

D. D. HOME, HIS LIFE AND MISSION

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D. D. Home, his life and mission by Dunglas Home & Sir Arthur Conan Doyle

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DUNGLAS HOME & SIR ARTHUR CONAN DOYLE

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BY

MME. DUNGLAS HOME

Edited, with an Introduction, by
SIR ARTHUR CONAN DOYLE

"La raison ne prescrit jamais; elle éclaire."

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INTRODUCTION

BY

SIR ARTHUR CONAN DOYLE

I have felt it to be an honour to be allowed to edit this new Edition of the *Life of D. D. Home*. The book is so vital that it went much against the grain to excise any part of it, but our first task is to make it easy for the public to get the information which they need, and in its original form the book was a little difficult on account of occasional redundancy and repetition. This I have endeavoured to correct, but I foresee the time when the full text will be restored and I censured for having tampered with what is a very valuable record. Meanwhile this shorter version gives the reader all that is essential.

Home has himself left three books to the world, the first and second series of *Incidents of my Life* and *Lights and Shadows of Spiritualism*. The latter contains the most earnest protest against the abuse either of mediumship or of Spiritualism which the most conservative critic could utter. Personally I am of opinion that Home took a somewhat narrow view of mediumship, failing to realise its protean aspects, so that when he found any which differed from his own he was inclined to put it down to bad observation or to fraud. At the same time he sets us an example of that alert and critical intelligence which every spiritualist should cultivate. In *Incidents of my Life* will be found a most interesting autobiography including his controversy with Sir David Brewster from which the man of Science emerged so badly. Very especially the second series is commended to the student of Home, because in it will be found all the actual papers dealing with the Home-Lyon lawsuit, showing conclusively how honourable was the action of Home, in spite of the severe remarks by Lord Gifford, which were the result of his own ignorance and prejudice. To quote them against Home's character is like quoting the remarks

of a Roman judge upon an early Christian. A spectator has told me that Gifford asked Home's counsel: "Do I understand that your client claims to have been levitated?" Upon the counsel assenting, Lord Gifford made a wild gesture of his arms, very much as the High Priest rent his garment of old. The reader who consults the evidence for levitation given in this volume will certainly have no doubt as to Home's power or as to Gifford's bumptious ignorance.

Home is a man to whom the human race, and especially the British public, owes a deep apology. He was most shamefully used by them. He came as one of the first and most powerful missionaries who have set forth upon the greatest of human tasks, to prove immortality, to do away with the awful mystery of death, to found religion upon positive knowledge, and to break down the dense materialism which was as great within the Christian Churches as outside them. All this he felt that he could do by those same personal demonstrations of spiritual power which were used for the same ends in the early age of the Church, before form and ritual smothered the living reality. He devoted his life to this end in spite of failing health and comparative poverty. Never did he receive any reward for his splendid, self-sacrificing work—save indeed those personal souvenirs from Royalties which were given not in payment but in friendship. He left a trail of religious conviction and of human consolation behind him wherever he went. He was admirable in every relation of life, a good husband, a devoted father, a beloved friend, a charitable helper, a worker upon the battle-fields, a lover of art and of all that is beautiful. And yet when he died worn out at the age of 51 there was hardly a paper in Great Britain which did not speak of him as if he had been a Cagliostro, who had spent a life of intrigue and deception. Those who read this life will surely echo my words that we owe him a deep apology, and recognise that in this Spiritual-tide which flows so strongly to-day we find much which undoubtedly found its spring in his unselfish labours. His influence was admirably summed up by Mrs. Webster, a

