



AFTER-DEATH COMMUNICATIONS

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to report, and again when an old lady was writing, of whom he remarked: "The old lady flagged...she goes...was she a belle in her youth? She is strong and fine. My comment. Hewett."

In both cases the comments were very much to the point, and correct.

Eight other "guides" have figured from time to time in the script, only two of them being women; each personality seemed quite distinct, and all showed great insight into the minds of those to whom they were attached as guides, summing up their characteristics, and giving suitable advice in each case.

No evidential value can, however, be attached to the above, as in each case the individuals were known to me.

One of the guides described himself as having been an American engineer; another said that he was a private, killed in the Afghan War. A third, named Scott, said that he was a clergyman, and his remarks were characterised throughout by a breezy humour and optimism.

As in the case of my own guide, Hewett, the others were helpful at first in bringing those to whom they were attached as helpers into touch with me, but when direct touch was established, they seemed to stand aside, unless specially appealed to for help. One guide asserted that she was only intermittently attached to her earth-protégée, and declared that the help given was mutual. The idea of ministrations by guardian spirits to those on earth is a very familiar one, but the possibility of the help being reciprocal is at least unusual and suggestive.

Note.—All this matter concerning Guides is simply gathered from the script.

I have no means of knowing whether they are real entities, or merely creations of the subconscious mind.

CHAPTER 9. SUPER-NORMAL SENSE-IMPRESSIONS, ETC.

IT may have been observed that in some of the accounts given, sense-impressions experienced by me have played some part in intensifying the feeling of reality conveyed to my mind.

It would appear that anyone possessed of mediumistic powers (usually described as a sensitive) becomes aware from time to time of the operating of an expanded consciousness; clairvoyance and clairaudience fall naturally into this category, and it seems probable that there are other varieties of manifestation.

My own experience includes many of these, and I record them simply as they came to me, without any attempt at classification or explanation. I cannot attempt either, as my experience has been too limited; no doubt this could be undertaken by other sensitives, who possess a longer record of such impressions from which to make deductions.

I have, from time to time throughout my life, been conscious of supernormal impressions, if I may roughly classify the following as such. My first memory of this kind is of a dream when I was five years old; I was seriously ill at the time, and it seemed to me that I had left my body, and was moving through space, guided by someone, who took me to heaven, into the Presence of Christ.

He was seated on a throne, around which many people were standing. I was not immediately presented to Him, but when my turn came I was told to go forward, and Christ placed a little crown on my head, very gently and kindly. On my way back, I passed hell, which looked like a hole in the ground, from which clouds of smoke came up; I saw many people going down there, and was greatly distressed about this when I awoke. The strongest impression which remained with me was that of the personality of Christ, and I lay still for a long time, lest the feeling should leave me.

I have remembered this dream clearly all my life, and the room in which it took place.

The next experience 'that I can remember came to me when I was helping to train students for teaching at a certain College; 'the work was very engrossing, and I fully expected that this would be my occupation for the future.

On two occasions, however, I heard a voice clairaudiently which told me that I should not be at the College long, and that my life-work did not lie there. As a matter of fact, I was at the College for a year.

In the early morning of New Year's Day (I think in 1910) I saw at about 7 a.m. a large wooden cross in my room. It appeared as if made of dark oak, and was very large, reaching almost to the ceiling; it remained stationary for a few seconds, and then vanished. An impression of coming difficulties was left strongly in my mind, and one of the most formidable faced me about a fortnight later, and others throughout that year.

In December, 1916, I woke one night to see a bright figure bending over me, but the face was not discernible; another night I woke suddenly, and found myself enveloped in a flood of light. I have continually seen rays of light apparently issuing from my own head, and assume that this must be the "aura" often described by clairvoyants.

In February of the same year, on the 11th and 15th, I saw on each occasion a shadowy white figure, unrecognisable but clear.

On July 1st and 12th, 1917, I had two psychic experiences, which may or may not have been connected; I have never been able to find out if they had any meaning.

On the 1st, I woke at 2 a.m., and saw a man with a white drawn face, and eyes dilated and wild. He conveyed the impression to me of saying "I will do it" (meaning suicide). When he had vanished, I was left with a great feeling of fear.

