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THE ARCHIVE OF
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Calls from Afar

(Diary Leaves)

BY NICHOLAS ROERICH



ANY people have known Lady Dean Paul, a talented composer and a very cordial and cultured person, but not many have known that all her life she has been in closest contact with the world beyond. Through some turn of destiny, by means of some particular qualities, she has constantly viewed the subtle world, invisible to others.

I shall never forget how, when returning from the opening of my exhibition at Brighton, in the railway coach Lady Paul had a heated argument with P. N. M. P. N., an incorrigible materialist, tried in every way to prove to her that all her visions were nothing else but hallucinations evoked by herself. To this Lady Paul, smiling sadly, retorted that she had no wish whatever to see them, that they were things that she could in no wise imagine, but that to her regret she continued to see many circumstances of events past in the subtlest reality.

Among her narratives we recall, for example, a characteristic episode in a newly rented villa. Lady Paul knowing that especially in long occupied places are there greater possibilities for all sorts of materializations, always tried to select new residences, preferably just built and where no one had yet lived. And so it was in this case. The villa had just been constructed, and according to the owner had never been occupied. The first night D. P.

suddenly felt that next to her in bed lay a dead body. Then she saw that from the room she was occupying there was being carried out a coffin which passed with difficulty through the doors and left a deep scratch on them. Upon arising the next morning after such an unpleasant night, D. P. examined the door the first thing and to her horror, found precisely that deeply incised scratch, the cause of which she had so realistically viewed in the night.

The owner was summoned and he admitted that a woman had actually died in this room after living there only two days in all.

In another case, D. P., also when removing to a new lodging, was expecting a new servant who had been recommended to her. She awakened very early and to her surprise she saw a neatly dressed affable old woman moving through the apartment. Naturally D. P. assumed that this was the new servant and she merely wondered how she could have entered her bed-room so early. At this point the old woman went to the mantle-piece upon which were placed some old portraits and began to gaze at them intently. Then to D. P.'s amazement she actually leaped up, and gradually rising to the ceiling, she disappeared. Only then did it occur to D. P. that this was not the servant at all.

Another time, being awakened at night as if by a push, D. P. saw seated near her on the bed a man, as she said, with a most unpleasant marauder's face. The visitor gazed fixedly at her for some time, then gradually vanished.

There were a great number of such manifestations, both by night and by day; sometimes they had the direct effect of driving D. P. into despair. In all sincerity she exclaimed: "Certainly I have no wish to see them. And why do all my other friends see nothing of the sort, and yet I have to encounter all these uninvited visitors?"

Moreover, it happened that her unbidden guests would move objects all about, and people calling upon her would see the movement of an object with the cause of it remaining invisible.

Especially have many similar accounts been disclosed in connection with the recent war. Thus for example, the son of V. J. Karentsov, who was killed on the British Front, appeared to his mother and communicated the place and circumstance of his death. The General Staff denied the possibility of this, giving out the information that in the indicated place there was an impassable swamp. But after several months a friend of the deceased arrived and established the facts in the case. It appeared that in order to shorten lines of communication a brushwood trail had been laid through this marsh

Likewise one of our American friends related how at Verdun, going to changing the garrison they encountered on the way the platoon which was to have been replaced. The whole command not only saw this platoon in detail but unsuccessfully tried to hail it. Proceeding to the post they noticed a sentry standing silent and when they touched him they found him to be a corpse. The fact was later cleared up that the entire platoon had been annihilated by an unexpected raid by the Germans.

Entire books could be written about all such individual and mass manifestations. One hears about the same things in the Orient, in China, Mongolia, Afghanistan, where various traditions are connected with definite places. Concerning objects moving about without any visible cause, one can often hear about such from entirely trustworthy people.

We have before us some photographs of Mrs. F., with extraordinarily realistic images of the subtle world. Spirit photographs have been taken without any special wish for it. Rev. Solntsev in Serdobol has related several unusually clear visions which have appeared to him. Thus for example, a gravely ill midshipman promised to appear to him and bring him news of his death. Several months passed. One evening being occupied at his work-table, Solntsev heard behind him the sound of a door opening. Turning around, he saw his young friend but in a lieutenant's uniform at which he was surprised. He saluted him and then as it were went out through the door. Later on

Solntsev realized that actually at this time his friend had departed this life, but that his promotion to lieutenant had come after his death and, therefore, he had been buried in officer's uniform.

A similar instance was related by E. I.'s grandmother, when, according to an agreement with her, a student who was dying of tuberculosis appeared to her and she even conversed with him. Others in the room at the time heard this conversation. A man who died in Paris last year, Rev. George Spassky, likewise experienced more than once the most extraordinary manifestations.

Especially valuable are the accounts of perfectly balanced people, who can calmly and consciously appraise the circumstances beheld by them. Indeed, it is possible to hear a great number of authentic narratives, but such communications will, of course, be of a completely different order. As in everything else, what is needed is simplicity, directness, preciseness, in a word, everything that is included in the concept, honesty. It is especially valuable when those who have viewed something do not try first off to attribute this to some extraordinary peculiarities of their own, but simply determine and establish the fact in all its surrounding circumstances. If a crude photographic film can take impressions of subtle forms, so much the more, under known conditions, can the human consciousness perceive them.