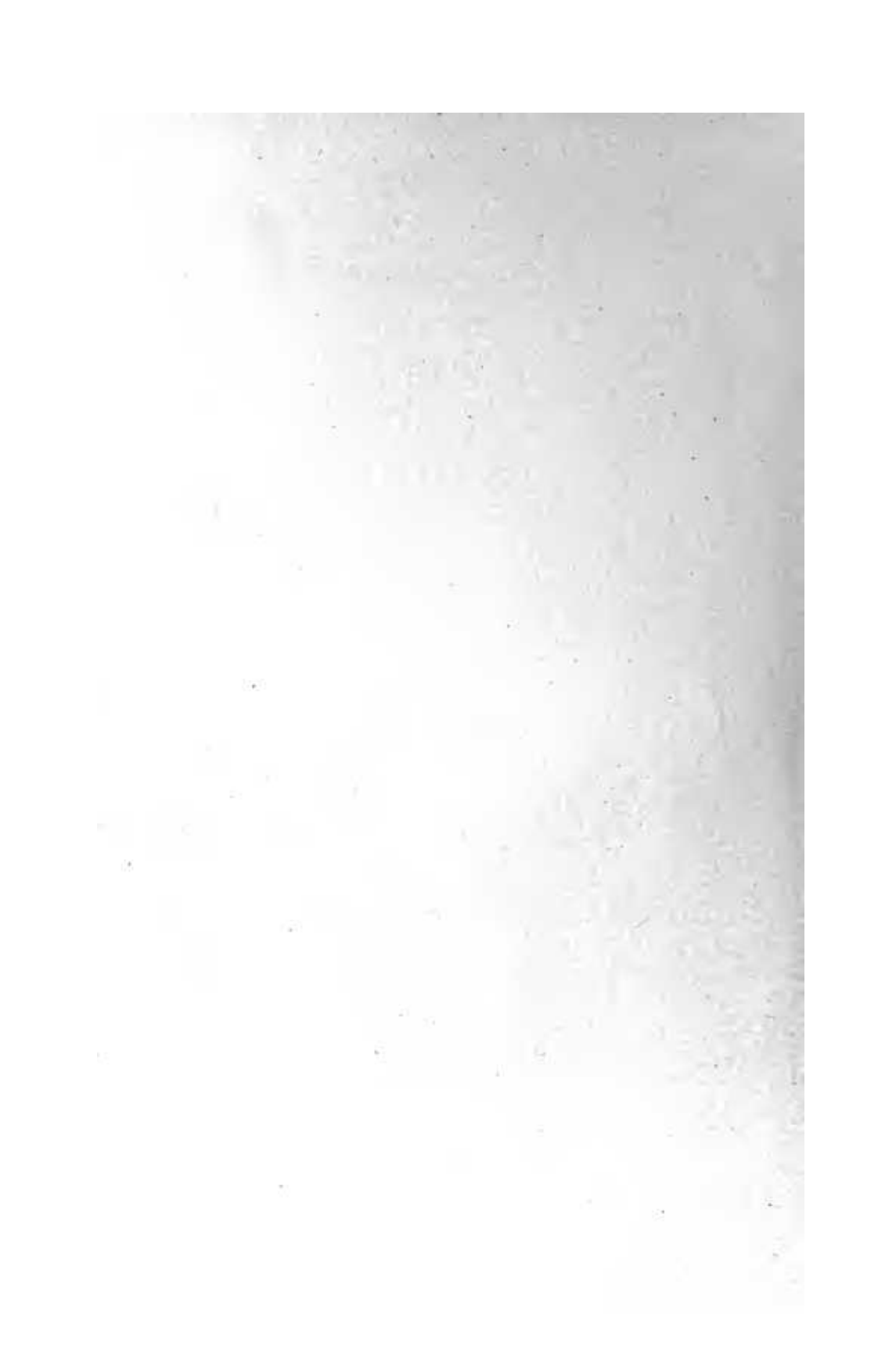
well-known resident of Florence, when she wrote: "He is the most marvellous missionary of modern times, and the good that he has done cannot be reckoned. Where Mr. Home passes he bestows around him the greatest of all blessings, the certainty of a future life."

One or two of Home's aphorisms may be quoted to show the mind of this man who is even now hounded down by ignorant traducers, especially Materialists who cannot forgive the shattering blow which he inflicted upon their whole philosophy—a death-blow, as it will prove. "Follow Christ's teaching and carry out His mission." "Religion is to worship something outside and beyond yourself." "Try all communications by the help of your conscience and your reason." The sanity as well as the essential piety of the man shines through such sayings. Surely it is the outworn case of a beautiful soul which lies under the slab in Paris on which is carved the words: "To another, discerning of spirits."—Cor. xii. 10.

A. C. D.

March, 1921.

NOTE.—*In reading this edition of "D. D. Home—His Life and Mission," it is necessary to remember that the book was originally written nearly forty years ago. It is thus necessary to make allowance for dates and occurrences referred to as of comparatively recent occurrence—the original language being retained.*



PROLOGUE

IN the realm of Spirit as well as in the exact sciences, our age demands facts that can be verified. I reproduce, in all its authenticity, as much as possible of the testimony that has been borne to the phenomena investigated in the presence of D. D. Home. A crowd of theories, more or less ingenious but none satisfactory, have been created to explain away the facts, without explaining them in the least. The perverted understanding which takes that which is not for the reality, and the reality for a chimera, can alone lead men into this singular denial of the possibility of a truth that, by their own avowal, it would give them the greatest happiness to recognise. Undoubtedly the most hideous cancer of our age is its materialism, that, eating constantly deeper, leads men more and more into the denial of their immortality. Spiritualism was not regarded by Home as a fantastic or poetic reverie. He suffered cruelly for his mission, without having any other object in view than to give an irresistible impulse to the consoling belief in a future life. A multitude of irrefutable facts were demonstrated in his presence which science tested and admitted. By sacrificing himself to every description of research, he enabled scientific investigators to establish the existence of forces that until his day had remained unknown; and he founded belief in a spirit-world on those remarkable evidences of identity that will remain the bases of the true modern Spiritualism. No sophistry can avail to show that the well-established and well-attested facts contained in this work have had no existence. It will be seen how great a number of well-known personages have investigated the subject, and have been convinced. The fact that many of these names are now for the first time published, will prove to what degree Home carried his consideration for others, suppressing their names in order to spare them from ignorant abuse, and tranquilly encountering the host of calumnies that were directed against him in consequence. Where is there another man, who, with the means in his possession of proving how false were the assertions made concerning him, would have thought of others, rather than of himself? There are very few celebrated men whose real character has been so strangely misunderstood, and concerning whom false reports have more persistently been spread abroad. The extensive correspondence he has left—even the small portion of it I have found space to print—proves how blameless his life must have been, how irreproachable his honour, and how elevated his sentiments. No one was ever more happy in doing good, or was more beloved. In every country persons who were not Spiritualists