On the 12th, at 3:30 a.m., I was awakened by the report, heard clairaudiently, of a pistol shot, and caught a glimpse of someone holding a pistol to the

back of his head. I had an oppressive feeling of being in close proximity to this person at the moment.

Twice I have experienced strongly, and often slightly, the feeling of being drawn out of my body to watch some passing event; this usually occurs just before sleep.

On the first occasion the darkness of my room appeared to focus, into a ball of blackness, which suddenly opened, and disclosed a wide, straight road, along which a motor-car was rushing at great speed. I seemed to follow this car, keeping close behind it, and had the impression afterwards that I had saved it from an accident, or that I myself had had a narrow escape.

I was suddenly back on my bed, gasping for breath, my heart beating very quickly, fully awake.

On the second occasion, at 2:15 p.m., I was resting on my bed, when I found myself following a motor-ambulance in the same way; we rushed past two cars coming towards us; the road we were on. was wide, and very dusty, raised above the surrounding fields. The day was bright, and the contrasting darkness of two tunnels under which we passed was very marked.

On November 21st, 1917, and April 12th, 1918, I saw two people clairvoyantly, neither of whom had been known to me in earth-life; I identified them by describing them afterwards.

One was an elderly lady, whose daughter was staying with me at the time; the other was the sister of a friend with whom I was staying.

Referring to the latter, the son of the lady who had died was expected home on leave from the East that day, and the appearance of his mother seemed to be in some way connected with his expected arrival.

In January, 1918, I saw some writing on the wall of my room; it consisted of two Christian names and a surname, all of which I recognised, as they were the names of an airman whom I knew to have been killed, though he was not personally known to me. I also had the impression that I was trying to write automatically. A few days later a friend, to whom I had not mentioned

this incident, chanced to. remark that on the 28th she had received a short message automatically written, from this airman.

On February 2nd, 1918, I had a curiously vivid dream, which at the time seemed to be more like a vision.

I was walking along a corridor in an old house, guided by an elderly lady, with very beautiful soft white hair. I noticed some fine stained glass windows on the right side of the corridor, and we stopped once while she remarked on these.

At the end of the corridor was a door on the left, and a maid passed us, and opened this door; I glanced in, and saw the maid proceeding to lay the fire. The room was dimly lighted, as the curtains, blue in colour, were not drawn back; the colouring of the room was indistinctly blue throughout. There was an old lady lying in bed, facing the window, and the one who was guiding me told me that this was her sister, who was ill.

I have a dim recollection' of such a house, but the clue is too slight to pursue.

I have three times seen (clairvoyantly) the friend who has assisted me with this book once when she was away on rather distressing business, once when I myself woke in the night with a feeling of distress, and the third time for no reason that we can remember.

During the Spring of 1918, a stranger engaged in war-work slept at our house for several months, and after she had left, I happened to sleep for one night in the room that she had occupied. I woke several times in the night, feeling very uneasy, and conscious of someone standing close to the bed, He leaned over me, and on. his face was a very fixed, searching expression, and hard lines round the mouth. I shrank from the feeling of distress that he brought with him each time that he came near me.

It occurred to me the second time that he was seeking someone, not myself, whom he expected to find there; I therefore mentally explained to him that Miss X— had left, and he disappeared. A few, days later, I met Miss X—, and she told me that a brother of hers was just reported "Missing."

So far as I know, no news of him has been received.

On August 14th, 1918, at about 10 p.m., I had a strong presentiment that some tragedy had taken place, either that someone had died suddenly or been killed in the war; I mentioned this at the time to my friend. This ominous feeling remained with me for quite an hour, accompanied by great physical discomfort; my flesh seemed to "creep," and I shivered. I also became aware that someone was in my room, trying to attract my attention, but I could see nothing, and had no idea who it could be.

Two days later a telegram came to my friend, asking her to break the news of a sudden death to someone staying in her house.

Some years ago I attended the funeral of an old clergyman whom I had visited constantly during his last illness.

