

Ghost Land

Emma Hardinge Britten

Ghost Land

Ghost Land
or
Researches Into the Mysteries
of
Occultism

Illustrated in a
Series of Biographical Sketches

By the Author of "Art Magic" With Extracts From
the Records of "Magical Seances", etc., etc.

Translated and Edited By

Emma Hardinge Britten

*"I am He that liveth and was dead,
And behold, I am alive for evermore."*

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Forword

The following brief history of *Ghost Land* and its involvement with the Brotherhood of Light teachings was originally published in the spring of 1975 for the 50th anniversary issue of the Church of Light Quarterly. It is presented here for the benefit of all students in the hope of furthering their understanding of our great tradition.

The preparations for preparing The Brotherhood of Light Teachings for presentation to the public involved a long and laborious process. The inconspicuous details regarding our history are not totally by chance. It has always been, and we trust always will be, the policy of the individuals who are responsible for continuing the line of succession on the physical plane to remain in a position that leaves no openings for establishing a personality cult. Our Teachings must and WILL stand on their own.

The events leading up to the publishing of *Ghostland* are somewhat complex. The sketches of the people are by no means complete in all details but take special note of the similarity of interests and backgrounds; the geographical locations of these activities as well as the concurring dates. That these individuals cooperated and were in frequent contact cannot be disputed. They layed the foundations for the presentation of the 21 Brotherhood of Light Lessons that was not accomplished in entirety until February 20, 1934.

Spiritualism was a new and growing movement in Europe and America during all of the 1800's. The Brotherhood of Light was functioning in Europe at the birth of Emma Britten in 1823. All orders of this type were closed orders out of necessity. There was no room in the orthodox world at that time for even the slightest form of this type of thought.

Emma Britten was born in the East End of London in 1823 as Emma Floyd. Her father was a sea captain who died when she was a child; consequently her devotion to her mother was very strong and played a major role in all of her life. By Emma's own account she says she preferred her own company to that of other children in the neighborhood. Her interest in the occult was obvious at an early age in her life. Even in her early years she had a close association with a secret occult society. The members met in London, conducting various rites and employing clairvoyant and magnetic subjects for the purposes of demonstrations and experiments. Little reliable material seems to have been published about this group. We believe it was probably a lodge of The Brotherhood of Light. It is of considerable interest that it was through her association with this group that Emma received the name of Hardinge, which she continued to use until her death.

Apart from her abilities as a magnetic subject, she had marked musical talents and these were soon developed in singing and at the piano. Because of these talents this was her introduction to America. She was invited by a theater manager to visit New York and made her first appearance at the Broadway Theater and later at the Broadway Athenaeum. While on this en-

gement she met several people who were Spiritualists and this rekindled her earlier interest in the occult. She was involved off and on with the Spiritualists' movements and by 1857 was famous in both Spiritualist and musical circles in New York and she became directress of music at Dodsworth Hall. She continued her activities in both these circles and became very involved in the Union cause during the Civil War, campaigning vigorously for Lincoln's re-election. She stayed in America until August 1865 when she finally yielded to her mother's wishes for her to return to England & retire to a less eventful life. It was not in her makeup to lead an uneventful life & she was active in Spiritualism in London during 1865 & 1866. She was just becoming settled in this activity when she was prevailed upon to return to the United States which she did in 1867.

Family matters required that she return to London later that same year but in the fall of 1867 she was in Scotland delivering a course of lectures under the auspices of the Glasgow Association of Spiritualists and after this returned to London where she compiled the majority of her first book, *Modern American Spiritualism*. When the manuscript was completed she decided to return to New York to arrange for its publication and did so in the fall of 1869. While she was rushing about, as was her custom, from place to place, an event occurred which was to change Miss Hardinge's hectic existence. She met her future husband, Mr. William Britten and they were married October 11, 1870. They settled in Boston in 1872 and she decided to start a new magazine dealing with occultism and with the help of friends started publishing *The Western Star*. This was 1870 and the year of the Boston Fire. The warehouse and offices were destroyed and the venture did not recover. It ceased publication in December after the sixth number

At this point she commenced translating *Ghostland* and *Art Magick*. As noted, *Ghostland* was published in 1876. Mrs. Britten received much abuse and criticism from all circles of people as these books were contrary to the views of orthodoxy as well as Spiritualistic circles. Undaunted by this, she and her husband continued their tours. From an extensive tour of Australia and New Zealand they came to California at the end of 1879. They were invited to remain in California but they decided to return to England in 1881. She continued her work in England but was now beginning to feel her age. On October 2, 1899, she died and was buried in Harpurhey Cemetery in Manchester. The Britten Memorial Institute was formed the following year and continues to function to this date.

M. Theon for years was the head of The Brotherhood of Light in Europe. As we have already established, Mrs. Britten was instrumental in bringing these teachings to America. There can be little doubt that they were in contact in some respects.

Thomas H. Burgoyne was the son of a physician in Scotland. As Mrs. Britten was in Scotland on occasions there is the possibility that they may have had contact with each other. Burgoyne was born April 14, 1855. He would have been a very young man compared to the age of Mrs. Britten but Burgoyne states that he was deep in occult study as early as 1861. Burgoyne roamed the moors during his boyhood and became conversant with the flora and fauna. He was an amateur naturalist and also a natural seer. Through his seership he contacted The Brotherhood of Light on the inner plane and

later contacted M. Theon in person. From this point on he appears to have been involved with The Brotherhood of Light continually. Later he came to America, where he taught and wrote on occult subjects. The first articles appear around 1885 and these predate *The Light of Egypt* by a few years. This also predates the translation of Paul Christian's works by Genevieve Stebbins by at least ten years and Miss Stebbins had not commenced to publish writings at this time.

Genevieve Stebbins was a Delsarte teacher in New York and also involved with the theater as was Mrs. Britten. Miss Stebbins was a member of The Brotherhood of Light and worked vigorously for it.

