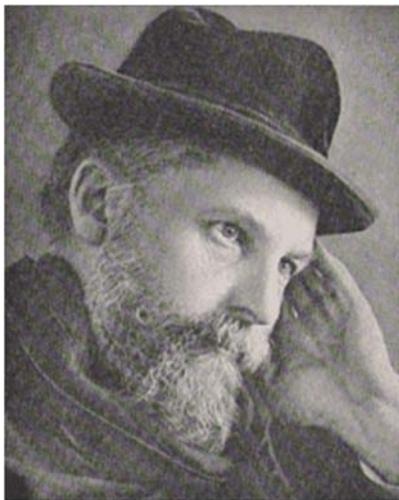


## An Early Cross-Correspondence Message

By Michael E. Tymn

On September 19, 1903, Alice MacDonald Fleming, the sister of author Rudyard Kipling, began receiving automatic writing messages purportedly coming from Frederic W. H. Myers, a Cambridge University classics scholar as well as a pioneering psychical researcher, who had died in 1901. Fleming, the wife of a British army officer, was living in India at the time. Because members of her family disapproved of her “dabbling in the occult,” she used the pseudonym, “Mrs. Holland.” The initial messages were short and apparently an attempt by Myers to convince her of his identity. He told her that much of what he would write through her is not meant for her, that she was to be the reporter. She was asked by Myers to send the messages to the Society for Psychical Research (SPR) in London, an organization which Myers had helped organize in 1882.



Frederic W. H. Myers

In a subsequent message, Myers told Fleming not to worry about being made a fool or dupe. “It’s a form of restless vanity to fear that

your hand is imposing upon yourself, as it were,” Myers communicated to her. To the SPR (through Fleming), he communicated: “...if it were possible for the soul to die back into earth life again I should die from sheer yearning to reach you – to tell you that all that we imagined is not half wonderful enough for the truth...If I could only reach you – if I could only tell you – I long for power and all that comes to me is an infinite yearning – an infinite pain. Does any of this reach you – reaching anyone – or am I only wailing as the wind wails – wordless and unheeded?”

On January 5, 1904, Myers wrote that he was in a “bound to earth condition,” but it was largely of a voluntary choice. “I am, as it were, actuated by the missionary spirit; and the great longing to speak to the souls in prison – still in the prison of flesh – leads me to ‘absent me from felicity awhile.’”

On another occasion, Myers wrote that “to believe that the mere act of death enables a spirit to understand the whole mystery of death is as absurd as to imagine that the act of birth enables an infant to understand the whole mystery of life.” He added that he was still groping...surmising...conjecturing.

Fleming also received messages from Edmund Gurney and Roden Noel, both unknown to her. A message from Noel said to ask “A.W.” what the date May 26, 1894 meant to him, and if he could not remember, to ask Nora. Not knowing what to make of the message, Fleming sent the message to the SPR in London, where it was recognized that Noel was referring to Noel’s good friends, Dr. A. W. Verrall and Dr. Eleanor

(Nora) Sidgwick. The date was the day of Noel's death.

On January 17, 1904, Fleming recorded another message purportedly coming from Myers for the SPR. He gave the biblical reference I Cor. xvi, 12. He told the SPR that he tried to get the entire wording through in Greek but could not get Fleming's hand to form Greek characters, and so he gave only the reference. On the very same day, thousands of miles away in England, Mrs. Margaret Verrall, an automatic writing medium who was a member of the SPR, also received the same biblical reference from Myers by means of automatic writing. This biblical passage, "Watch ye, stand fast in the faith, quit you like men, be strong," was the wording inscribed in Greek over the gateway of Selwyn College, Cambridge, under which Myers frequently passed.

This was apparently the first of what came to be known as the "cross-correspondences" – similar messages through different mediums around the world or fragmentary messages sent through different mediums which in themselves had no meaning until the SPR linked them up and made a complete message out of them. Fleming ("Mrs. Holland") in India, Leonora Piper in the United States, Verrall and Winifred Coombe-Tenant ("Mrs. Willett"), both in England, were the four principal mediums used by Myers in delivering these cross-correspondences. As Myers was a classical scholar, a number of the messages had to do with the classics.

While complex and very difficult to read, these cross-correspondences are often looked upon as the best evidence of survival of individual consciousness after death. "The intention was obvious – namely to show that one mind was acting on all these mediums," physicist and psychical researcher Sir Oliver Lodge explained, "each separate portion of the message being so obscure that there could be no telepathy or any other means of communication between them."