

# PSYPIONEER

Founded by Leslie Price

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## A new note at PN

Susan Farrow, whose appointment as editor of Psychic News was announced in the issue of February 9 2008, has a distinguished career in music<sup>1</sup>.

She is already known to readers of the Zerdin Fellowship Buzz Sheet for her keen interest in physical mediumship.

Immediately after the SNU acquired PN in 1995, Julie Stretton became editor, to be succeeded by Lyn Guest de Swarte. It was on Lyn's watch that the Psychic Pioneer project began. She warmly supported it, putting the web site on the free list for PN, and participating in joint competitions when Psypioneer pamphlets were issued (the question in the Stainton Moses one was the name of his personal guide - no, it was not Imperator!)

Under the next PN editor, when the Psypioneer project morphed into a monthly free electronic newsletter, Psypioneer was never mentioned in Psychic News except in the correspondence columns. None our stories were ever followed up and we were never interviewed, although ours was a venture originally seeded by Spiritual Truth Foundation. However it was true that we were and still are the world's smallest Spiritualist newspaper, and much of our news was a century old. We were comforted by other indications of seed on fertile ground - a student citing an article from us in an

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<sup>1</sup> [www.banmussoc.demon.co.uk/musicians.htm](http://www.banmussoc.demon.co.uk/musicians.htm)

essay, a donor recommending us to a postgrad student, sympathetic interest from authors, parapsychologists, librarians and from those just glad to see the old workers remembered, often in their own words. We were also able to tell prospective subscribers that the news we carried could not be read elsewhere!

But this is not an ideal situation. There is much scope for working more closely together, and we are hopeful that this will now come to pass.

LP.

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## **Is Mrs Duncan the victim of a logical fallacy? - a tutorial note.**

Our texts are taken from *Psychic News*, February 9, 2008, beginning to read on page 1.

*“The Fraudulent Mediums Act was a hard-won piece of legislation. In 1944, materialisation medium Helen Duncan was convicted under the Witchcraft Act of 1735, for no greater crime than that of demonstrating the continuity of life. Spiritualists (and others) were outraged. Pressure from many quarters was brought to bear upon the government of the day. Result- the Fraudulent Mediums Act, 1951.”*

And again we read on page 2 in the same issue of

*“...the Fraudulent Mediums Act – a piece of legislation which resulted from the high profile and traumatic trial of Helen Duncan.”*

Is it possible that we have here an example of the ancient logical fallacy “Post hoc ergo propter hoc”, that is to say, the false conclusion that because one event follows another, it is caused by it?

There is also the tendency for famous names to become associated with big events. We have previously noted in our June 2006 issue how the name of Winston Churchill is today associated on the Internet with this 1951 legal change (which actually took place under a government of a different political party). Spiritualists, chiefly over-enthusiastic supporters of Mrs Duncan, (the Duncanistas as we may call them) are responsible for this confusion.

Similarly, the name of Mrs Duncan, now the most famous medium of the last century, has become associated with the 1951 legal change. No evidence needs to be produced in making this claim - it suffices that one event followed the other, therefore it caused it.

The full story of the change in the law in 1951 and the long campaign leading up to it has never been told - it would make a good subject for a Ph.D, as many surviving papers must now be in the Public Record Office. The campaign lasted many decades. Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's last public act was to lead a delegation to the Home Secretary pressing for a change in the law in 1930. It was a campaign by and for Spiritualists and mediums, most of them ordinary people, seeking religious freedom. The Spiritualist National Union played a long and honourable part in it. Although, as we noted in our June 2006 issue, money from the SNU Freedom Fund was used in the defence of Mrs Duncan, her case was really a diversion, and possibly a hindrance to the main campaign. (Indeed, it led to the reactivation of the Witchcraft Act against mediums from 1945-50.)

Did Mrs Duncan play any part in the campaign for a legal change? Granted, if you will, she was not a public speaker, did she sit on the platform of any meetings, sign any petitions, join any lobbies or donate any money?

Was her name mentioned in the parliamentary debates leading up to the legal change in 1951? Did her case influence in any way the wording of the draft bill which eventually became law?

Did writers at the time, or then SNU leaders say "This change results from the Duncan case"? or "We owe this Act to the Duncan Case"?

If pressure was brought upon the government of the day after the Duncan case in 1944 (and it was) why did the triumphant and radical Labour government of 1945-50 resist the legalisation of mediumship? Why was it not until the precarious Labour government of 1950-51 that the private members bill, with Labour government support, was permitted to pass through Parliament? Was it Herbert Morrison, the Labour politician who was antagonistic to Spiritualism, who long blocked the change?

We do not foreclose discussion on any of these questions. On the contrary, we are part of the contemporary community of historians into Spiritualism who are regularly finding and publishing new evidence. Although we offer a hypothesis "**Mrs Duncan had nothing to do with the 1951 legal change, which was the result of a long campaign by all Spiritualist bodies**" we expect our readers to try to falsify this with new evidence. In this way, scholarship proceeds.

Finally, a general observation. It is sometimes suggested that too great an interest in Glastonbury leads to the balance of the mind being disturbed. It is known that spending time in Jerusalem can lead some pilgrims to a breakdown. In the same way, involvement with the Duncan case can lead writers to abandon their normal caution. How else to explain that in the last 18 months not one but four complaints have been upheld against BBC History web site and BBC News for false statements about the Duncan case. If so eminent an institution as the BBC can be led into fantasy, it behoves the rest of us to be cautious.

LP.

# ALFRED VOUT PETERS

1867 - 1934

Alfred Vout Peters was credited for outstanding trance mediumship, clairvoyance and psychometry, and he was the first spiritualist medium in 1903 to demonstrate 'Public Clairvoyance' in Holland. He traveled extensively, promoting Spiritualism in most European countries until his death on Saturday, March 31<sup>st</sup> 1934 at Longton, Staffordshire, aged 67.

His first séance and the emergence of his trance mediumship took place on Sunday 17<sup>th</sup> March 1895; his public mediumship was to begin three years later in 1898 with his guide/control Moonstone.

However we shall see below that his beginnings in the psychic field began much earlier.

Whilst giving a lecture at the 'British College of Psychic Science' on Wednesday 15<sup>th</sup> March 1922 under the chairmanship of Mrs. Hewat McKenzie, Peters, on speaking on his beginnings, spoke of:- ..... *extraordinary powers of hearing, seeing and "sensing" as a child, which were quite normal to him, but which he speedily found were foreign to others. These powers seemed to leave him for a time, but later returned in the form of clairvoyance which manifested first during attendance at a Friends' meeting, and was often repeated. Only later did he touch what was called Spiritualism, and connected his own experiences with it.*

Later in the same lecture<sup>2</sup> he made this interesting remark: -

*Many questions followed, one extremely interesting one being in what country Mr. Peters thought that he obtained the best results. The answer was Scotland, where it was comparatively easy both for himself and other clairvoyants to get first and second names in public meetings. The reason for this Mr. Peters could not give, although various theories have been suggested. Denmark and Russia also gave excellent conditions.*

At some point before 1923, Vout Peters became a member of the Theosophical Society.

