

News From Beyond Reaches Famous Lawyer

By Michael E. Tymn

In the Introduction to a 1923 book, *Guidance from Beyond*, by Kate Wingfield, Sir Edward Marshall Hall (1858-1927), one of Great Britain's leading barristers, states that he did not believe in a future life until meeting Miss Wingfield at the home of his sister some 30 years earlier. Wingfield, his sister's close personal friend, was an automatic writing and trance medium observed and validated by psychical researchers Frederic W. H. Myers and C. D. Broad. References indicate that various "guides" produced script through her hand in different handwriting.

Hall was visiting his sister's home at a time when Wingfield was staying with her. The sister, knowing of her brother's disbelief in such things, asked him to test Wingfield and her spirit guides. "I declined," Hall wrote, "and, being a confirmed skeptic, I said: 'What's the use? She cannot tell me the winner of the Derby or the Leger.'" However, when his sister persisted, Hall agreed to the test.

Placing his hand in his breast pocket, searching for a piece of paper on which to write something, Hall pulled out a letter which he had received at his chambers the preceding day. "As if inspired, an idea came to me," Hall continued the story. "I folded up the letter in its envelope, writing, stamp, and postmark inside, and then placed the whole in another envelope, which I sealed with a seal I always carried. There was not writing on the outside of the envelope so sealed, and I handed it to my sister to hand to Miss Wingfield." Hall then asked Wingfield to identify the location of the writer.

"The writer of that letter is dead," Wingfield's hand wrote. The response added to Hall's skepticism, but he decided to ask when and where the writer died.

"He died yesterday in South Africa," was the reply.



Sir Edward Marshall Hall

"I had mentioned no sex and given no indication of locality, and the answer, though curious, seemed ridiculous," Hall wrote. "To say that I was puzzled is to put it mildly. This letter, which I had received on the Saturday preceding the Sunday on which I had asked the question, was written by my brother in South Africa some three weeks prior to the date of its receipt, and was a very pleasant communication. I had not told my sister of this letter and she could not know of its existence."

Some three weeks after the visit with his sister and Wingfield, Hall received a letter from Archdeacon Gaul, in which he wrote: "I little thought when I wrote to you last mail that I should have to tell you that your brother was found dead in his bed this morning." The letter

was dated the day before Hall put the question to Wingfield.

“I need hardly say that I was staggered at the communication, and, making any and every allowance that my imagination can conceive, I came to the conclusion then, and I still believe, that that message can only have been communicated through Miss Winfield by some agency outside this sphere,” Hall further wrote. “Telepathy, clairvoyance, thought-reading are eliminated absolutely. I was ignorant of the fact – for it was when the message came on that Sunday afternoon – that the writer of the letter was at that moment lying dead in South Africa.”

As far as Hall could determine, his brother had died about 36 hours prior to the receipt of the message through Wingfield and the death was unknown to anyone in England until three weeks later, when the Archdeacon’s letter was received.

“I could relate many other instances and experiences that have occurred since, but for me this was enough,” Hall concluded the story. “I was and am convinced that there is an existence beyond so-called death, and that there are means of communication between them and us. It is not given to me to see visions or hear voices, or write down messages that are sent. I realize that I am not sufficiently detached from the earthly attraction of life to be allowed myself to pierce the veil. But am I for this reason to say that these things do not exist?”

Summing up the Introduction to the book, Hall wrote: “My knowledge is nil, my belief strong, my hope infinite.”