

Trance Medium Gladys Osborne Leonard's Visits to the Other Side



This 'precipitated painting' anomalously created in the presence of the [Bangs Sisters](#) has been entitled "The Spirit World" and shows people in a canoe crossing a river toward a castle in a sphere of the ascended realm of human existence.

Descriptions of the ascended realm of existence may be heard in Direct Voice seance recordings. Visits to the 'other side' of life are also chronicled in medium autobiographies. One of these books is *My Life in Two Worlds* (1931) by trance medium Gladys Osborne Leonard (1882-1968). The book is profiled in a previous [blog article](#). Gladys remembered that as a child in England there were initial experiences "of an entirely spiritual and psychic nature." She described herself as a sensitive child who at the age of six surreptitiously taught herself to read and made use of her father's editions of the works of such authors as Shakespeare, Byron,

Dickens and Zola. She wrote about intermittent visions of 'the happy valley' during these early years of her life.

Every morning, soon after waking, even while dressing or having my nursery breakfast, I saw visions of most beautiful places. In whatever direction I happened to be looking, the physical view of wall, door, ceiling, or whatever it was, would disappear, and in its place would gradually come valleys, gentle slopes, lovely trees and banks covered with flowers of every shape and hue. The scene seemed to extend for many miles, and I was conscious that I could see much further than was possible with the ordinary physical scenery around me. The most entrancing part to me was the restful, velvety green of the grass that covered the ground of the valley and the hills. Walking about, in couples usually and sometimes in groups, were people who looked radiantly happy. They were dressed in graceful flowing draperies, for the greater part, but every movement, gesture and expression suggested an undefinable and yet positive way a condition of deep happiness, a state of quiet ecstasy. I remember thinking to myself, "How different they are, how different from the 'Down here' people, how full of love and light and peace they are. No fear, or doubt, or dreadful mystery is there." It all looked too expressive of Life and Joy to be in any way connected with the unsatisfactory state in which I mentally lived.

"I did not at the time, look upon these visions as anything abnormal or unusual."

Gladys commented about her family:

At first they thought I was "making it up," but as I was so persistent, and described many of the visions so minutely, they were forced to the conclusion that there was something in it—something which was not in line with their conventional way of looking at things. I was sternly forbidden to see or look for the Happy Valley again!

. . . little by little, my visions disappeared. This was a great deprivation.

As an adult, she experienced visiting the "Land Beyond" again. She commented: "It seems so near. Perhaps it is really all around us—the *other* side of *this* side." She also described psychic experiences in her 'astral body,' including on one occasion: ". . . I opened my eyes and looked down and saw my physical body resting on the bed, and I, in my astral body, seemed to be resting above it . . ." The interlude is what in 2016 is sometimes called an 'Out of Body Experience' (OBE) and included Gladys in her astral body conversing with Philip, who'd passed over about one year before. Having previously seen him clairvoyantly on one occasion, Gladys recognized Philip as the son of a couple who attended her sittings. Upon later describing to the couple the room where she'd encountered Philip, she learned that this was apparently the drawing-room of their home sixty miles away.

A week or two later I again went out of my body, but this time I was not in the least nervous. I saw Philip standing close to my bed as if he were waiting to take me somewhere. I lost again for a few moments the power of conscious thinking, until I suddenly found myself standing in a most beautiful garden at the edge of a small wood. Philip and I walked along together, and he pointed out various beautiful

places to me, in particular a wide stream running under a charming rustic bridge. He said to me, "This is like my home on the earth-plane."

Gladys wrote that on another occasion she was beginning to feel drowsy when she felt "that slight 'drawing out from,' or 'getting away' from my physical body, that usually precedes an experience of this kind."

I seemed to be floating or flying towards a very bright place. On nearing it I saw a large stone house, with a veranda and terraces in front flanked by roses. Several broad steps led up to a wide doorway, and standing on the top was a lady who had recently passed over, who used to visit me in order to communicate with her husband who had died four or five years previously, and whom she adored. She always longed to join him, and used to say to me, "What will it be like over there? Well, it doesn't matter much what it's like as my beloved George is there, and we can have our own home and garden as we had on the earth."

