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978-1-108-06794-2 - *Ghost Land: Or Researches into the Mysteries of Occultism*

Edited and Translated by Emma Hardinge Britten

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Ghost Land

A lecturer and writer on spiritualism, Emma Hardinge Britten (1823–99) acted as a medium in both England and America. Allegedly written by an enigmatic nobleman, ‘Chevalier Louis de B’, *Ghost Land* was prepared for publication by Britten in 1876. The author’s real identity is unknown, and scholars have attributed the work to various personalities, including Ernest de Bunsen, Britten’s husband William, and Britten herself. The book is divided into two parts, ‘The Neophyte’ and ‘The Adept’. Each part includes a series of sketches from the life of the author, who was initiated into the ancient mysteries of the occult. The book also describes the spiritual encounters of an Englishman referred to as ‘John Cavendish Dudley’. Britten claimed to have translated the French parts of the manuscript and edited the English sections. Of enduring interest in the history of spiritualism, the work reflects a strong theosophical influence.

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Frontmatter

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GHOST LAND
OR
RESEARCHES INTO THE MYSTERIES
OF
OCCULTISM

ILLUSTRATED IN A

SERIES OF AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL SKETCHES.

IN TWO PARTS

BY THE AUTHOR OF "ART MAGIC;" WITH EXTRACTS FROM THE RECORDS
OF "MAGICAL SEANCES," ETC., ETC.

TRANSLATED AND EDITED BY

EMMA HARDINGE BRITTEN.

*"I am He that liveth and was dead,
And behold, I am alive for evermore."*

CHICAGO, ILL.

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1905

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Frontmatter

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Frontmatter

[More information](#)

CONTENTS.

PART FIRST.	PAGE.
THE NEOPHYTE	5
AUTHOR'S PREFACE	7-10
EDITOR'S INTRODUCTION	11-17
CHAPTER I.	
INTERESTING SPIRITUAL MYSTERIES AND EXPERIENCES— ON THE THRESHOLD—AT COLLEGE—PROF. VON MARX— BERLIN BROTHERHOOD.	18-28
CHAPTER II.	
MARVEL OF MAGNETIC INFLUENCE AND SOMNAMBULISM— MAGIC—FLYING SOULS—MURDER AND ITS RESULTS.	29-37
CHAPTER III.	
PROFESSOR MULLER, THE GREAT SCIENTIST AND MATHE- MATICIAN—CONSTANCE—THE VICTIM.	38-50
CHAPTER IV.	
ZWINGLER—HOW TO TRACE A MURDERER—REMARKABLE PSYCHOMETRIC FEATS OF THE BOHEMIAN WONDER.	51-59
CHAPTER V.	
MAGIC IN ENGLAND—JOHN CAVENDISH DUDLEY—OCCULT- ISM—LETTER SHADOWS OF FATE—AMONG THE MAGI- CIANS—THE INNER LIGHT.	60-71
CHAPTER VI.	
MAGICIANS AND SPIRIT MEDIUMS—INVOCATIONS—ELE- MENTARIES—PLANETARIES—KOBOLDS—FAIRIES.	72-95
CHAPTER VII.	
PHILOSOPHY OF OBSESSION—WHO ARE THE EASIEST VIC- TIMS OF THE AFFLICTION—THE TELESCOPE—SPIRITS.	96-107
CHAPTER VIII.	
STRAY WANDERERS—THE FASTING GIRL—GYPSIES—"DER FREISCHUTZ"—JUANITA—HER WONDERFUL GIFTS.	108-128
CHAPTER IX.	
THE LETTER—THE LIFE TRANSFER—BEREAVEMENT—THE PHOTOSPHERE—THE UNIVERSE OF WORLDS.	129-139
CHAPTER X.	
IN THE WILDERNESS—THE JOURNEY—DEATH OF PROF. VON MARX—HIS GREAT ATTACHMENT TO LOUIS.	
CHAPTER XI.	
AWAKENING TO REAL LIFE—IN THE SPHERES—THE LIFE TRANSFER REVERSED—LOUIS IN DESPERATION TRIES TO STARVE HIMSELF TO DEATH—LEARNS A LESSON.	154-161
CHAPTER XII.	
DIARY OF JOHN CAVENDISH DUDLEY—PROF. VON MARX'S HISTORY—THE PRINCESS—PROSPERO AND ARIEL.	162-182

Cambridge University Press

978-1-108-06794-2 - Ghost Land: Or Researches into the Mysteries of Occultism

Edited and Translated by Emma Hardinge Britten

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

4

CONTENTS.

