THE WANDERINGS OF A SPIRITUALIST

ARTHUR CONAN DOYLE

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By SIR ARTHUR CONAN DOYLE

On the Life Hereafter

THE NEW REVELATION
THE VITAL MESSAGE

A History of the Great War

THE BRITISH CAMPAIGN IN FRANCE AND FLANDERS—5 Vols.

Poems

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Photo: Stirling, Melbourne.

ON THE WARPATH IN AUSTRALIA, 1920-21.

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THE WANDERINGS OF A SPIRITUALIST

BY

ARTHUR CONAN DOYLE

Author of "The New Revelation," "The Vital Message," "A History of the Great War," etc.

ILLUSTRATED

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TO MY WIFE

THIS MEMORIAL OF A JOURNEY WHICH
HER HELP AND PRESENCE CHANGED
FROM A DUTY TO A PLEASURE

A. C. D.

July 18, 1921.

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"Aggressive fighting for the right is the noblest sport the world affords."

THEODORE ROOSEVELT.

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THE WANDERINGS OF A SPIRITUALIST

CHAPTER I

The inception of the enterprise.—The Merthyr Séance.—Experience of British lectures.—Call from Australia.—The Holborn luncheon.—Remarkable testimony to communication.—Is individual proof necessary?—Excursion to Exeter.—Can spiritualists continue to be Christians?—Their views on Atonement.—The party on the "Naldera."

THIS is an account of the wanderings of a spiritualist, geographical and speculative. Should the reader have no interest in psychic things—if indeed any human being can be so foolish as not to be interested in his own nature and fate,—then this is the place to put the book down. It were better also to end the matter now if you have no patience with a go-as-you-please style of narrative, which founds itself upon the conviction that thought may be as interesting as action, and which is bound by its very nature to be intensely personal. I write a record of what absorbs my mind which may be very different from that which appeals to yours. But if you are content to come with me upon these terms then let us start with my apologies in advance for the pages which may bore you, and with my hopes that some may compensate you by pleasure or by profit.

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I write these lines with a pad upon my knee, heaving upon the long roll of the Indian Ocean, running large and grey under a grey streaked sky, with the rain-swept hills of Ceylon, just one shade greyer, lining the Eastern skyline. So under many difficulties it will be carried on, which may explain if it does not excuse any slurring of a style, which is at its best but plain English.

There was one memorable night when I walked forth with my head throbbing and my whole frame quivering from the villa of Mr. Southey at Merthyr. Behind me the brazen glare of Dowlais iron-works lit up the sky, and in front twinkled the many lights of the Welsh town. For two hours my wife and I had sat within listening to the whispering voices of the dead, voices which are so full of earnest life, and of desperate endeavours to pierce the barrier of our dull senses. They had quivered and wavered around us, giving us pet names, sweet sacred things, the intimate talk of the olden time. Graceful lights, signs of spirit power had hovered over us in the darkness. It was a different and a wonderful world. Now with those voices still haunting our memories we had slipped out into the material world—a world of glaring iron-works and of twinkling cottage windows. As I looked down on it all I grasped my wife's hand in the darkness and I cried aloud, "My God, if they only knew—if they could only know!" Perhaps in that cry, wrung from my very soul, lay the inception of my voyage to the other side of the world. The wish to serve was strong upon us both. God had given us wonderful signs, and they were surely not for ourselves alone.

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HOW THIS BOOK WAS WRITTEN.

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I had already done the little I might. From the moment that I had understood the overwhelming importance of this subject, and realised how utterly it must change and chasten the whole thought of the world when it is whole-heartedly accepted, I felt it good to work in the matter and understood that all other work which I had ever done, or could ever do, was as nothing compared to this. Therefore, from the time that I had finished the history of the Great War on which I was engaged, I was ready to turn all my remaining energies of voice or hand to the one great end. At first I had little of my own to narrate, and my task was simply to expound the spiritual philosophy as worked out by the thoughts and experiences of others, showing folk, so far as I was able, that the superficial and ignorant view taken of it in the ordinary newspapers did not touch the heart of the matter. My own experiences were limited and inconclusive, so that it was the evidence of others which I quoted. But as I went forward signs were given in profusion to me also, such signs as were far above all error or deception, so that I was able to speak with that more vibrant note which comes not from belief or faith, but from personal experience and knowledge. I had found that the wonderful literature of Spiritualism did not reach the people, and that the press was so full of would-be jocosities and shallow difficulties that the public were utterly misled. Only one way was left, which was to speak to the people face to face. This was the task upon which I set forth, and it had led me to nearly every considerable city of Great Britain from Aberdeen to Torquay. Everywhere I found interest, though it

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varied from the heavier spirit of the sleepy cathedral towns to the brisk reality of centres of life and work like Glasgow or Wolverhampton. Many a time my halls were packed, and there were as many outside as inside the building. I have no eloquence and make profession of none, but I am audible and I say no more than I mean and can prove, so that my audiences felt that it was indeed truth so far as I could see it, which I conveyed. Their earnestness and receptiveness were my great help and reward in my venture. Those who had no knowledge of what my views were assembled often outside my halls, waving banners and distributing tracts, but never once in the course of addressing 150,000 people, did I have disturbance in my hall. I tried, while never flinching from truth, to put my views in such a way as to hurt no one's feelings, and although I have had clergymen of many denominations as my chairmen, I have had thanks from them and no remonstrance. My enemies used to follow and address meetings, as they had every right to do, in the same towns. It is curious that the most persistent of these enemies were Jesuits on the one side and Evangelical sects of the Plymouth Brethren type upon the other. I suppose the literal interpretation of the Old Testament was the common bond.

However, this is digression, and when the digressions are taken out of this book there will not be much left. I get back to the fact that the overwhelming effect of the Merthyr Séance and of others like it, made my wife and myself feel that when we had done what we could in Britain we must go forth to further fields. Then came the direct invitation from Spiritual bodies

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in Australia. I had spent some never-to-be-forgotten days with Australian troops at the very crisis of the war. My heart was much with them. If my message could indeed bring consolation to bruised hearts and to bewildered minds—and I had boxes full of letters to show that it did—then to whom should I carry it rather than to those who had fought so splendidly and lost so heavily in the common cause? I was a little weary also after three years of incessant controversy, speaking often five times a week, and continually endeavouring to uphold the cause in the press. The long voyage presented attractions, even if there was hard work at the end of it. There were difficulties in the way. Three children, boys of eleven and nine, with a girl of seven, all devotedly attached to their home and their parents, could not easily be left behind. If they came a maid was also necessary. The pressure upon me of correspondence and interviews would be so great that my old friend and secretary, Major Wood, would be also needed. Seven of us in all therefore, and a cheque of sixteen hundred pounds drawn for our return tickets, apart from outfit, before a penny could be entered on the credit side. However, Mr. Carlyle Smythe, the best agent in Australia, had taken the matter up and I felt that we were in good hands. The lectures would be numerous, controversies severe, the weather at its hottest, and my own age over sixty. But there are compensating forces, and I was constantly aware of their presence. I may count our adventures as actually beginning from the luncheon which was given us in farewell a week or so before our sailing by the Spiritualists of England. Harry Engholm, most unselfish of

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men, and a born organiser among our most unorganised crowd, had the matter in hand, so it was bound to be a success. There was sitting room at the Holborn Restaurant for 290 people, and it was all taken up three weeks before the event. The secretary said that he could have filled the Albert Hall. It was an impressive example of the solidity of the movement showing itself for the moment round us, but really round the cause. There were peers, doctors, clergymen, officers of both services, and, above all, those splendid lower middle class folk, if one talks in our material earth terms, who are the spiritual peers of the nation. Many professional mediums were there also, and I was honoured by their presence, for as I said in my remarks, I consider that in these days of doubt and sorrow, a genuine professional medium is the most useful member of the whole community. Alas! how few they are! Four photographic mediums do I know in all Britain, with about twelve physical phenomena mediums and as many really reliable clairvoyants. What are these among so many? But there are many amateur mediums of various degrees, and the number tends to increase. Perhaps there will at last be an angel to every church as in the days of John. I see dimly the time when two congregations, the living and those who have passed on, shall move forward together with the medium angel as the bridge between them.

It was a wonderful gathering, and I only wish I could think that my own remarks rose to the height of the occasion. However, I did my best and spoke from my heart. I told how the Australian visit had arisen, and I claimed that the message that I would carry was

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the most important that the mind of man could conceive, implying as it did the practical abolition of death, and the reinforcement of our present religious views by the actual experience of those who have made the change from the natural to the spiritual bodies. Speaking of our own experiences, I mentioned that my wife and I had actually spoken face to face beyond all question or doubt with eleven friends or relatives who had passed over, their direct voices being in each case audible, and their conversation characteristic and evidential—in some cases marvellously so. Then with a sudden impulse I called upon those in the audience who were prepared to swear that they had had a similar experience to stand up and testify. It seemed for a moment as if the whole audience were on their feet. *The Times* next day said 250 out of 290 and I am prepared to accept that estimate. Men and women, of all professions and social ranks—I do not think that I exaggerated when I said that it was the most remarkable demonstration that I had ever seen and that nothing like it had ever occurred in the City of London.