Captain Norman Astley, an officer in the British Army, had traveled extensively and in the performance of his duties he had lived in India and there had pursued occult studies. He also resided for a time in Australia. As mentioned earlier, Mr. & Mrs. Britten were also in Australia. Later Captain Astley returned to England to meet M. Theon, having previously contacted the Brotherhood of Light in his travels. By this time he had retired from the British Army where he had been a surveyor. In the course of events he came to America and met Genevieve Stebbins and they were married. He was employed to survey Carmel, California and it was such a beautiful region that they decided to build their home there. This was in the 1880's. As Thomas Burgoyne was a member of the Brotherhood, it was natural he should pay them a visit. Captain and Mrs. Astley, who had contacted a number of earnest students, suggested to Burgoyne that he write the basic Brotherhood of Light Teachings as a series of private lessons. This he agreed to do provided the students would enable him to live while he did this work. The Astleys made contact with students they knew and twelve were found who were willing to donate \$5.00 per month to this purpose. Burgoyne lived in the home of the Astleys while he wrote *The Light of Egypt--Volume I*.

He wrote, and issued as a manuscript, the lessons which the twelve students were permitted to copy, one chapter each month. Each day he would go to a spot on Point Lobos overlooking the charging and retreating waters, always sitting at the same spot, and wrote the whole of *The Light of Egypt--Volume I*. For reasons set forth in the preface of *The Light of Egypt* it was later decided to publish these private lessons in book form. That this might be done it became necessary to finance the venture, and to have some kind of organization which would resist the attacks it was anticipated would be made by those opposed to the purpose of this book.

Dr. Henry Wagner and Mrs. Bell M. Wagner (both with Jupiter in the tenth house of their birthcharts) agreed to finance the venture, & did so to the extent of \$100,000.00. A branch of The Brotherhood of Light, called the Hermetic Brotherhood of Luxor, was formed for the express purpose of seeing to it that *The Light of Egypt* and its Teachings should receive wide distribution. This was done with the approval of M. Theon, the Grand Master, and his brother adepts. The Hermetic Brotherhood of Luxor was governed in all its affairs by a Council of Three consisting of a Secretary, an Astrologer and a Seer. Burgoyne was the original Secretary. He passed to the next plane in March of 1894. Burgoyne states in *The Light of Egypt--Volume II* that Mrs. Bell M. Wagner had been chosen by the Masters as his successor and representative of the Hermetic Brotherhood of Luxor, and thus perpetuate the

chain of outward connection between those in the realm of the higher life with those upon the outward plane. Mrs. Wagner (Sun in Pisces, Aquarius rising and Moon in the first house in Aquarius) from Humbolt County, California was duly elected to take his place on the Council. Minnie Higgin (Sun in Cancer and Libra rising) was the Astrologer. Mrs. Anderson (Sun in Sagittarius, Moon in Cancer and Libra rising) was the Seer. Meetings to decide issues were held on the second floor of Mrs. Anderson's large home in Denver, Colorado. The by-laws of the Hermetic Brotherhood of Luxor made it impossible for any person under 21 years of age to join, made it impossible for a married person to join unless the spouse also joined and made membership possible only by invitation after the individual's record had been thoroughly investigated.

Early in 1909 Minnie Higgin passed to the next plane and in the spring of that year Elbert Benjamine was called to Denver and elected to take her place on the Council as the Astrologer. At this meeting on the second floor of Mrs. Anderson's home in Denver the other two members of the Council did their utmost, as the official minutes of the meeting show, to convince Elbert Benjamine that he should undertake the job of preparing a complete system of education that would enable a wide public to become conversant with THE RELIGION OF THE STARS. But it was not until April of 1910 that he consented to do this work. In the mean time he had contacted personally and through correspondence not only members of the Hermetic Brotherhood of Luxor, but other members of The Brotherhood of Light who had remained aloof from the organization with headquarters at Denver, but it was chiefly due to his becoming more closely associated with the Brotherhood of Light on the inner plane that his reluctance to take on such an imposing task was overcome. In 1913 the three members of the Council of the Hermetic Brotherhood of Luxor, after due deliberation, voted unanimously to close the Hermetic Brotherhood of Luxor, and since that date no members have been accepted.

Elbert Benjamine took the name of C. C. Zain and only that name applies to Brotherhood of Light Teachings. Any other publications he wrote are under Elbert Benjamine. Elbert spent the years from 1910 until 1915 in preparation. During this period of preparation there was never any spirit other than that of helpfulness shown toward this work by any members of The Hermetic Brotherhood of Luxor or The Brotherhood of Light. In particular were Captain and Mrs. Astley helpful. Elbert visited them in their home on various occasions and received extensive and encouraging correspondence from them.

In May 1915, Elbert Benjamine came to Los Angeles, California and re-opened The Brotherhood of Light but still on a closed basis. He was instructed not to open membership to the public at large until the end of World War I. The Brotherhood of Light was re-opened to the public on Armistice Day, November 11, 1918. This would be the first time that The Brotherhood of Light would be available to all persons in its long history from 2440 B.C. except for the brief reign of our Brother Akhenaten who ruled Egypt for a little more than a decade in 1375 B.C.

Forrest Teague
Spring 1975

Author's Preface

Before the subjoined papers are submitted to the critical reader, the author desires most emphatically to protest against their being ranked in the same category of literature as his recently published volume on "Art. Magic." The autobiographical sketches now presented to the public were written, or rather collated from private memoranda, some four years since, at the earnest request of Mrs. Emma Hardinge Britten, and that with the simple design of -contributing such a series of magazine papers to her admirable periodical, "The Western Star," as would be in harmony with its general aim and design.

When it is remembered that these papers are only off-hand sketches of a fateful life, in which striking illustrations of the spiritual philosophy may be found in a less stately guise than abstract essays, and that at most they are only to be considered as magazine sketches, the author trusts that his work will be held exempt from that severity of critical analysis which he would have courted for "Art Magic" had it been placed before the world under similar circumstances.

The only claim that the author can advance for the present work is that of strict veracity. Although the same reasons that induced him to withhold his name when it was first produced prevail with him to-day, all the incidents narrated have been faithfully set down with the strictest regard to truth as far as the present volume carries the history forward.

