

# PSYPIONEER

Founded by Leslie Price

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## SPR STILL PLAYS DOWN SPIRITUALIST LINKS

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The Society for Psychical Research has redesigned its web site, and no longer directly claims having been founded by a distinguished group of Cambridge scholars. [http://www.spr.ac.uk/expcms/index.php?section=29#mod\\_184](http://www.spr.ac.uk/expcms/index.php?section=29#mod_184)

However only a passing mention is made on the history page of Professor William Barrett who convened in London the first meeting which was held at a Spiritualist centre, and his university (Dublin) is not disclosed.

As noted in Psypioneer issue one, the SPR has been reluctant to give credit to Edmund Dawson Rogers, a leading figure on the newspaper LIGHT who conceived the idea of such a society. Unfortunately he did not belong to any university, and was also a Spiritualist and a practising journalist. The Spiritualist background of the early SPR was documented by Fraser Nicol in PSPR, vol. 55 "The Founders of the SPR" which SPR members can read in the society's online library.

**What is disturbing about the selectivity of such an approach to history is that if applied to the cases reported, it could affect their value as evidence. LP.**

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## MAURICE ELLIOTT AND MRS DUNCAN

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*Note by Psypioneer. It is not known what Maurice Elliott, later Hon. Secretary of CFPS, did during the Second World War, as there is a gap of over a decade in his entry in Crockford's Clerical Directory, until he reappears in the Chichester Diocese (see Psypioneer February 2005<sup>1</sup> "Maurice Elliott and the Search for Faith"...). Psychic News, not least its diary column, may hold the answer. But here is a brief drawing back of the curtain, which reveals that he was involved in the attempt to defend Mrs Duncan - and that he lived in London. It is taken from the verbatim book of the case. The point about dates in the evidence - or rather the attempt to present the evidence - is that the court had refused to accept any account of a séance after the date of arrest. What Elliott saw at his séance with Mrs Duncan may therefore never be known.*

(p.238: - THE TRIAL OF MRS. DUNCAN. Jarrolds Publishers (London) Ltd. 1945)

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REV. MAURICE ELLIOTT, *Sworn*

*Examined by MR. LOSEBY*

Q. Is your name Maurice Elliott? A. Yes.

Q. Are you a clergyman of the Church of England? A. I am.

Q. Where do you live? A. 97 Clifton Hill, St. John's Wood.

Q. Have you been a psychic investigator for many years? A. I have.

Q. Have you from time to time observed the phenomena called materialisation phenomena? A. Yes.

Q. What is the value of materialisation phenomena from a scientific, philosophic and religious point of view?

A. From a scientific point of view it opens an entirely new world to the physicist and, if only our scientists can discover and understand all about ectoplasm and about dematerialisation, it might affect all kinds of diseases such as cancer; they might be able to dematerialise the cancerous part. From a religious point of view, especially a Christian's, it turns a doubt and a hope into a certainty, and I think helps us to believe many of the stories referred to in the New Testament. For example, Jesus—

THE RECORDER: I think you have made that very clear. If I may say so, it could not have been put better.

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<sup>1</sup> [http://www.woodlandway.org/PDF/Leslie\\_Price\\_PP10.pdf](http://www.woodlandway.org/PDF/Leslie_Price_PP10.pdf)

MR. LOSEBY: If your Lordship thought it was a proper question, I was going to ask him - I thought I ought to get it on the record - if he was present for the purposes of an experiment on the 15th March, 1944.

THE RECORDER: There is not much point in asking the question; because, whatever the answer is, I have got to abide by my own ruling.

MR. LOSEBY: Yes. I thought your Lordship might allow me. The second question would be: Did you make certain observations?

THE RECORDER: Yes, I think so; but I have, of course, already ruled upon it.

MR. LOSEBY: Yes. I thought that I ought, if your Lordship would allow me, to put it on the record.

THE RECORDER: To frame a question - I think you have framed the two questions which you would like to ask, but I should have to say the answers would be inadmissible. I think that covers the situation.

MR. LOSEBY: The precise question would be: Were you there for the purpose of making certain observations; did you make certain observations?

THE RECORDER: Yes.

MR. LOSEBY: Therefore I need not formally put it.

THE RECORDER: No, you need not. I should think that quite protects your rights.

*Cross-examined by Mr. Elam*

Q. You are Church of England, are you? A. Yes.

Q. Would you agree that one of the great tenets of the Church of England religion is faith in the New Testament? A. Yes.

Q. Have you ever known a case where spiritualism has cured cancer or anything of that kind directly? A. No.

*Re-examined by MR. LOSEBY*

Q. Have you ever known a case in which entities described as being of another world have assisted in curing physical diseases? A. Many.

Q. It is a matter of high importance and well understood by psychic investigators? A. Yes.

## BARBANELL AND THE STARS

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A new book on the history of sun sign astrology recalls a famous legal case which it was hoped would ease the law on mediumship.

London historian Kim Farnell describes the 1930s boom in sun-sign astrology in “Flirting with the Zodiac; a true history of sun sign astrology “(Bournemouth, The Wessex Astrologer, 2007.) £14.50. ISBN 1902405234. She is best known for her biographies of Walter Old (“Sepharial”) and of Mabel Collins who transmitted “Light on the Path.”

In 1936 Sunday Express astrologer Richard Naylor was world famous. But technically his activities were illegal under the 1824 Vagrancy Act, just like mediumship. The authorities however concentrated their action against mediums. To dramatise the unfairness of this, Maurice Barbanell, editor of Psychic News, brought an action under the Vagrancy Act against Naylor and the Sunday Express editor. The magistrates rejected the charge, and this was confirmed on appeal.

*“Barbanell wrote in fury about the outcome of the case. His view that spiritualists would continue to be prosecuted under the Vagrancy Act was borne out by later events. He was left with the costs of £300 (equivalent to over £15,000 in 2002) and forced to ask for contributions from sympathetic spiritualists” (p.148).*

The book contains valuable material about many astrologers past and present, but its introduction of the Helen Duncan case goes sadly adrift.