It was vain for those journals who tried to minimise it to urge that in a Baptist or a Unitarian assembly all would have stood up to testify to their own faith. No doubt they would, but this was not a case of faith, it was a case of bearing witness to fact. There were people of all creeds, Church, dissent, Unitarian and ex-materialists. They were testifying to an actual objective experience as they might have testified to having seen the lions in Trafalgar Square. If such a public agreement of evidence does not establish a fact then it is indeed impossible, as Professor Challis remarked

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long ago, to prove a thing by any human testimony whatever. I confess that I was amazed. When I remember how many years it was before I myself got any final personal proofs I should have thought that the vast majority of Spiritualists were going rather upon the evidence of others than upon their own. And yet 250 out of 290 had actually joined hands across the border. I had no idea that the direct proof was so widely spread.

I have always held that people insist too much upon direct proof. What direct proof have we of most of the great facts of Science? We simply take the word of those who have examined. How many of us have, for example, seen the rings of Saturn? We are assured that they are there, and we accept the assurance. Strong telescopes are rare, and so we do not all expect to see the rings with our own eyes. In the same way strong mediums are rare, and we cannot all expect to experience the higher psychic results. But if the assurance of those who have carefully experimented, of the Barretts, the Hares, the Crookes, the Wallaces, the Lodges and the Lombrosos, is not enough, then it is manifest that we are dealing with this matter on different terms to those which we apply to all the other affairs of science. It would of course be different if there were a school of patient investigators who had gone equally deeply into the matter and come to opposite conclusions. Then we should certainly have to find the path of truth by individual effort. But such a school does not exist. Only the ignorant and inexperienced are in total opposition, and the humblest wit-

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ness who has really sought the evidence has more weight than they.

After the luncheon my wife made the final preparations—and only ladies can tell what it means to fit out six people with tropical and semi-tropical outfits which will enable them for eight months to stand inspection in public. I employed the time by running down to Devonshire to give addresses at Exeter and Torquay, with admirable audiences at both. Good Evan Powell had come down to give me a last séance, and I had the joy of a few last words with my arisen son, who blessed me on my mission and assured me that I would indeed bring solace to bruised hearts. The words he uttered were a quotation from my London speech at which Powell had not been present, nor had the verbatim account of it appeared anywhere at that time. It was one more sign of how closely our words and actions are noted from the other side. Powell was tired, having given a sitting the night before, so the proceedings were short, a few floating lights, my son and my sister's son to me, one or two greetings to other sitters, and it was over.

Whilst in Exeter I had a discussion with those who would break away from Christianity. They are a strong body within the movement, and how can Christians be surprised at it when they remember that for seventy years they have had nothing but contempt and abuse for the true light-bearers of the world? Is there at the present moment one single bishop, or one head of a Free Church, who has the first idea of psychic truth? Dr. Parker had, in his day, so too Archdeacons Wilberforce and Colley, Mr. Haweis and a few others. Gen-

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eral Booth has also testified to spiritual communion with the dead. But what have Spiritualists had in the main save misrepresentation and persecution? Hence the movement has admittedly, so far as it is an organised religion—and it has already 360 churches and 1,000 building funds—taken a purely Unitarian turn. This involves no disrespect towards Him Whom they look upon as the greatest Spirit who ever trod the earth, but only a deep desire to communicate direct without intermediary with that tremendous centre of force from and to whom all things radiate or return. They are very earnest and good men, these organised religious Spiritualists, and for the most part, so far as my experience goes, are converts from materialism who, having in their materialistic days said very properly that they would believe nothing which could not be proved to them, are ready now with Thomas to be absolutely wholehearted when the proof of survival and spirit communion has actually reached them. There, however, the proof ends, nor will they go further than the proof extends, as otherwise their original principles would be gone. Therefore they are Unitarians with a breadth of vision which includes Christ, Krishna, Buddha and all the other great spirits whom God has sent to direct different lines of spiritual evolution which correspond to the different needs of the various races of mankind. Our information from the beyond is that this evolution is continued beyond the grave, and very far on until all details being gradually merged, they become one as children of God. With a deep reverence for Christ it is undeniable that the organised Spiritualist does not accept vicarious atonement nor original

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THE GOD-SPEED LUNCHEON IN LONDON.

On this occasion 250 out of 290 guests rose as testimony that they were in personal touch with their dead.

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sin, and believes that a man reaps as he sows with no one but himself to pull out the weeds. It seems to me the more virile and manly doctrine, and as to the texts which seem to say otherwise, we cannot deny that the New Testament has been doctored again and again in order to square the record of the Scriptures with the practice of the Church. Professor Nestle, in the preface to a work on theology (I write far from books of reference), remarks that there were actually officials named "Correctores," who were appointed at the time of the Council of Nicæa for this purpose, and St. Jerome, when he constructed the Vulgate, complains to Pope Damasus that it is practically a new book that he is making, putting any sin arising upon the Pope's head. In the face of such facts we can only accept the spirit of the New Testament fortified with common sense, and using such interpretation as brings most spiritual strength to each of us. Personally, I accept the view of the organised Spiritual religion, for it removes difficulties which formerly stood between me and the whole Christian system, but I would not say or do anything which would abash those others who are getting real spiritual help from any sort of Christian belief. The gaining of spirituality and widening of the personality are the aims of life, and how it is done is the business of the individual. Every creed has produced its saints and has to that extent justified its existence. I like the Unitarian position of the main Spiritual body, however, because it links the movement up with the other great creeds of the world and makes it more accessible to the Jew, the Moham-

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medan or the Buddhist. It is far too big to be confined within the palings of Christianity.

Here is a little bit of authentic teaching from the other side which bears upon the question. I take it from the remarkable record of Mr. Miller of Belfast, whose dialogues with his son after the death of the latter seem to me to be as certainly true as any case which has come to my notice. On asking the young soldier some question about the exact position of Christ in religion he modestly protested that such a subject was above his head, and asked leave to bring his higher guide to answer the question. Using a fresh voice and in a new and more weighty manner the medium then said :—

"I wish to answer your question. Jesus the Christ is the proper designation. Jesus was perfect humanity. Christ was the God idea in Him. Jesus, on account of His purity, manifested in the highest degree the psychic powers which resulted in His miracles. Jesus never preached the blood of the lamb. The disciples after His ascension forgot the message in admiration of the man. The Christ is in every human being, and so are the psychic forces which were used by Jesus. If the same attention were given to spiritual development which you give to the comfort and growth of your material bodies your progress in spiritual life would be rapid and would be characterised by the same works as were performed by Jesus. The one essential thing for all on earth to strive after is a fuller knowledge and growth in spiritual living."

I think that the phrase, "In their admiration of the

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man they forgot His message," is as pregnant a one as I ever heard.

To come back then to the discussion at Exeter, what I said then and feel now is that every Spiritualist is free to find his own path, and that as a matter of fact his typical path is a Unitarian one, but that this in no way obscures the fact that our greatest leaders, Lodge, Barrett, Ellis Powell, Tweedale, are devoted sons of the Church, that our literature is full of Christian aspiration, and that our greatest prophet, Vale Owen, is a priest of a particularly sacerdotal turn of mind. We are in a transition stage, and have not yet found any common theological position, or any common position at all, save that the dead carry on, that they do not change, that they can under proper physical conditions communicate with us, and that there are many physical signs by which they make their presence known to us. That is our common ground, and all beyond that is matter of individual observation and inference. Therefore, we are not in a position to take on any anti-Christian agitation, for it would be against the conscience of the greater part of our own people.

Well, it is clear that if I do not begin my book I shall finish it before I have begun, so let me end this chapter by saying that in despite of all superstition we started for Australia in the good ship "Naldera" (Capt. Lewellin, R.N.R.), on Friday, August 13th, 1920. As we carried two bishops in addition to our ominous dates we were foredoomed by every nautical tradition. Our party were my dear, splendid wife, who has shared both my evidence and my convictions. She it is who, by breaking up her household, leaving her beloved

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home, breaking the schooling of her children, and venturing out upon a sea voyage, which of all things she hates, has made the real sacrifice for the cause. As to me, I am fond of change and adventure, and heartily agree with President Roosevelt when he said that the grandest sport upon earth is to champion an unpopular cause which you know to be true. With us were Denis, Malcolm and Baby, concerning whom I wrote the "Three of them" sketches some years ago. In their train was Jakeman, most faithful of maids, and in mine Major Wood, who has been mixed up in my life ever since as young men we played both cricket and football in the same team. Such was the little party who set forth to try and blow that smouldering glow of truth which already existed in Australia, into a more lively flame.

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CHAPTER II

Gibraltar.—Spanish right versus British might.—Relics of Barbary Rovers, and of German militarists.—Ichabod! Senegal Infantry.—No peace for the world.—Religion on a liner.—Differences of vibration.—The Bishop of Kwang-Si.—Religion in China.—Whisky in excelsis.—France's masterpiece.—British errors.—A procession of giants.—The invasion of Egypt.—Tropical weather.—The Russian Horror.—An Indian experiment.—Aden.—Bombay.—The Lambeth encyclical.—A great novelist.—The Mango trick.—Snakes.—The Catamarans.—The Robber Castles of Ceylon.—Doctrine of Reincarnation.—Whales and Whalers.—Perth.—The Bight.