When she saw me coming towards her she smiled, and held out both hands to me, eagerly. Her expression was of radiant happiness (how often one is forced to use the word radiant in describing the people and life on the Other Side! It's the only word that fits.) She was a handsome woman, and I noticed that she was dressed as carefully as ever, though I was puzzled to see that she was wearing a dress of somewhat old-fashioned design, and when she lived on earth every article of her clothing had to be the latest thing in fashion.

This particular dress was of the tight-fitting princess shape, made of cream-coloured "piece" lace, and it had a slight train. Just as I noticed these details, I found myself being drawn back to my body again. Somebody had knocked on my bedroom door, and I awoke, feeling rather disappointed that I had not been able to speak to my friend, or she to me; but I had brought back the knowledge that she was thoroughly happy. I afterwards found out that the lace dress was one that her husband had loved her to wear when on earth. I never saw her again, but occasionally she brought me the scent of red roses, and sometimes violets, of both of which she was very fond.

Gladys also described being reunited on the Other Side with a retired army officer whom she called 'Colonel Halifax' in the book.

A few weeks after his passing I was spending the week-end with friends near Harrow. On the Sunday afternoon my hostess insisted on my going to my bedroom and laying down to rest. I prepared to doze. Instead, I began to feel very much awake, but felt the same sensation of leaving my body as I described before. Suddenly I found myself standing in a very pretty garden, stocked with every kind of flower. A little way to the left was a house.

Looking around, I knew I had been permitted to visit the Spirit World again.

As I stood in the garden, I noticed that close to me on the right was a wooden shed. I walked in. The place looked like a small engineering works. Suddenly a man stepped quickly out of the adjoining room, and to my joy I recognized Colonel Halifax.

"Mrs. Leonard, I'm so glad you've come to see me," he said. "now let me tell you something quickly, while there's time. It's all true. All I was told about the life here was true. Only it's so much better than I was told it would be." He said this with great emphasis, as if he longed to impress me with the sense of his happiness.

He told me that his wife had met him immediately after his passing, and that his joy in the reunion was great and deep. Then he said, "There is someone here whom I wish you to meet, Mrs. Leonard, and please look at her well, so that you will remember her when you return to your physical body." (He evidently was quite aware that I was only on a temporary visit to the Spirit World, and that I should be leaving again almost immediately.)

I turned, hoping to see his wife, but I saw at once that it could not be she, as during his earth life Colonel Halifax had given me a description of her, and the woman he now beckoned forward had a very different personality; indeed, she was so striking in colouring and figure that a description of her would not have fitted one woman in a thousand.

A moment after I felt myself being drawn away from the place and found myself in my physical body, lying on the bed in my friend's house.

About a fortnight later a sister of Colonel Halifax came to have a sitting with me. I had not met her before, but her brother had told her, during his life here, about me. After the sitting I told her about my visit to her brother's spirit home. I omitted the description of the shed as it puzzled me, and seemed so unlike anything the Colonel would be interested in. But when I described the—to me—unknown lady, she said, "That was one of the people he loved best in the world. She was the aunt who brought him up, took the place of a mother to him. He was devoted to her, right up to the time she died."

I was pleased to hear this, and felt sure that Colonel Halifax's critical and clever mind had arranged for me to meet his aunt instead of his wife, as he knew that I had never heard of the existence of the former, and it would be so much more evidential for me, and would prove to me that I had really been to his spirit home and seen him. It was just like Colonel Halifax to think all this out, as he was always very keen on "evidence."

A few weeks later the sister passed over, too, very suddenly, and it was good to feel that her last days were happier because she had heard of her brother.

The engineering shed still stuck in my mind; I could not imagine what connection it had with Colonel Halifax.

Several months afterwards I met a friend of the Colonel's, and while talking about him I felt impelled to ask if the Colonel had ever been interested in engineering. The friend replied, "Of course he had. He had been a very clever engineer, and was very fond of it, too!" I was pleased with this information as it was something altogether outside my knowledge of him.