*“Duncan had been tested by the Society for Psychical Research and they found it likely that she was a fraud” it is claimed.”* **But Mrs Duncan was never tested by the SPR. We would recommend anyone writing about Mrs Duncan to have a free factual health check with Psypioneer.**

Whilst on the subject, printed below is an interesting note on Mrs. Duncan taken from the Bulletin of the National Laboratory of Psychical research, ‘Regurgitation and the Duncan Mediumship’ by Harry Price 1931 page 11: -

## A NOTE RE MRS. DUNCAN

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MRS. VICTORIA HELEN DUNCAN (née Macfarlane) was born in Callander, Perthshire, Scotland, on November 25th, 1898, so that she is just (May, 1931) 32 ½ years old. The Duncans' home is in Dundee.

Mr. Duncan informed me that his wife has been mediumistic since she was a child. Tactile clairvoyance ('psychometry'), clairvoyance, clairaudience, telekinesis, and – later – materializations have, it is stated, been witnessed at different times.

Mrs. Duncan suffers from very bad health. She has been in hospitals several times and still receives medical attention. Although only 32 years of age, she weighs 17 stone 4 ounces – a weight that varies a little from one to one-and-a-half pounds. She measures 57 inches round the chest and 54 inches round the hips. She is 5 feet 6 inches in height. Mrs. Duncan has had nine children, three of whom died in early infancy.

Of the various 'controls' alleged to manifest through Mrs. Duncan 'Albert Stewart' is the chief. He is stated to have been a native of Dundee, afterwards emigrating to Sydney, New South Wales, Australia, where he died in the year 1909. His occupation, we are told, was that of a pattern maker.

'Albert' says that he converses by means of a 'voice box' which, Mr. Duncan states, has been seen in the form of a pair of pendulous lips which moved just as if they were speaking. Nothing of the sort has been seen in London. 'Peggy Hazeldine' is the name of a child control alleged to manifest through Mrs. Duncan.

Mr. Henry Duncan is a cabinet maker by trade, is 32 years old, and - he informed me - gave up his work in order that he could develop his wife's mediumship. He usually forms one of the circle during the séances.

I first learnt of the Duncan mediumship in the pages of *Light*.<sup>2</sup> When I heard that the Duncans intended coming south I made a mental resolution that I would get in touch with them. I had already read some details of the alleged phenomena and the fact that Mrs. Duncan's manifestations were produced in such a good light whetted my curiosity and rather impressed me. I was delighted when I knew that they were coming to London.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> For October 19th, 1929, p. 495.

<sup>3</sup> Since this Report was completed, Major C. H. Mowbray has informed me that many months ago he investigated the Duncans in Scotland and came to the conclusion that all the effects he witnessed were normally produced. His adverse report was placed in the hands of the London spiritualists at the time. In spite of his report, between forty and fifty seances were afterwards held by the spiritualists.

During the month of September, 1931, it was learnt that four 'mediums' have been guilty of producing fraudulent phenomena. Charles Albert Beare, a 'certificated' clairvoyant and trumpet medium has confessed (*Daily Express*, September 18th, 1931) that his mediumship was fraudulent.

Mr. Dennis Bradley has completely exposed George Valiantine (who was closely associated with the 'Margery' cross-correspondence tests), an American trumpet medium who produced fraudulent thumb-prints (*Daily Express*, September 21st, 1931); and Craig and George Falconer, Glasgow photographic mediums, have been convicted of producing fraudulent spirit photographs at Johannesburg, South Africa, and each fined £150 and costs. (*Light*, October 2nd, 1931, P.478) All these mediums have consistently refused to be tested at the National Laboratory.

# THOMAS BLYTON

1847c - 1933

And the

## DALSTON ASSOCIATION of INQUIRERS INTO SPIRITUALISM

1870 - 1880s

Thomas Blyton and the Dalston Association of Inquirers into Spiritualism became well known in 1871, through their link with a new physical medium Florence Eliza Cook (1856-1904).

The first address was 74, Navarino Road, Dalston, E. At the onset of the Association, which was formed in 1870, it is unclear if this was Blyton's personal residence with early Dalston meetings being conducted at this address, then with the Association's growth it acquired its own premises at 53, Sigdon Road, Dalston Lane, Hackney Downs London, E. Possibly the former address was already the Association's own Rooms.

Among other Spiritualist and Psychological societies/associations being formed in the early 1870s, we have previously featured 'The Marylebone Association' (M.S.A.) founded in 1872 - see: *Psypioneer* December Newsletter<sup>4</sup>. The following information has been summarised from '*Spiritual Notes*'<sup>5</sup> Volume one, which covers July, 1878 to June, 1880.

The 'Dalston Association of Inquirers into Spiritualism' was established in 1870 and at a later date (after 1873) situated at 53, Sigdon Road, Dalston Lane, Hackney Downs London; E. Apart from the early associations with Florence Cook, we are only able to find some scattered insight into the Association, which was once well established, offering a full programme of events to its members and visitors, a lending library and a reading-room for reference purposes which contained English and foreign periodical literature.

Some reciprocity of members' privileges as regards admission to ordinary meetings and séances existed between the various metropolitan spiritual and psychological societies. In July 1878 membership subscription at the Dalston was Annual 10s. half yearly 5s or quarterly at 3s; for a minimum donation of £2.2s you would receive a life membership. At a Dalston council meeting on August 10<sup>th</sup> 1879, Blyton tried to expand this connection and put a motion- "*That a proposal be made to the British National Association of Spiritualists for a voluntary interchange of full privileges of membership between the two Associations, subject to a minimum payment of 5s. per annum on part of members of either Association who may be desirous of availing themselves of such privileges.*" This proposed interchange between the two societies

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<sup>4</sup> <http://www.woodlandway.org/PDF/PP2.12December06..pdf>

<sup>5</sup> *Spiritual Notes* was the official monthly journal of the British National Association of Spiritualists. However the journal was short lived and was in production from 1878-81.

was not however accepted by the British National Association of Spiritualists. (B.N.A.S.)