We had a favourable journey across the Bay and came without adventure to Gibraltar, that strange crag, Arabic by name, African in type, Spanish by right, and British by might. I trust that my whole record has shown me to be a loyal son of the Empire, and I recognise that we must have a secure line of communications with the East, but if any change could give us Ceuta, on the opposite African coast, instead of this outlying corner of proud old Spain, it would be good policy as well as good morality to make the change. I wonder how we should like it if the French held a garrison at Mount St. Michael in Cornwall, which would be a very similar situation. Is it worth having a latent enemy who at any time might become an active one, or is it wiser to hold them to us by the memory of a great voluntary act of justice? They would pay,

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of course, for all quays, breakwaters and improvements, which would give us the money to turn Ceuta into a worthy substitute, which could be held without offending the pride of a great nation, as old and proud as ourselves. The whole lesson of this great war is that no nation can do what is unjust with impunity, and that sooner or later one's sin will find one out. How successful seemed all the scheming of Frederick of Prussia! But what of Silesia and of Poland now? Only on justice can you build with a permanent foundation, and there is no justice in our tenure of Gibraltar. We had only an hour ashore, a great joy to the children, and carried away a vague impression of grey-shirted Tommies, swarthy loungers, one long, cobble-stoned street, scarlet blossoms, and a fine Governor's house, in which I picture that brave old warrior, Smith-Dorrien, writing a book which will set all the critics talking, and the military clubs buzzing a year or two from now. I do not know if he was really forced to fight at Le Cateau, though our sympathies must always go to the man who fights, but I do feel that if he had had his way and straightened the salient of Ypres, there would have been a mighty saving of blood and tears. There were sentimental reasons against it, but I can think of no material ones—certainly none which were worth all the casualties of the Salient. I had only one look at the place, and that by night, but never shall I forget the murderous loop, outlined by star shells, nor the horrible noises which rose up from that place of wrath and misery.

On August 19th we were running up the eastern Spanish coast, a most desolate country of high bare

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cliffs and barren uplands, studded with aged towers which told of pirate raids of old. These Mediterranean shore dwellers must have had a hellish life, when the Barbary Rover was afloat, and they might be wakened any night by the Moslem yell. Truly, if the object of human life was chastening by suffering, then we have given it to each other in full measure. If this were the only life I do not know how the hypothesis of the goodness of God could be sustained, since our history has been one hardly broken record of recurring miseries, war, famine, and disease, from the ice to the equator. I should still be a materialist, as I was of yore, if it were not for the comfort and teaching from beyond, which tells me that this is the worst—far the worst—and that by its standard everything else becomes most gloriously better, so long as we help to make it so. "If the boys knew what it was like over here," said a dead soldier, "they would just jump for it." He added however, "If they did that they would surely miss it." We cannot bluff Providence, or short-circuit things to our liking.

We got ashore once more at Marseilles. I saw converted German merchant ships, with names like "Burgomeister Müller," in the harbour, and railway trucks with "Mainz-Cöln" still marked upon their flanks—part of the captured loot. Germany, that name of terror, how short is the time since we watched you well-nigh all-powerful, mighty on land, dangerous on the sea, conquering the world with your commerce and threatening it with your arms! You had everything, numbers, discipline, knowledge, industry, bravery, organisation, all in the highest—such an engine as the

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world has never seen. And now—Ichabod! Ichabod! Your warships lie under the waves, your liners fly the flags of your enemies, your mother Rhine on either bank hears the bugles of your invaders. What was wanting in you to bring you to such a pass? Was it not spirituality? Had not your churches become as much a department of State as the Post Office, where every priest and pastor was in State pay, and said that which the State ordained? All other life was at its highest, but spiritual life was dead, and because it was dead all the rest had taken on evil activities which could only lead to dissolution and corruption. Had Germany obeyed the moral law would she not now be great and flourishing, instead of the ruin which we see? Was ever such an object lesson in sin and its consequence placed before the world? But let us look to it, for we also have our lesson to learn, and our punishment is surely waiting if we do not learn it. If now after such years we sink back into old ruts and do not make an earnest effort for real religion and real active morality, then we cumber the ground, and it is time that we were swept away, for no greater chance of reform can ever come to us.

I saw some of the Senegal troops in the streets of Marseilles—a whole battalion of them marching down for re-embarkation. They are fierce, hard soldiers, by the look of them, for the negro is a natural fighter, as the prize ring shows, and these have long service training upon the top of this racial pugnacity. They look pure savages, with the tribal cuts still upon their faces, and I do not wonder that the Germans objected to them, though we cannot doubt that the Germans

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would themselves have used their Askaris in Europe as well as in Africa if they could have done so. The men who had as allies the murderers of the Armenians would not stick at trifles. I said during the war, and I can clearly see now, that the way in which the war was fought will prove hardly second to the war itself as a misfortune to the human race. A clean war could end in a clean peace. But how can we ever forget the poison gas, the Zeppelin bombardments of helpless cities, the submarine murders, the scattering of disease germs, and all the other atrocities of Germany? No water of oblivion can ever wash her clean. She had one chance, and only one. It was to at once admit it all herself and to set to work purging her national guilt by punishing guilty individuals. Perhaps she may even now save herself and clear the moral atmosphere of the world by doing this. But time passes and the signs are against it. There can be no real peace in the world until voluntary reparation has been made. Forced reparation can only make things worse, for it cannot satisfy us, and it must embitter them. I long for real peace, and should love to see our Spiritualist bodies lead the van. But the time is not yet and it is realities we need, not phrases.

Old travellers say that they never remember the Mediterranean so hot. We went down it with a following breeze which just neutralised our own head wind, the result being a quivering tropical heat. With the Red Sea before us it was no joke to start our trials so soon, and already the children began to wilt. However, Major Wood kept them at work for the forenoons and discipline still flourished. On the third day

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out we were south of Crete, and saw an island lying there which is surely the same in the lee of which Paul's galley took refuge when Euroclydon was behaving so badly. I had been asked to address the first-class passengers upon psychic religion that evening, and it was strange indeed to speak in those waters, for I knew well that however ill my little pip-squeak might compare with that mighty voice, yet it was still the same battle of the unseen against the material, raging now as it did 2,000 years ago. Some 200 of the passengers, with the Bishop of Kwang-Si, turned up, and a better audience one could not wish, though the acoustic properties of the saloon were abominable. However, I got it across, though I was as wet as if I had fallen overboard when I had finished. I was pleased to learn afterwards that among the most keen of my audience were every coloured man and woman on the ship, Parsees, Hindoos, Japanese and Mohammedans.

"Do you believe it is true?" they were asked next day.

"We *know* that it is true," was the answer, and it came from a lady with a red caste-mark like a wafer upon her forehead. So far as I could learn she spoke for all the Eastern folk.

And the others? At least I set them talking and thinking. I heard next morning of a queue of six waiting at the barber's all deep in theological discussion, with the barber himself, razor in hand, joining warmly in. "There has never been so much religion talked on a P. & O. ship since the line was started," said one old traveller. It was all good-humoured and could do no harm. Before we had reached Port Said all my

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books on the subject were lent out to eager readers, and I was being led aside into remote corners and cross-questioned all day. I have a number of good psychic photographs with me, some of them of my own taking, and all of them guaranteed, and I find these valuable as making folk realise that my words do in truth represent realities. I have the famous fairy photos also, which will appear in England in the Christmas number of the *Strand*. I feel as if it were a delay-action mine which I had left behind me. I can imagine the cry of "Fake!" which will arise. But they will stand investigation. It has of course nothing to do with Spiritualism proper, but everything which can shake the mind out of narrow material grooves and make it realise that endless worlds surround us, separated only by difference of vibration, must work in the general direction of truth.

"Difference of Vibration"—I have been trying lately to get behind mere words and to realise more clearly what this may mean. It is a fascinating and fruitful line of thought. It begins with my electric fan whizzing over my head. As it starts with slow vibration I see the little propellers. Soon they become a dim mist, and finally I can see them no more. But they are there. At any moment, by slowing the movement, I can bring them back to my vision. Why do I not see it all the time? Because the impression is so fast that my retina has not time to register it. Can we not imagine then that some objects may emit the usual light waves, long enough and slow enough to leave a picture, but that other objects may send waves which are short and steep, and therefore make so swift an impression that it is not recorded? That, so far as I can follow

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it, is what we mean by an object with a higher rate of vibration. It is but a feeling out into the dark, but it is a hypothesis which may serve us to carry on with, though the clairvoyant seems to be not a person with a better developed physical retina, but rather one who has the power to use that which corresponds with the retina in their own etheric bodies which are in harmony with etheric waves from outside. When a man can walk round a room and examine the pictures with the back of his head, as Tom Tyrrell has done, it is clear that it is not his physical retina which is working. In countless cases inquirers into magnetic phenomena have caused their subjects to read with various parts of their bodies. It is the other body, the etheric body, the "spiritual" body of Paul, which lies behind all such phenomena—that body which is loose with all of us in sleep, but only exceptionally in waking hours. Once we fully understand the existence of that deathless etheric body, merged in our own but occasionally detachable, we have mastered many a problem and solved many a ghost story.

