

**ACROSS THE BARRIER:
A RECORD OF TRUE
EXPERIENCES**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649177271

Across the barrier: a record of true experiences by H. A. Dallas & H. B. Marriott Watson

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Edited by Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd.
Cover @ 2017

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PREFACE

IN the following pages I have tried to set forth as accurately as possible an account of certain experiences which have happened in a family personally known to me. I am well aware that to a reader unacquainted with the persons concerned the record cannot have the value which it has for those who received the account at first hand. I believe, however, that those who read it will recognise that it is sincere, that in permitting its publication the parents of the child who plays so large a part in the story are prompted by a desire to bring comfort to others such as they themselves have so abundantly received.

It is obvious that the experiences gain value by their collective character. For this reason I have given them as fully as possible, whilst withholding those which are too personal and private. I have inserted much which to a scientific investigator will appear non-evidential, my aim being, not to select only the strictly evidential matter, but to tell the story as completely as I can, leaving it to those who may read it to form their own opinion as to the interpretation that should be put upon it.

I should like to point out, however, that many of the phenomena experienced by the Normans are supported by similar experiences attested repeatedly by other trustworthy witnesses.

For the benefit of those who are not familiar with the language of *Psychical Research*, or with experiences such as those described in these pages, I will briefly explain some of the expressions of which I have made use most frequently.

There are persons who have the capacity for *automatic writing*; that is to say they find that after holding a pencil quietly for a few minutes it will write words without their being aware of what is written. Sometimes the hand feels numb and lifeless whilst the writing is done, sometimes the pencil moves slowly, at other times very rapidly. In some cases a

thrill is felt in the arm before the writing begins and frequently it is in differing styles. Writing is also called automatic, when the writer is conscious of each word as it comes, but has no knowledge of the whole sentence to be written. In Mrs. Norman's case she is ignorant of what is written until she reads it over afterwards.

Clairvoyance denotes vision in which, apparently, the physical eyes take no part; for objects or persons seen clairvoyantly may be described in darkness, or when they are invisible to other persons. Clair-audience is a kind of inner hearing. This is no doubt difficult to explain. I have several times asked clair-audients how they seem to know themselves to hear; but they have always found it difficult to tell me. On one occasion—and I think only one—I have heard thus, and I can only describe it as a clear, far sound. It seemed a small voice far away, but quite distinct.

Psychometry is a word used to indicate impressions received by "sensitives" when they handle objects. (By "sensitives" I mean those who are gifted with psychic faculties). For instance I sent Mrs. Norman a lock of hair to psychometrize before she had seen me, and she sent me back a good description of my person and of the style and colour of my attire at that time.

Perhaps some readers will dislike the term "medium" which occurs now and then in this book. It is used to denote a person who is a channel of communication. It is not easy to find any other equally suitable term, but I have occasionally used "psychic," and "sensitive," as alternatives.

Readers should bear in mind that one of the most marked features of psychic visions and experiences is their symbolic character. F. W. H. Myers has discussed this in his work on *Human Personality*, (vol. i., chapter iii.) A very literal mind, incapable of understanding the language of symbolism will of necessity be puzzled by psychic experiences, and they are also likely to misinterpret the Scriptures, which being

oriental works, are full of symbolism. If we bear in mind the symbolical character of ordinary language we shall not think it strange that communications should be made through symbolic visions and signs.

It should, also, be remembered that the mind of the medium is a factor in the experiences and may at times affect the form which the messages take, even when they allude to matters quite unknown to the writer or to any one present at the time.

Having been for many years a student of Psychical Research I am, of course, aware of the various theories which have been suggested as explanations of phenomena similar to those dealt with in this book; I have, however, purposely refrained from discussing these, my object being merely to record facts and to leave the reader to find his own interpretations.

I wish here to express my grateful appreciation of the frankness and confidence with which Mr. and Mrs. Norman have treated me throughout the time that I have been studying their experiences. Their personal kindness has greatly added to the pleasure which my work has given me. I am well aware that the force of the narrative has been weakened by omissions which I have been obliged to make, and that if I had printed private details the whole story would have gained in impressiveness; even as it stands, however, it is sufficiently remarkable.

I also wish to thank Mr. Marriott Watson for very kindly volunteering to let the statement about his own experiences appear over his signature. In other cases the names used are pseudonyms, and I should not have ventured to ask to be allowed to use his own name, although obviously his testimony gains value and interest from the fact that it is that of one already well known to readers, as an able and popular novelist.

I also sincerely thank the other friends who have allowed me to add their experiences and who have in many ways done much to assist me in this work.

H. A. DALLAS.

August 18th, 1913

“ Yet men are led away from threatening destruction : a hand is put into theirs which leads them out gently towards a calm and bright land, so that they look no more backward, and the hand may be a little child's.”—*Silas Marner*.

GEORGE ELIOT.

TO DEAR MONICA
August 18, 1903—July 31, 1911.



"Would I might give thee back, my little one,
But half the good that I have got from thee!"

H. COLERIDGE.