Gladys commented about these 'visits' —

How very much like the earth this other world looks! At least, that portion of it that I have seen when visiting the different friends who have passed away. There appear to be houses, gardens, meadows, woods, lakes, but I have never seen what I would call a manufacturing town, a colliery town, or anything approximating to one; at least, not on the plane where I have seen these normal, everyday sort of people like Colonel Halifax, and my other friends.

That there are other conditions than this third sphere, as it is called, I am well aware. I have never been to the higher ones, or if I have, I have not remembered on returning to my physical condition again. We probably often visit the "third sphere" during sleep, but we forget it on awaking. Undoubtedly, just as there is the physical world, or condition, so is there the spiritual or etheric world, or condition.

Gladys recounted in her autobiography participating in Direct Voice seances and listening to descriptions of the 'etheric world.' She mentioned that some people referred to 'the happy plane' as "the Summerland." Also described are Gladys witnessing 'lower planes' or spheres of the ascended realm where inhabitants appeared troubled.

It has been my sad and painful experience to visit, during sleep, some of the lower planes, especially where the poor mistaken souls go who have committed suicide.

Oh, the difference between the sphere to which such a one goes, and the happy planes which I have described to you!

One visit to such a place remains in my mind above all others. I realized that I had left my earth body, and after experiencing that "upward" motion which I have mentioned before, I found myself floating over a curious, desolate, rocky country. Dark gloomy rocks, forming caverns and crevices, pools of dark water, and an overwhelming feeling of loneliness are what I remember most strongly about this sinister plane.

I found myself drawing nearer to one particular man. I could see him distinctly, as I was so close to him. His look of abject hopelessness was terrible, and changed occasionally to a kind of puzzled wonder as to what he was doing over there. I felt overcome with pity for him. My feeling was so intense, he seemed to feel it, or sense it.

Something that looked—or did I only imagine it?—like a faint ray of hope illuminated his face. I wanted to speak to him, but immediately found myself being drawn back to my physical body again. I awoke, remembering clearly every detail of the place, the people, and of this particular man's appearance. I felt impressed to pray for him, and did so.

Two days later, Sir Walter Gibbons [a theatre impresario who was a friend of Gladys] called to see me, looking very tired and exhausted. I asked him what was

the matter. He replied, "I have had an awful time on the astral plane during sleep. The night before last I was taken to the plane where some suicides go, and there I saw my old friend—who killed himself the previous day, because he had got so terribly into debt and financial trouble."

"Wait a moment," I said, "I think I have been there, too; wait till I describe some of it to you."

I did so, and alternately Sir Walter and I described details of the place to each other, until we were certain we had actually been to the same plane, and seen the same man, at the same time, though I did not remember seeing Sir Walter, and he did not recollect seeing me.

This was not the only plane of which Sir Walter and I brought back complete and detailed memories. Sometimes, on awakening from such an experience, Sir Walter would look at his watch and write down the exact time. I did not do that, because in my bedroom I can hear the grandfather's clock chime in the hall below, and usually get a good idea of the time from that. Several times I noticed that I must have "come back" about five minutes to six, as the clock chimed six almost immediately after I awoke. Later, on comparing these notes, Sir Walter and I always agreed regarding the time of our return to our earth bodies.

The plane that Sir Walter and I disliked visiting even more than the one where we saw the suicides, was a place to which we went several times before we discovered what it was, and why it existed.

I have hesitated a great deal as to whether I should describe this particular sphere or not. Yet I feel it cowardly to shirk truth because it is unpleasant, and it seems a very poor policy always to present one side of a picture, and *purposely* to ignore the other, when one knows it exists. Let us dwell on the happy, hopeful aspects of life as much as we will, but we must not imagine there are no evils to be cleared away. While we *pretend* there are none, or purposely avoid discussing, or trying to tackle them, we help them to accumulate, just as one would by ignoring the presence of dirt or dust in a room, because one didn't want to *raise* trouble by making an onslaught on it.

While I was—wrongly, I know—considering the advisability of omitting this chapter, I put out my hand, without thinking, and reached for a book that stood on a table near by. I opened it idly and at random, and staring me in the face were these words:

They are slaves who fear to speak
For the fallen and the weak;
They are slaves who will not choose
Hatred, scoffing, and abuse,
Rather than in silence shrink,
From the truths they needs must think.
They are slaves who dare not be

In the right with two or three.