Dalston's eighth annual general meeting on Thursday 6<sup>th</sup> March 1879, shows that the association had a membership of 81, an increased income, expenditure maintained within the income, a small cash balance, and a stock balance of £80 4s 3d., Both membership and income were up. To give some perspective to these amounts, the rent for the Association's rooms was 5s per week. However on August 1<sup>st</sup> of this year it was increased to 7s 6p - a hefty rise! By all accounts the Dalston was flourishing with musical recitals, experimental seances and discussions. It drew many of the influential speakers and mediums to its doors, like J.J. Morse, W.J. Colville, Mr. Mrs. J. William Fletcher, and E.W. Wallis with honorary members including Alexandre<sup>6</sup> Aksakof, J.M. Peebles, and William Eglinton.

Just prior to the ninth annual general meeting the president was Mrs. Amelia Corner, (whose son Edward Elgie Corner married Florence Cook in April 1874). Mrs. Corner resigned her presidency due to ill health on the 22<sup>nd</sup> February 1880; a Mr. Jonathon Tozeland was appointed the new president until the next annual general meeting.

The ninth annual general meeting was held on the 12<sup>th</sup> March 1880. The Association's position was not this time as favourable with a £3.13s. 5d deficit in their funds; their stock however was increased to £83. 8s. 7d primarily due to their library receiving valuable additions. However, the Dalston continued with an impressive agenda of events for the coming months, for example a physical séance with Charles E. Williams on 29<sup>th</sup> April 1880. The cost for this was 1s. for members, or 2s. 6d for non-members. Throughout these years Mrs. Edward Elgie Corner (Florence Cook) supported the Dalston with her mediumship.

There was some difficulty at this point in finding a replacement president, Thomas Blyton motioned that the vice-president Thomas Everitt<sup>7</sup> should be invited to take this position. Everitt declined the invitation at the next meeting which was then offered to Mr. C.C. Massey,<sup>8</sup> who incidentally had resigned his seat on the BNAS council on the 11<sup>th</sup> February 1879 and his membership a month later, but Massey also declined this position on May 8<sup>th</sup> 1880. On June 13<sup>th</sup> 1880 the presidency was offered to Rev. W. Miall, a Nonconformist minister who resided at 236, Richmond Road. Dalston, Rev. Miall was a council member of the BNAS and was on the séance committee under the chairmanship of Dawson Rogers in an article we featured, 'Seizure of Mrs. Elgie Corner'<sup>9</sup>. If Rev. Miall accepted this position I do not know.

Post July 1880, I have not noted any information on the 'Dalston Association of Inquirers into Spiritualism'. In the British journal '*The Herald of Progress*' (July 1880-?) under the 'List of Societies' July 22<sup>nd</sup> 1881 there is an entry: - *Secretary* Mr. J. Taft, 53, Sigdon Road, Dalston, London; E. On February 24<sup>th</sup> 1882 this changes to Mr. J. Greenwell. These names did not feature in the Dalston council for the years I have covered from '*Spiritual Notes*'. Whether Dalston survived, or even for how long, I do not know. Any information on this would be most welcome.

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<sup>6</sup> Some publications spell the name Alexander, correct spelling is Alexandre.

<sup>7</sup> <http://www.woodlandway.org/PDF/PP3.1January07..pdf>

<sup>8</sup> Charles Carleton Massey (1838-1905) Barrister.

<sup>9</sup> <http://www.woodlandway.org/PDF/PP2.8August06..pdf>

The Dalston was allied with the B.N.A.S., from the B.N.A.S' start in 1873. It's interesting also to note that it was the Dalston's address at Sigdon road, which was printed in the first issue of 'Spiritual Notes' in July 1878, with the inscription, 'Published for the Proprietors at 53, Sigdon Road, Dalston, E'. Spiritual Notes was intended to serve as an auxiliary to all agencies in disseminating knowledge of the Spiritualist movement, J.J. Morse was the first to act for the Midland districts as an agent for Spiritual Notes. As from March 1879, Thomas Blyton took on the business communications for 'Spiritual Notes'. From November of that year all communications were taken by Blyton at the Dalston address. It appears that from 1870-1880 Thomas Blyton was also Hon Secretary to the Dalston Association.

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Blyton had an interest in the preservation of 'Psychographic Pictures', and also 'Psychic Photography'<sup>10</sup> -see this interesting little letter to 'Spiritual Notes' published January 1879 p.97: -

## PSYCHOGRAPHIC PICTURES

*To the Editor*

*Sir, - In complying with the request of several friends to aid in obtaining subscriptions towards the purchase of Mr. Coleman's unique collection of psychographic pictures, with the view to presentation to the British National Association of Spiritualists, you will aid the object in view by permitting me to appeal to your readers for their generous co-operation.*

*Mr. Charles Blackburn, who initiated the project, and is one of the subscribers, has wisely urged that this valuable collection of psychographic pictures should be preserved intact to permanently adorn the walls of the National Association; and, as the collection is one of special interest and value to Spiritualists, it is to be hoped that a liberal and prompt response will be made, not only by members of the National Association, but by the general body of Spiritualists.*

*Miss Kislingbury, the Secretary of the Association, or the undersigned, will be happy to receive and acknowledge subscriptions for the above object. -Yours faithfully,*

*THOMAS BLYTON.*

*53, Sigdon-road, Dalston, E*

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<sup>10</sup> <http://www.woodlandway.org/PDF/2.2%20PSYPIONEERFoundedbyLesliePrice.pdf> Psychic Photography featured in this edition by Leslie Price.

