

# Chelsea Ghosts—And Others

By Jessie Adelaide Middleton

Major-General Sir Alfred Turner, K.C.B., who was Commissioner of Police in Ireland, is Chairman of the Alliance Franco-Britannique, and has held many other distinguished posts, has studied psychic phenomena closely for about seventeen years, and welcomes the change that has come over the general attitude towards these matters. His own experiences have been deeply interesting, and in a recent lecture he is reported as saying—“People talk about the supernatural, but I tell them there is nothing supernatural. Everything pertains to, and is brought about in harmony with, the laws of Nature, but there are laws of Nature which are over and above our comprehension, and which cannot be determined by any known science, and therefore it is futile for scientists to say that these things are not real because they themselves cannot explain them by any theory of a scientific kind. Take such men as Lombroso, Richet, Flammarion, on the continent; and in our own country, Crookes, Lodge, Myers, Stainton Moses, and that gentle and charming old man of science, co-discoverer with Darwin of the principle of Natural Selection—I mean the late Alfred Russel Wallace. How is it possible to set aside the testimony of men like these?”

When I was writing this book, I had the privilege of a long and most interesting talk on occult subjects with Sir Alfred Turner at his house in Chelsea, during which he told me the following experiences of his own, which, coming from so high an authority, are, of course, absolutely convincing.

“A curious example of haunting,” said Sir Alfred, “is the case of a house near here in Chelsea, of which I will give you the name—but not for publication.

“The people who once owned the house were great friends of mine, and one evening they asked me to come and dine with them.

“Inside the building, as well as the main staircase there were some curious winding stairs, and as I was going from the hall to the dining-room, I saw the figure of a monk in a brown robe and hood ascending the stairs. Naturally, as the people of the house were Roman Catholics, I took him for a guest, like myself.

“When the host and hostess were sitting down to dinner, I asked them, ‘Where is the priest?’

“They looked askance, and said, ‘What priest?’

“Whereupon I told them what I had just seen, and was then told that there was no such person in the house. Further inquiries showed that the figure I had seen was not of this world, but was one of the ghosts which haunted the house—a priest supposed to have been father-confessor to a family who had owned the place many years ago.

“Many brown monks are still earth-bound, though not always to the place where they lived while on earth. The house in question stands where a monastery once stood, so that this particular monk was probably one of the monks belonging to it in former times.

“I was once sitting in the music-room of this same house when two musical instruments—guitars, as a matter of fact—standing in a corner of the room began to play very sweetly in perfect musical harmony. There were no strings on them at the time.

“My friends who owned the house are now dead, and two or three tenants have since lived in the house, one of them being a distinguished composer.

“During a *séance* there, a late owner came among us. He was absolutely unaware that he had passed over, and could not imagine why I and a circle of my friends were sitting in his house.

He said indignantly, ‘What are you doing here? Why is the Duke of here? Why are you all sitting in the dark?’

“The duke in question was not present, but his son was one of our party. We soon persuaded the spirit that he had been ‘on the other side’ for upwards of a hundred years. He gave us his name and the name of his solicitor! We have since verified the fact that a man of that name did live in the house, and his initial is on the outside of it.

“About eight years ago I visited a house in Norfolk where there was a haunted room. It was in a part of the house considerably older than the rest, and was a large, dark room, with oak panelling, containing a huge four-poster bedstead.

“Early in the afternoon I went into the haunted room, accompanied by two ladies. We stood by chance at the foot of the bed, and in an instant something unseen, but very tangible, gripped each of the ladies by the nape of the neck, while at the same time I felt something pressing into my back, as if a figure was leaning against me, and a blast of cold wind passed over us. Both the ladies screamed out, and the strange visitation ceased.

“I learnt later that, centuries ago, a horrible crime had been committed in this very room. There was a large hole the wall, through which the murderer was reported to have thrown the bodies.

“Many people fail to distinguish between ghosts and spirits, though there is a great distinction between them. Spirits are the absolute spirits of the departed that are always around us, and appear when psychically-endowed persons are present.

“A ghost never rises above the astral. It is a thought-form, which in the case of a murder arises out of the evil thoughts which emerge from the murderer at the moment of his foul deed, and it never leaves the locality. Thought has far more power than people imagine.

“I have seen no end of spirits, but very few ghosts. A ghost can come to anybody, psychic or not, and they often, as you know, appear on the anniversary of a crime.

“I know a case at a house near Guildford, which is haunted in this way.

“Many years ago the master of the house went away and left his wife and child alone in the house. The mother was a cruel woman, who starved her child by shutting it, without food, in a cupboard, so that it died.

“The man returned, and, on learning what had happened, shut his wife up in the same cupboard, locked the house again and left her to starve. It is the woman’s ghost that appears on the anniversary of the crime.

“Once, after suffering a great bereavement, I myself became for a time very clairvoyant, and saw two fully materialized beings—in this very room— at the same moment.

“All spirits, however bad, evolve in time, and go through the astral and mental planes to evolution. Every spirit evolves and goes upward, but to shake off earth attractions they need help. Mr. Stead, who was a great personal friend of mine, whom I have both seen and spoken with after he went down in the *Titanic*, is helping earth-bound spirits in this way.”