

A PRIVATE HOME CIRCLE by Maurice Barbanell

When I come to describe the third home circle I visited, I must refrain from giving the medium's name, or any indication of where he and his wife live, except to say that it is in the Home Counties. The nature of his occupation makes it essential for him to shun publicity. Not only is this man a remarkable medium for direct voice and materialisation, but he is also one of the most brilliant clairvoyants I have met in my long experience.

Among the spirit communicators were people I had known very well and so was able to identify their voices and to understand their references which were sometimes of a private nature. Thus I clearly identified the voice of Harry Boddington, a veteran Spiritualist pioneer, who had passed on less than a year earlier.

Similarly I recognised the tones of Jack Webber who in his day had been an outstanding physical medium. And there was a communication from a former member of my staff who gave her full name. Another dramatic happening was the return of a man who had recently committed suicide. He too gave his full name.

Boddington's was a short but evidential communication. In a clear voice, through the luminous trumpet poised in mid-air, he greeted me and recalled the comment I made when last we met. This was that he was looking younger despite his advancing age. I had jokingly referred to him as Spiritualism's 'Peter Pan'. An indication of the wonders of spirit life was indicated by his statement, 'I thought I knew everything. . .' He followed by telling how much he was learning. This, mark you, came from a man who had devoted over half a century to spreading our truths and whose book, *The University of Spiritualism*, is rightly regarded as a classic dealing with every phase of this subject.

The séance began with one of the most remarkable demonstrations of ectoplasm I have ever seen. The third member of the circle is an electrician. Some time earlier, he had wondered what the effect of introducing an ultra-violet lamp into the séance room would be. They experimented, with heartening results.

It enabled me to see that two kinds of ectoplasm are used, one coloured white and the other brown. The white strip streamed from the medium's nose and the brown strip from one ear - later there were two brown strips, one from each ear. Yet when the red lamp was switched on, only one colour, a whitish hue, was visible in all the strips. The brown ectoplasm, I was told, was of a 'lower vibration'. It was composed out of the material in the room, furnishings, carpets, curtains, etc. The white ectoplasm came from the medium's body.

The entranced medium was brought round the circle to each member in turn. We clearly saw the ectoplasm streaming from his nostrils and were invited to examine and handle it. It was bone dry and felt like fine cloth. Later we were allowed to see it form a rod, attached to the trumpet, to enable it to move.

In some photographs, taken with a white flashlight, during the years, spirit faces are seen to have been built up in this ectoplasm. There are two pictures of levitation, one showing a stool off the ground, and the other a chair almost touching the ceiling.

The séance that night was perfectly organised. The medium's wife played the piano throughout to produce the vibrations necessary for the spirit voices. She stopped only when there was a communication. The guide in charge of this part of the séance is Robbie, a sixteen-year-old relative of the medium's wife.

Robbie always spoke in between each communicator, indicated who was coming and for whom the communication was intended. Occasionally, when the communication had ended he added evidential details.

A suicide addressed two friends of mine. This communicator, I learned, is the husband of their daily help. With a marked Cockney dialect, he thanked them for their help, saying that, as a result, 'I can see the light.' Expressing regrets for all the trouble he had caused, he said: 'I was silly. . . I should not have done it.'

Robbie indicated that the next spirit speaker, who was named, 'a little lady' - an accurate description - was for my wife. 'She has not been over here very long,' he said. 'Her passing was caused by a very bad internal condition.' This was true - it was cancer.

Because it was her first return in the direct voice - I believe it is equivalent to dying all over again - it obviously entailed a great effort. She was almost overcome with emotion. My two friends to whom the suicide returned - they are frequent sitters - say they clearly heard her repeat her Christian name, but my wife and I missed that and heard only the surname, an unusual one. She did not stay very long. She gave a message for a member of her family, whom she named, and expressed gratitude for the help given her.

There were short but clear communications from some guides of the sitters. Then came Jack Webber - he had been a famous physical medium, who announced himself, by name. It is many years since I sat in his séances. He gave me two messages for his great friend, Harry Edwards, the celebrated spirit healer, who originally sponsored his mediumship when he came to London.

Jack mentioned that his own guide, Rueben, whose singing was always a joy, sometimes came to these séances. He followed Webber and sang, in his musical voice, one verse of 'Lead Kindly Light'.

Finally the trumpet moved over to the medium's wife at the piano. It was obviously an experienced communicator, who was able to whisper into the recipient's ear, so that others could not hear, all she wanted to say. Later she told me it was her mother.

I was intrigued, during the séance, by the supernormal behaviour of a luminous tambourine. This, suspended in mid-air, whirled rapidly round and round. Another striking feature was the playing, by an invisible hand, of a luminous miniature xylophone in tune with our hymn-singing.

I asked the medium to tell me how he discovered his psychic gifts. It all began just under a score of years earlier when at 9 p.m., one September night, he saw what he thought was a radiantly white-dressed figure of a nurse walking in the rain. She approached him as he was cycling home. After she had passed him he was struck by her supernormal appearance. He turned round to overtake her - but she had vanished.

Determined to solve the mystery, he went to a Spiritualist church where they were having an open circle. The visiting medium told him about his own latent psychic gifts. He determined to develop them, with the wonderful results that I had seen.

As an example of this medium's remarkable clairvoyance I quote an incident which happened when he and his wife visited my London flat. He turned to one of my friends and asked, 'Is there a Vale Court not far away in Maida Vale?' Told the answer was 'yes', he said there was a spirit communicator giving the name Nathaniel Nathan. With him there was somebody named Phillips. These names were known only to my friend and the address was correct. When he made inquiries, he discovered that Nathaniel Nathan had passed on only three weeks earlier. Phillips was a relative.

One of the members of my own home circle is Vernon Moore, a former Methodist missionary and now a business executive in a leading industrial company. He has frequently attended this medium's séances.

On more than one occasion he has been asked by an unknown communicator to comfort a loved one left behind. Whenever this has happened the communicator has not only given the full name but the complete address where his close relative was to be found.

Vernon was also involved in another remarkable happening. At one of this medium's séances a strong voice announced through the trumpet that his name was Roderick McDonald. He said that he was interested in some work that Vernon was doing. The name was unknown to my friend, so he asked for more information.

The communicator said that he had been a missionary and a doctor of medicine whose earthly career had ended some 46 years earlier by being murdered in Canton, China. Vernon experienced some difficulty in trying to confirm these statements. Finally he contacted the missionary society and the relatives mentioned by the communicator.

The society kindly offered to search through the records for the early part of the century. The result was corroboration that Roderick McDonald was a missionary in China. He had been a doctor of medicine and was murdered in Canton. The only variation was a difference of a year in the date of his passing.