In 'Light' April 7<sup>th</sup> 1933 p.213, we are returned to this period of the 'Dalston Association of Inquirers into Spiritualism'

## PSYCHIC PHOTOGRAPHY

### AN EXPERIMENT OF SIXTY YEARS AGO

*MR. THOMAS BLYTON, of Canadia, Battle, Sussex, is an "old-timer" in Spiritualism, his recollections of the subject going back for well over sixty-five years.*

*In a letter received from him a short time ago, he mentions that he had been re-examining a photo print of an "extra" obtained in the early '70's of last century, when he was acting as hon. secretary to the Dalston Association of Inquirers into Spiritualism.*

*It was at the time when Hudson, the photographic Medium, was getting psychic results in his studio at Highbury. Curious to know what there was in psychic photography, Mr. Blyton, and Mr. W. Brooks (a photographic artist of some repute in his day) and a Mr. J. Webster, formed themselves into an investigating group and decided to make an experiment on their own account without recourse to Hudson. They had difficulty in securing the use of a studio in the Dalston district, but eventually hired a rather poorly-equipped one in the Kingsland Road, and carried out the experiment.*

*Mr. Brooks undertook to remove and replace the cap of the camera lens, while they sat in a group at a small table and got the plates ready (the wet process was the one in use in those days), secure in the knowledge that no one but themselves was present in the studio.*

*A number of plates were then exposed without any other than the normal result, nearly exhausting the chemical supplies and leaving just about enough for the final plate.*

*"When the last plate was exposed," writes Mr. Blyton, "I experienced a sensation as though a cobweb were being drawn across my face, but I saw nothing. On replacing the lens cap, I immediately mentioned my experience; and on our proceeding to the dark room and developing the plate, there appeared a draped human figure over my right shoulder, partly obscuring my face. Two prints from this negative (now included with similar photographs in the Psychic Athenaeum Museum) when closely scrutinized show somewhat faintly, yet sufficiently distinct, a number of human faces in a cloudy formation over our little group."*

*Mr. Blyton rightly concludes that, after a lapse of some sixty years, this experience is of especial interest in view of the extent to which it corroborates many of the genuine psycho-photographic results of to-day.*

*The reference to the feeling of a cobweb drawn across the face is suggestive. Some of us who have made any close and practical study of objective phenomena are*

*personally familiar with the sensation, which may fairly be attributed to delicate filaments of some psychic substance.*

In the next issue of 'Light' on April 14<sup>th</sup> page 231 Blyton adds this: -

*Sir, - In further reference to the old-time experiments in psychic photography in which I was concerned, and which was described in LIGHT of 7th inst. I would like to emphasise the point regarding the highly sensitised substance which I felt upon my face at the time and which gave the sensation of a cobweb, although, as you have pointed out, this experience has been described in many cases by others. I would further say that on closely scrutinising the process of developing photographic plates I have often observed the psychic "extra" as being the first thing to make its appearance when the developing fluid is poured on the plate.*

*Canadia, Battle, Sussex*

*THOMAS BLYTON.*

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In an earlier edition of 'Light' September 2<sup>nd</sup> 1922 on page 554, we find a valuable and more general article written by Mr. Thomas Blyton.

## **FROM A VETERAN'S NOTE BOOK**

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### **A SHEAF OF RECOLLECTIONS BY THOMAS BLYTON**

*In the brief span of, some sixty years have been crowded many pleasant reminiscences and associations connected with the Spiritualist movement, while a careful perusal of much of its literature and periodical publications has confirmed convictions derived from a somewhat extensive personal experience. As with the vast majority of Spiritualists, my interest in the subject was first aroused by reading accounts of spirit manifestations of so extraordinary a character as to induce me to obtain confirmation by personal experience whenever opportunity might offer. It was in this way a multiplicity of experiences, with close on a hundred different private and professional mediums of varied powers, enabled me to compare and check the recorded work of other investigators, affording ample assurance of their genuineness.*

*Of physical phenomena, demonstrated on a public platform, the most astounding were undoubtedly those given in presence of the brothers Davenport, witnessed by myself on several occasions in the east and west-end of London in the late 'sixties of previous century. Descriptions of these manifestations will be found in the "Biography of the Brothers Davenport," by Dr. T. L. Nichols, M.D., to which readers are referred. The Davenports were "mobbed," not exposed, in Liverpool. The phenomena both in light and darkness were inexplicable, the manipulating hands being frequently seen in the light; while the counterfeit exhibition by the conjurers were generally looked upon, by witnesses of both parties, as but a very poor and weak imitation of the*

*original production. It is certain that, for a public demonstration of physical phenomena, there has been nothing to compare with it in this country either before or since the advent of the Davenports. Notwithstanding elaborate precautions in securing the two brothers both in the light and dark, when placed in a slightly constructed cabinet enclosure on trestles, phenomena of a very startling nature immediately occurred, to the wonder of the onlookers on platform and among the audience.*

*When darkness was required, the cabinet was dispensed with, and the two brothers were seated in chairs on the open platform; and, on one occasion, as the lights were being turned up, I distinctly saw the coat of one of the brothers being actually drawn up and removed from his body, while the rope fastenings about him were still intact. After being tied up; their hands were on occasions filled with flour or other material, so that any movement would spill it, but the phenomena continued notwithstanding all kinds of tests.*

*An experience in my own family circle with a medium (a relative of mine), after what satisfied me as a secure method of tying and sealing of the knots, showed that the medium could be liberated by unseen powers without difficulty or disturbing the tying and sealing nearly instantaneously in darkness. The modus operandi as yet remains a mystery, although it would seem as if some kind of dissociation of matter is involved. On another occasion, at a special seance of the old Dalston Association, a wooden ring was passed on to my arm between shoulder and elbow while firmly holding the medium's hand. This latter instance is somewhat similar to that of the iron ring passed on Husk's arm under like conditions, as well as other instances on record in our journals.*

*So-called materialisations (some of which have been photographed) are perhaps the most remarkable of physical phenomena within my personal experience, of which a few brief particulars may be of interest. "John King" and his band of spirit workers are familiar in many seances, even at the present day, but were most in evidence through Messrs. Hearne<sup>11</sup> and Williams, Husk, Haxby, Mrs. Guppy, and others. "Katie King" (the younger), through Miss Florrie Cook: "Lilly"<sup>12</sup> Gordon" through Miss Kate S. Cook; Florence Maples," through Miss Showers; "Abdullah," through Haxby; "Katie King" (the younger) and "Lilly Gordon" being those with whom I have had the most opportunities for associating. While manifesting, they have been life-like in appearance from head to foot, appealing to sight, touch and hearing, similar to a human being. The regularity and frequency of their manifesting induced a degree of familiarity between them and the sitters, so much so, that the wonder and marvel of it all did not strike the imagination as it did at the commencement. At first an indistinct appearance of the face, followed after a time by the shoulders and bust with the arms and hands, and eventually the complete human form draped in flowing white robes.*

*I have stood beside "Katie King" and, at my request, she has taken my arm and walked around the room. Looking through the venetian blinds of the window, she observed a light opposite and inquired as to its object, so I had to explain the need for*

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<sup>11</sup> Correct spelling would be Frank Herne, not Hearne.

