

# Signs & Wonders

By J. D. Beresford

I dreamed this in the dullness of a February day in London.

I had been pondering the elements that go to the making of the human entity, and more particularly that new aspect of the theory of the etheric body which presents it as a visible, ponderable, tangible, highly organised, but almost incredibly tenuous, form of matter. From that I slid to the consideration of the possibility of some essence still more remote from our conception of the gross material of our objective experience; and then for a moment I held the idea of the imperceptible transition from this ultimately dispersing matter to thought or impulse—from the various bodies, etheric, astral, mental, causal, or Buddhistic, to the free and absolute Soul.

I suppose that at this point I fell asleep. I was not aware of any change of consciousness, but I cannot otherwise explain the fact that in an instant I was transported from an open place in the North of London, and from all this familiar earth of ours, to some planet without the knowledge of the dwellers in the solar system.

This amazing change was accomplished without the least shock. It was, indeed, imperceptible. The new world upon which I opened my eyes appeared at first sight to differ in no particular from that I had so recently left. I saw below me a perfect replica of the Hampstead Garden Suburb. The wind blew from the east with no loss of its characteristic quality. The occasional people who passed had the same air of tired foreboding and intense preoccupation with the miserable importance of their instant lives, that has seemed to me to mark the air of the middle-classes for the past few weeks. Also it was, I thought, beginning to rain.

I shivered and decided that I might as well go home. I felt that it was not worth while to travel a distance unrecordable in any measure of earthly miles, only to renew my terrestrial experiences. And then, by an accident, possibly to verify my theory that it was certainly going to rain, I looked up and realised at once the unspeakable difference between that world and our own.

For on this little earth of ours the sky makes no claim on our attention. It has its effects of cloud and light occasionally, and these effects no doubt may engage at times the interest of the poet or tile artist. But to us, ordinary people, the sky is always pretty much the same, and we only look at it when we are expecting rain. Even then we often shut our eyes.

In that other world which revolves round a sun so distant that the light of it has not yet reached the earth the sky is quite different. Things happen in it. As I looked up, for instance, I saw a great door open, and out of it there marched an immense procession that trailed its glorious length across the whole width of heaven. I heard no sound. The eternal host moved in silent dignity from zenith to horizon. And after the procession had passed the whole visible arch of the sky was parted like a curtain and there looked out from the opening the semblance of a vast, intent eye.

But what immediately followed the gaze of that overwhelming watcher I do not know, for someone touched my arm, and a voice close at my shoulder said in the very tones of an earthly cockney:

“What yer starin’ at, guv’nor? Airyplanes? I can’t see none.”

I looked at him and found that he was just such a loafer as one may see any day in London.

“Aeroplanes,” I repeated. “Great Heaven, can’t you see what’s up there? The procession and that eye?”

He stared up then, and I with him, and the eye had gone; but between the still parted heavens I could see into the profundity of a space so rich with beauty and, as it seemed, with promise, that I held my breath in sheer wonder.

“No! I can’t see nothin’, guv’nor,” my companion said.

And I presume that as he spoke I must have waked from my dream, for the glory vanished and I found myself dispensing a small alms to a shabby man who was representing himself as most unworthily suffering through no fault of his own.

As I walked home through the rain I reflected that the people of that incredibly distant world, walking, as they always do, with their gaze bent upon the ground, are probably unable to see the signs and wonders that blaze across the sky. They, like ourselves, are so preoccupied with the miserable importance of their instant lives.