However, I must get back to my Cretan lecture. The bishop was interested, and I lent him one of the Rev. Charles Tweedale's pamphlets next day, which shows how sadly Christianity has wandered away from its early faith of spiritual gifts and Communion of Saints. Both have now become words instead of things, save among our ranks. The bishop is a good fellow, red and rough like a Boer farmer, but healthy, breezy, and Apostolic. "Do mention his kind grey eyes," says my wife. He may die a martyr yet in that inland diocese of China—and he would not shrink from it. Mean-

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while, apart from his dogma, which must be desperately difficult to explain to an educated Chinaman, he must always be a centre of civilisation and social effort. A splendid fellow—but he suffers from what all bishops and all cardinals and all Popes suffer from, and that is superannuation. A physiologist has said that few men can ever entertain a new idea after fifty. How then can any church progress when all its leaders are over that age? This is why Christianity has stagnated and degenerated. If here and there one had a new idea, how could it survive the pressure of the others? It is hopeless. In this particular question of psychic religion the whole order is an inversion, for the people are ahead of the clergy and the clergy of the bishops. But when the laymen lead strongly enough the others will follow unless they wish to see the whole Church organisation dissolve.

He was very interesting upon the state of Christianity in China. Protestantism, thanks to the joint British and American Missions, is gaining upon Roman Catholicism, and has now far outstripped it, but the Roman Catholic organisations are very wealthy on account of ancient valuable concessions and well-invested funds. In case of a Bolshevist movement that may be a source of danger, as it gives a reason for attack. The Bishop made the very striking remark that if the whites cleared right out of China all the Christian Churches of divers creeds would within a generation merge into one creed. "What have we to do," they say, "with these old historical quarrels which are hardly intelligible to us? We are all followers of Christ, and that is enough." Truly, the converted seem far ahead

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of those who converted them. It is the priesthoods, the organisations, the funds and the vested interests which prevent the Churches from being united. In the meanwhile ninety per cent. of our population shows what it thinks by never entering into a church at all. Personally, I can never remember since I reached manhood feeling myself the better for having gone into one. And yet I have been an earnest seeker for truth. Verily, there is something deep down which is rotten. It is want of fact, want of reality, words instead of things. Only last Sunday I shuddered as I listened to the hymns, and it amazed me to look around and see the composed faces of those who were singing them. Do they think what they are saying, or does Faith atrophy some part of the brain? We are "born through water and blood into the true church." We drink precious blood. "He hath broken the teeth in their jaw." Can such phrases really mean anything to any thoughtful man? If not, why continue them? You will have your churches empty while you do. People will not argue about it—they will, and do, simply stay away. And the clergy go on stating and re-stating incredible unproved things, while neglecting and railing at those which could be proved and believed. On our lines those nine out of ten could be forced back to a reconsideration of their position, even though that position would not square with all the doctrines of present-day Christianity, which would, I think, have offended the early Christians as much as it does the earnest thinkers of to-day.

Port Said came at last, and we entered the Suez Canal. It is a shocking thing that the entrance to

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this, one of the most magnificent of the works of man, are flanked by great sky advertisements of various brands of whisky. The sale of whisky may or may not be a tolerable thing, but its flaunting advertisements, Dewar, Johnny Walker, and the rest, have surely long been intolerable. If anything would make me a total prohibitionist those would. They are shameless. I do not know if some middle way could be found by which light alcoholic drinks could remain—so light that drunkenness would be hardly possible—but if this cannot be done, then let us follow the noble example of America. It is indeed shameful to see at the very point of the world where some noble sentiment might best be expressed these huge reminders of that which has led to so much misery and crime. To a Frenchman it must seem even worse than to us, while what the abstemious Mohammedan can think is beyond my imagination. In that direction at least the religion of Mohammed has done better than that of Christ. If all those Esquimaux, South Sea Islanders and others who have been converted to Christianity and then debauched by drink, had followed the prophet instead, it cannot be denied that their development would have been a happier and a higher one, though the cast-iron doctrines and dogmas of the Moslem have dangers of their own.

Has France ever had the credit she deserves for the splendid faith with which she followed that great beneficent genius Lesseps in his wonderful work? It is beautiful from end to end, French in its neatness, its order, its exquisite finish. Truly the opposition of our people, both experts and public, was a disgrace to us, though it sinks into insignificance when compared with

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our colossal national stupidity over the Channel tunnel. When our descendants compute the sums spent in shipping and transhipping in the great war, the waste of merchant ships and convoys, the sufferings of the wounded, the delay in reinforcements, the dependence upon the weather, they will agree that our sin had found us out and that we have paid a fitting price for our stupidity. Unhappily, it was not our blind guides who paid it, but it was the soldier and sailor and taxpayer, for the nation always pays collectively for the individual blunder. Would a hundred million pounds cover the cost of that one? Well can I remember how a year before war was declared, seeing clearly what was coming, I sent three memoranda to the Naval and Military authorities and to the Imperial Council of Defence pointing out exactly what the situation would be, and especially the danger to our transports. It is admitted now that it was only the strange inaction of the German light forces, and especially their want of comprehension of the possibilities of the submarine, which enabled our Expeditionary Force to get across at all, so that we might have lost the war within the first month. But as to my poor memoranda, which proved so terribly correct, I might as well have dropped them into my own wastepaper basket instead of theirs, and so saved the postage. My only convert was Captain, now General, Swinton, part inventor of the tanks, who acted as Secretary to the Imperial Defence Committee, and who told me at the time that my paper had set him thinking furiously.

Which leads my thoughts to the question of the torpedoing of merchant vessels by submarines. So

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sure was I that the Germans would do this, that after knocking at official doors in vain, I published a sketch called "Danger," which was written a year before the war, and depicted all that afterwards occurred, even down to such small details as the ships zig-zagging up Channel to escape, and the submarines using their guns to save torpedoes. I felt as if, like Solomon Eagle, I could have marched down Fleet Street with a brazier on my head if I could only call people's attention to the coming danger. I saw naval officers on the point, but they were strangely blind, as is shown by the comments printed at the end of "Danger," which give the opinions of several admirals pooh-poohing my fears. Among others I saw Captain Beatty, as he then was, and found him alive to the possible danger, though he did not suggest a remedy. His quiet, brisk personality impressed me, and I felt that our national brain-errors might perhaps be made good in the end by the grit that is in us. But how hard were our tasks from our want of foresight. Admiral Von Capelle did me the honour to say during the war, in the German Reichstag, that I was the only man who had prophesied the conditions of the great naval war. As a matter of fact, both Fisher and Scott had done so, though they had not given it to the public in the same detail—but nothing had been done. We know now that there was not a single harbour proof against submarines on our whole East Coast. Truly the hand of the Lord was over England. Nothing less could have saved her.

We tied up to the bank soon after entering the Canal, and lay there most of the night while a procession of great ships moving northwards swept silently

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past us in the ring of vivid light cast by their search-lights and our own. I stayed on deck most of the night to watch them. The silence was impressive—those huge structures sweeping past with only the slow beat of their propellers and the wash of their bow wave on either side. No sooner had one of these great shapes slid past than, looking down the Canal, one saw the brilliant head light of another in the distance. They are only allowed to go at the slowest pace, so that their wash may not wear away the banks. Finally, the last had passed, and we were ourselves able to cast off our warps and push southwards. I remained on deck seeing the sun rise over the Eastern desert, and then a wonderful slow-moving panorama of Egypt as the bank slid slowly past us. First desert, then green oases, then the long line of rude fortifications from Kantara downwards, with the camp fires smoking, groups of early busy Tommies and endless dumps of stores. Here and to the south was the point where the Turks with their German leaders attempted the invasion of Egypt, carrying flat-bottomed boats to ford the Canal. How they were ever allowed to get so far is barely comprehensible, but how they were ever permitted to get back again across one hundred miles of desert in the face of our cavalry and camelry is altogether beyond me. Even their guns got back untaken. They dropped a number of mines in the Canal, but with true Turkish slovenliness they left on the banks at each point the long bamboos on which they had carried them across the desert, which considerably lessened the work of those who had to sweep them up. The sympathies of the Egyptians seem to have been against us, and yet

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they have no desire to pass again under the rule of the Turk. Our dominion has had the effect of turning a very poor country into a very rich one, and of securing some sort of justice for the fellah or peasant, but since we get no gratitude and have no trade preference it is a little difficult to see how we are the better for all our labours. So long as the Canal is secure—and it is no one's interest to injure it—we should be better if the country governed itself. We have too many commitments, and if we have to take new ones, such as Mesopotamia, it would be well to get rid of some of the others where our task is reasonably complete. "We never let the youngsters grow up," said a friendly critic. There is, however, I admit, another side to the question, and the idea of permitting a healthy moral place like Port Said to relapse into the hotbed of gambling and syphilis which it used to be, is repugnant to the mind. Which is better—that a race be free, immoral and incompetent, or that it be forced into morality and prosperity? That question meets us at every turn.