<sup>12</sup> Kate Cook's principle materialisation was Lillie Gordon, also spelt by some as Lilly, Lily.

*a lamp-post. She remarked that there were no such things when she lived on earth. Passing the pianoforte, I raised the lid and seating herself she played a few bars, and then desired me to take her back to her medium as the power was diminishing. On one occasion while facing and talking to her with her permission, she allowed me to pass my hand around her neck, when an opening was observed at the back which I drew her attention. She desired me to remove my hand and, falling gently back in the direction of her recumbent medium, she again resumed her position facing me, and on her request I again passed my hand as before around her neck and found no opening, "Katie" saying she had been unaware of the incompleteness of the materialisation. On another occasion, while "Lilly Gordon" was manifesting, a lighted carriage passed rapidly in front of the house, momentarily lighting the interior of the room, with the effect of her suddenly collapsing to the floor level, but rapidly recovered her formed condition in full form. No untoward result was apparent to her medium. "Abdullah" was on another occasion showing himself to a circle at my residence at Dalston, one of the sitters at my side secretly pricking him with a pin, but at the moment he took no notice; yet, he came again opposite the sitter in question, and looking somewhat sternly, indicated with a dagger in his hand that the sitter had better not attempt the action again. The sitter explained his action to me after the seance, adding that he did not like the look of "Abdullah" on his second appearance in front of him. These few instances of materialisation phenomena will suffice as illustrations of some of these manifestations.*

*Amongst other mediums of good repute for materialisation phenomena with whom I have been privileged to come in contact are Mr. George Spriggs, D. D. Home, Arthur Coleman, William Eglinton, Mrs. Mellon (nee Annie Fairlamb), Miss Kate Wood, Mme. d'Esperance, Dr. Henry Slade, and the Wakeford family. In this connection reference should be made to such published works as "Shadow Land," by Mme. E. d'Esperance; "There Is No Death" by Florence Marryat; "Dawn of the Awakened Mind," by Dr. John S. King, M.D.; "Startling Facts in Modern Spiritualism," by L. N. Wolfe; and others accessible in the library of the London Spiritualist Alliance, Ltd., or other societies.*

*Other psychical phenomena more or less of a physical type which may be mentioned as part of my experiences include independent slate script through Dr. Henry Slade, experienced the day following his alleged exposure by Dr. E. Ray Lankester. My sitting with Dr. Slade was in full daylight, the slate script pertinent to the occasion and referring to a message purporting to come from his spirit wife and received on the previous evening at a seance with Miss Florrie Cook at Hackney, and of which Dr. Slade could not possibly have had any previous knowledge. While the slate script was in progress a materialised living hand was projected from under the flap of the Pembroke table at which I was sitting at right angles with Dr. Slade, and pulled my watch chain so as to attract my attention. Leaning slightly back in the chair, I was able to observe the hand critically and readily saw it complete as far as the wrist, where it became nebulous and invisible. The hand and fingers were beautifully formed and of the female type, and on calling Dr. Slade's attention to it he recognised it as that of his wife in spirit life. After sufficient time for observing the phenomenon, the hand released its hold on the watch chain, withdrew and became invisible while I looked at it. The sunlight was streaming into the room throughout the sitting, and nothing suggestive of deception was observable. Dr. Slade sat sidewise at the*

*uncovered table, his hands and legs being in my view all the time, fully satisfying me of the genuineness of the results of the sitting.*

*In Glasgow an experience with David Duguid deserves recalling. One of a number of sitters, I tore off a small portion of a photo mount card for purposes of identification, the medium being securely bound hand and foot to his chair, painting materials being placed on a central table. In darkness, while singing a verse of "Auld Lang Syne" the sound of movements of the painting materials was noted, and light being obtained, oil paintings were found at the feet of sitters where the photo cards had been deposited, my own with the torn corner being identified by the piece reserved in my charge. Another similar kind of miniature oil painting was produced on another occasion, both being in my possession at time of this writing. At another sitting with David Duguid, this time in the light, and effectually blindfolded, he worked for about an hour on a large oil painting while the sitters looked on commenting on its progress, he being at the time in a trance condition. There was not the slightest indecision in his mixing and applying the colours, some considerable work being put in on the canvas during the sitting. A few years back the Rev. Susanna Harris, of the U.S.A., gave a public demonstration of blind-folded painting at the Steinway Hall, in London, with the electric lights full on; and also a similar demonstration at the premises of the International Psychic Club in Regent Street, giving satisfaction in both instances.*

*Spirit photography I recall as far back as the seventies, with Mumler, Buguet, Dr. Ochorowicz, Chevalier Kirkup, Dr. G. Thompson, Beattie, Dr. Hooper, F. A. Hudson, W. Brooks, F. N. Parkes, J. Traill Taylor, Slater, Reeves, Rite, David Duguid, as amongst the exponents of the art. A fairly large collection is in my possession of representative specimens of these productions. together with some of later exponents: "Crewe Circle," W. Walker, W. G. Mitchell, Bournsnel, Wyllie, H. Blackwell, Chas. J. Cooper, Fred Barlow, W. Jeffrey. Special interest attaches to some of these specimens due to identification and circumstances under which they have been obtained, and also for the reason of their being permanent records of supernormal, or psychic, workings. This latter remark applies also to direct independent scripts, drawings, apports, etc. and this feature will probably be more greatly appreciated as time goes on.*

*Transporting of living beings and inanimate objects must not be overlooked. I was present at one of the earlier seances with the Cook family at Hackney when Frank Hearne<sup>13</sup> was suddenly and unexpectedly brought into the room from the West-end of London. The famous case of the transport of Mrs. Guppy from her residence at Highbury to Lambs Conduit-street, in Holborn, is on record. Other instances of Miss Lottie Fowler, and Florrie Cook, are recalled. Of inanimate objects being brought into seances there are innumerable instances recorded; on one occasion at Mrs. Guppy's, with some twenty or more friends assembled, each sitter was asked to select some object to be brought them. Although it was a dark seance, a variety of things were thus brought to the sitters; in my own case a flower which was deftly placed between my outstretched fingers, which I held up at the back of my head without saying anything of the action to those sitting on each side of me. One sitter had asked for a fish, when a live eel was given, not a little to the surprise of the recipient. On*

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<sup>13</sup> *Ib* 8.

