life is a journey - because I had to learn more than many require to learn, in order to become a part of the Divine Creative Spirit - a guardian of the Life of the World's Gardens.

I would like to tell you that Arthur and my darling Ni have gone on the "grand tour", as Ni calls it. In company with Frank and some other young men they are exploring this vast world of the so-called dead. The earth, with its millions and millions of people is, numerically speaking, a trifle compared with size and numbers here.

Hilda's above communication would seem to disclose the purpose which lay behind her love for flowers, both on earth and in the Hereafter. The break with Nigel is made. As Muriel wrote on January 4th, 1943, he now "begins to make his own way in this life".

Hilda continued with the following words:

And now my school-master has asked me to write at his dictation. Please listen.

Hilda has told you about herself and her family. It is one record, one history. To-day I wish to write of those I call the "static souls". At least, they are in my view stationary, though in their own view they lead active, busy lives.

Many millions of people who pass the "unseen bourne from which no traveller returns" literally fulfil that statement made by Shakespeare in an inspired moment.

For they go on and on, repeating the familiar conditions of the earthly life in World Number One. They are men and women who are creatures of habit. They do not seek the Divine Adventure. They are not sufficiently developed to break from routine. They are content with it. The crucial experience of the Memory-gallery fails to give them the spiritual passion for progress on new and strange planes of being. As a rule such people do not seek to reincarnate on earth - at least, so far as my vision goes, they do not travel nor do they go back in order to rise higher. So you will realise there are the travellers and the home-bound, village or town-bound souls in Eternity. In other words, they remain within themselves, within their habit of life.

Hilda and Harold are travellers. They are even prepared to face the sufferings of one last earth-life in order that they may rise to higher worlds.

Reincarnation, therefore, is true for some and not for others. But bear in mind my vision does not embrace Infinity. I can only assure you that all, save a few souls, are eventually united with God. There is neither speech nor language which can describe that unity when the dross has been cast away - that miracle of unity with God, who has many names but is the Divine Spirit.

I have given you my tutor's message. But I have only written an introduction to this world. Who will believe it? Words that are breathed in the soul as by the wind, and, like that wind, are born in Mystery.

HILDA.

THE END

APPENDIX

A SITTING WITH MRS. DOWDEN

This record of a sitting with Mrs. Dowden on June 10th, 1942, is remarkable in that it illustrates and corroborates through her Hilda's anxiety concerning Nigel, and the fact that she had not yet been told of his death.

In reading the following it will be remembered that neither Mrs. Dowden nor I had any idea that Miss Cummins was, on or about this date, also sitting for automatic writing in Ireland.

Saturday, June 10th, 1942, at 25, Jubilee Place, 2.40 p.m.:

(Mrs. Dowden wrote on a stool beside my bed, as in the sittings with Geraldine Cummins.)

Johannes: There are three people here to-day. I tell you so because you may wish to have others. The three who came here are Hilda, Ethel and your brother Frank.

Here Mrs. Dowden looked up and said, "Have you a brother called Frank? I had no idea." After some conversation with Frank, I asked him to tell me about Hilda. He replied:

Hilda is with her family, naturally enough, poor child. And Arthur, thoroughly discontented, complains of not having her with him.

After further conversation I asked him to let Hilda speak.

Hilda: It was hard to give up a bit of time to Frank, but he really wanted to speak to you. I am happier. As you know, I have told you so, and just a little uneasy about the boys, that's all. I want you to tell me all you know about Nigel, all.

E.B.G.: Well, I wondered if you could tell me anything.

Hilda: I can tell you my side of it. I am uneasy, as I said, and no wonder. So far safe, but for how long?

E.B.G.: Why are you so anxious?

Here Mrs. Dowden enquired if he was out of the war. I nodded my head, and she said, "How dreadful."

Hilda: I wonder whether the war will continue longer than we expected here, and of course there is danger every week. I am just in a state; quite unreasonable, probably.

E.B.G.: Well, of course things have been pretty serious, but how lovely it would be if he came over to you. You wouldn't have that anxiety then.

Hilda: I know that, and can't help it. Things aren't too good for him, you know.

At a loss to know how to tell her, I repeated more or less what I had already said.

Hilda: Things are very serious. If he came here I should love to have him. That would be very selfish, for now I am here I realise what a drawback it is to pass over here too soon.

E.B.G.: Is Muriel there? Could I speak a few words to her?

Hilda: Yes, she is, of course. I am with her almost always.

Muriel: What is it? I am beside Hilda.

E.B.G.: If you are there, Muriel, don't you know what has happened?

Muriel: Yes, I do. You can see how Hilda is, can't you?

E.B.G.: Wouldn't it be better to tell her, though of course you know the conditions more than I do.

Muriel: No, not yet, we mustn't yet. We have been keeping it carefully from her. Leave it as it is. She is not in a state to know yet. You saw how very much upset she was at first. Well, that is slowly passing off like an illness, and now we dare not upset her again.