To the author himself the details of his life convey in retrospect the most important lessons, but their value to the world is entirely dependent upon their actuality. As a mere tale of fiction far more interesting subjects could doubtless have been found in any sensational novel or newspaper romance; but if the narratives herein detailed faithfully represent the mystic action of mind upon mind, the fearful phenomenon of obsession, the possibility of an actual life transfer, and the interposition of beings in human affairs whose existence supplies the missing link which connects the realm of animate and inanimate nature then is this work, however crude in style or imperfect in philosophical deduction, a most important and noteworthy one.

It is because it, ought to be thus regarded, because it narrates step by step and incident by incident, actualities which may one day become the experience of the many rather than the few, that the author is again persuaded to brave the idle sneer and vulgar jeer of those who are only capable of appreciating the facts that may have come within the narrow circle of their own observation. That those persons who call themselves "spiritual teachers" and claim to be "interpreters and exponents" of the spiritual philosophy (?) have not

all the truth--nay, not even a tithe of the experience necessary to qualify them for the office they have assumed--becomes more and more painfully evident to the earnest student into spiritual mysteries the more he compares the immensity of the realms to be traversed with the shallow pretences at explanation put forth by the self-elected spiritual teachers of this generation.

By these great authorities occultism is assumed to be a word invented by a few individuals, whose chief aim is to destroy Spiritualism and substitute "black magic" in its place, whilst occultists are renegades, who would "rollback the car of progress" (a favorite expression, by the way, of those who deny the right of any one to progress beyond their own standard of knowledge) and presume to add to the sublime philosophy enunciated through the table-tipping and trance-speaking media for "spirits of the seventh sphere," the antiquated stuff of Oriental cabalists, Chaldean astrologists, Hindoo, Egyptian, and Persian magi, Greek philosophers, Arabian alchemists, and medieval Rosicrucian mystics. Of course all these are mere ignoramuses, who for thousands of years have been blundering through the mysteries of occult science, which the aforesaid table-tipping and seventh-sphere-inspiring spirits instantly sweep away with the knock-down argument of "What I don't know isn't true; and what I can not explain has no existence."

That the author of "Ghost Land" has attempted to explain occultism, or present a concrete scheme of occult philosophy in these pages, must not for one moment be assumed. He has simply introduced such scenes in his own life experience as will show what a vast amount of phenomena remains to be explained, which the spiritual philosophy of the present day has not touched, and which many, modern Spiritists, following out the rude and illogical example of their own materialistic opponents, find it easier to deny altogether than to elucidate. No one has more faithfully, humbly, and reverently sought for truth wherever it may be found than the author of "Ghost Land;" yet he is fain to confess the table-tipping and trance-inspiring spirits of America and England have not, to his blundering apprehension, covered the whole ground of the experiences which he has ventured to detail in this volume. When he adds that an additional score of years' experiences still more wonderful and occult yet remain to be accounted for, and that during his wide wanderings over the world he has encountered hundreds of individuals who have an array of equally occult testimony to render, the Illuminee of the modern spiritual movement may forgive him if he ventures to question whether there may not be some few things, scenes, and persons more in the spiritual universe than their seven spheres of purely human intelligence can account for.

The author could have wished that his esteemed editor had dispensed with the chapters interpolated by their mutual and highly valued friend, "John Cavendish Dudley;" not that any portion of this gentleman's writings are lacking in that strict fidelity to truth which has been the ruling genius of the entire work, whilst in style and interest they far surpass the attempts of a foreigner to express his ideas in an unfamiliar language; but the author has marked with deep regret the many eulogistic allusions to himself with which Mr. Dudley's diary is seasoned; and whilst he knows they are dictated in all sincerity by a too partial friend, he feels their association with auto-biographical sketches will subject him to a charge of vanity which is equally repulsive to his habits of thought and action. On this point he has no other excuse to offer than the all-potential will of his editor. Mrs. Hardinge Britten alleges that the diary of Mr. Dudley was given to her in the same unconditional spirit as the "Ghost Land" papers; also, that it was not until she came to examine the MSS. separately that she discovered how intimately they were related and how impossible it would have been to continue the narrative after the eleventh chapter without the assistance of Mr. Dudley's journal.

When Mrs. Hardinge Britten further added I will to I wish, the author of "Art Magic," himself the strongest possible pleader for the omnipotence of will, found all his arguments on the per contra of the question silenced.

With a final allegation that though the style of composition is all too faulty, the details are a faithful representation of facts known to and witnessed by many most honorable persons in the present generation, the author gives his work to the winds of public opinion. Blow hot or cold as they will, they only represent the source from whence they come, but cannot make or mar the work they ban or bless.

Puentes Grandes,
The Havana, Isle de Cuba, 1876.

Introduction by the Editor

The following series of papers was first prepared for the press in 1872, when a few ladies and gentlemen interested in the cause of Spiritualism, and believing its interests would be promoted by the publication of a high-toned periodical, agreed to sustain me in the production of "The Western Star," a magazine issued expressly to meet the above design. As soon as I had decided upon the expediency of this undertaking I applied to several European friends from whom I deemed I might obtain literary assistance of the highest value, and contributions which would be more fresh to my American readers than those of the writers on this side of the Atlantic.

The foremost and perhaps the most urgent applications I made were addressed to two gentlemen from whose friendship for me and their talent as writers I anticipated the most favorable results. I knew that both had enjoyed rare opportunities of research into the realms of spiritual existence.

One, whom I shall henceforth speak of as the Chevalier de B _____, was, as I well knew, a member of several Oriental and European societies, where he had enjoyed the privilege of initiation into the ancient mysteries, and opportunities for the study of occultism rarely open to modern investigators. I had myself witnessed many evidences of this gentleman's wonderful powers as a seer and adept in magical rites, no less than what is now called "mediumship," for every conceivable phase of spirit power. Already familiar with many of his remarkable experiences, and believing I could obtain still further information on the subject from his intimate and near connection, an English nobleman, to whom I give the nom de plume of John Cavendish Dudley, I laid my case before both parties, soliciting from them such a series of papers as would embody their joint experiences in Spiritualism without impinging upon any points they might desire to reserve from the public eye.