In 1898, while in London, Peters was controlled by another medium who was in Paris; this occurrence happening on five separate occasions! He also witnessed evidence of this with the physical medium Cecil Husk, whereby a friend of Peters materialised at a Husk séance but was still very much alive. These experiences may well have directed Peters towards Theosophy!

He was also strongly featured with the medium Mrs. Leonard in Sir Oliver J. Lodge's famous book *Raymond or Life and Death* first published 2<sup>nd</sup> November

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<sup>2</sup> *LIGHT* March 25, 1922 page 187

1916. It is here on September 27<sup>th</sup> 1915, that Peters first sat *anonymously*<sup>3</sup> with Lady Lodge and it was on this first sitting the famous ‘Group Photograph’<sup>4</sup> came to light.

Later in 1927 Peters participated in another historic event ‘Joanna Southcott’s Box’<sup>5</sup> as managed by Harry Price. Peters was one of the psychometrists (others included Mrs Cannock, Mrs. Eileen Garrett and Mrs Cantlon) who tried to discern its contents before the contents were known. On the morning of May 5<sup>th</sup> 1927 at the National Laboratory of Psychical Research, the box was X-rayed and the results were published in the London *Times* May 6<sup>th</sup> 1927.

The sealed box was opened by the ‘National Laboratory of Psychical Research’<sup>6</sup> on Monday July 11<sup>th</sup> 1927, at 8.00pm. This story is very well covered in the ‘*Journal of the American Society for Psychical Research*’ (JASPR) Volume XXI 1927. I shall only print what is said in relation to Peters’ psychometric results published in the JASPR page 704:-

*Mr. Vout Peters did much better (referring to the previous psychometrist Florence Kingstone: Psypioneer). His impressions of “bound books” (Right); “3 different kinds of writings” (annotations and notes in various books); “long piece of poetry” (Ovid); “curious drawings” (in Riders Merlin); “torn paper” (there was a crumpled up fly leaf torn from one of the books); “legible writings” (Right); “the box lining” (in the lid: right); “the name Jehovah” (in the Discourses); “1812 is mentioned” (on the coins); “writing blue or red” (Merlin is printed throughout in black and red ); and MS. 8vo. Size” (several of the books are octavo size).*

Suprisingly, there is little readily available historic information pertaining to Alfred Vout Peters. The *Psychic News* article 2<sup>nd</sup> July 1932 by Maurice Barbanell, printed below, was to be my principal reference to Alfred Vout Peters. However I have now used this as a template and have further researched some of the points featured by Barbanell.

Much of this will be continued into the March issue.

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<sup>3</sup> The anonymous sitting did not take place at the Lodge residence, but at Mrs. Kennedy’s house who kept a written record of the s Séance for Lodge.

<sup>4</sup> See: - *The New York Times Magazine* January 14<sup>th</sup> 1917. [http://query.nytimes.com/mem/archive-free/pdf?\\_r=1&res=9B00E4D6163AE433A25757C1A9679C946696D6CF&oref=slogin](http://query.nytimes.com/mem/archive-free/pdf?_r=1&res=9B00E4D6163AE433A25757C1A9679C946696D6CF&oref=slogin) See also: -

<http://209.85.135.104/search?q=cache:32t3Vvlg59QJ:people.clarkson.edu/~ekatz/scientists/lodge.html+raymond+or+life+and+death.+sir+oliver+lodge&hl=en&ct=clnk&cd=8&gl=uk>

<sup>5</sup> Harry Price website <http://www.harryprice.co.uk/Famous%20Cases/southcottbyharryprice.htm>

<sup>6</sup> Opened at Church House, Westminster, under the auspices of the ‘National Laboratory of Psychical Research’.

# **MEDIUM WHO WAS CONTROLLED BY A LIVING BEING**

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## **HAS THE GIFT OF TONGUES**

Alfred Vout Peters is our most widely travelled medium. He is also one of the old school. He is sixty-three years old and has been in the Spiritualist movement for thirty-seven years.

**When he was quite a child, he was conscious of the presence of two other children, and he used to remark to his mother, "I suppose they are God's angels who come and play with me after you leave me?"**

His mother, obviously a very sensible woman, allowed him to think they were angels, and thus there was in his mind no sense of fear. The word "ghost" had no terrors for him, for it was never mentioned to him.

Peters' troubles started when other people heard of his "curious ideas," and he was nicknamed "Fossil." He began to dream dreams that came true, but he kept this to himself, as he knew he would be laughed at. Then he had visions and heard voices other than his own. Later he was drawn towards the Society of Friends (Quakers), but he found that the visions increased in intensity.

He went to his sister-in-law's house on a Sunday early in 1895 for a table-sitting. He took his place at the table and waited to hear the raps and knocks he had been led to expect.

**Suddenly he felt as if he was being drawn up towards the ceiling, and he had to bend his head down to look at the people below. He was then thrown violently back from his chair, and while he was sprawling on the floor he heard voices coming through his mouth that were not his own.**

At that time he knew nothing of Spiritualism, but he continued to sit at home until his people became frightened. Then he went to a woman to "learn" about mediumship. He soon discovered that he was doing all the work while she was taking all the money, so he decided to take up mediumship under his own name.

It was in 1898 that he actually launched out on his own, and since then he has given seances in all parts of Europe. His guide is Moonstone, a Hindoo, who has materialised at the sittings of Florrie Cook (Mrs. Corner), Husk, and Williams.

### **SPREADING THE GOSPEL**

Moonstone has told Peters practically nothing about himself. He discourages personal questions. Peters has a picture of him, but he regards this as sacred, and will not let it out of his sight. The thought that it should be reproduced in the *Psychic News* and that thousands of people should look at it is positively distasteful to him – it is almost sacrilege.

Peters started a propaganda tour lasting ten years in 1903, and he visited every country in Europe with the exception of Spain, Portugal, and the Balkan States. He has also been to Iceland and Africa.

He was the first medium to give public clairvoyance in Holland, Belgium, Germany and several other countries, and while he was in Denmark he twice addressed audiences of over two thousand people. He concluded this tour just prior to the War, and after the Armistice had been declared he again travelled to Europe, spreading the teaching of Spiritualism and giving demonstrations of clairvoyance. He has visited Holland every year since, and is making another journey to that country this week-end.

Peters has written extensively for newspapers in England and in other countries, and was for some time the English correspondent of "Het Toekomst Leven" (meaning "The Future Life ") of Denmark. He was also the English representative at several Spiritualist congresses on the Continent.

### **LODGE AND THE MEDIUM**

He figures largely in Sir Oliver Lodge's book, "Raymond, which is mostly written round the seances of Mrs. Osborne Leonard and Peters, and his work has been quoted in various other books.