I looked at Mrs. Dowden, who immediately said: "Why not tell her? It is much better to do so." Recalling Hilda's remarks in Geraldine's scripts about the family not understanding her, keeping her in ignorance and thereby increasing her anxiety, I remarked to Muriel that I thought it would be better to tell her.

Muriel: If she is to be told, perhaps it's best that you should tell her. We have been very puzzled as to what it's best to do. (See Ruth's letter, June 16th, 1942.)

E.B.G.: Well, then, let her come.

Hilda: I'm here again. I want to explain why I have been so uneasy about Nigel. I can't find him. I have tried so hard.

E.B.G.: Have you asked Muriel to try and find him for you, or to take you to him?

Hilda: Take me? No, I haven't, but I'm afraid. I'm really frightened. I think either he is very badly wounded and I can't see him, or he has come over here.

E.B.G.: Well, you know how happy you would be to have him, and I rather think he has come over to you, but it's the best thing now if he has come.

Hilda: Is he wounded, or has he come?

E.B.G.: I think he has come to you. He is probably in one of your hospitals. It is natural that he would wake up finding himself being nursed and not in a strange place. Muriel and Ruth would help you find him.

Hilda: Well, that's better, yes, it's better. I'm thankful he isn't wounded.

E.B.G.: No, he's quite all right now. You'll be so happy together.

Hilda: I feel I can't talk about it. He isn't with Arthur, and he isn't with me.

E.B.G.: No, he has probably been taken to some safe place and is sleeping quietly. He may yet be unconscious and not know he's come over, but you will soon find him.

Hilda: He must be in a hospital, but I want to be with him. I must wait a minute and think. (Slight pause.) I'll talk now. I'm glad you told me. But why didn't Muriel tell me?

E.B.G.: I suppose she was afraid of upsetting you.

Hilda: It was worse. When I came to-day I was in a state of great uneasiness. I said, "Tell me about him," and you didn't seem to be able to tell me anything. Now I know, and I'm going to see him, wherever he may be. I shall have him, at any rate, and perhaps in the end it may be better. I was never sure what might be in store for him.

E.B.G.: Yes, I know. Well, you may find him in some drowsy state somewhere, so go to him. You know how much he loves you.

Hilda: I know he loves me. I can make up to him, I think. I worshipped him. What I'm thinking of is that first meeting. When will he be well enough to know?

E.B.G.: I can't tell you, but I'm sure very soon now. Muriel will know, and you will be very happy to have him with you.

Hilda: Yes, I'll have him. He will be just what he was when he was a baby.

E.B.G.: Ask Frank to help you find him; I know he'll do all he can.

Hilda: I'll ask Frank. But why didn't he tell me? He is kind. I feel it's wonderful, and it's a great shock too. Does Arthur know?

E.B.G.: I don't know.

Hilda: They have told him, I dare say. Nigel wasn't the same to him as to me.

E.B.G.: Anyhow, he might have been badly wounded and a cripple, and now you need not worry over him.

Hilda: Well, I'll be happier, and I hope I will make up for what he left behind. I'll go and find him and have him near me. I am sure he doesn't know yet. My dear, I am so glad you've told me. I must find out why Muriel didn't. I can't understand that. I feel queer, half glad and half sorry. I knew something had happened. I think I'll go now, and we might look at once, don't you think so? It's strange to think how much I've thought of him and how much I missed him here, and now we are to be together. Now I'll go, and I can't thank you, I never could thank you, Bea.

During a pause Mrs. Dowden made a few remarks and said: "Let's see if there's anyone else there." Her hand then wrote "Arthur."

Arthur: I came to-day to tell you I know all about Nigel. They didn't tell Hilda, but I think he will be with her soon. He was killed quickly and now is still confused, doesn't know what has happened.

Here Mrs. Dowden made some comments, and I asked Johannes to let Harold speak a moment. After a slight pause Harold wrote his name. I asked why he didn't tell Hilda about Nigel, as she was so troubled about him.

Harold: I knew you would say "Why didn't we tell Hilda?" We were right, I think, from our point of view. Now she knows, and I will take her to Nigel. He won't know her, I think.

E.B.G.: Have you seen him?

Harold: Oh yes, I have. He had a pretty bad six hours and then came here, confused, but he will be well soon, I think. . . . I'll take her, and I'll go now. Good-bye.

It will be observed that, writing through Geraldine alone in Ireland on June 17th, 1942, Hilda had said that she "could not find Nigel now", that she had "tried and tried", that she "had a feeling that he wanted her badly, and that she couldn't get to him", etc. I did not receive that script from Geraldine Cummins until June 25th. Mrs. Dowden, therefore, could not have obtained telepathically from me the fact that Hilda had failed to find Nigel and other details corroborated at above sitting. (See scripts of June 17th, 20th, 22nd, etc., 1942.)