The cordial response which I obtained from these well-tried and valued friends was accompanied, however, with some restrictions, the most, important of which was the positive charge to withhold their names, also to arrange their MSS. under such veiled expressions as would effectually conceal their identity. Both gentlemen were aware that their personalities would be recognized by their own immediate circle of acquaintances should the narratives ever fall into such hands; but whilst they were most willing to oblige me, and deemed their remarkable experiences might benefit and instruct many a spiritualistic reader, they protested strongly against subjecting themselves to the rude criticism and cold infidelic sneers of an unsympathetic world.

"I would not wear my heart upon my sleeve for claws to peck at," said my English friend, in the words of the immortal bard of Avon; whilst the Chevalier de B_____, urged private and personal reasons still more stringent. To mask the identity of my authors then, and even maintain a strict incognito for all those associated with them, became the conditions upon which the terms of my editorship in these papers were founded.

Less, perhaps, with a view of enlightening a generation which is not always prepared to recognize its need of enlightenment, than with a desire to embellish my periodical with a series of papers which I deemed eminently worthy of the place assigned them, I cheerfully accepted the offer of my two friends, subject to the restrictions they laid upon me. On examining the MSS. committed to my charge, I found that I could commence the publication of the Chevalier de B_____'s papers in a serial entitled "Ghost Land," and from the mass of records furnished me by Mr. J. C. Dudley I extracted the humorous and racy description of that gentleman's experiences in America, to which he had given the caption of "Amongst the Spirits." The autobiographical sketches of the Chevalier were written originally in German, but as I was not sufficiently familiar with that language to read or translate it, my kind friend, himself an excellent linguist, engaged to furnish me with a literal translation--that is, to render his writings into "rough English," and leave to me the task of arranging the phraseology and construction of the sentences. In many instances I found this task unnecessary, although in others I have had much labor in re-transcribing, arranging, and compiling fragmentary memoranda, written not infrequently in French or imperfect English.

As I proceeded with my work, I found that the MSS. would be wholly incomplete without that of Mr. Dudley, and as I had the good fortune to be in possession of the latter's journal, I selected from it such chapters relating to the Chevalier as supplied the hiatus in question, and enabled me to form a consecutive narrative of that gentleman's singular and eventful career.

I encountered some opposition from both my friends in this course of procedure, the Chevalier objecting strongly to the eulogistic tone adopted by his friend in reference to himself, and Mr. Dudley urging me to say more on the same subject than I deemed it prudent to insert. Another and still graver difficulty in my path has been the necessity of transcribing a foreigner's ideas and statements to a considerable extent in my own language, and clothing thoughts, opinions, and even the framework of the dialogues given by the author in my own form of expression. I feel keenly the loss the reader must sustain in many instances by this infusion of my personality into the author's sublime and exalted ideality. I am aware, also, what a handle it affords to those untruthful and uncandid critics who see themselves in other's acts, and who, being naturally deceptive and tricky themselves, cannot recognize truth and honesty even when it stares them in the face.

Although I have been and shall be again, induced from the force of circumstances to mask the noble sentiments of the Chevalier de B_____ in my own peculiarities of style, I have in vain labored to persuade him to place his works in other hands or avail himself of a less prononcee style of compilation. Had I not devoted myself to this work it would never have been accomplished, and that thought has been my chief recompense for the slander and misrepresentation that has been cast on my share of the publication. Although my friend's courtesy has induced him to treat these misrepresentations lightly, and even to allege that he felt honored in hearing the authorship of his works attributed to me, such a slander upon him, no less than the wrong done to my veracity and the character for straightforward candor which I deemed my life had earned, has been the worst stab my enemies could have inflicted upon me, and calls for this explanation concerning the necessary share which I have had in characterizing the Chevalier de B_____'s writings.

In view of the stringent charge I received from each of my authors, not only to preserve their incognito, but even to represent an ideal personage as the vehicle of the thoughts rendered, I drew up an introductory sketch of the supposed author of "Ghost Land," which I printed in the first number of "The Western Star."

In becoming more familiar with the later portions of the autobiography, I found that the author had stated the real events of his life so candidly, and alluded to the various dates and epochs that marked it with such fidelity of detail, that my ideal sketch had to be abandoned; the two histories would not cohere together: hence in republishing the first five chapters of "Ghost Land" in their present form I have felt obliged to present the author in his real character from beginning to end; and although I have observed all the other restrictions laid upon me in respect to the names of persons and places, the incidents of this strange life are so true, so candidly and simply detailed, that I doubt whether the lovers of fiction will be able to recognize that truth, and I shall not be surprised to hear that the whole narrative is a made-up affair.

I have some reason to believe this view would not be displeasing to the author himself, who, although compelled to write under the efflatus of the same power that obliges the "sibyl to vaticinate" even when she is not believed in, still feels sensitively opposed to parading his peculiar and often most painful personal experiences before a hard, unkind, and unsympathetic world. I, on the contrary, have a deep and religious interest in urging the exact truth of these experiences, and as I have been mainly instrumental in inducing my friend to narrate them, I would gladly, most gladly, add the lustre of a far more authoritative name than my own to the solemn assurance that they are all literal transcripts of history, and that they ought to be studied and classified by every philosophic thinker as amongst the rarest and most important psychological facts on record.

It simply remains for me to explain how and why this autobiography appears at this particular time. I need not remind those of my readers who may have been subscribers to "The Western Star," that just after the issue of the sixth number, the occurrence of the disastrous Boston fires and the immense losses sustained by some of my principal supporters, compelled me to suspend that periodical; but immediately upon the announcement of this suspension and up to the present time I have been literally besieged with requests to issue a reprint and continuance of "Ghost Land," my correspondents assuring me that those delightful and absorbing papers were more to them than all the rest of the magazine. The same request has been repeatedly made in reference to the articles of Mr. Dudley, entitled "Amongst the Spirits." In a word, the high appreciation accorded to those two serials made me often regret that leisure and opportunity were not afforded me for their publication in separate and continuous forms.