#### **Peters has the strange experience of being controlled by a living person.**

In 1899 he conducted a circle at his house in Brompton. There were three lady sitters, and one of them was herself a well-known medium. She went to Paris, but before going she promised the other sitters that she would try to control Peters. In Paris she went into trance, and Peters went into trance at Brompton. The spirit of this woman medium controlled Peters and gave evidential messages. Peters was controlled by her on five separate occasions.

Another similar experience, some time later, was rather embarrassing to a young woman sitter. While Peters was at Leicester, the daughter of another medium joined the circle, and Moonstone, who was in control, promised that, as no spirit had come through for her, he would make a test.

#### **She then heard the voice of her fiancé, who was alive and then on the West Coast of Africa, calling her by a pet name. He also told her that he had had her name tattooed on his left arm.**

Princess Karadja, of Sweden was a frequent sitter of Peters early in the present century. She has since published a volume of Spiritualistic phenomena in which she gives accounts of her sittings with Peters and Husk.

She got into touch with Peters through an advertisement in a psychic newspaper that had been left behind in a restaurant. She went, a stranger, to Peters' house for a sitting, and during the seance a message was given her in Swedish. The evidential details given her included the fact the husband's coffin had caught fire while it was lying in state in the castle of Bovigny. Peters went to Sweden in 1901, and she had several sittings with him.

When he first went to Russia, in 1906, he gave what was probably the first public clairvoyance in that country. The special permission of the police had first to be obtained – with the aid of a little bribery – and after that he gave clairvoyance to a number of groups.

### **SAVING HER FORTUNE**

At one meeting the Spirit told a woman, through Peters, that she should put her papers in order, for her husband would not be much longer on the earth, and if he died suddenly she would be a poor woman. She replied that she had not lived with her husband for many years, and, anyway, their estates were separate.

The warning was repeated, however and the woman did have her papers examined. A fortnight later the woman's husband died, and it was found that the woman's estate was involved with that of her husband. Had she not had her papers put in order she would have been a poor woman, as was predicted.

On another occasion Peters had finished his usual clairvoyance when he felt impelled to tell a man to be careful of the following January 14, about two months off.

**The man asked the reason, and Peters replied that he could see that date written over his head, in black. Peters later learned that the man committed suicide on 14th January at Monte Carlo, after he had lost heavily at gambling.**

Peters opened a campaign with Miss Stead in 1925. They, by the way, are the only two surviving members of Julia's Bureau, which was instituted by W. T. Stead and is now known as the Stead Bureau. The campaign was started in a remarkable way.

Miss Stead received a message from her father, telling her to go out into the highways and the byways and spread the teaching. She was to take Peters with her, and they were to concentrate on those places where there was not a Spiritualist society in existence. Miss Stead was at that time in London, and Peters was in Edinburgh.

Twice while he was in Edinburgh and once while he was in Glasgow Peters had similar messages from Stead. When they compared notes later, they found that the messages had come through almost on the same day. Peters knew Stead very well, and sat with him a great deal.

### **REVIVING AN OLD TRADE**

Peters was once the means of reviving the manufacture of old gold tissue. He went to Canterbury and saw two women who were searching for the secret.

**The information that Moonstone was able to give them enabled them to present to Queen Alexandra the first piece of gold tissue that had been made since the eighteenth century.**

Through psychometry, Peters was able to trace an important paper, on which depended the result of a law suit.

A Dr. Hansen once came over from Copenhagen with some letters from a man named George Larsen to be psychometrised. Neither Peters nor Dr. Hansen knew what

the letters contained, but when the doctor returned to Copenhagen he ascertained that all that Peters had said was correct.

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Due to space, this current issue only allows me to pick up on Princess Karadja, of Sweden. There is little in historic works that gives an early detailed progression of Modern Spiritualism in this county, so the two following articles gives us some insight to the work and affect of Alfred Vout Peters' work.

It will be remembered also that Sweden was the birthplace of Emanuel Swedenborg (1688 – 1772).

*Below is taken from Light October 27th 1900 - page 513*

## **WORKS BY THE PRINCESS KARADJA**

The literature of Spiritualism has just been enriched by translation into German of three little books by the princess Mary Karadja, a well-known Swedish writer who is a convert to Spiritualism.

In her introduction to 'Spiritistic Phenomena and Spiritualistic Communications,' the Princess tells us that the first spiritualistic séance at which she was ever present, took place in Stockholm, on April 2nd, 1899, with a clairvoyant medium. Up to that time she had never taken any interest in occult subjects; but she was so impressed by what then occurred that she determined, when on a visit to London the same spring, to devote her whole time to this interesting study. She goes on to say that she had no acquaintance among Spiritualists in London and it was only through seeing an advertisement in 'LIGHT' that she resolved to attend a séance with the well-known clairvoyant and psychometrist, Alfred Peters. The description of this first séance, which was a turning point in her life, is extremely interesting. She tells us that she went to him as a perfect stranger and found herself one of ten persons, all of whom were utterly unknown to her, as she was to them, and says that, as she speaks English like a native, Mr. Peters was not even acquainted with her nationality. What occurred at this séance is – I think – worth giving in her own words. Premising that no one spoke to her and that she took her place without uttering a word, she writes:-

*After the medium had psychometrised several persons with good results he turned to me and said: "I see a spirit close to you" (there followed a description which I recognised the minutest details as that of my deceased husband). "I hear him call, Mary! Mary! His name is John; he wishes to say something to you." Thereupon followed a long communication of a private nature, concerning facts about which no one except my late husband could possibly have knowledge. Among other things, he reminded me of a fire which broke out at Castle Bovigny while his body was in the coffin. He was conscious of seeing his coffin burning and myself falling fainting beside it. This remarkable and terrible event was, of course, unknown to anyone present, nor was I thinking of it at the time. After a short pause the medium continued: "I see a female figure near you," which he described*

*minutely. I said I had never known such a person. Mr. Peters said: "She gives her name as Bremer." I said he must be mistaken for I had never known anyone of that name. After a long pause and with great effort, he added, "Fred-rika Bre-mer."<sup>7</sup> To my astonishment, the voice of the medium changed and he said slowly in Swedish, "Hjälp den svenska kvinnan" (help the Swedish lady).*

Princess Karadja seems to have attended many of Mr. Peters' séances, and she partly attributes the unusual success she met with to the fact that she discovered that she herself possessed strong medial powers. With another medium she likewise on several occasions saw the materialised face of her husband, who was also able to speak to her, and she gives the names and addresses of persons who were present, among whom was Dr. George Wyld. She seems to have highly enjoyed her visit to London and writes:

*I had the great happiness during my stay in London of making the acquaintance of many eminent men of science, among whom were Sir William Crookes, Mr. Myers, Mr. Sinnett, Mr. Douglas Murray and Dr. George Wyld, from whom I obtained much information.*

The Princess's stay in London was terminated rather abruptly by a command from her husband – on the seventh occasion of his appearing to her (June 18th, 1899) – that she should immediately leave London and proceed to the Chapel of Schloss Bovigny. She accordingly set out on her travels on the following day, without any idea of why she was required to do so. What occurred on her arrival at Schloss Bovigny a few days after, I will tell later on.