*another occasion Mrs. Guppy had been in conversation with friends around the fire in the winter season, and, on a seance following, the first apport was a large block of ice dropped on the table. The most unexpected and astonishing things happened in those days through that lady's psychic powers, utterly bewildering in their nature and difficult to realise even by those who actually witnessed the phenomena.*

*The direct independent voice as experienced with such mediums as Mrs. Thos. Everitt, Mrs. Basset, Herne, Williams, Huxley, Husk, and particularly of recent date with Mrs. Etta Wreidt, Wakeford's Circle, and others, has brought us in close communion with the spirit people. Sitting at the residence of the Stead family at Wimbledon with Mrs. Wreidt, after a most convincing conversation with Mr. W. T. Stead, his voice and characteristic manner of speaking made recognition for me very convincing. The querulous voice of a family relation addressed me, that of an old lady who was by no means in my thoughts and so surprising me by her speaking in the old, well-remembered style customary with her when on earth. The "sound of a voice that is still," in the particular instance which I was desirous of hearing was not manifested, somewhat to my disappointment; only one of many instances showing that our thoughts and wishes are not always gratified in seances.*

*Turning from physical to mental phenomena, it may be well to speak of the great intellectual feasts enjoyed through the trance and inspired addresses of such veterans as Emma Hardinge-Britten, Cora L. V. Tappan (Mrs. Richmond), Mr. and Mrs. E. W. Wallis, J. J. Morse, W. J. Colville, Florence Montague, Thomas Walker, and J. W. Fletcher, whose oratorical eloquence has scarcely ever been equalled. Many of these illuminating utterances are fortunately to be found in book form, or in the Spiritualist periodicals of the period of their delivery. An instance of script is found in that of the Rev. G. Vale Owen, publication of which in the first instance was extended over a year in weekly instalments in the "Weekly Dispatch," and subsequently issued in book form of three volumes. Clairvoyant and psychometric delineations are yet another feature of mental phenomena to be reckoned with, presenting features strongly bearing out the spirit source and identification with the loved ones who have passed "into the life more abundant." It is but a duty to express indebtedness for many interesting and satisfying experiences of this class to (amongst many others) Dr. and Mrs. Murray Spear, Lottie Fowler, Miss S. W. McCreadie, Mrs. F. W. Smith, Mrs. Foote-Young, and Mrs. M. H. Wallis.*

*These reminiscences are but a very meagre attempt to portray a few psychic experiences, which, if only considered collectively instead of individually, are valuable witnesses to the continuity of life. To myself they have given an assurance of reality, and corroboration of similar records in sacred and profane history, supplementing previous revelation concerning the future life.*

Finally, it was reported in 'Light' November 1<sup>st</sup> 1933 p. 666, (no significance in the number!)

## **PASSING OF MR. T. BLYTON**

*Mr. T. Blyton, of "Psychicote," Canadia, Battle, Sussex, passed to the higher life on the morning of Saturday last (October 27th) at the age of 86. His daughter-in-law (Mrs. A. G. Wallis) writes that "he was ready and happy to go."*

*Mr. Blyton was associated with Spiritualism for over fifty years and was at one time a frequent contributor to LIGHT. Mediumistic himself, he was personally acquainted with many of the Mediums of the past generation, and he had an intimate knowledge both of the phenomena and philosophy of Spiritualism and was an earnest and successful propagandist. One of his daughters married a son of Mr. E. W. Wallis, a former Editor of LIGHT.*

*Mr. Leigh Hunt, who knew Mr. Blyton personally, expresses high appreciation of the services he rendered to spiritualism.*

Paul J. Gaunt

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## **SPIRITS BANISHED FROM BELGRAVIA SPIRITUALIST CENTRE**

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The reissue of a pioneering biography "Priestess" by Alan Richardson recalls a forgotten psychic story a stone's throw from the present SAGB headquarters.

("Priestess, the life and magic of Dion Fortune" Second revised edition, Thoth Publications, 2007 ISBN 978-1- 870450-11-9 £14.95)

In the early days of Psychic News, Lady Caillard, the widow of industrialist Sir Vincent Caillard, was one of the titled newsmakers welcome in the diary column. She or her late husband owned or leased a former church (The Belfry), and it was here that, helped by some guides, he communicated a book "A New Conception of Love" (Rider, 1934) A mechanical aid to mediumship was employed, the communigraph, earning the case a notice in any history of such devices.

After Lady Caillard became unwell, she leased the premises to Dion Fortune, who had plans for a different form of occult activity. The Banishing Ritual of the Pentagram carried out by Dion terminated the presence of the sundry entities without notice.

However, as we have noticed before in this newsletter (May 2006)<sup>14</sup>, Dion Fortune was herself a channel with (privately) named inspirers. We can recommend "Priestess" as an insightful exploration of a noble life.

LP...