It was some three years after the suspension of "The Western Star" that my esteemed friend, the Chevalier de B_____, made a second visit to the United States, travelling, as was his custom, in a private and unostentatious manner under an incognito, and employing his time in the observation and study of those Spiritualistic facts which it has been the main object of his life to gather up. It was then that I learned from him that two works, the scheme of which he had often laid out in project to me, were nearly completed; and as he was unable to undertake the fatigue and master the harassing details of their publication, he offered to present me with the MSS., although he wished that their production should be deferred for a stated period.

One of the MSS. thus intrusted to me was "Art Magic." It was written, like "Ghost Land," partly in French and partly rendered into English, for the sake of aiding me in its translation.

Much of the language I found capable of representing the author's ideas without any alteration; but the whole work struck me as so important, sublime, and beautiful that I urged upon my friend its immediate production without waiting for further contingencies.

Tendering all the services I deemed likely to be available on the occasion, I at last succeeded in overcoming the Chevalier's reticence, and provided that I would give it to the world under the conditions which he dictated, he said the work was at my disposal. My friend then laid down those conditions of publication which have called forth the clouds of abuse, scandal, and insult which it has been my privilege to endure in so good a cause, and I dictated the financial terms by which I had hoped to save him from loss. In this respect the results belong to ourselves, not to the world. It is enough that I have been instrumental in launching a noble work upon the ocean of human thought. Many a bitter experience has been added to those which both author and editor have had to endure, many that might have been more gracefully spared by those who inflicted them. The effect of these experiences, however, it may not be amiss to notice a little more in detail, for it is evident they have not fulfilled the exact purpose with which they were freighted. In the first place, they have taught the sensitive author to rise superior to all human opinion, by showing him that which the editor has long since understood, namely, that there is always a certain amount of journalistic criticism which can be bought or sold, according to the purchaser's disposition or means of payment; another class from which praise would be dishonor; still another, who never waste time one way or the other on any subject that is not a marketable commodity and likely to pay well; and a fourth class, but one alas! greatly in the minority, who can and will recognize truth and beauty wherever they find it: and to this class "Art Magic" has indeed been "the gem of Spiritualistic effort of this and every other generation."

All this the author has had to learn. That he was not entirely ignorant of the crucible through which his work would have had to pass had it been published for "the masses" instead of the few, he himself proved, as I find in a letter addressed to me on this very subject the following complimentary expressions of opinion concerning the "great public":

"The masses, to whom you so enthusiastically would have me commend the perusal of 'Art Magic,' ever halt between two horns of a dilemma. If you tell them what they do not already know, they will cry: 'We cannot understand this writer!' If you repeat old truths, no matter how new may be your methods of representation, they will scream against you for telling them nothing new; and herein lies the real power of the critic, which is just to tell the world, according to his own personal predilections, what that poor imbecile thing ought to believe or reject, exalt to the skies or trample in the dust."

I have learned something as well as the author in this publication, for despite the infamous slanders of one part of a press calling itself "spiritual," and the significant silence of others, the subscribers to this work have in general been of that class which bravely and boldly takes the task of thinking into its own hands; hence they have not only written to me in the most glowing and enthusiastic praise of this "great and sublime work," but they have insisted upon having something more from the same "facile and fascinating pen."

Now, although this gentleman has submitted to me the rough draft of a still more elaborate exposition of the subjects on which "Art Magic" treats than even that admirable work itself, it may be some time before it can be completed and ready for press. In the interim the continued demand for "another work from the same author" induces me to turn my attention to the long-promised continuation of "Ghost Land," the deeply interesting and instructive character of which is fully equal to "Art Magic"; and besides, I am still more inclined to pursue this course from the very natural and spontaneous desire of many read-

ers to know more about the gifted individual who wrote "Art Magic." That these autobiographical sketches will prove as acceptable as they are instructive I cannot doubt, and I once more commend them to the reader with the assurance that, though the truths in these pages are, as truth generally is, stranger than fiction, I respect myself and my friend too highly to apologize further for the fact that some of those truths may be unprecedented, hence difficult of realization.

I now commit the precious MSS. intrusted to me to the tender mercies of a world of which my respectful but candid opinion may be gathered from the aphorism which has been my life's motto, and the one which has urged me forward to the publication of this volume, namely, "The truth against the world!"

Boston, 1876.

EMMA HARDINGE BRITTEN.

Chapter 1

Interesting Spiritual Mysteries and Experiences

ON THE THRESHOLD--AUTHOR'S VIEWS--PARENTAGE--
FIRST YEARS AT COLLEGE--PROFESSOR VON MARX--
THE BERLIN BROTHERHOOD--FIRST SEANCE.

As the sole object of these sketches has been to present to the investigator into spiritual mysteries some experiences of a singular and exceptional character, I would gladly have recorded them as isolated facts, or even communicated their curious details to such Spiritualistic journalists as might have deemed them worthy of a place in their columns; but on attempting to arrange them in such a form as would accord with this design, I found it impossible to separate the phenomenal portions of the history from the person with whom they were most immediately connected.

Had I been a mere spectator of the scenes detailed, I could have easily reduced them to narrative form, but as in most instances I was either the "medium" through whom the phenomena worthy of record transpired, or their interest was derived from their association with a consecutive history, I found I must either relinquish the design of contributing my experiences to the world, or consent to the repulsive task of identifying them with one who has sufficient reason to shrink from publicity, and sighs for nothing so much as the peaceful retirement which should precede the last farewell to earth. As my own desires have been completely overruled by one whose wishes I gladly prefer to my own, I find myself either obliged to identify my Spiritualistic experiences with a fictitious personage, or accept the repulsive alternative of adding to the many characters I have been compelled to act out on the stage of life's tragic drama the unwelcome one of an autobiographer.