	PAGE.
CHAPTER XIII.	
MR. DUDLEY'S DIARY CONTINUED—MAGICAL SEANCES— THE NINE DAYS' TRIAL—PROF. VON MARX'S SPIRIT.	183-196
CHAPTER XIV.	
MR. DUDLEY'S DIARY CONTINUED—THE CHEVALIER'S RE- TURN—OBSESSED BY THE SPIRIT OF PROF. VON MARX.	197-210
CHAPTER XV.	
MR. DUDLEY'S DIARY CONTINUED—PHILOSOPHY OF NEW BIRTH—RESURRECTION—WHY AND WHENCE—SEANCE.	211-218
CHAPTER XVI.	
MR. DUDLEY'S DIARY CONTINUED—DEPARTURE OF LOUIS TO INDIA AND MR. DUDLEY TO AMERICA—A MYSTIC.	219-227
PART II.	
THE ADEPT—INVOCATION—THE SOUL'S LITANIES.	229-232
CHAPTER XVII.	
ORDER OF THE UNIVERSE—BIOGRAPHY OF THE CHEVALIER —INCIDENTS IN THE LAND OF THE FAKIR.	233-240
CHAPTER XXVIII.	
IN ACTIVE PUBLIC SERVICE, AS SOLDIER AND STATESMAN— ANGEL OF MIDNIGHT—THE RUINS—JUGGLERS.	241-255
CHAPTER XIX.	
THE DHARMA SALA OF THE VAIDYA—DAWNING LIGHT— THE BROTHERHOOD—SUBTERRANEAN REVELATIONS—	256-271
CHAPTER XX.	
OCCULTISM—ITS USES AND ABUSES—LOVE—MARRIAGE— SPELLS—CHARMS—SPIRITUAL AFFINITY—SOUL LOVE.	272-282
CHAPTER XXI.	
THE ANGEL OF MORNING—ENVIRONED IN AN ATMOSPHERE OF FIRE-MIST—THE POTENTIAL TOUCH OF FORCE.	283-296
CHAPTER XXII.	
THE ENCHANTRESS—LADY BLANCHE—DEPARTURE FOR CALCUTTA—MR. DUDLEY'S ELEVATION—EVIL SPIRITS.	297-311
CHAPTER XXIII.	
BLACK MAGIC OR VAUDOISM—THE ENCHANTRESS PRO- POSES TO LOUIS—IS REJECTED—THREATENS—FAKIRS.	312-324
CHAPTER XXIV.	
PSYCHOLOGY—ITS USES AND ABUSES—LOUIS AND BLANCHE PREPARE TO DEPART—ENCHANTRESS' PLOT FOILED.	325-335
CHAPTER XXV.	
DIARY OF LADY BLANCHE—THE MARRIAGE—BLANCHE'S DEVOTION—FAREWELL TO LOUIS.	336-345
CHAPTER XXVI.	
CLOSE OF THE LIFE EPISODE—THE CHEVALIER'S RECON- CILIATION WITH THE SPIRITS—THE PRISON—EDITOR'S NOTES IN CONCLUSION.	346-357

Cambridge University Press

978-1-108-06794-2 - Ghost Land: Or Researches into the Mysteries of Occultism

Edited and Translated by Emma Hardinge Britten

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

PART I.



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Frontmatter

[More information](#)



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Edited and Translated by Emma Hardinge Britten

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

MRS. EMMA HARDINGE BRITTEN,

HER COMMANDING INFLUENCE AND GREAT GENEROSITY.