J. R. Lowell

This made me ashamed of my hesitation, so I must just tell you briefly what we saw in those lower regions. I must give my own idea of them, but Sir Walter has seen the same, or some of the places, too.

On my first few visits I was so puzzled as to the nature of the places, that I only brought back a feeling of abhorrence, and a vague memory of animals being there. I quietly thought it over during the day, and sent out a mental request that my Guides, or whoever was sending me to these places during sleep, would give me some enlightenment as to the purpose of their existence. Otherwise it seemed a waste of time, if I was just going there to have my feelings harrowed by something I did not in the least understand.

For some time after I did not see these places, and thought my visits must have been brought to an end by my instinctive dislike of them, and I felt that I must make a conscious effort to control such a feeling in which there might be lurking an element of fear, which often inhibits genuine “out of the body” travelling and experiences.

One night, soon after I recognized this fact, I found myself leaving the physical body, but instead of the soaring upward motion, I had a heavy weighted feeling, as if I were forced to travel in a horizontal position, and suddenly found myself in a narrow, dark street. I found I could just stand upright now, as if I were adjusting myself more easily to the atmosphere, but I did not want to put my feet on the ground as it was covered with mud and slime. Gloomy buildings, like stables, huddled against each other so closely that they almost touched, leaving only sufficient room for one to walk between. Here and there I saw a wider opening, which appeared to lead into a kind of yard, into which the doors of some of the stables opened. I looked in and saw that the yard was crowded with animals—bullocks, pigs and sheep—dead, and yet alive. I *knew* they were dead, but I could also see that they were alive, too. They moved very slightly, many lay on the ground. I understood at once from their appearance that they had just been slaughtered.

I pulled myself together with a tremendous effort. The place and everything in it was so horrible that I did indeed have to make an effort—a great one. I noticed that there was a great difference in the *substance* of this plane, compared with that of the planes where I had seen ordinary discarnate human life. Even the suicides' plane was different, inasmuch as it seemed fixed and solid. *This* dreadful place gave me the impression that it had but *temporary* existence. I will not go into more details of the place and the condition of the animals, but only tell you that it was indeed most dreadful and repulsive in every possible sense.

I soon became aware that somebody was speaking to me, somebody whom I could not see, and who seemed to be a long way off. This person, who I afterwards found out was one of my spiritual Guides, told me that the place lay *between* the earth and etheric planes. Its misery was due to the tremendous slaughtering of animals for food that takes place daily; so much strong animal life is suddenly forced out of the actual physical condition into one that is very close indeed to earth, and yet is in no

way part of the spiritual world. What happens to the animal astrals, I do not know. I was only shown this horrible scene on the astral side, which followed all the killing and pain on the earth side. In the very air around me was a most definite feeling of terrible fear, suffering, and blind resentment that was even more tangible than the buildings and walls.

Now, up to a short time ago I had been a flesh-eater. Every day I had my cutlet, cut off the joint, or piece of chicken. It always looked so nice and appetizing that somehow one hadn't thought of it as being a piece of something that had walked and breathed, and felt pain and discomfort, just as we do ourselves. From time to time Feda [Gladys's spirit 'control'] had tried to discourage me and other people, too, from eating meat, but as there is only a limited amount of power that can be used, I had been obliged to devote it to the needs of bereaved sitters, and so had little opportunity of questioning Feda on this point. Now, after all I had seen, and the explanation given me of the reason for the existence of this horrible plane, I felt I wanted to ask several questions, so I got one or two sitters to ask Feda about it, while they were talking to her through me.

One thing we asked was, "What would happen if we all suddenly stopped eating meat? Surely, the world would be overrun with cattle, sheep and other animals?"

"No," said Feda. "You wouldn't be overrun with them because you would stop breeding them. There would not be anything like the number you have got if you hadn't purposely encouraged them by breeding them."

She said that, in time, as people understood more of the Spiritual World, they would eat less flesh, and be better for it, and from my own more recent personal experience, I have come to the definite conclusion that Feda was right. Since I gave up meat entirely a few years ago, my health has improved very much, in spite of strenuous work done under sometimes very difficult conditions. My husband, too, has found great benefit through becoming a vegetarian, and the same has been told us by many of our friends. My mind is clearer, and I am more "open" to direct spiritual guidance than I used to be.