The remainder of this little book, as well as another called 'The Gospel of Hope,' is principally devoted to the facts and philosophy of Spiritualism. Princess Karadja, though very earnest and even enthusiastic in her endeavours to proclaim what she justly calls 'the evangel of hope,' writes with great moderation and without exaggeration; her diction is clear, and her style marked by great good sense; and Sweden may be congratulated on possessing among her daughters a lady of such rare gifts and talents, who is not afraid of devoting them to an unpopular cause. She says but little of her own medial gifts, but it appears that she is not only impressionably endowed and possessed of the power of automatic writing, but she has likewise that of automatic drawing, a rare gift and one requiring great physical power. Two of her 'spirit' drawings appear as frontispieces to 'Spiritistic Phenomena' and 'The Gospel of Hope.' The first represents the soul body immediately after the decease of the physical, with the eyes closed, still unconscious, and the cord connecting it with the mortal body not yet dissevered. The second is a symbolical drawing, executed in the presence of two Swedish ladies – whose names are given – on January 16th, 1900; an explanation of this was given in writing later on and appears opposite it. Both drawings are beautifully executed.

The third of these little books, 'Into the Light,' is an inspirational poem, translated into German by Alfred Wocher von Trauchburg from the Swedish original, and the remarkable manner of its production may be best given in the authoress's own words from the preface. I will just say that I feel scarcely competent

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<sup>7</sup> This was a well-known Swedish authoress and philanthropist, who flourished in the early part of the century and whose works, translated into English, I was very fond of in my youth, but which are rarely met with now. M.T.

to judge of its merits as a poem, being, as it is, a translation from one foreign language into another; but it appears to me to be full of beauties, while the interest is so sustained I could not lay it down till I had read the last line. Princess Karadja writes:-

*When I was in London last spring I received a series of spiritistic communications from my deceased husband... In the last one he requested me to leave London immediately in order to receive a communication from the spirit world in the chapel of Schloss Bovigny. I obeyed, and on St. John's Eve I was told to provide myself there with paper and writing materials. My hand then automatically drew a sun and wrote the words "Mot Ljuset" (Into the Light); and then was written "In memoria æterna erit justus." I have never studied Latin and am ignorant if this is a quotation.*

*What followed was not written automatically but through inspiration. When I took the pen in my hand I had no idea of what was going to be written, in spite of which I wrote hundreds of verses without once pausing for a word. It seemed to me at the time as though the temperature perceptibly became lower and I was freezing in spite of the oppressive heat of summer. My soul was wrapt and all my senses sharpened to an extraordinary degree. I seemed to perceive the whispers of spirits so clearly, it was as though I was being dictated to.*

The poem itself is addressed to the medium in the first person by the supposed spirit of one who says his name has long been forgotten on earth. In his earth life he was a materialist, and wholly given up to selfish and sensual pleasures; when he had exhausted all that earth could give him and was tired of life, he thought to ensure eternal rest, or annihilation, by putting an end to it, which he did by committing suicide by shooting himself. The horror he experienced when, after a short period of unconsciousness, he awoke to find that, although his body lay dead before him weltering in the blood he himself had shed, he himself was as much alive as ever, but in total darkness and despair, is very graphically depicted, as are the events which follow, through which he was finally led 'into the Light.' The poem contains many instructive passages, and throughout the gospel of Hope is proclaimed, in that it sets forth that there is hope for the greatest sinner who ever lived when he can once be brought to send forth a cry of penitence and a prayer, however feeble and despairing, to that Heavenly Father whom in life he had ignored and denied.

The German editions of these three little books are entitled respectively 'Spiritistische Phænomene,' 'Das Evangelium der Hoffnung,' and 'Zum Licht.' They are very daintily got up, are printed in large clear type on very fine paper, and published by Max Spohr at Leipzig, at the price of one mark and a half each.

M. T.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> I do not know who M. T. was, at this time *Light* was edited by E. Dawson Rogers – Assisted by a staff of able contributors.

## SPIRITUALISM IN NORWAY AND SWEDEN

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As many of my friends have asked me to write about my experiences in Scandinavia, permit me to say that Spiritualism in Sweden and Norway is of long standing, and some of the best English and American mediums have visited both countries. I met many people who knew Mr. Eglinton, Dr. Slade, Mrs. Fay, and last, but not least, Madame d'Esperance, who is loved and honoured for her self-sacrificing work on the Continent. But, although the climate and conditions generally are good, yet in the whole of Norway and Sweden, so far as I am aware, there is not a clairvoyant who can give a test. I think I am correct in saying that I was the first clairvoyant who visited Sweden to work for Spiritualism.

Some of the readers of 'LIGHT,' I find, are under the impression that my reception in Stockholm was not a good one, because, in her kindly letter in 'LIGHT,' of March 15th, the Princess Karadja pointed out some of the difficulties<sup>9</sup> I had to contend with; but I am pleased to say that every one I met in Sweden and Norway was most kind and sympathetic, and both Spiritualists and non-Spiritualists put themselves out of the way to make me happy and comfortable, and the only rudeness I received was from an Englishman. The representatives of the Press of Stockholm interviewed me and were very much kinder to me than those of London papers; but I regret that I cannot say the same regarding their treatment of the Princess Karadja, whose recent nervous breakdown was due to her great efforts to correct and counteract the misstatements and misrepresentations of the newspapers all over Sweden. There is, however, another side to the picture. The people are tired of the State Church; at the same time materialism does not satisfy them; and Princess Karadja's book, 'Towards the Light,' which has been translated into well-nigh every other language but English, has made many a heart hungry for the truths of Spiritualism. The Spiritualists meet at each other's houses and hold seances at which they get a little automatic writing, and read and translate 'LIGHT' (which, by the way, is light to the struggling ones there), and in Norway there are many Spiritualists who are the converts of a gentleman who was brought to Spiritualism in South America. There is a spiritualist paper edited by Mr. Torstenton, of Skien, and the faithful few struggle on, endeavouring to help their countrymen to realise that

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<sup>9</sup> **A significant part of Mary Karadja letter:** - Your English readers cannot form any conception of the intense hatred which the progress of our Cause has provoked in certain classes of this country. Some people (who had obtained admission under false pretences) came to the seances with the deliberate purpose of preventing success, and afterwards published in the papers distorted reports of the phenomena we obtained.

One man of science, for instance, conceived the neat little trick of giving the medium, to psychometrise, a piece of paper enclosed in four envelopes, which he had got from different people, and which consequently was impregnated with uncongenial fluids. In another case a piece of waste paper was handed to the medium, enclosed in a mourning envelope fastened with a black seal, by a sad-faced gentleman, who afterwards begged Mr. Peters to psychometrise a locket, containing 'hair of a dear relative.' Later on the public were informed that the hair had been taken from the tail of a dog. (taken from Mr. Peters in Sweden by Princess Karadja *Light* 1902)

there is no death. The good work of Mr. Matthews Fidler is not forgotten; and how truly his memory is loved both in Sweden and Norway eternity alone can reveal! I feel sure that the readers of 'LIGHT' will extend their deep sympathy to the Princess Karadja in the sufferings which have resulted from her noble endeavours to spread the knowledge of truth in her country, against the opposition of clergy, doctors, college professors, and an unchivalrous public Press, and wish her a speedy restoration to health and strength.