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In the November 2005<sup>15</sup> newsletter we published an interesting account: - *A Life-size Portrait of "Katie King."* Mr. Hawkins Simpson also commented upon the materialised form of "Katie King"

While reading the letter pages of 'Light' Saturday January 26<sup>th</sup> 1901, p.47, I came across the names again of J. Hawkins Simpson and 'Katie King': -

## **The Hair of 'Katie King'**

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*SIR,- In reply to your correspondent, Mr. A. G. Young, permit me to say that in 1874 (when I was at work upon a monochrome portrait of 'Katie King,' previous to the production of my water-colour picture of that mysterious visitor), Sir William Crookes kindly lent me a single hair taken from a lock which he had cut down to the scalp of that figure. This was returned, with the remark that it did not resemble any human hair ever seen by myself, and that it was not round but angular, like, but finer than, the catgut of which a sportsman makes his 'casting-line' for fishing over clear, shallow streams.*

*Ringlets composed of this bright amber-coloured material must have presented a strikingly beautiful appearance when seen under electric light, the shadows being softened by sheets judiciously placed.*

*Having carefully studied (1) a photo of 'Katie' taken by the late Mr. W. H. Harrison, in 1873, and the account of its production; (2) all the photos of 'Katie' and of Miss Cook taken by Sir W. Crookes, in 1874, together with his history of the same, I am convinced that no fraud was perpetrated or possible under the stringent conditions imposed by Sir William in his own house, where Miss Cook was staying during three weeks.*

*I hope that all this is made plain in that part of a work (now ready for the press) which deals with 'fleeting forms,' other parts being devoted to loud voices and the successive stages of trance development. In it, reasons are given for thinking that 'Katie King' was not a spirit disincarnate, and a new theory is propounded for consideration, by physicians more especially.*

*J. HAWKINS SIMPSON.*

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<sup>14</sup> <http://www.woodlandway.org/PDF/2.5%20PSYPIONEERFoundedbyLesliePrice.pdf>

<sup>15</sup> <http://www.woodlandway.org/PDF/19.PSYPIONEERFoundedbyLesliePrice.pdf>

This response by Simpson was to a letter printed in 'Light' on January 12<sup>th</sup> 1901, p 24, by a A.G. Young of Brixton, who was surprised at reading a statement by the famous spiritualist Hudson Tuttle: -

## **Hudson Tuttle on Materialisations**

*Sir,-In reading Hudson Tuttle's 'Arcana of Spiritualism,' I was greatly surprised at finding the following statement which appears on p. 44: -*

*'The instance of Professor Crookes' cutting off a lock of hair from a "materialised" spirit, the lock remaining perfect human hair under a microscope, proves, not the "materialisation" of a spirit, but that it was real human hair; for if the hair was perfect, the whole body must have been the same, and if the hair remained intact, not "dematerialising," the whole body might and must have remained. Instead of being a "test" it was a prima facie evidence of fraud.'*

*I think, sir, that you will readily recognise that such a dogmatic statement made by an accepted authority on Spiritualism, comes as a most damaging blow to many investigators, especially those who, like myself, though very desirous of learning the truth of the matter, have had very little opportunity of personal experimental research, and so have to rely almost wholly upon the research of others.*

*Sir William Crookes's investigations appealed to me, when I read them, as the most valuable and convincing testimony that I had come across, but if the above quotation is justified then discredit is cast upon the whole of his work. I should much like to hear the opinion of some of your able contributors upon this subject.*

*A. G. Young.*

*Acre-lane, Brixton*

Alfred Smedley had also responded to the letter printed in 'Light' by A.G. Young: -

Taken from January 19<sup>th</sup> 1901 page 36

## **Hudson Tuttle on Materialisations**

*SIR, - In your last issue I see a letter on the above subject, signed 'A. G. Young.'*

*When I read the English edition of Tuttle's 'Arcana of Spiritualism,' I was very much astonished to see the paragraph on page 44, for which Mr. Young refers, and I wrote in the margin opposite 'not correct.'*

*A few months ago, when Mr. Bibbings was last at Belper, I pointed this paragraph out to him, and at the same time I showed for him some hair and a small piece of a spirit's white robe, both of which were cut off by the spirit in the presence of more than twenty persons.*

*Fraud, on that occasion, was entirely out off the question, as the spirit materialised in the midst of the circle, within two feet of my own eyes in full view, the*

*medium being in the cage; and after conversing with us for a considerable time the form dematerialised before our eyes; but the small portion of hair and robe which he cut off did not dematerialise, for portions of them are now in my possession.*

*I have read of cases in which locks of hair and pieces of robes have been cut off, and when the spirit form has dematerialised, the hair and pieces of the robe cut off have dematerialised also, but in this case they did not; and most certainly the fact of the non-dematerialising of the portions of hair and robe cut off, when the spirit form dematerialised, is not a 'prima facie evidence of fraud.' To me, it simply proves that portions of hair or robe cut off under such circumstances do not necessarily dematerialise when the form from which they were taken does so.*

*A full account of the seance at which the hair and robe were cut off is given in Chapter XI of my 'Reminiscences,'<sup>16</sup> just published. I had fully intended writing to Hudson Tuttle on the subject and asking him for an answer and explanation, but as the question is now before the public I presume we shall have his explanation in due course.*

A. SMEDLEY.

Alfred Smedley is referring to a materialisation séance with Catherine Elizabeth Wood, to whom much of his book is dedicated. I will print the relevant parts of Chapter XI as referred to by Mr. Smedley after the Hudson Tuttle response: -

Taken from *Light* March 9, 1901 page 110

## HUDSON TUTTLE ON MATERIALISATIONS

*My attention has been called to the criticism of Mr. A. G. Young and Mr. Smedley, on a certain passage in the 'Arcana of Spiritualism,' relating to materialisations. I have made it a rule not to reply to criticisms, and should not now, had I not been directly appealed to by two English friends. I do not intend to offer an argument in defence of the passage quoted, only a statement. The offending passage is as follows:-*

*'The instance of Professor Crookes' cutting off a lock of hair from a, "materialised" spirit, the lock remaining perfect human hair under a microscope, proves, not the "materialisation" of a spirit, but that it was real human hair; for if the hair was perfect, the whole body must have been the same, and if the hair remained intact, not "dematerialising," the whole body might and must have remained. Instead of being a "test" it was a prima facie evidence of fraud.'*

*One critic calls this a dogmatic statement, and another presents facts to prove it untrue. Is it dogmatic? Is it untrue? Not to uphold a cause, but the truth, should be the aim of every honest seeker. This passage, like all my published writings, I received as*

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<sup>16</sup> Some Reminiscences. By, Alfred Smedley, Belper. Published by Light and British Lyceum Depot in 1900.