You must not think that all animals that die, or have to be "put to sleep," go to such places as I have described. An animal that you have loved and who has loved you, whether it be horse, dog, cat, or bird, goes usually to the third sphere where somebody takes care of it, and where it leads a normal animal life (except that it doesn't reproduce its species as it would on earth), and is even brought to see you at times while you are still on earth. I know you will meet your pets, the animal companions that you have loved. I have seen my special cats, and also a dog, a pekinese, to whom my husband and I were much attached. It seems as if the animals who love, and are loved, attain to spiritual rights and have an after-life in the spiritual world, just as we do. Whether their "post-physical" lives continue for ever, I do not know. I rather doubt it; that is, I doubt if they continue everlastingly in animal form, but they certainly live for a considerable time in the shape we loved and knew them by, and, thank goodness, they will live with us again when we pass over.

Gladys Osborne Leonard's Steps to Trance Mediumship (Trance Channeling) and
Healing



Gladys Osborne Leonard

Gladys Osborne Leonard (1882-1968) described in her autobiography *My Life in Two Worlds* (1931) how she became a deep trance medium (or what is now described as a trance channeler). The book offers her reflections of the natural phenomena experienced by mediums that is sometimes construed 'supernatural' only because of a lack of understanding.

During her childhood in England, Gladys experienced "visions of most beautiful places" where there were "people who looked radiantly happy." She was a teenager when she saw a sign announcing "Spiritualism" meetings and attended the weekly Thursday night event without understanding what she saw happening. Only later did she realize she had seen a man who had been, as Leonard described it, "controlled by a discarnate spirit."

The following week, she again felt an odd "exhilaration and interest" on her way to the meeting. The person on the platform on this occasion was a delicate-looking middle-aged woman whom young Gladys thought at first was acting "the part of a North American Indian." This night as she observed the proceedings Gladys began to realize what was happening.

"Why," I said to myself, "they are speaking of *dead* people. They are asserting that these dead people are living, and are happy, and clean, and healthy, not rotting in a horrible grave, as I have believed."

Then the medium turned in her direction and Gladys saw that her "whole appearance underwent a change. She shrank and trembled."

Waving her hand backwards and forwards in front of her, she said, "There is someone here who was drowned—a young boy. He was so frightened, poor lad, and could not understand why no one attempted to save him. So many people were near him at the time, but no one tried to save him. Oh he is moving near to the person to whom he wishes to speak—it is to *you*, the young girl there—*you*—he wants you—his name is Charley, and he is related to you, though you did not know him intimately."

She pointed straight at me. I at once recognized the description as being that of my cousin, Charley, who was drowned bathing, being seized with cramp in his legs, and in full sight of his friends who did not know anything was wrong with him, as he was a powerful swimmer for his age. All these details were given correctly, and many other matters mentioned in connexion with my family.

The medium went on to say that Gladys was being prepared for a special work, similar to that which she, the speaker, was doing. Gladys recalled, "This part of the message did not impress me at the time, as I had not the faintest idea how it ever would be possible for me to develop such powers, even if I possessed the nucleus of them . . ."

Gladys trained to become a professional singer but after being ill with diphtheria her voice did not improve so she "took parts in plays in which I was not called upon to sing." She married an actor sympathetic toward Spiritualism and began experimenting with mediumship with two other actresses offstage during a tour of a play.

On the twenty-seventh evening: ". . . the table began to tilt up and down! Overjoyed, I explained how the alphabet was used, and soon Florence's mother and mine were spelling out evidential messages . . . a Communicator came who gave her name as Feda, and explained that she was an ancestress of mine. She had married my great-great-grandfather."

'Feda' told her by spelling out words with the aid of the table that "she had been watching over me since I was born, waiting for me to develop my psychic power so that she could put me into a trance and give messages through me."

Gladys grew to love and trust Feda —

So I agreed to let her entrance me, and asked her what I was to do to help it on. She told me just to go on sitting with two or three friends round a table, and that I should later on go into trance quite easily and naturally.