As an illustration of the eagerness of the people to know the truth, I may mention that I met a lady in Christiania who had travelled two hundred miles to attend the séance during the rigour of a Norwegian winter – and those only who have experienced it can understand what that means. At Stockholm, too, there was an old peasant woman who came twenty-five miles over an ice-bound sea to Princess Karadja, to get proof of her son's death (and entrance into life), for he had left home in a boat and was never heard of again. Spiritualism has brought light to many, and 'the tears have thereby been wiped from many eyes.' May God bless the workers and brave upholders of truth in the lovely lands of Sweden and Norway, is the wish of

ALFRED VOUT PETERS.

To be continued in the next issue.....•

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[**Note by Psypioneer:** - The following is the first part of a four part series of papers presented by Dr. Carlos S. Alvarado. The following three papers will be: - Od and Psychometry, Perispirit and Mediumistic Forces, and Mental Mediumship and Telepathy.]

## **Further Notes on Historical Ideas of Human Radiations:**

### **I. On Electricity and Other Forces**

**Carlos S. Alvarado**

The topic of human radiations—also called animal magnetism, fluids, and nervous, psychic or vital force—has a vast literature, as I have discussed in a recently published paper (Alvarado, 2006). In that article I reviewed several ideas and observations from mesmeric, spiritualistic, and psychical research writings. The current notes, divided into four parts, are intended to be an addendum to the previous paper and are based to a great extent on material that had to be excluded due to space limitations. It is my hope that, together with the initial paper, these notes will guide

interested readers to sources of information about past concepts of force and their relation to psychic phenomena.

### Electrical Speculations and Other Forces

Darnton (1968) has reminded us that ideas of animal magnetism were developed by Mesmer and others in France in the context of a great interest in all kind of physical forces. For example, at the time the wonders of electricity were as mysterious to the intellectual and scientist as was animal magnetism. Electricity was considered by many to be a vital force, something related or identical to the process of life itself (Brazier, 1984; Clarke & Jacyna, 1987; for a later period see Morus, 1998). In fact, the concepts of electricity and animal magnetism were not completely independent of each other (Sutton, 1981). Certainly some mesmerists drew their ideas from the studies of electricity of their times. In one mesmerist's view: "Mesmerism is probably only a modification of inorganic electricity" (Esdaile, 1852, p. 230). Esdaile further wrote: "If the electric fish can secrete electricity, and project it in the direction desired by the will, why should not man possess a modification of the same power?" (p. 233).

Another writer stated:

Some consider Electricity to be the principle of life . . . . We hear of Galvanism and Magnetic-electricity, or Electro-magnetism, and its efficacy through machines, upon the human body, in relieving paralysis and rheumatism, and different neuralgic disorders. Why might not Mesmerism, or Animal-magnetism . . . be Electricity under a different character? . . . . In our present imperfect knowledge of Mesmerism . . . it may be premature to adopt a theory: still I cannot help expressing an opinion that electricity, under some modification or other, is the immediate agent to which the Mesmeric action must be referred (Sandby, 1848, p. 71).

In this context, animal magnetism was only one among many unexplained forces of nature. Mesmer himself felt that animal magnetism could increase our understanding of such things as fire, light, gravity, and electricity, as seen in his *Mémoire sur la découverte du magnétisme* (1779, p. 80). Some years later Deleuze (1813, p. 81) wondered about the possibility that animal magnetism was a variant of such forces as light, magnetism, electricity, and heat. While this context did not ensure universal acceptance of the idea of animal magnetism in all quarters, it may have prepared the ground for receptive hearing.

Another example of attempts to associate animal magnetism to other forces of nature was John Ashburner's (1867) discussion of animal magnetism in his book, *Notes and Studies in the Philosophy of Animal Magnetism and Spiritualism*. In his view, we should consider the "evolutions of forces to be traced from the lowest grades of mineral crystal force by successive gradations up to that magnetic vital force culminating finally in the magnet, or grand crystal, Man; who remains subject even in the operations of his mind, to an inexorable magnetic law, acting through his phrenological organs, either from the force of his own soul, or from the force of the will of another" (p. vii). Such continuity of forces was assumed by many in the mesmeric literature.

Spiritualists also speculated that the phenomena produced by mediums were new and little-understood forces of nature, such as magnetism and electricity. This seemed to have been the perspective taken by Thomas Brevior (1864). After discussing such phenomena as evaporation, combustion, heat, electricity, and magnetism, Brevior stated: “If spirit is to us a mystery, matter of which we talk so glibly is no less so; for who can tell what matter is . . . . What is the substance which underlies these properties? Who can tell me that? If we know spirit by its manifestations, we know matter only by its properties of the real—the inmost nature of both we are equally ignorant” (pp. 279-280). Similar arguments and comparisons appeared in other nineteenth century publications (e.g., Barkas, 1862, pp. 75-82), and it was not uncommon for spiritualists to write about the forces of nature, principles such as electricity, light, and magnetism (e.g., Dille, 1852). Many writers on spiritualism discussed the range of physical forces and its relation to spirit. One such example was the following:

It is well known that, in its higher gradations, matter is so sublimated as to escape the observation of the senses. If we admit that, in this refined state, it may be organized, we have furnished *our* answer to the great question of the soul’s independent existence. It is equally certain that the sphere of organic being comprehends millions of creatures, too minute to be perceived by the eye. Why may not other millions exist, invisible, not on account of their minuteness, but the refinement of their composition? . . . . But if disorganized matter may be so refined as to escape the sphere of sensuous observation, can a single reason be given for the hypothesis which denies the existence of invisible beings, possessing an organic structure of more refined elements, and adapted to sustain the relations, and perform the functions of a more exalted and spiritual life? To think of limiting the organic law to the contracted vision of mortals, indicates less of the immortal than appropriately belongs to man. If I am not in error concerning the general law which I have presumed to graduate the organization of matter by the specific degrees of its refinement, the argument would seem to be conclusive in proof of the existence of invisible spiritual beings (Brittan, 1852, p. 59-60).

Eugene Crowell asserted in his book *The Identity of Primitive Christianity and Modern Spiritualism* (1874): “Whatever may be the force employed, it soon becomes evident to all investigators of the spiritual phenomena, that electricity is not the cause of them, as some unscientific persons assert” (Vol. 1, p. 493). Nonetheless, there were many speculations about the role of electricity in spiritualistic phenomena. This included a statement from a spirit communicators saying: “It is by that power all tangible bodies are moved—all the so-called miracles are performed” (Bradley, 1870, p. 186). Furthermore such an influential writer as Andrew Jackson Davis believed that electricity was the “universal medium of spiritual vision” (Davis, 1853, p. 264).