For many reasons unnecessary to detail, I have a special dislike to tales of fiction. Life is all too real, too thoroughly momentous, to be travestied by fictional representations. Truth appeals to the consciousness of true natures with much more earnestness than fiction; and Spiritualistic narratives in particular, as pointing the way on a new path of discovery, and one wherein the eternal interests of the race are concerned, are simply degraded by fictional contrivances. Even the too common tendency to exaggerate the marvels of Spiritualistic phenomena should be carefully avoided, for the sake of arriving at the heart of truths so important and unfamiliar as those which relate to the spiritual side of man's nature.

It is with these reverential views of truth that I enter upon the task of narrating my singular and exceptional experiences. The only departure I have permitted myself to make from the line of stern and ungarbled fact is in relation to my own identity and that of the persons associated with me. My reasons for suppressing my real name and in every possible

way veiling the identity of those connected with me, are imperative, and if fully understood would be fully appreciated. In all other respects I am about to enter upon a candid history of myself, so far as I am connected with the incidents I am required to detail.

My father was a Hungarian nobleman, but having deemed himself wronged by the ruling government of his country, he virtually renounced it, and being connected on the mother's side with the most powerful native princes of India, from whom he received tempting offers of military and official distinction, he determined to prepare himself for his new career by the requisite course of study in England; hence, the belief very generally prevailed that he was an English officer, an opinion strengthened by the fact that for many years he abandoned his title, and substituted for the rank which he had once held in his native country that which was to him far more honorable, namely, a military distinction won on the battle-fields of India by services of the most extraordinary gallantry.

Before his departure for the East my father had married a beautiful Italian lady, and as he resolved to maintain his Hungarian title and estates, barren as they were, for the benefit of his children, he left his eldest son, my only brother, in Austria, for education, in the charge of near relatives. I was born on the soil of Hindoostan shortly after my parents arrived there, and as my eldest brother died when I was about ten years of age, I was sent to Europe to take his place, receive a European education, and become formally installed into the empty dignity, title, and heirship of our Hungarian estates. As my poor father tenaciously adhered to these shadowy dignities for his children, even though he despised and rejected them for himself, I was accustomed from early childhood to hear myself addressed as the Chevalier de B _____, and taught to believe, when my brother died, I had become the heir of a noble house, the prerogatives of which I have never realized, except in the form of the same wrong, oppression, and political tyranny which made my father an alien and a professed subject of a foreign power.

I was about twelve years of age, as well as I can remember, when, returning one day late in the afternoon from the college I attended at B., just as I was about to enter the gate of the house where I boarded, I felt a hand laid on my shoulder, and looking around, I saw myself confronted with one of my teachers, a man who, during the period of my ten months' study in that place, had exerted a singular and irresistible influence over me. He was a professor of Oriental languages, and though I had not been regularly entered in his class, I had joined it because he one day suddenly asked me to do so, and I as suddenly felt impelled to accept his offer. From the very moment that I entered Professor von Marx's class, I became absorbed in the study of Eastern literature, and the proficiency I made was doubtless owing to my desire to master the subjects to which these Oriental tongues formed the key. On the morning of the day from which I commence my narrative, Professor von Marx had abruptly asked me if I were a dreamer. I replied in the negative, adding that I thought I often dreamed something, but the memory of what it might be only remained with me on awaking sufficiently long to impress me with the opinion that I had been somewhere in my sleep, but had forgotten where. When the professor touched me on the shoulder, as above mentioned, at my own doorstep, he said:

"Louis, my boy, how would you like to have some dreams that you could remember, and go to places in your sleep from which you should return and give accounts of?"

"O, professor!" I exclaimed in astonishment, "could I do this, and how?"

"Come with me, boy," replied my teacher. "I belong to a philosophical society, the existence or at least the real nature of which is but little known. We want the aid of a good, smart

lad, like you, especially one who is not a conscious dreamer. I have long had my eye upon you, and I think I cannot only trust you with our secrets, but, by making you a partaker of them, instruct you in lore of great wisdom, which few children of your age would be thought worthy to know."

Flattered by this confidence, and more than usually thrilled by the strange shivering which always seemed to follow the touch of the professor's hand, I suffered myself to be led on until I reached with him the fourth story of a large house in a very quiet part of the city, where I was speedily introduced into an apartment of spacious dimensions, parted off by screens and curtains into many subdivisions, and half filled with an assemblage of gentlemen, several of whom, to my surprise, I recognized as belonging to the college, some to neighboring literary institutions, and two others as members of one of the princely families of Germany.

There was an air of mystery and caution attending our entrance into this place and my subsequent introduction to the company, which inclined me to believe that this was a meeting of one of those secret societies that, young as I was, I knew to have been strictly forbidden by the government; hence the idea that I was making one of an illegal gathering impressed me with a sentiment of fear and a restless desire to be gone. Apparently these unexpressed feelings were understood by my teacher, for he addressed me in a low voice, assuring me that I was in the society of gentlemen of honor and respectability, that my presence there had only been solicited to assist them in certain philosophical experiments they were conducting, and that I should soon find cause to congratulate myself that I had been so highly favored as to be inducted into their association.

Whilst he spoke the professor laid his hand on my head, and continued to hold it there, at first with a seemingly slight and accidental pressure; but ere he had concluded his address, the weight of that hand appeared to me to increase to an almost unendurable extent. Like a mountain bearing down upon my shoulders, columns of fiery, cloud-like matter seemed to stream from the professor's fingers, enter my whole being, and finally crush me beneath their terrific force into a state where resistance, appeal, or even speech was impossible. A vague feeling that death was upon me filled my bewildered brain, and a sensation of an undefinable yearning to escape from a certain thralldom in which I believed myself to be held, oppressed me with agonizing force. At length it seemed as if this intense longing for liberation was gratified. I stood, and seemed to myself to stand, free of the professor's crushing hand, free of my body, free of every clog or chain but an invisible and yet tangible cord which connected me with the form I had worn, but which now, like a garment I had put off, lay sleeping in an easy chair beneath me.