When Gladys participated in a 'developing circle,' she and the other attendees were sitting quietly around the table with the lights turned down after an opening prayer. Then:

Suddenly I felt a tingling in my hands, which were resting lightly upon the table. The tingling spread through my wrists, up my arms, then began in my feet and legs, till my whole being felt as if filled by a gentle electric current. Then came a strange feeling in my head—a pressure on my temples as of a band tied round them, and also on top of the head.

The pressure ceased, and I felt a curious force pulling me up from my chair impelling me to stand. What I was to do in the event of my standing up I seemed incapable of imagining. It was like a dream in which I was neither conscious nor unconscious, but yet aware that somebody outside myself urged me to do one thing at a time, telling me not to try to think what the sequence of events might be.

I was drawn up on my feet by this strange magnetic power which seemed to operate from just above my head. My mouth opened; a sound issued from my lips. What it was I do not know, for at that moment the president touched me on the hand, saying, "All right, friend, don't worry, you'll be able to speak in a moment or two." He was addressing the spirit who he knew was trying to control me, but I stupidly thought he was speaking to me. That, and the touch on my hand, broke the spell.

All sense of magnetic control left me. I became my normal self again, and hurriedly sat down in my chair, feeling that I had made myself ridiculous to no purpose.

Two sitters among the people at the gathering became entranced that night, allowing 'controlling spirits' to communicate.

An engagement at a West End theatre in London enabled Gladys to continue investigating mediumship on a nightly basis. She reported, "Feda had given up spelling out messages, as she said she wanted to concentrate entirely on controlling me . . ." One evening when Gladys was feeling pessimistic about her psychic possibilities, she relapsed into an unusually sleepy state.

The drowsy, tired feeling increased. I lazily thought, "It's darker than usual to-night. I'm sleepy. They won't notice if I sleep for a little while."

I slept. I awoke.

It seemed to me as if I might have been asleep for a few months or for as many hours.

Agnes and Nellie were leaning across the table holding my hands. I noticed they were agitated. Nellie turned the light on and I saw that tears were glistening on their cheeks.

"What on earth's the matter?" I asked.

"Matter!" said Agnes. "Feda has been controlling you and giving us messages from our relatives. Nellie's mother has sent her some messages, too. We have had a wonderful time."

They told me of many evidential things that had been given about matters of which I knew nothing, yet I could scarcely believe it was true. I felt too dazed and tired to enter into the spirit of joy and wonder that Agnes felt.

Gladys recounted that Feda controlled her whenever she could find an understanding or sympathetic sitter. In 1913 she was planning on enlarging her circle of

sitters. Suffering slightly from neuralgia, Gladys decided to have a few teeth extracted. She was rendered unconscious by gas and after the operation she "felt dreadfully tired and went to bed, almost immediately falling asleep."

The very second I lost consciousness, I had a most horrid and vivid experience. I thought I was in the dentist's operating-room, sitting in the dental chair, and that the gas had just been given me. I watched the doctor and dentist doing one or two little things, moving away a stand, selecting an instrument, and so on, and then the dentist began to extract my teeth.

Gladys observed the entire incident, feeling the pain of each extraction.

I saw the doctor bending down in front of me, watching my face, and heard him say to the dentist, "Go on a little longer," but the dentist answered, "No, I think I'd better stop now. I've got a good handful."

I awoke, bathed in perspiration, and shaking with pain. Summoning all my self-control, I assured myself that it was all overstrained imagination—I had only had a kind of nightmare. I composed myself, and after a little while sleep came over me, but almost immediately I began to go through a repetition, in detail, of the same dreadful experience.

This happened night after night for two weeks and Gladys found that she wasn't able to go into trance during this interim. 'Feda' communicated via spelling out words during table sittings:

She told me that a North American Indian, called North Star, would give me some healing, and that I was to take things very quietly, only sitting occasionally for Mrs. Watkins and her sister, Mrs. Massey, or an intimate friend.