In his book *Experimental Investigations of the Spirit Manifestations*, chemist Robert Hare (1855) saw raps as related to some sort of electricity. As discussed in mediumistic communications presented by Hare: “The raps are produced by voluntary discharges of the vitalized spiritual electricity, above mentioned, from the spirit, coming in contact with the animal electricity emanating from the medium” (p. 94). Certainly many writers speculated on electricity, or its variants, to explain such phenomena as the movement of objects (e.g., Dods, 1854; Hitchman, 1875), an idea

disputed by others (e.g., Rogers, 1853). One writer presented an elaborate and imaginative account of the process:

The vertebrae are, as it were, the successive plates of a galvanic battery, of which the skull is the apex, while the spine, culminating in the brain, constitutes, like the acid in the artificial battery, a continuous and cumulative creator and channel of the electromagnetic force. Of this force the nerves of sensation and of voluntary motion are the conductors. . . . The living battery, as ordinarily charged, may suffice to keep but one hemisphere of the brain in action, while an excessive charge may keep both hemispheres in simultaneous action.

This theory may account for the rappings, phosphoric lights, table tipping, and other physical phenomena, reported in connection with the pretended spiritual intercourse. (Modern Necromancy, 1855, p. 521)

There were reports of electrical-like sensations that supported this belief. When Judge John Worth Edmonds was developing as a medium he experienced “like a stream of electricity” touching him in different parts of the body (Edmonds & Dexter, 1853, p. 19). Another example appeared in Capron and Barron’s *Explanation and History of the Mysterious Communion with Spirits* (1850). They stated in relation to rapping mediums: “Persons sometimes feel a sensation of electricity passing over their limbs when they stand in the vicinity of those who get the sounds most freely, although the particular persons who seem to be the medium feel no sensation at all. In one or two instances we have seen a perceptible shock as if caused by a galvanic battery especially when the persons were under the influence of Magnetism” (p. 29). Similarly, Sophia De Morgan (1863) referred to sensations of “tingling like that produced by the wires of a galvanic battery, and, during the raps, slight shocks like electricity passing through the arm of the medium” (p. 95).

The idea was also related late into the nineteenth-century to telepathy. One example was Mark Twain’s (1891) belief that “the something which conveys on thoughts through the air from brain to brain is a finer and subtler form of electricity” (p. 101). Other cases helping to keep alive the belief in the electrical agency of physical phenomena were reports of poltergeist occurrences. The controversial “electrical girl” Angélique Cottin (Owen, 1864) was one of the better known and most widely cited cases (e.g., Rogers, 1853, pp. 52-59). She presented phenomena such as the apparent “repulsion” of chairs and other objects when in contact with her body. Another case was published in the *Atlantic Monthly* by H. A. Willis (1868, p. 133), who reported observations made to determine whether electricity accounted for both raps and movements of tables. The raps usually followed the presumed agent around but when she got into a bed that had the posts on glass with the purpose of preventing electrical discharges, the raps did not take place. Lack of raps in bed continued for six weeks and when they were heard once it was found that one of the posts was not on the glass. Other observations did not seem to support an electrical explanation.

In his book, *Essai sur les phénomènes électriques des êtres vivants comprenant l’explication scientifique des phénomènes dits spirites*, Louis-Sophron Fugairon (1894) claimed that “mediumistic phenomena are nothing but electrical phenomena” (p. 181). Under abnormal conditions this electricity could be projected from the body and could be enhanced by emission from the sitters in a mediumistic circle. The

phantoms seen in these circles, according to Fugairon, were electrical vapors coming from the medium. These could be “an expansion of the vaporous body similar to the pseudopods or prolongations of the gelatinous body of amoebas” (p. 153). The electrical vapor could be formed also of organic substances from the medium’s body. This vaporous body, called an aereosome, formed materializations.

Whiting (1871) recommended the use of a “magneto-electric” machine of his to improve table phenomena caused by the animal electricity used by the spirits. Along these lines, De Rochas (1897, p. 16) noticed that Palladino’s phenomena seemed to be intensified by electricity from a Wimshurst machine. Years later Azam (1926) believed that the vital force was a current of electrons (p. 356) and that this current from mediums and sitters produced materializations (p. 410).

There is no question that electricity, and other forces and related technology, became part of the modern nineteenth-century world. Electricity was so integrated into culture that an author referred to an “age of electricity, just as former ones have been called, respectively, the ages of stone, bronze, and iron” (Brackett, 1889, p. 643). Such a principle, perceived by many as having limitless potential, was surely destined to be applied to all sorts of mysterious and little understood phenomena, such as the ones discussed in this paper.

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In the next issue we continue with 'Further Notes on Historical Ideas of Human Radiations: - Part II. *Od and Psychometry*.

Notes by the Way: -

## So farewell then, the Christian Parapsychologist?

*A good name is better than precious ointment" - Ecclesiastes 7.1*

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It's official – the Churches' Fellowship for Psychical and Spiritual Studies is planning to close down its flagship quarterly journal "The Christian Parapsychologist" after the retirement of Canon Michael Perry (see *Psypioneer* January 2008.<sup>10</sup>) The news came in a circular sent to all members dated February 2008. Recommendations from a working party (names not disclosed) whom they consulted had been approved by the CFPSS Council.

*"It was also recommended that the ' Christian Parapsychologist' in its present form should cease publication with Michael's final edition in September 2008 to be re-launched with the new title ' Psychical and Spiritual Studies' in the Spring of 2009. It is proposed that this new journal be published only twice a year, but be larger in size...."*

It was not clear why the closure had been sought, but the new title, which omits the word "Christian", might be felt to be more inclusive and of a wider appeal in a multi-cultural society. However this could be a "Consignia moment" (a reference to the decision of the old-established Post Office brand in the UK to change its name in 2002 to the meaningless "Consignia," later reversed at great expense). There is also the possibility of confusion with other journals, such as those of the Unitarian Society for Psychical Studies or of the former Academy of Religion and Psychical Research<sup>11</sup>. The fate of Spiritual Frontiers Fellowship, which became so inclusive it faded like the Cheshire Cat, also comes to mind.

But in my memory we are again in the parlour of CFPSS vice-chairman John Pearce-Higgins (JDPH) in Putney, London, in Spring 1975. It is late but the Psychic Phenomena Committee, chaired by Rev Allan Barham, is discussing a proposal to issue a newsletter. The name, conceived later by David Ellis who printed the early issues, was "The Christian Parapsychologist." (Ellis also drew the original chi-rho-psi symbol for the CP) The new publication caused consternation. This was no duplicated gestetner effort, but a fully fledged printed journal in miniature. Soon the command came from CFPSS headquarters to cease publication, as there was already an official organ, the "Quarterly Review" edited by Maurice Frost the general secretary.

But Ellis, Michael Lewis and myself, while agreeing to remove the CFPSS symbol, registered it as a business name. Margaret Brice-Smith, then merely in her eighties, was joined by her colleague from the CFPSS Mysticism Committee, Jean Sydney, and they took over sub records and distribution of the new publication. (Real mystics can

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<sup>10</sup> <http://www.woodlandway.org/PDF/PP4.1January08..pdf> page 10.