The service was taken by his eldest son, who was also a clergyman. There was a long pause for silent prayer before the coffin was removed from the Church, and glancing up during this silence, I saw that the officiating priest was standing before the altar, with his arms raised high above his head. He remained in this position for a curiously long time, and the congregation grew a little restless at the delay.

I do not know whether anyone else became aware, as I did, of the cause of this delay. I could see quite plainly the outstretched arms and hands of his father, reaching down from above, and grasping his own; I knew the hands too well to mistake them. The son did not change his position till the father's grasp was relaxed. There seemed to be a special significance about this act, as the son had found some difficulty, during his father's later years, in maintaining sympathetic touch with him.

The sense-impressions recorded above, taken as a whole, affect one's normal life very little; I noted them carefully at the time, and put them aside, in case of possible verification later.

CHAPTER 10. THE POTENTIAL VALUE OF COMMUNICATION

BEFORE closing this short record, it may be of use to refer briefly to the potential value of communication from "the other side" in general, and to touch on the opinions and criticisms expressed by those who have entered into this subject with us during the last two years, in many cases for the first time.

Owing to the careful system of introduction pursued throughout, I have been fortunate and privileged in coming into contact only with those who have approached the matter in a dignified and thoughtful spirit, the only spirit in which such investigation is, to my mind, justifiable.

In the case of public mediums, the protection of careful private introduction is often lacking, and they are at the mercy of an indiscriminate collection of sitters, who come with very mixed, and even unworthy, motives.

In the latter cases, the communications received must necessarily be on a low level, and detrimental to all concerned.

Many of the public mediums are high minded and honourable people, who, owing to their sensitive nature, undergo a considerable amount of real suffering from unworthy influences such as these. If the extreme sensitiveness of this heightened consciousness were more generally recognised, sitters would, no doubt, hesitate to make use in the manner just indicated, of the rare powers placed at their disposal.

On the other hand, it is a real refreshment and inspiration to high-minded mediums when they are brought into touch with sitters and communicators of a higher type, and the communications received under such conditions are often valuable, and a worthy outcome of the delicate vital force expended.

There has often been a certain hesitation on the sitter's part with regard to entering into communication with the departed, and this is probably due to

a natural and healthy sense of self-protection, which halts before the exploration of unknown ground, where even experts tread cautiously, and confess to only fragmentary knowledge. A very common attitude on the part of survivors seems to be expressed in the following words: "Can we not leave them in God's hands? Why attempt to call them back?"

It may be well to point out that they cannot be "called back" against their will; they come at their own wish if at all.

Perhaps the expression "call them back" is in itself an unfortunate one, as it suggests a sharp division between the spirit-world and our own, which is out of accord with much of the scientific thought of the day.

Recent telepathic experiments have shown that thought-transference is unhampered by the limitations of space, and for all we know, the worlds of spirit and matter may interpenetrate, as matter is interpenetrated by the ether of space.

What limits can be set to the attraction-power of thought, especially when the thought is permeated by love? If it is true that "neither life nor death can separate from the love of God," may this not also be true of human love?

Love demands expression by intercourse of some kind, and intercourse with the spirit-world in the past has been limited to communion with God by means of prayer, and in the case of the Roman Church, the invocation of saints. It is at least worth considering whether communication with our own departed friends may not be a perfectly natural and legitimate extension of the above.

An important fact noticed by us is, that those on "the other side" often seem anxious to take any opportunity open to them of re-establishing the intercourse interrupted by death, and some of their attempts to do this have an element of pathos in them, as they try one channel after another in the hope of success.

If, as is so often the case, the would-be communicator is a man of mature judgment, well-tempered mind, and unselfish character, such action on his part should be respected by his friends on earth, even though this involve some departure from their habitual ways of thought.

It may be supposed that those in the next stage of existence are better judges on this question, so far as they themselves are concerned, than their friends on earth, who have had no experience of the change wrought by death.

The decision that inevitably rests with the survivors is, what attitude they should wisely adopt towards such communication if it comes, and whether they themselves are in such a condition of mind and body as to render such communication beneficial to all concerned.