I gradually grew stronger while following this advice, but was still rather afraid of going to sleep. One night, feeling very tired, I had prayed more fervently than ever that I should be spared the dental ordeal, and allowed to sleep, and to my great relief, I fell into a perfectly natural sleep for about three hours, waking between three and four in the morning. As I awoke, I heard a glorious baritone voice singing the beginning of the hymn, "Nearer my God to Thee."

I sat up in bed quickly. The voice appeared to be in the room.

Fully conscious, I listened to this voice singing the whole of the first verse. (It was the kind of voice that one would expect to hear in first-class opera or oratorio.) Then I became aware that the sound seemed not only to be *in* the room, but *everywhere*.

Gladys commented that she never again experienced "that awful nightmare, or whatever it was, about the dental extractions." She also observed, "North Star continued to help me, or so I was told. I cannot say that I was conscious of him doing anything to me, but I certainly grew stronger very quickly . . . North Star was never able to speak through me. He only made a kind of guttural sound, but he used my hands and arms in an extraordinary way, making passes over the patient, and certainly he cured several people of different maladies."

There would be further problems with her teeth, which were successfully treated by a capable surgeon-dentist. A friend of Gladys who facilitated spiritual healing for her at this time was Helen Macgregor, about whom Gladys wrote: "Miss Macgregor is certainly a marvellous channel for the healing power, as far as I am concerned."

In March 1914, Feda gave Mrs. Watkins a message for Gladys that she was "to take some rooms where I could begin work as a professional medium as soon as possible. Feda repeated this message through friends who were psychic, through planchette, table, automatic writing, or any way she could manage." Gladys found the appropriate place and began giving private sittings daily and small public circles on certain evenings. Two reputable men became supporters of her mediumship.

During the winter of 1914, Mr. Hewat McKenzie, the founder of the British College of Psychic Research, called upon me, anonymously. I had never seen or heard of him before, but Feda gave him what he considered was a satisfactory sitting, and from that time onwards he was of the greatest help to me, sending me just the right kind of sitter, bereaved, but well-balanced, even sceptical, people, to whom the sittings were of benefit and service.

One day Mr. McKenzie personally brought to me a lady in deep mourning, who was obviously in great grief. Her sittings with me brought her some comfort. She knew Sir Oliver Lodge, though I did not know him at this time, and when his son Raymond was killed in the war, in the autumn of 1915, this lady arranged a sitting for an "unknown gentleman."

It may sound absurd, almost unbelievable, but as it happened I had never before seen Sir Oliver Lodge in person, nor had I ever seen a *portrait of him*. I had read, or seen, very little scientific or psychical literature, and I had never read anything that he had written. Anyhow, I had not the faintest idea of his identity, but Raymond in this—his first—sitting with me, communicated with his father through Feda, and from that time onwards it has been my great privilege to have had many sittings with him, and also with many of the bereaved people who wrote to Sir Oliver, asking him to send them to someone who could give them a message from those who had passed over.

After becoming a prominent medium, Gladys learned that her spiritual development was continuing. She recounted an experience that resulted with new insights, commenting:

I think that there are planes of an intermediate kind, where the higher spirit Guides and Teachers can meet us when we leave our bodies during sleep. These intermediate planes are not, I think, in the same sphere or condition to which people go when they pass over after death. To me there seems to be a difference. One feels it but cannot explain it.

After settling herself for sleep one night, she experienced the sensation of leaving her body and traveling through space.

After a time, the blindfold condition began to disappear gradually, and I found myself in some kind of building, like a school or institution. The feeling it gave me was neither happiness nor unhappiness, though I am usually very sensitive to places,

whether on the earthly or spiritual plane. I simply felt I was there for some definite purpose.

The room in which I stood was well lighted, and a passage led from it, not so light; at the end of the passage was a door leading into a darker room. A voice directed me to go into this room, and I obeyed unquestioningly. At first I could not see what was in the room, it seemed so dark after the lighter atmosphere, so I passed round and at last made out a low chair or seat in one corner, and reclining on this seat was the figure of a woman, apparently asleep. The sight of her gave me a feeling of deep depression. There was something about her that was so—not repulsive—but sad. For one thing, everything about her was brown. Her dress, hair and even her skin, were of a dull muddy brown. As I stood there, I felt an overwhelming pity for her. "I must help her," I thought. "I must give her something of the spiritual happiness, the inspiration, and hope that I am so conscious of."