<sup>11</sup> Now found at [www.aspsi.org](http://www.aspsi.org) (ASPSI)

be highly practical!) Margaret also financed expansion. She recruited Robin Gold to be our treasurer. Edwin Butler, a veteran Christian Spiritualist, became Minutes Secretary of the Editorial Group.

Another Spiritualist, Maurice Barbanell, editor of Psychic News, was not pleased. Christian Parapsychology, he declared, was a contradiction in terms. And certainly in those days the fellowship was regarded with suspicion not just by Spiritualists (for stealing their thunder, as was supposed) but also by many church people, and by psychical researchers, for alleged unsound beliefs and uncritical attitudes.

Archdeacon Michael Perry epitomised the change which ensued. After accepting an invitation to review a book for CP, he later became book review editor and then editor himself. The first bishops, then an archbishop, appeared in its pages. No wonder CFPSS president Garth Moore was moved to declare that CP was the most effective single instrument so far in the mission of the fellowship. The CFPSS symbol was proudly restored on CP next to CP's own Greek symbol.

Some of those who created the early CP went on to further work. David Ellis became printer to this day of the SPR. Robin Gold served as CFPSS treasurer, Margaret Brice-Smith became a CFPSS vice-president. Edwin Butler in his nineties was an early financier of Psypioneer publications. The CP editor of 1975 became the "Theosophical History" editor of 1985; this publication again caused consternation, as content was not controlled by any theosophical organisation; still the case<sup>12</sup>.

Personally I believe that CP has something in common with Psychic News. We have published accounts of how PN was inspired from elsewhere. Similarly I suspect that CP also was an idea dropped into the subconscious by what JDPH used to call the celestial civil service. I think also it was foreshadowed by a gentleman of military bearing (giving the name Reg) who was perceived by a medium just before a sitting in Chiswick in 1974, and who spoke of a coming small thing which would become large. But then Col. Lester himself, first fellowship chairman, had been alerted (by Mollie Duncan) well in advance, to the coming of the fellowship.

CFPSS members have until 29 February 2008 to comment on these and other proposals. The Fellowship is to be commended for setting them out in detail to members well in advance.

LP.

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<sup>12</sup> See: - [www.theohistory.org](http://www.theohistory.org) .

## W.J. COLVILLE

1859 – 1917

W.J. Colville was an inspirational speaker and authored numerous books; in 1890 he became a member of the Theosophical Society.

The following has been taken from his short autobiography that was published in his 'Universal Spiritualism' R.F. Fenno & Company: New York (copyright 1906) including several quotes.

Colville starts his autobiography I quote: -

*IF I am to relate faithfully, even in barest outline, my experiences with "unseen helpers," I must go back to my very early childhood, when my "mediumship" originally declared itself. I was practically an orphan from birth. My mother passed to spirit life in my infancy and my father was called by important business to travel in lands remote from England, where I was left in charge of a guardian.*

He continues; Inspirational experiences: -

*How I first came to see my mother clairvoyantly I do not know, but I distinctly remember becoming vividly conscious at frequent intervals of the gentle, loving presence of a beautiful young woman, who invariably appeared to my vision gracefully attired in light garments of singular beauty. The head of this charming lady was adorned with golden ringlets; her eyes were intensely blue; she was tall and of rather slender build, and manifested many attributes of almost ideal womanhood. I cannot recall to mind any occasion when this lady spoke to me as one ordinary human being on earth converses with another, but I distinctly recollect that when I saw her most plainly and felt her presence most distinctly, I was intensely conscious of information flowing into me. I can only liken my experience to some memorable statements of Swedenborg concerning influx of knowledge into the interiors of human understanding.*

Significant dates May 24<sup>th</sup> 1874 - March 4<sup>th</sup> 1877: -

*I gradually drifted into a more prosaic state of life, from which I was suddenly aroused by the presence of the world-renowned Cora L. V. Richmond (then Mrs. Tappan) in England during the seventies of the last century. When I was nearly fourteen years of age, and a member of a church choir, Mrs. Tappan greatly excited the population of Brighton, where I was then residing, by her marvelous discourses and poems, and singularly erudite replies to all kinds of questions, which she claimed were not due to her own erudition, of which she made no boast and to which she laid no claim, but to the action through her instrumentality of a band of guides who were ready to speak through her whenever their services were in demand.*

*May 24th, 1874, was, indeed, an eventful day in my history, for though my public career as a lecturer and globe-trotter did not begin till nearly three years later, it was on the evening of that beautiful Whit-Sunday that I experienced the first thrill of consciousness that it was my principal lifework to travel nearly all over the earth, guided by unseen but not unknown inspirers, who would carry me safely over all*

*tempestuous oceans and protect me from all dangers by land if I would but be faithful to the mission entrusted to me by wise and kindly helpers.*

*When I first took the platform I felt very much as I had often felt in more private places when voluntarily obeying the silently expressed dictation of the talented psychologist who could transmit to and through me any information he desired to convey when I was in a susceptible condition; but though he declared that I was perfectly his “subject,” and I was quite willing to be such, I could not be induced by any professional mesmerist, or practicing physician, who was engaged in the conduct of hypnotic experiments, to receive or transmit anything, simply because I did not choose to make myself passive or susceptible.*

*I remember well sitting on the platform in old Doughty Hall (a Masonic edifice no longer in existence) on Sunday evening, March 4th, 1877, and gazing out upon a large concourse of people gathered to hear the “kitten orator,” as I had been called because of my youth, discourse on a subject to be selected by their own vote. A hymn was sung to open a semi-religious service, and then I rose and offered a prayer, the words of which formed themselves in my mouth without forethought or conscious volition of my own. After a second hymn the presiding officer – the long celebrated James Burns, editor of the *Medium and Daybreak* – announced in my hearing that the youthful occupant of the platform was prepared to discourse under inspiration on any theme the audience might think proper to select. I heard this without the slightest internal trepidation. I had become tense, callous, self-assured, but completely confident that an intelligence beyond my normal own would certainly render me entirely equal to the occasion.*

*A subject was quickly decided upon by show of hands, and I rose to lecture. I spoke unfalteringly for fully an hour, and resumed my seat unexcited and unfatigued. A third hymn was sung, and then Mr. Burns called upon the audience to mention topics for an impromptu poem. Three or four subjects were given, and no sooner was a decision reached by the chairman as to which topic had received the greatest show of hands, than I rose for the third and last time that evening, and heard myself reel off a number of verses as easily and fluently as though I had them well committed to memory, though I am certain they were nowhere in print, and I was listening to them for the first time.*

From this point Colville, for the next nineteen months (March 1877 – 1878) became a celebrated speaker in England, he left England for Boston America near the close of October, 1878,

On reaching America he found that his arrival had been heralded in the columns of the *Banner of Light*, the oldest spiritualistic paper in the world at that time. He was met by his friend the spiritualist pioneer Robert Cooper, of Eastbourne, England who will incidentally be featured in a later next newsletter.