*an amanuensis, and now that this control has passed, I cannot recall it to add to or explain. This position which I occupy is often embarrassing, for when requested to explain portions of my writings, I can only do so by my own understanding, which is quite distinct from the intelligence which gave it, which I cannot recall at my own desire.*

*I have been actuated by one supreme motive during the long period of my mediumship: to furnish the best conditions for the reception of the thoughts which the inspiring intelligences sought to present. I have a consciousness that those inspiring spirits have, with exalted motives, without fear or favour, given the subjects they have treated their best endeavours. This by no means carries the claim of infallibility any more than adheres to all conscientious work.*

*With this preface allow me to say that the 'materialisations' have been the cause of unmeasured obloquy being cast on Spiritualism. This has come, not from the genuine, but the fraudulent, for which it has been a most prolific field. The conditions under which they have been too frequently observed have not been unobjectionable; rather have they been such as permitted deception. At a seance of a noted medium, who sat in a 'fraud-proof' wire room or cage, carefully locked, materialisations came on the outside of this cabinet; lace was made and given to those present, and forms sank seemingly into the floor. I suggested, as it was not in conflict with any known spiritual laws, that the medium should sit outside the cabinet, and allow the 'materialisations' to come within, as no one could doubt this form of the manifestations. To my surprise the medium promptly objected. No confederate, or anything but a spirit, could enter the wire room, and manifestations therein given would be 'tests' near to demonstration.*

*In my last publication, 'Mediumship and its Laws,' the authors have substituted 'Etherialisations' for 'Materialisations,' as more expressive of the character of the phenomena. A spirit can draw around itself sufficient matter to reflect light and thus become visible. It is quite another thing to materialise sufficiently to organise a, body and garments of wool, silk and cotton, to the actual weight of 100lb. to 160lb., as has frequently been reported. I ask the believer in this weight to pause and consider. Spirits cannot create matter; they cannot destroy it. They must gather it in; carbon, nitrogen, hydrogen, oxygen, and mineral elements that go to build the organism, or the 'lace' that is so abundantly displayed. I ask there to consider the effect of 150lb. of such a materialised body, suddenly, in one minute, being dissolved into the atmosphere of a small room, or the gathered circle! Would it not instantly suffocate them all? Hence, to my understanding, the spirit authors of the quoted passage stated the case with well known principles of science supporting them, and were not 'dogmatic,' unless an axiom is dogmatic.*

*The ethereal appearances, such as came unsought to that wonderful medium D. H. Home, required no cabinet nor darkened room. They did not repeatedly duplicate themselves. There was no set to stage 'make-up'. They were not at the command of the medium whenever any sitter would place a bank note in his hand. But is not one well attested fact of more value than a thousand which, however well attested, in the very nature of things are impossible, and prove only the defective observation of the witness?*

Alfred Smedley states in his above letter: - .....*after conversing with us for a considerable time the form dematerialised before our eyes; but the small portion of hair and robe which he cut off did not dematerialise, for portions of them are now in my possession.* Smedley continues: - *A full account of the seance at which the hair and robe were cut off is given in Chapter XI. of my 'Reminiscences,' just published.*

In this chapter XI, the séance held on Saturday evening February 17<sup>th</sup> was reported by W. P. Adshead, aided with Smedley's notes and was originally published in *Medium and Daybreak*, March 1877, however this chapter does not fully correspond with Smedley's letter. For example Adshead reports two separate materialisations rather than one as the Smedley letter suggests?

Page 115 states: - *Producing a pair of scissors, I asked "Benny" if he would oblige me by giving me a portion of his whisker. Instead of either bowing or shaking his head, I was delighted to hear him answer, in good honest Scotch, "Aye." He took the scissors, and I saw him cut from his face a portion of his whisker, which he gave to me, and which is now in my possession.*

However page 117 states: - *Mr. Smedley, in his notes, says: - "I asked her ['Pocka'] if she would give me a piece of her robe. She answered, 'No.' I asked if.....*

Either Alfred Smedley has mixed his reference or exaggerated his point of reference!

Paul J. Gaunt

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## ALFRED DEAKIN

1856 – 1919

See also *Psypioneer* Volume 1.2 June 2004: - 'The Prime Minister was a Lyceumist'  
[http://www.woodlandway.org/PDF/Leslie\\_Price\\_PP2.pdf](http://www.woodlandway.org/PDF/Leslie_Price_PP2.pdf)

Taken from *Light* January 7<sup>th</sup> 1888 page 2

**SPIRITUALISM IN AUSTRALIA.**-*It is not very generally known that the Hon. Alfred Deakin - the pride of the Young Australian party – whose ability and eloquence were so prominently displayed during the sittings of the recent Colonial Conference is one of the leading Spiritualists at the Antipodes. Spiritualism is, proportionately speaking, much better supported in Australia than in probably any other country under the sun, and amongst its devotees there is no greater enthusiast than Mr. Deakin.*

*He was originally a pronounced sceptic in regard to Spiritualism, and his "conversion" to it is attributed to an incident which happened a few years since, and which Melbourne people all remember well.*

*Two well-known Melbourne youths were upset from a boat in Hobson's Bay one afternoon, and for a few days all attempts to recover the bodies proved unsuccessful. Some of their sorrowing friends at last requisitioned the "spirit," and, as the story goes, the spirit of one of the unfortunate youths rapped out a message to the effect that his body was lying at a certain spot on Brighton Beach, with the face partly eaten away by a shark. A party at once hurried off to the place indicated, and the body was found, and in the condition described by the spirit.*

*Besides converting such an able sceptic as Mr. Deakin, the affair had the effect of bringing a large number of believers into the Spiritualistic fold.*

*From The Colonies and India*

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## BOOKS FOR SALE

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*'Red Cactus: - The Life of Anna Kingsford'* By Alan Pert @ £14.95 + pp ISBN: - 978-1-74018-405-2 See. Psypioneer 3.5 issue: -  
<http://www.woodlandway.org/PDF/PP3.5May07..pdf>

*'Six Lectures on Theology and Nature'* By Emma Hardinge first published in 1860. £14.95 + pp. ISBN: - 978-0-9556539-0-2. See Psypioneer 3.6 issue: -  
<http://www.woodlandway.org/PDF/PP3.6June07..pdf>

(The print run has been increased to 100 copies giving a better price than previously advertised.)

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Paul J. Gaunt