The children have been delighted by the fish on the surface of the Canal. Their idea seems to be that the one aim and object of our excursion is to see sharks in the sea and snakes in Australia. We did actually see a shark half ashore upon a sandbank in one of the lower lakes near Suez. It was lashing about with a frantic tail, and so got itself off into deep water. To the west all day we see the very wild and barren country through which our ancestors used to drive upon the overland route when they travelled by land from Cairo to Suez. The smoke of a tiny mail-train marks the general line of that most desolate road. In the evening we were

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through the Canal and marked the rugged shore upon our left down which the Israelites pursued their way in the direction of Sinai. One wonders how much truth there is in the narrative. On the one hand it is impossible to doubt that something of the sort did occur. On the other, the impossibility of so huge a crowd living on the rare wells of the desert is manifest. But numbers are not the strong point of an Oriental historian. Perhaps a thousand or two may have followed their great leader upon that perilous journey. I have heard that Moses either on his own or through his wife was in touch with Babylonian habits. This would explain those tablets of stone, or of inscribed clay burned into brick which we receive as the Ten Commandments, and which only differ from the moral precepts of other races in the strange limitations and omissions. At least ten new ones have long been needed to include drunkenness, gluttony, pride, envy, bigotry, lying and the rest.

The weather grows hotter and hotter, so that one aged steward who has done 100 voyages declares it to be unique. One passenger has died. Several stewards have collapsed. The wind still keeps behind us. In the midst of all this I had an extensively signed petition from the second class passengers that I should address them. I did so, and spoke on deck for forty minutes to a very attentive audience which included many of the officers of the ship. I hope I got my points across to them. I was a sad example of sweated labour when I had finished. My wife tells me that the people were impressed. As I am never aware of the presence of any individual when I am speaking on this subject I

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rely upon my wife's very quick and accurate feminine impressions. She sits always beside me, notes everything, gives me her sympathetic atmosphere which is of such psychic importance, and finally reports the result. If any point of mine seems to her to miss its mark I unhesitatingly take it out. It interests me to hear her tell of the half-concealed sneer with which men listen to me, and how it turns into interest, bewilderment and finally something like reverence and awe as their brain gradually realises the proved truth of what I am saying, which upsets the whole philosophy on which their lives are built.

There are several Australian officers on board who are coming from the Russian front full of dreadful stories of Bolshevist atrocities, seen with their own eyes. The executioners were Letts and Chinese, and the instigators renegade Jews, so that the Russians proper seem to have been the more or less innocent dupes. They had dreadful photographs of tortured and mutilated men as corroboration. Surely hell, the place of punishment and purgatorial expiation, is actually upon this earth in such cases. One leader seems to have been a Sadic madman, for after torturing his victims till even the Chinese executioners struck, he would sit playing a violin very exquisitely while he gloated over their agonies. All these Australian boys agree that the matter will burn itself out, and that it will end in an immense massacre of Jews which may involve the whole seven millions now in Russia. God forbid, but the outlook is ominous! I remember a prophecy which I read early in the war that a great figure would arise in the north and have power for

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six years. If Lenin was the great figure then he has, according to the prophet, about two years more to run. But prophecy is fitful, dangerous work. The way in which the founders of the Christian faith all foretold the imminent end of the world is an example. What they dimly saw was no doubt the destruction of Jerusalem, which seems to have been equally clear to Ezekiel 600 years before, for his picture of cannibalism and dispersion is very exact.

It is wonderful what chances of gaining direct information one has aboard a ship of this sort, with its mixed crowd of passengers, many of them famous in their own lines. I have already alluded to the officers returning from Russia with their prophecies of evil. But there are many other folk with tales of deep interest. There is a Mr. Covell, a solid practical Briton, who may prove to be a great pioneer, for he has made farming pay handsomely in the very heart of the Indian plains. Within a hundred miles of Lucknow he has founded the townlet of Covellpore, where he handles 3,000 acres of wheat and cotton with the aid of about the same number of natives. This is the most practical step I have ever heard of for forming a real indigenous white population in India. His son was with him, going out to carry on the work. Mr. Covell holds that the irrigation of the North West of India is one of the greatest wonders of the world, and Jacob the engineer responsible. I had never heard of him nor, I am ashamed to say, had I heard of Sir Leonard Rogers, who is one of those great men like Sir Ronald Ross, whom the Indian Medical Service throws up. Rogers has reduced the mortality of cholera by intravenous in-

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jections of hypertonic saline until it is only 15 per cent. General Maude, I am informed, would almost certainly have been saved, had it not been that some false departmental economy had withheld the necessary apparatus. Leprosy also seems in a fair way to yielding to Rogers' genius for investigation.

It is sad to hear that this same Indian Medical Service which has produced such giants as Fayrer, Ross, and Rogers is in a fair way to absolute ruin, because the conditions are such that good white candidates will no longer enter it. White doctors do not mind working with, or even under, natives who have passed the same British examinations as themselves, but they bar the native doctor who has got through a native college in India, and is on a far lower educational level than themselves. To serve under such a man is an impossible inversion. This is appreciated by the medical authorities at home, the word is given to the students, and the best men avoid the service. So unless a change is made, the end is in sight of the grand old service which has given so much to humanity.

Aden is remarkable only for the huge water tanks cut to catch rain, and carved out of solid rock. A whole captive people must have been set to work on so colossal a task, and one wonders where the poor wretches got water themselves the while. Their work is as fresh and efficient as when they left it. No doubt it was for the watering, not of the population, but of the Egyptian and other galleys on their way to Punt and King Solomon's mines. It must be a weary life for our garrison in such a place. There is strange

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fishing, sea snakes, parrot fish and the like. It is their only relaxation, for it is desert all round.

Monsoon and swell and drifting rain in the Indian Ocean. We heard that "thresh of the deep sea rain," of which Kipling sings. Then at last in the early morning the long quay of Bombay, and the wonderful crowd of men of every race who await an incoming steamer. Here at least half our passengers were disgorged, young subalterns, grey colonels, grave administrators, yellow-faced planters, all the fuel which is grown in Britain and consumed in the roaring furnace of India. So devoted to their work, so unthanked and uncomprehended by those for whom they work! They are indeed a splendid set of men, and if they withdrew I wonder how long it would be before the wild men of the frontier would be in Calcutta and Bombay, as the Picts and Scots flowed over Britain when the Roman legions were withdrawn. What view will the coming Labour governments of Britain take of our Imperial commitments? Upon that will depend the future history of great tracts of the globe which might very easily relapse into barbarism.

The ship seemed lonely when our Indian friends were gone, for indeed, the pick of the company went with them. Several pleased me by assuring me as they left that their views of life had been changed since they came on board the "Naldera." To many I gave reading lists that they might look further into the matter for themselves. A little leaven in the great lump, but how can we help leavening it all when we know that, unlike other creeds, no true Spiritualist can ever revert, so that while we continually gain, we never

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lose. One hears of the converts to various sects, but one does not hear of those who are driven out by their narrow, intolerant doctrines. You can change your mind about faiths, but not about facts, and hence our certain conquest.

One cannot spend even a single long day in India without carrying away a wonderful impression of the gentle dignity of the Indian people. Our motor drivers were extraordinarily intelligent and polite, and all we met gave the same impression.

India may be held by the sword, but it is certainly kept very carefully in the scabbard, for we hardly saw a soldier in the streets of this, its greatest city. I observed some splendid types of manhood, however, among the native police. We lunched at the Taj Mahal Hotel, and got back tired and full of mixed impressions.

Verily the ingenuity of children is wonderful. They have turned their active minds upon the problem of paper currency with fearsome results. Baby writes cheques in quaint ways upon odd bits of paper and brings them to me to be cashed. Malcolm, once known as Dimples, has made a series of pound and five pound notes of his own. The bank they call the money shop. I can trace every sort of atavism, the arboreal, the cave dweller, the adventurous raider, and the tribal instinct in the child, but this development seems a little premature.

Sunday once more and the good Bishop preaching. I wonder more and more what an educated Chinaman would make of such doctrines. To take an example, he has quoted to-day with great approval, the action of Peter in discarding the rite of circumcision as a proof

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of election. That marked, according to the Bishop, the broad comprehensive mind which could not confine the mercies of God to any limited class. And yet when I take up the œcumenical pronouncement from the congress of Anglican bishops which he has just attended, I find that baptism is made the test, even as the Jews made circumcision. Have the bishops not learned that there are millions who revere the memory of Christ, whether they look upon Him as God or man, but who think that baptism is a senseless survival of heathendom, like so many of our religious observances? The idea that the Being who made the milky way can be either placated or incensed by pouring a splash of water over child or adult is an offence to reason, and a slur upon the Divinity.

Two weary days upon the sea with drifting rain showers and wonderful scarlet and green sunsets. Have beguiled the time with W. B. Maxwell's "Lamp and the Mirror." I have long thought that Maxwell was the greatest of British novelists, and this book confirms me in my opinion. Who else could have drawn such fine detail and yet so broad and philosophic a picture? There may have been single books which were better than Maxwell's best—the "Garden of Allah," with its gorgeous oriental colour, would, for example, make a bid for first place, but which of us has so splendid a list of first class serious works as "Mrs. Thompson," "The Rest Cure," "Vivian," "In Cotton Wool," above all, "The Guarded Flame"—classics, every one. Our order of merit will come out very differently in a generation or so to what it stands now, and I shall expect to find my nominee at the top. But

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after all, what's the odds? You do your work as well as you can. You pass. You find other work to do. How the old work compares with the other fellow's work can be a matter of small concern.