Cooper informed Colville on his arrival that Dr. Peebles had just completed a lecture engagement in Parker Memorial Hall, and that he had announced Colville to be his successor. Colville now 18 years old was entirely unknown to the directors of the Parker Hall lectureship. In Boston his work quickly grew and he was called to New York, Philadelphia, and other mighty cities, not excepting Chicago, where he

filled Mrs. Cora L. V. Richmond's platform for an extended period, while she was filling an engagement in Boston.

He writes: - *Nearly five busy years had sped their course when, in 1883, I found myself again in England, taking up afresh the work which I never laid down, but only temporarily suspended when I was led to cross the ocean and become a prominent worker in America.*

1884 he returned to the United States, and in 1885 again briefly revisited England. During those years he accomplished a large amount of literary work in addition to extensive traveling and constant lecturing, also visiting California in 1886 for the first time....., *and spent five delightful months on the sunny Pacific slope, in which charming country I addressed daily audiences often numbering many hundred persons, and saw wonderful results from the practice of mental healing, of which I had by that time become, and of which I still am, an uncompromising, though I trust not a fanatical, advocate and exponent.*

Colville continues: - *For ten years I saw nothing of England, and it was through the joint instrumentality of Lady Caithness, Duchesse de Pomar, in Paris, and the special excursion of the World's Women's Christian Temperance Union from New York, in June, 1895, that I revisited Europe after ten years' unbroken residence in America. Those ten years had been very busy and highly eventful ones; my singular experiences during their highly checkered course would fill many a bulky volume. I had scoured America from Canada to the Gulf of Mexico, and had met with warm receptions and enthusiastic audiences everywhere, though let no one imagine that a prominent public life means constant resting on a bed of roses; roses abound but thorns are often their intimate neighbors. I had produced a number of books, edited several periodicals, and contributed many hundreds of articles to magazines, besides having written thousands of letters to newspapers, in addition to musical work, before I again set foot in England after my departure in 1885.*

In 1886 Colville received pressing invitations to visit Australia, but he did not go until around 1900 to which he records: - *.....during the nearly two years which I spent south of the Equator, I still pursued my way unflaggingly and untiringly in all varieties of climate and in a great variety of surroundings. I owe a deep debt of gratitude to friends, seen and unseen, for the many tokens of their care and kindness which have brightened all my journeyings and rendered possible of accomplishment the widely extended mission which took me to the Southern Hemisphere. Adelaide, Melbourne, Sydney, Brisbane, Newcastle, and many smaller places in great Australia, I shall ever feel united with as centres of work which I know has already borne good fruit in numerous ways. Auckland, Wellington, and Christchurch in picturesque New Zealand will always remain equally sacred in my memory. During all my Antipodean wanderings I found my psychic faculties fully as clear and as much in evidence as in other lands where the Southern Cross is an unseen constellation. I am now assured that my traveling days are not yet over, and that I still have oceans to cross, and continents to traverse, before I can honorably retire from active service, if such retirement shall ever be my portion.*

Here printed below Colville, while in Australia, shows the *early* importance of 'LIGHT', that indeed even today these valuable pages are still being turned by Psypioneer and its readers!

LIGHT, July 13, 1901 - page 334.

## MR. W. J. COLVILLE

Though it is a long time since I have sent anything to your columns, I have during my long sojourn at the Antipodes been frequently delighted and edified by the pages of your most instructive journal, which I am happy to say is being very extensively read in the public reading rooms of all the chief Australian cities; no paper, indeed, is more eagerly sought after and diligently perused in the School of Arts of Library in Sydney, which is always frequented by an immense crowd of readers. I was very much pleased to see your kind allusion a few months ago to my anticipated return to London. In the course of a business letter to Mr. Lingford I incidentally mentioned my fervent hope that I should soon see London again, not expecting that it would gain such wide publicity as your columns have given it. In consequence of your advertising my expected return to England I have received up to date nearly forty letters from old and new friends inquiring as to the expected date of my arrival and the arrangements to be made for my public appearances and semi-private lectures. I now ask you to inform your numerous readers that my engagement in Sydney – where I am having immense audiences twice and often three times every Sunday, and nearly every evening in the week, either in the city or the suburbs – terminates with the end of July. Early in August I expect to embark on the Canadian Pacific steamer for Vancouver, *en route* for England I shall no doubt be detained a few months in America, where I have numerous opportunities for lecturing and important business with publishers, but at the very latest I hope to be installed in London early in December next. Before my arrival I shall advertise in your columns full particulars concerning my lecture-courses in London, and hope that our mutual friend, Mrs. Bell-Lewis, whose name I am glad often appears in your columns, will again act as advance agent, fully empowered to make engagements for me previous to my arrival.

I am sure you will be glad to learn that very great and serious interest is now being taken all over Australia and New Zealand in all those numerous and important questions which are so ably discussed in your paper from week to week, and you cannot be other than highly pleased to know that your recent editorials have been quoted far and wide, and have given solid help and comfort to many perplexed and doubting people. Mr. Terry, of the 'Harbinger of Light,' in Melbourne, efficiently aided by his extremely competent secretary, Miss Hinge, and a large staff of able assistants, is doing a most successful business and carrying on highly successful and influential meetings. During my recent visit to Melbourne I had immense audiences on several occasions, despite the fact that rain often came down in deluges for several days in succession. In the beautiful city of Adelaide, where I have filled five successful engagements during the past fifteen months, I find unbounded interest in all phases of spiritual and generally progressive thought, and I anticipate equally favourable symptoms when I visit Brisbane, where I expect to lecture

immediately I leave Sydney on my way to Vancouver. New Zealand (particularly Wellington) is a very fruitful field for work. Mrs. Ada Foye <sup>13</sup> has been there more recently than my visit, and has reported even greater enthusiasm than I witnessed during my singularly successful course of lectures there last January.

The visit of the Duke and Duchess of York to Melbourne, Sydney, and all the other chief cities of the Southern Hemisphere is passing off brilliantly. All the cities are splendidly decorated, business has greatly improved, crowds of visitors from the Northern Hemisphere have seen Australia for the first time, and their Royal Highnesses, who are beloved as well as greatly respected wherever they go, have certainly been instrumental in substantially aiding the progress of the Australian Commonwealth. At the time of writing the weather in Sydney is perfect; this is the Australian November, and is indeed a very different month from its English equivalent. Gentle showers fall occasionally, but the weather is nearly always fine and bright and the temperature pleasantly temperate.

When I know the exact date of my departure for England I will again communicate with you; meanwhile I think I can safely promise that I can fulfil any engagements which may be made for me in England not earlier than Sunday, December 15th. With all best wishes for old and new friends, wherever they may sojourn, believe me, sincerely your co-worker,  
W.J. COLVILLE

4, Norwich-chambers,  
Hunter-street, Sydney.  
May 27th, 1901.

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<sup>13</sup> See The Cause in other lands: Australian spiritualism page 224.  
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Paul J. Gaunt