She soon became aware that the woman was herself — "It was just as if I were looking at myself in a very dirty, dark mirror."

After looking at her for what seemed an eternity, I heard a voice, though I could not see the speaker. It was a deep resonant voice, like a note on the organ. At the time, every word and every tiny inflexion of the voice was deeply impressed on my mind, but now I can only remember that this voice told me that the "brown woman," as I have always called her in my mind, was my lower self; and that my mediumship—my association with higher entities, and the advantages I had had through the development of my psychic faculties, had not brought about the spiritual and ethical improvement in my earthly self that there might have been.

Gladys expressed what was important to consider about her mediumship:

. . . what is it going to do for us, or what are we going to let the greater knowledge make of us? Yes, the privilege of communicating brings a great spiritual and moral responsibility to us, which we cannot and must not shirk.

All this was told me at length by the Voice. I did not imagine it, and not a word or idea of it had been in my mind. Indeed, it was all a great shock to my self-esteem, as I had rather prided myself on taking care of my power, using it to help others and so on. But I was told that was not nearly enough; that there was so much selfishness and vanity, and intolerance, allied to a disposition to take the line of least resistance if anything very unpleasant had to be done, or anything that would make me unpopular. Oh, the Voice certainly "put me through it"! Every scrap of my self-complacency dwindled into nothingness before the beautifully modulated, even tones that thrust these unpleasant truths at me. It never entered my head to rebel, or deny any of it. After the first shock, I made up my mind, even while the Voice was speaking, that I would take my lower self in hand on my return to my physical body.

I looked again at the "brown woman" as the resolution formed definitely in my mind. I thought I saw a slight lightening or clearing up of the muddy depressing shade, and gradually she melted before my eyes, while I was conscious of being drawn away from the place, down and back to earth, though the Voice still kept beside me, quietly telling me what my faults were, and all I had to eradicate.

On awakening she remembered the details of what had happened.

I lay in bed and pondered over my strange experience, and wondered why I had been given the lesson just then. As I lay wide awake, but with my eyes closed, I heard the Voice again, telling me that my physical health had been in a condition which, though not apparently serious in itself, was leading to a crisis in which I should need not only help from my spirit friends, but from my own higher self, which was even more important. Shortly after this, I had the septic poisoning from my teeth, for which Miss Macgregor gave me such splendid help . . .

Gladys related another illuminating incident wherein a "hardened agnostic had understood in two short sittings the lesson it had taken me several years of intensive study and development to learn."

In the early days of the Great War, a bereaved father visited me with the hope of communicating with his only son who had been recently killed at the front. Father and son had evidently been devoted to each other; the one seemed lost indeed without the other. I felt it would be a difficult sitting, because the poor man was so sure that there couldn't be a God, there couldn't be an afterlife, there couldn't be any loving Providence, or anything of the kind in a world where such a war went on, and where thousands of fine young lives were thrown away daily.

He explained all this to me while I was arranging the room, and endeavouring to get him to settle quietly in his chair for the sitting. Well, Feda brought his son to him, and he gave his father so much proof of his identity that he was staggered, and after the séance he went away without saying much to me, but he made an appointment for another sitting at an early date—I think it was a few weeks later. After this second sitting he told me he had received so much evidence that he was now sure that it was his son who had communicated with him, and who showed him that he still loved him, was near him at times, and looked forward to their being together again. He said he could no longer doubt either survival itself, or the possibility of communication. I felt very happy, as I had been particularly sorry for this man.

Suddenly he threw his note-book violently down on the table, and started to stride up and down the room. He drew his hand across his forehead with a bewildered gesture, and cried out, "Damn it! Knowing this new truth about the life to come, and my son and others seeing me, and knowing what I am doing—it's all going to be an infernal nuisance to me, it's going to revolutionize my business life. I can't go on conducting things on the old lines—I'd be ashamed. Yes, damn it, this is going to give me some trouble." He said more than this, and his language was much more lurid, but I didn't mind. I saw that this boiling over of his sense of responsibility was really the outcome of his great relief and joy in finding his boy again.