In Colombo harbour lay H.M.S. "Highflyer," which we looked upon with the reverence which everybody and everything which did well in the war deserve from us—a saucy, rakish, speedy craft. Several other steamers were flying the yellow quarantine flag, but our captain confided to me that it was a recognised way of saying "no visitors," and did not necessarily bear any pathological meaning. As we had nearly two days before we resumed our voyage I was able to give all our party a long stretch on shore, finally staying with my wife for the night at the Galle Face Hotel, a place where the preposterous charges are partly compensated for by the glorious rollers which break upon the beach outside. I was interested in the afternoon by a native conjurer giving us what was practically a private performance of the mango-tree trick. He did it so admirably that I can well understand those who think that it is an occult process. I watched the man narrowly, and believe that I solved the little mystery, though even now I cannot be sure. In doing it he began by laying several objects out in a casual way while hunting in his bag for his mango seed. These were small odds and ends including a little rag doll, very rudely fashioned, about six or eight inches long. One got accustomed to the presence of these things and ceased to remark them. He showed the seed and passed it for examination, a sort of large Brazil nut. He then laid it among some loose earth, poured some water on it,

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covered it with a handkerchief, and crooned over it. In about a minute he exhibited the same, or another seed, the capsule burst, and a light green leaf protruding. I took it in my hands, and it was certainly a real bursting mango seed, but clearly it had been palmed and substituted for the other. He then buried it again and kept raising the handkerchief upon his own side, and scrabbling about with his long brown fingers underneath its cover. Then he suddenly whisked off the handkerchief and there was the plant, a foot or so high, with thick foliage and blossoms, its root well planted in the earth. It was certainly very startling.

My explanation is that by a miracle of packing the whole of the plant had been compressed into the rag doll, or little cloth cylinder already mentioned. The scrabbling of the hands under the cloth was to smooth out the leaves after it was freed from this covering. I observed that the leaves were still rather crumpled, and that there were dark specks of fungi which would not be there if the plant were straight from nature's manufactory. But it was wonderfully done when you consider that the man was squatting in our midst, we standing in a semi-circle around him, with no adventitious aid whatever. I do not believe that the famous Mr. Maskeleyne or any of those otherwise conjurers who are good enough occasionally to put Lodge, Crookes and Lombroso in their places, could have wrought a better illusion.

The fellow had a cobra with him which he challenged me to pick up. I did so and gazed into its strange eyes, which some devilry of man's had turned to a lapis lazuli blue. The juggler said it was the result of its

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skin-sloughing, but I have my doubts. The poison bag had, I suppose, been extracted, but the man seemed nervous and slipped his brown hand between my own and the swaying venomous head with its peculiar flattened hood. It is a fearsome beast, and I can realise what was told me by a lover of animals that the snake was the one creature from which he could get no return of affection. I remember that I once had three in my employ when the "Speckled Band" was produced in London, fine, lively rock pythons, and yet in spite of this profusion of realism I had the experience of reading a review which, after duly slating the play, wound up with the scathing sentence, "The performance ended with the production of a palpably artificial serpent." Such is the reward of virtue. Afterwards when the necessities of several travelling companies compelled us to use dummy snakes we produced a much more realistic effect. The real article either hung down like a pudgy yellow bell rope, or else when his tail was pinched, endeavoured to squirm back and get level with the stage carpenter, who pinched him, which was not in the plot. The latter individual had no doubts at all as to the dummy being an improvement upon the real.

Never, save on the west coast of Africa, have I seen "the league-long roller thundering on the shore," as here, where the Indian Ocean with its thousand leagues of momentum hits the western coast of Ceylon. It looks smooth out at sea, and then you are surprised to observe that a good-sized boat had suddenly vanished. Then it scoops upwards once more on the smooth arch of the billow, disappearing on the further slope. The

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native catamarans are almost invisible, so that you see a row of standing figures from time to time on the crest of the waves. I cannot think that any craft in the world would come through rough water as these catamarans with their long outriggers can do. Man has made few more simple and more effective inventions, and if I were a younger man I would endeavour to introduce them to Brighton beach, as once I introduced ski to Switzerland, or auto-wheels to the British roads. I have other work to do now, but why does not some sportsman take the model, have it made in England, and then give an exhibition in a gale of wind on the south coast. It would teach our fishermen some possibilities of which they are ignorant.

As I stood in a sandy cove one of them came flying in, a group of natives rushing out and pulling it up on the beach. The craft consists only of two planks edgewise and lengthwise. In the nine-inch slit between them lay a number of great twelve-pound fish, like cod, and tied to the side of the boat was a ten-foot sword-fish. To catch that creature while standing on a couple of floating planks must have been sport indeed, and yet the craft is so ingenious that to a man who can at a pinch swim for it, there is very small element of danger. The really great men of our race, the inventor of the wheel, the inventor of the lever, the inventor of the catamaran are all lost in the mists of the past, but ethnologists have found that the cubic capacity of the neolithic brain is as great as our own.

There are two robbers' castles, as the unhappy visitor calls them, facing the glorious sea, the one Galle Face, the other the Mount Lavinia Hotel. They are con-

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nected by an eight-mile road, which has all the colour and life and variety of the East for every inch of the way. In that glorious sun, under the blue arch of such a sky, and with the tropical trees and flowers around, the poverty of these people is very different from the poverty of a London slum. Is there in all God's world such a life as that, and can it really be God's world while we suffer it to exist! Surely, it is a palpable truth that no one has a right to luxuries until every one has been provided with necessities, and among such necessities a decent environment is the first. If we had spent money to fight slumland as we spent it to fight Germany, what a different England it would be. The world moves all the same, and we have eternity before us. But some folk need it.

A doctor came up to me in the hotel and told me that he was practising there, and had come recently from England. He had lost his son in the war, and had himself become unsettled. Being a Spiritualist he went to Mrs. Brittain, the medium, who told him that his boy had a message for him which was that he would do very well in Colombo. He had himself thought of Ceylon, but Mrs. B. had no means of knowing that. He had obeyed the advice thus given, and was glad that he had done so. How much people may miss by cutting themselves away from these ministers of grace! In all this opposition to Spiritualism the punishment continually fits the crime.

Once again we shed passengers and proceeded in chastened mood with empty decks where once it was hard to move. Among others, good Bishop Banister of Kwang-si had gone. I care little for his sacramental

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and vicarious doctrines, but I am very sure that wherever his robust, kindly, sincere personality may dwell is bound to be a centre of the true missionary effort—the effort which makes for the real original teaching of his Master, submission to God and goodwill to our fellow-men.

Now we are on the last lap with nothing but a clear stretch of salt water between our prow and West Australia. Our mission from being a sort of dream takes concrete form and involves definite plans. Meanwhile we plough our way through a deep blue sea with the wind continually against us. I have not seen really calm water since we left the Canal. We carry on with the usual routine of ship sports, which include an England and Australia cricket match, in which I have the honour of captaining England, a proper ending for a long if mediocre career as a cricketer. We lost by one run, which was not bad considering our limited numbers.

Posers of all sorts are brought to me by thoughtful inquirers, which I answer when I can. Often I can't. One which is a most reasonable objection has given me a day's thought. If, as is certain, we can remember in our next life the more important incidents of this one, why is it that in this one we can remember nothing of that previous spiritual career, which must have existed since nothing can be born in time for eternity. Our friends on the other side cannot help us there, nor can even such extended spiritual visions as those of Vale Owen clear it up. On the whole we must admit that our Theosophical friends, with whom we quarrel for their absence of evidence, have the best attempt at

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an explanation. I imagine that man's soul has a cycle which is complete in itself, and all of which is continuous and self conscious. This begins with earth life. Then at last a point is reached, it may be a reincarnation, and a new cycle is commenced, the old one being closed to our memory until we have reached some lofty height in our further journey. Pure speculation, I admit, but it would cover what we know and give us a working hypothesis. I can never excite myself much about the reincarnation idea, for if it be so, it occurs seldom, and at long intervals, with ten years spent in the other spheres for one spent here, so that even admitting all that is said by its supporters it is not of such great importance. At the present rate of change this world will be as strange as another sphere by the time we are due to tread the old stage once more. It is only fair to say that though many spiritualists oppose it, there is a strong body, including the whole French Allan Kardec school, who support it. Those who have passed over may well be divided upon the subject since it concerns their far future and is a matter of speculation to them as to us.