As for my real self, I stood balanced in air, as I thought at first, about four feet above and a little on one side of my slumbering mortal envelope; presently, however, I perceived that I was treading on a beautiful crystalline form of matter, pure and transparent, and hard as a diamond, but sparkling, bright, luminous and ethereal. There was a wonderful atmosphere, too, surrounding me on all sides. Above and about me, it was discernible as a radiant, sparkling mist, enclosing my form, piercing the walls and ceiling, and permitting my vision to take in an almost illimitable area of space, including the city, fields, plains, mountains and scenery, together with the firmament above my head, spangled with stars, and irradiated by the soft beams of the tranquil moon. All this vast realm of perception opened up before me in despite of the enclosing walls, ceiling, and other obstacles of matter which surrounded me.

These were obstacles no more. I saw through them as if they had been thin air; and

what is more I knew I could not only pass through them with perfect ease, but that any piece of ponderable matter in the apartment, the very furniture itself, if it were only brought into the solvent of the radiant fire mist that surrounded me, would dissolve and become, like me and like my atmosphere, so soluble that it could pass, just as I could, through everything material. I saw, or seemed to see, that I was now all force; that I was soul loosed from the body save by the invisible cord which connected me with it; also, that I was in the realm of soul, the soul of matter; and that as my soul and the soul-realm in which I had now entered, was the real force which kept matter together, I could just as easily break the atoms apart and pass through them as one can put a solid body into the midst of water or air.

Suddenly it seemed to me that I would try this newly discovered power, and observing that the college cap I had worn on my poor lifeless body's head was lying idly in the hands, I made an effort to reach it. To succeed, however, I found I must come into contact with a singular kind of blue vapor which for the first time I noticed to be issuing from my body, and surrounding it like a second self.

Whilst I was gazing at this curious phenomenon I felt impressed to look at the other persons in the room, and I then observed that a similar aura or luminous second self issued from every one of them. The color and density of each one varied, and by carefully regarding the nature of these mists, or as I have since learned to call them "photospheres," I could correctly discern the character, motives, and past lives of these individuals.

I became so deeply absorbed facing the images, shapes, scenes and revelations that were depicted on these men's souls that I forgot my design of appropriating the cap I had worn, until I noticed that the emanations of Professor von Marx, assuming the hue of a shining rose tint, seemed to permeate and commingle with the bluish vapor that issued from my form. I noticed then another phenomenon. When the two vapors or photospheres were thoroughly commingled, they, too, became force, like my soul and like the realm of soul in which I was standing. To perceive, in the state into which I was inducted, was to see, hear, taste, smell, and understand all things in one new sense. I knew that as a mortal I could not use more than one or two of the senses at a time; but as a soul, I could realize all sensations through one master sense, perception; also, that this sublime and exalted sixth sense informed me of far more than all which the other senses separately could have done. Suddenly a feeling of triumph possessed me at the idea of knowing and understanding so much more than the grave and learned professors into whose company I had entered as a timid, shrinking lad, but whom I now regarded with contempt, because their knowledge was so inferior to mine, and pity, because they could not conceive of the new functions and consequent enjoyments that I experienced as a liberated soul.

There was another revelation impressed upon me at that time, and one which subsequent experiences have quickened into stupendous depths of consciousness. It was this: I saw, as I have before stated, upon my companions, in distinct and vivid characters, the events of their past lives and the motives which had prompted them to their acts. Now it became to me clear as sunlight that one set of motives were wrong, and another right; and that one set of actions (those prompted by wrong motives, I mean) produced horrible deformities and loathsome appearances on the photosphere, whilst the other set of actions (prompted by the motives which I at once detected as right) seemed to illuminate the soul aura with indescribable brightness, and cast a halo of such beauty and radiance over the whole being, that one old man in particular, who was of a singularly uncomely and withered appearance as a mortal, shone, as a soul, in the light of his noble life and glorious emanations, like a perfect angel.

I could now write a folio volume on the interior disclosures which are revealed to the soul's eye, and which are hidden away or unknown to the bodily senses. I cannot pause upon them now, though I think it would be well if we would write many books on this subject, provided men would read and believe them. In that case, I feel confident, human beings would shrink back aghast and terror-stricken from crime, or even from bad thoughts, so hideous do they show upon the soul, and so full of torment and pain does the photosphere become that is charged with evil. I saw in one very fine gentleman's photosphere the representation of all sorts of the most foul and disgusting reptiles. These images seemed to form, as it were, out of his misty emanations, whilst upon his soul I perceived sores and frightful marks that convinced me he was not only a libertine and a sensualist, but a man imbued with many base and repulsive traits of character.

What I saw that night made me afraid of crime, afraid to cherish bad thoughts or harbor bad motives, and with all my faults and shortcomings in after life, I have never forgotten, or ceased to try and live out, the awful lessons of warning I then learned. I must here state that what may have taken me some fifteen minutes or more to write, flashed upon my perceptions nearly all at once, and its comprehension, in much fuller detail than I have here given, could not have occupied more than a few seconds of time to arrive at.

By this time, that at which I now write, "clairvoyance," as the soul's perceptions are called, has become too common a faculty to interest the world much by its elaborate description. Thirty or forty years ago it was too much of a marvel to obtain general credit; but I question whether those who then watched its powers and properties did not study them with more profound appreciation and understanding than they do now, when it seems to be a gift cultivated for very little use beyond that of affording a means of livelihood, and too frequently opens up opportunities of deception for the quack doctor or pretended fortune-teller. But to resume my narrative.

I had not been long free from the fetters of my sleeping body and the professor's magical hand, when he bent down over my form and said:

"Louis, I will you to remember all that transpires in the mesmeric sleep; also, I desire that you should speak and relate to us, as far as you can, all that you now see and hear."