We have had many personal testimonies as to the beneficial and uplifting effect of communication, but these letters are naturally of a private character. No case of detrimental effect has so far come into my personal experience.

That such communication, if entered upon at all, should be moderate and restrained, is as necessary as in the case of all friendships undue absorption of, one personality in another would be as limiting and inadvisable in the spirit-sphere as in any other.

It is often stated that messages received in this manner are concerned mainly with trivialities, or else are of so abstruse a nature that no evidential value can be attached to them. This accusation is one which might equally well be brought against our communications with each other in earth-life, and it is not surprising to find the same mental conditions persisting after death.

For proof of identity it will readily be granted that trivialities are invaluable; do we not single out our friends here from many others, by small peculiarities of dress or manner?

The difficulty on the part of communicators must be very great, as either type of communication is liable to be classified as unsatisfactory by the recipients.

As a matter of fact, the messages that I have received have been of a very varied character, and would scarcely fall into either of the above categories.

Some communicators tried to convey definite advice, some desired to give help of various kinds to their relations, some gave news of "Missing" persons (correct in the majority of cases), some expressed a wish to heal a misunderstanding, whilst others impressed upon their friends the fact of their continued and intensified love and interest, and spoke of the mutual efforts needed to link their world with ours.

The messages have sometimes indicated that help needs to be received on the other side, as well as given; a few extracts follow which make this clear: "Do not grieve only...grief is so short-sighted, I mean, it blocks the outlets, dear.... I am close at hand, you must feel it surely? I cannot return, no.... You face that one chasm, and then turn your back on it. I return in spirit, and we must learn to meet in this realm. It is a tremendous step, and uplifting to us both...a stepping-stone upwards...you will see when grief is tamed...tamed, yes...it is a force which ravages."

A curious appeal, made directly to ourselves, came one day from a stranger killed in the war, who gave the name of Sogno. He wrote with much agitation:

"Sogno is getting no help at all, no help, I say...cruel war.... God is indeed cruel to men. I am bitter and so sad....

"Miss, I am appealing to your charity. I was called to fight against my will and better judgment. I am sad and alone here. We are not ready for this sudden change, how can we be? Help me, to you I appeal. You are reposeful, I felt it, and came like a hunted thing I was and am, but I want to understand. I cannot follow yet, I am confused.... You are at rest, I see and feel. I remain near at present, may I? I am no one you need fear at all. I drink repose.... I feel it, so it must be at hand. I get so perplexed, see glimpses at times only. I am helped.

"Ah, the sign of death...how we saw it on all hands.... Your charity I appreciate.... I go now.... Ah...ah...you women are lucky to be where you are...ah...ah...so late and dark...so wet.... Sogno. Thank you."

The case of "Sogno" is one of acute appeal for help. I am told that special private circles exist for the help of such cases, and that they are still carrying

on the steady work begun in the stress of the war-need. Testimony from those helped in these circles tends to show that in some cases, especially where the grip of physical conditions has been strong and painful up to the moment of death, the spirit finds himself best able to receive help from those still on earth, in order to prepare him for the further help that awaits him beyond.

The close of earth-life has come to these men in an unnatural catastrophic fashion, for which our world in general is responsible. They have missed the maturing influences of normal life at its later stages, and the responsibility of compensating partly for this loss rests with parents and friends here, as well. as with those who are helping them directly in the spirit-world. The thought of help by prayer is accepted by many, but the possibilities, of direct thought-help are as yet very inadequately used or understood.

No one is without experience of such help in his earth-life, and the appeal made by death is surely that we should transmute the power so commonly expended in hopeless grief into a fruitful, developing influence of mind upon mind.

The growing belief in the continuity of life, and the fast-vanishing fear of death, are two of the most marked effects of the new thought which has grown up around this subject.

Another effect is the development of a new receptive attitude on the part of those here, as the realisation slowly grows that the difficult process of rebuilding the social order need not be undertaken by ourselves alone, but maybe a joint effort, inspired by those whose wider outlook gives a larger scope to human enterprise, and a deeper insight into the ultimate possibilities of human life.