Thrasher whales and sperm whales were seen which aroused the old whaling thrill in my heart. It was the more valuable Greenland whale which I helped to catch, while these creatures are those which dear old Frank Bullen, a childlike sailor to the last, described in his "Cruise of the Cachelot." How is it that sailors write such perfect English. There are Bullen and Conrad, both of whom served before the mast—the two purest stylists of their generation. So was Loti in France. There are some essays of Bullen's, especially

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a description of a calm in the tropics, and again of "Sunrise seen from the Crow's Nest," which have not been matched in our time for perfection of imagery and diction. They are both in his "Idyls of the Sea." If there is compensation in the beyond—and I know that there is—then Frank Bullen is in great peace, for his whole earthly life was one succession of troubles. When I think of his cruel stepmother, his dreadful childhood, his life on a Yankee blood ship, his struggles as a tradesman, his bankruptcy, his sordid worries, and finally, his prolonged ill-health, I marvel at the unequal distribution of such burdens. He was the best singer of a chanty that I have ever heard, and I can hear him now with his rich baritone voice trolling out "Sally Brown" or "Stormalong." May I hear him once again! Our dear ones tell us that there is no great gap between what pleases us here and that which will please us in the beyond. Our own brains, had we ever used them in the matter, should have instructed us that all evolution, spiritual as well as material, must be gradual. Indeed, once one knows psychic truth, one can, reasoning backwards, perceive that we should unaided have come to the same conclusions, but since we have all been deliberately trained not to use our reason in religious matters, it is no wonder that we have made rather a hash of it. Surely it is clear enough that in the case of an artist the artistic nature is part of the man himself. Therefore, if he survives it must survive. But if it survives it must have means of expression, or it is a senseless thing. But means of expression implies appreciation from others and a life on the general lines of this one. So also of the drama, music, science

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and literature, if we carry on they carry on, and they cannot carry on without actual expression and a public to be served.

To the east of us and just beyond the horizon lie the Cocos Islands, where Ross established his strange little kingdom, and where the *Emden* met its end—a glorious one, as every fair minded man must admit. I have seen her stern post since then in the hall of the Federal Parliament at Melbourne, like some fossil monster, once a terror and now for children to gaze at. As to the Cocos Islands, the highest point is, I understand, about twenty feet, and tidal waves are not unknown upon the Pacific, so that the community holds its tenure at very short and sudden notice to quit.

On the morning of September 17th a low coast line appeared upon the port bow—Australia at last. It was the edge of the West Australian State. The evening before a wireless had reached me from the spiritualists of Perth saying that they welcomed us and our message. It was a kind thought and a helpful one. We were hardly moored in the port of Fremantle, which is about ten miles from the capital, when a deputation of these good, kind people was aboard, bearing great bunches of wild flowers, most of which were new to us. Their faces fell when they learned that I must go on in the ship and that there was very little chance of my being able to address them. They are only connected with the other States by one long thin railway line, 1,200 miles long, with scanty trains which were already engaged, so that unless we stuck to the ship we should have to pass ten days or so before we could

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resume our journey. This argument was unanswerable, and so the idea of a meeting was given up.

These kind people had two motors in attendance, which must, I fear, have been a strain upon their resources, for as in the old days the true believers and practical workers are drawn from the poor and humble. However, they certainly treated us royally, and even the children were packed into the motors. We skirted the Swan River, passed through the very beautiful public park, and, finally, lunched at the busy town, where Bone's store would cut a respectable figure in London, with its many departments and its roof restaurant. It was surprising after our memories of England to note how good and abundant was the food. It is a charming little town, and it was strange, after viewing its settled order, to see the mill where the early settlers not so very long ago had to fight for their lives with the black fellows. Those poor black fellows! Their fate is a dark stain upon Australia. And yet it must in justice to our settlers be admitted that the question was a very difficult one. Was colonisation to be abandoned, or were these brave savages to be overcome? That was really the issue. When they speared the cattle of the settlers what were the settlers to do? Of course, if a reservation could have been opened up, as in the case of the Maoris, that would have been ideal. But the noble Maori is a man with whom one could treat on equal terms and he belonged to a solid race. The Aborigines of Australia were broken wandering tribes, each at war with its neighbours. In a single reservation they would have exterminated each other. It was a piteous tragedy, and yet, even now in retro-

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spect, how difficult it is to point out what could have been done.

The Spiritualists of Perth seem to be a small body, but as earnest as their fellows elsewhere. A masterful looking lady, Mrs. McIlwraith, rules them, and seems fit for the part. They have several mediums developing, but I had no chance of testing their powers. Altogether our encounter with them cheered us on our way.

We had the first taste of Australian labour conditions at Fremantle, for the men knocked off at the given hour, refusing to work overtime, with the result that we carried a consignment of tea, meant for their own tea-pots, another thousand miles to Adelaide, and so back by train which must have been paid for out of their own pockets and those of their fellow citizens. Verily, you cannot get past the golden rule, and any breach of it brings its own punishment somehow, somewhere, be the sinner a master or a man.

And now we had to cross the dreaded Bight, where the great waves from the southern ice come rolling up, but our luck was still in, and we went through it without a qualm. Up to Albany one sees the barren irregular coast, and then there were two days of blue water, which brought us at last to Adelaide, our port of debarkation. The hour and the place at last!

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CHAPTER III

Mr. Hughes's letter of welcome.—Challenges.—Mr. Carlyle Smythe.—The Adelaide Press.—The great drought.—The wine industry.—Clairvoyance.—Meeting with Bellchambers.—The first lecture.—The effect.—The Religious lecture.—The illustrated lecture.—Premonitions.—The spot light.—Mr. Thomas's account of the incident.—Correspondence.—Adelaide doctors.—A day in the Bush.—The Mallee fowl.—Sussex in Australia.—Farewell to Adelaide.

I WAS welcomed to Australia by a hospitable letter from the Premier, Mr. Hughes, who assured me that he would do what he could to make our visit a pleasant one, and added, "I hope you will see Australia as it is, for I want you to tell the world about us. We are a very young country; we have a very big and very rich heritage, and the great war has made us realise that we are Australians, proud to belong to the Empire, but proud too of our own country."

Apart from Mr. Hughes's kind message, my chief welcome to the new land came from Sydney, and took the queer form of two independent challenges to public debate, one from the Christian Evidence Society, and the other from the local leader of the Materialists. As the two positions are mutually destructive, one felt inclined to tell them to fight it out between themselves and that I would fight the winner. The Christian Evidence Society, is, of course, out of the question, since they regard a text as an argument, which I can only

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accept with many qualifications, so that there is no common basis. The materialist is a more worthy antagonist, for though he is often as bigoted and inaccessible to reason as the worst type of Christian, there is always a leaven of honest, open-minded doubters on whom a debate might make an impression. A debate with them, as I experienced when I met Mr. MacCabe, can only follow one line, they quoting all the real or alleged scandals which have ever been connected with the lowest forms of mediumship, and claiming that the whole cult is comprised therein, to which you counter with your own personal experiences, and with the evidence of the cloud of witnesses who have found the deepest comfort and enlarged knowledge. It is like two boxers each hitting the air, and both returning to their respective corners amid the plaudits of their backers, while the general public is none the better.

Three correspondents headed me off on the ship, and as I gave each of them a long separate interview, I was a tired man before I got ashore. Mr. Carlyle Smythe, my impresario, had also arrived, a small alert competent gentleman, with whom I at once got on pleasant terms, which were never once clouded during our long travels together upon our tour. I was fortunate indeed to have so useful and so entertaining a companion, a musician, a scholar, and a man of many varied experiences. With his help we soon got our stuff through the customs, and made the short train journey which separates the Port of Adelaide from the charming city of that name. By one o'clock we were safely housed in the Grand Central Hotel, with win-

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dows in place of port holes, and the roar of the trams to take the place of the murmurs of the great ocean.

The good genius of Adelaide was a figure, already almost legendary, one Colonel Light, who played the part of Romulus and Remus to the infant city. Somewhere in the thirties of last century he chose the site, against strong opposition, and laid out the plan with such skill that in all British and American lands I have seen few such cities, so pretty, so orderly and so self-sufficing. When one sees all the amenities of the place, botanical gardens, zoological gardens, art gallery, museum, university, public library and the rest, it is hard to realise that the whole population is still under three hundred thousand. I do not know whether the press sets the tone to the community or the community to the press, but in any case Adelaide is greatly blessed in this respect, for its two chief papers, the *Register* and the *Advertiser*, under Sir William Sowden and Sir Langdon Bonython respectively, are really excellent, with a world-wide Metropolitan tone.

Their articles upon the subject in which I am particularly interested, though by no means one-sided, were at least informed with knowledge and breadth of mind.

In Adelaide I appreciated, for the first time, the crisis which Australia has been passing through in the shape of a two-years' drought, only recently broken. It seems to have involved all the States and to have caused great losses, amounting to millions of sheep and cattle. The result was that the price of those cattle which survived has risen enormously, and at the time of our visit an absolute record had been established, a bullock having been sold for £41. The normal price would be about

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Photo: Stirling, Melbourne.

THE WANDERERS, 1920-21.