In an instant the wish of my childish life, the one incessant yearning that possessed my waking hours, returned to me, namely, the desire to behold my dearly loved mother, from whom I had been separated for the past two years. With the flash of my mother's image across my mind, I seemed to be transported swiftly across an immense waste of waters, to behold a great city, where strange looking buildings were discernible, and where, huge domes, covered with brilliant metals, flashed in a burning, tropical sun.. Whirled through space, a thousand new and wondrous sights gleamed a moment before my eyes, then vanished. Then I found myself standing beneath the shade of a group of tall palm-trees, gazing upon a beautiful lady who lay stretched upon a couch, shaded by the broad verandah of a stately bungalow, whilst half a dozen dusky figures, robed in white, with bands of gold around their bare arms and ankles, waved immense fans over her, and seemed to be busy in ministering to her refreshment. "Mother, mother!" I cried, extending my arms towards the well-known image of the being dearest to me on earth.

As I spoke, I could see that my voice caused no vibration in the air that surrounded my mother's couch; still the impression produced by my earnest will affected her. I saw a light play around her head, which, strange to relate, assumed my exact form, shape and attitude, only that it was a singularly petite miniature resemblance. As it flickered over the senso-

rium, she raised her eyes from her book, and fixing them upon the exact point in space where I stood, murmured, in a voice that seemed indescribably distant, "My Louis! my poor, far-away, deserted child! would I could see thee now"

At this moment the will of my magnetizer seemed to intervene between me and my unexpected vision.

I caught his voice saying in stern tones: "Do not interfere, Herr Eschenmayer. I do not wish him to see his mother, and the tidings he could bring from her would not interest us."

Some one replied; for I felt that the professor listened, though for some cause unknown to me then, I could not hear any voice but his. Again he spoke and said; "I wish him to visit our society at Hamburg, and bring us some intelligence of what they are doing there." As the words were uttered, I saw for one brief second of time my mother's form, the couch whereon she lay, the verandah, bungalow, and all the objects that surrounded her, turn upside-down, like forms seen in a reversed mirror, and then the whole scene changed. Cities, villages, roads, mountains, valleys, oceans, flitted before my gaze, crowding up their representation in a large and splendidly furnished chamber, not unlike the one I had entered with the professor.

I perceived that I was at Hamburg, in the house of the Baron von S., and that he and a party of gentlemen were seated around a table on which were drinking cups, each filled with some hot, ruby-colored liquid, from which a fragrant, herb-like odor was exhaled. Several crystal globes were on the table, also some plates of dark, shining surfaces, together with a number of open books, some in print, others in MSS., and others again whose pages were covered with characters of an antique form, and highly illuminated. As I entered, or seemed borne into this apartment, a voice exclaimed: "A messenger from Herr von Marx is here, a 'flying soul,' one who will carry the promised word to our circle in B."

"Question him," responded another voice. "What tidings or message does he bring?"

"He is a new recruit, no adept in the sublime sciences," responded the first speaker, "and cannot be depended on."

"Let me speak with him," broke in a voice of singularly sweet tone and accent; and thereupon I became able to fix my perceptive sense so clearly on this last speaker that I fully realized who and what he was, and how situated. I observed that he stood immediately beneath a large mirror suspended against the wall, and set in a circular frame covered with strange and cabalistic looking characters. A dark velvet curtain was undrawn and parted on either side of the mirror, and in or on, I cannot tell which, its black and highly polished surface, I saw a miniature form of a being robed in starry garments, with a glittering crown on its head, long tresses of golden hair, shining as sunbeams, streaming down its shoulders, and a face of the most unparalleled loveliness my eyes had then or have ever since beheld. I cannot tell whether this creature or image was designed to represent a male or female. I did not then know and may not now say whether it was an animate or inanimate being. It seemed to be living, and its beautiful lips moved as if speaking, and its strangely-gleaming, sad eyes were fixed with an expression of pity upon me.

Several voices, with the tones of little children, though I saw none present, said, in a clear, choral accent: "The crowned angel speaks. Listen!" The lips of the figure in the mirror then seemed to move. A long beam of light extended from them to the fine, noble-looking youth of about eighteen who stood beneath the mirror, and who pronounced, in the voice I had last heard, these words:

"Tell Felix von Marx he and his companions are searching in vain. They spend their time in idle efforts to confirm a myth, and will only reap the bitter fruits of disappointment and mockery. The soul of man is compounded from the aroal life of elementary spirits, and, like the founders and authors of its being, only sustains an individualized life so long as the vehicle of the soul holds together and remains intact. If the spirits of the elements, stars, and worlds have been unable during countless ages to discover the secret of eternal being, shall such a mere vaporous compound of their exhaled essence as the soul of man achieve the aim denied to them? Go to, presumptuous ones! Life is a transitory condition of combinations, death a final state of dissolution. Being is an eternal alternation between these changes, and individuality is the privilege of the soul once only in eternity. Look upon my earthly companion! look well, and describe him, so that the employers who have sent you shall know that the crowned angel has spoken."

I looked as directed, and noticed that the young man who spoke, or seemed to speak, in rhythmic harmony with the image in the mirror, wore a fantastic masquerade dress, different from all the other persons present. He on his part seemed moved with the desire that those around him should become aware of my presence, as he was. Then I noticed his eyes looked intelligently into mine, as if he saw and recognized me; but the gaze of all the rest of the company met mine as if they looked on vacancy. They could not see me.

"Flying soul," said the youth, authoritatively addressing me, "can you not give us the usual signal?" Instantly I remarked that dim, shadowy forms, like half erased photographic images, were fixed in the air and about the apartment, and I saw that they were forms composed of the essence of souls that, like mine, had visited that chamber, and like mine had left their tracery behind. With the pictures thus presented, however, I understood the nature of the signals they had given, and what was now demanded of me. I willed instinctively a strong breath or life essence to pass from myself to the young man, also I noticed that his photosphere was of the same rosy tint as Professor von Marx's.

I saw the blue vapor from my form exhale like a cloud by my will, commingle with his photosphere, and precipitate itself towards his finger-ends, feet, hair, beard, and eyelashes.

He laid his hand on a small tripod of different kinds of metal which stood near him, and, by the direction of my will, five showers of the life essence were discharged from his fingers, sounding like clear, distinct detonations through the apartment.

All present started, and one voice remarked: "The messenger has been here!"

"And gone!" added the youth, when instantly I sunk into blank unconsciousness.