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£13. Sheep were about £3 each, the normal being fifteen shillings. This had, of course, sent the price of meat soaring with the usual popular unrest and agitation as a result. It was clear, however, that with the heavy rains the prices would fall. These Australian droughts are really terrible things, especially when they come upon newly-opened country and in the hotter regions of Queensland and the North. One lady told us that she had endured a drought in Queensland which lasted so long that children of five had never seen a drop of rain. You could travel a hundred miles and find the brown earth the whole way, with no sign of green anywhere, the sheep eating twigs or gnawing bark until they died. Her brother sold his surviving sheep for one shilling each, and when the drought broke had to restock at 50s. a head. This is a common experience, and all but the man with savings have to take to some subordinate work, ruined men. No doubt, with afforestation, artesian wells, irrigation and water storage things may be modified, but all these things need capital, and capital in these days is hard to seek, nor can it be expected that capitalists will pour their money into States which have wild politicians who talk lightly of past obligations. You cannot tell the investor that he is a bloated incubus one moment, and go hat in hand for further incubation the next. I fear that this grand country as a whole may suffer from the wild ideas of some of its representatives. But under it all lies the solid self-respecting British stuff, which will never repudiate a just debt, however heavily it may press. Australians may groan under the burden, but they

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should remember that for every pound of taxation they carry the home Briton carries nearly three.

But to return for a moment to the droughts; has any writer of fiction invented or described a more long-drawn agony than that of the man, his nerves the more tired and sensitive from the constant unbroken heat, waiting day after day for the cloud that never comes, while under the glaring sun from the unchanging blue above him, his sheep, which represent all his life's work and his hopes, perish before his eyes? A revolver shot has often ended the long vigil and the pioneer has joined his vanished flocks. I have just come in contact with a case where two young returned soldiers, demobilised from the war and planted on the land, had forty-two cattle given them by the State to stock their little farm. Not a drop of water fell for over a year, the feed failed, and these two warriors of Palestine and Flanders wept at their own helplessness while their little herd died before their eyes. Such are the trials which the Australian farmer has to bear.

While waiting for my first lecture I do what I can to understand the country and its problems. To this end I visited the vineyards and wine plant of a local firm which possesses every factor for success, save the capacity to answer letters. The originator started grape culture as a private hobby about 60 years ago, and now such an industry has risen that this firm alone has £700,000 sunk in the business, and yet it is only one of several. The product can be most excellent, but little or any ever reaches Europe, for it cannot overtake the local demand. The quality was good and purer than the corresponding wines in Europe—especially the

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champagnes, which seem to be devoid of that poison, whatever it may be, which has for a symptom a dry tongue with internal acidity, driving elderly gentlemen to whisky and soda. The Australian product, taken in moderate doses, seems to have no poisonous quality, and is without that lime-like dryness which appears to be the cause of it. If temperance reform takes the sane course of insisting upon a lowering of the alcohol in our drinks, so that one may be surfeited before one could be drunken, then this question of good mild wines will bulk very largely in the future, and Australia may supply one of the answers. With all my sympathy for the reformers I feel that wine is so useful a social agent that we should not abolish it until we are certain that there is no *via media*. The most pregnant argument upon the subject was the cartoon which showed the husband saying "My dear, it is the anniversary of our wedding. Let us have a second bottle of ginger beer."

We went over the vineyards, ourselves mildly interested in the vines, and the children wildly excited over the possibility of concealed snakes. Then we did the vats and the cellars with their countless bottles. We were taught the secrets of fermentation, how the wonderful Pasteur had discovered that the best and quickest was produced not by the grape itself, as of old, but by the scraped bloom of the grape inserted in the bottle. After viewing the number of times a bottle must be turned, a hundred at least, and the complex processes which lead up to the finished article, I will pay my wine bills in future with a better grace. The place was all polished wood and shining brass, like the fittings of a

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man-of-war, and a great impression of cleanliness and efficiency was left upon our minds. We only know the Australian wines at present by the rough articles sold in flasks, but when the supply has increased the world will learn that this country has some very different stuff in its cellars, and will try to transport it to their tables.

We had a small meeting of Spiritualists in our hotel sitting-room, under the direction of Mr. Victor Cromer, a local student of the occult, who seems to have considerable psychic power. He has a small circle for psychic development which is on new lines, for the neophytes who are learning clairvoyance sit around in a circle in silence, while Mr. Cromer endeavours by mental effort to build up the thought form of some object, say a tree, in the centre of the room. After a time he asks each of the circle what he or she can see, and has many correct answers. With colours in the same way he can convey impressions to his pupils. It is clear that telepathy is not excluded as an explanation, but the actual effect upon the participants is, according to their own account, visual rather than mental. We had an interesting sitting with a number of these developing mediums present, and much information was given, but little of it could be said to be truly evidential. After seeing such clairvoyance as that of Mr. Tom Tyrell or others at home, when a dozen names and addresses will be given together with the descriptions of those who once owned them, one is spoiled for any lesser display.

There was one man whom I had particularly determined to meet when I came to Australia. This was

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Mr. T. P. Bellchambers, about whom I had read an article in some magazine which showed that he was a sort of humble Jeffries or Thoreau, more lonely than the former, less learned than the latter, who lived among the wild creatures in the back country, and was on such terms with our humble brothers as few men are ever privileged to attain. I had read how the eagle with the broken wing had come to him for succour, and how little birds would sit on the edge of his panni-kin while he drank. Him at all cost would we see. Like the proverbial prophet, no one I met had ever heard of him, but on the third day of our residence there came a journalist bearing with him a rudely dressed, tangle-haired man, collarless and unkempt, with kind, irregular features and clear blue eyes—the eyes of a child. It was the man himself. "He brought me," said he, nodding towards the journalist. "He had to, for I always get bushed in a town."

This rude figure fingering his frayed cap was clearly out of his true picture, and we should have to visit him in his own little clearing to see him as he really was. Meanwhile I wondered whether one who was so near nature might know something of nature's more occult secrets. The dialogue ran like this:

"You who are so near nature must have psychic experiences."

"What's psychic? I live so much in the wild that I don't know much."

"I expect you know plenty we don't know. But I meant spiritual."

"Supernatural?"

"Well, we think it is natural but little understood."

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"You mean fairies and things?"
"Yes, and the dead."
"Well, I guess our fairies would be black fairies."
"Why not?"
"Well, I never saw any."
"I hoped you might."
"No, but I know one thing. The night my mother died I woke to find her hand upon my brow. Oh, there's no doubt. Her hand was heavy on my brow."

"At the time?"
"Yes, at the very hour."
"Well, that was good."
"Animals know more about such things."
"Yes."

"They see something. My dog gets terrified when I see nothing, and there's a place in the bush where my horse shies and sweats, he does, but there's nothing to see."

"Something evil has been done there. I've known many cases."
"I expect that's it."

So ran our dialogue. At the end of it he took a cigar, lighted it at the wrong end, and took himself with his strong simple backwoods atmosphere out of the room. Assuredly I must follow him to the wilds.

Now came the night of my first lecture. It was in the city hall, and every seat was occupied. It was a really magnificent audience of two thousand people, the most representative of the town. I am an embarrassed and an interested witness, so let me for this occasion quote the sympathetic, not to say flattering account of the *Register*.

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"There could not have been a more impressive set of circumstances than those which attended the first Australian lecture by Sir Arthur Conan Doyle at the Adelaide Town Hall on Saturday night, September 25th. The audience, large, representative and thoughtful, was in its calibre and proportions a fitting compliment to a world celebrity and his mission. Many of the intellectual leaders of the city were present—University professors, pulpit personalities, men eminent in business, legislators, every section of the community contributed a quota. It cannot be doubted, of course, that the brilliant literary fame of the lecturer was an attraction added to that strange subject which explored the 'unknown drama of the soul.' Over all, Sir Arthur dominated by his big arresting presence. His face has a rugged, kindly strength, tense and earnest in its grave moments, and full of winning animation when the sun of his rich humour plays on the powerful features.

"It is not altogether a sombre journey he makes among the shadows, but apparently one of happy, as well as tender experiences, so that laughter is not necessarily excluded from the exposition. Do not let that be misunderstood. There was no intrusion of the slightest flippancy—Sir Arthur, the whole time, exhibited that attitude of reverence and humility demanded of one traversing a domain on the borderland of the tremendous. Nothing approaching a theatrical presentation of the case for Spiritualism marred the discourse. It was for the most part a

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plain statement. First things had to be said, and the explanatory groundwork laid for future development. It was a lucid, illuminating introduction.

"Sir Arthur had a budget of notes, but after he had turned over a few pages he sallied forth with fluent independence under the inspiration of a vast mental store of material. A finger jutted out now and again with a thrust of passionate emphasis, or his big glasses twirled during moments of descriptive ease, and occasionally both hands were held forward as though delivering settled points to the audience for its examination. A clear, well-disciplined voice, excellent diction, and conspicuous sincerity of manner marked the lecture, and no one could have found fault with the way in which Sir Arthur presented his case.

"The lecturer approached the audience in no spirit of impatient dogmatism, but in the capacity of an understanding mind seeking to illumine the darkness of doubt in those who had not shared his great experiences. He did not dictate, but reasoned and pleaded, taking the people into his confidence with strong conviction and a consoling faith. 'I want to speak to you to-night on a subject which concerns the destiny of every man and woman in this room,' began Sir Arthur, bringing everybody at once into an intimate personal circle. 'No doubt the Almighty, by putting an angel in King William Street, could convert every one of you to Spiritualism, but the Almighty law is that we must use our own brains, and find out our own salvation, and it is not made too easy for us.'"

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