Mrs. Emma Hardinge Britten (now living in England) has been for many years a leading exponent in Spiritualism. Her lectures in this country excited great interest. She was thrillingly eloquent, logical and impressive as a speaker, and her influence for good was correspondingly great. She is known the wide world over as a lecturer and author. It was through her commanding influence that *Ghost Land* was first published, and it is now through her great generosity that we are able to republish the work and spread it broadcast wherever *The Progressive Thinker* goes.

TO BE SPREAD BROADCAST AS A GIFT.

The first edition of 12,000 copies will be given away to subscribers of *The Progressive Thinker*, on conditions set forth in that paper.

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You will readily comprehend our object in sending out this grand book on the conditions we do (to increase the circulation and usefulness of *The Progressive Thinker*), hence you will perceive that it would be unfair to us for you to loan the book to your neighbors or friends to study, who would receive all the information therein without the cost of a cent, thus defeating us in a measure in our intended object. Show them the work, beautifully bound and printed on splendid paper, and ask them to send for it, and *The Progressive Thinker* for one year. The book has always sold for \$2, and it is well worth that price.

THIS REMARKABLE WORK IS IN NO WISE A FICTION.

Ghost Land is in no wise a fiction. Mrs. Britten vouches for its entire truthfulness, and it may well be regarded as one of the most remarkable books of the present age, however much you may differ with some of its statements and conclusions.

J. R. FRANCIS, Publisher.

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Frontmatter

[More information](#)



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*You should commence forming at once a
Spiritualist or Occult Library. If you do not,
you will stand in the rear of the Grand Army
of Progress.*

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Frontmatter

[More information](#)

AUTHOR'S PREFACE.

Before the subjoined papers are submitted to the critical reader, the author desires most emphatically to protest against their being ranked in the same category of literature as his recently published volume on "Art Magic."

The autobiographical sketches now presented to the public were written, or rather collated from private memoranda, some four years since, at the earnest request of Mrs. Emma Hardinge Britten, and that with the simple design of contributing such a series of magazine papers to her admirable periodical, "The Western Star," as would be in harmony with its general tone and design.

When it is remembered that these papers are only off-hand sketches of a fateful life, in which striking illustrations of the spiritual philosophy may be found in a less stately guise than abstract essays, and that at most they are only to be considered as magazine sketches, the author trusts that his work will be held exempt from that severity of critical analysis which he would have courted for "Art Magic" had it been placed before the world under similar circumstances.

The only claim that the author can advance for the present work is that of strict veracity. Although the same reasons that induced him to withhold his name when it was first produced prevail with him to-day, all the incidents narrated have been faithfully set down with the strictest regard to truth as far as the present volume carries the history forward.

To the author himself the details of his life convey in retrospect the most important lessons, but their value to the world is entirely dependent upon their actuality. As a mere tale of fiction far more interesting subjects could doubtless have been found in any sensational novel or newspaper romance; but if the narratives herein detailed faithfully represent the mystic action of mind upon mind, the fearful phenomenon of obsession, the possibility of an actual life transfer, and the interposition of beings in human affairs whose existence supplies the missing link which

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Frontmatter

[More information](#)

connects the realm of animate and inanimate nature, then is this work, however crude in style or imperfect in philosophical deduction, a most important and noteworthy one.

It is because it ought to be thus regarded, because it narrates step by step and incident by incident, actualities which may one day become the experience of the many rather than the few, that the author is again persuaded to brave the idle sneer and vulgar jeer of those who are only capable of appreciating the facts that may have come within the narrow circle of their own observation. That those persons who call themselves "spiritual teachers" and claim to be "interpreters and exponents" of the spiritual philosophy (?) have not all the truth—nay, not even a tithe of the experience necessary to qualify them for the office they have assumed—becomes more and more painfully evident to the earnest student into spiritual mysteries the more he compares the immensity of the realms to be traversed with the shallow pretences at explanation put forth by the self-elected spiritual teachers of this generation.

By these great authorities occultism is assumed to be a word invented by a few individuals, whose chief aim is to destroy Spiritualism and substitute "black magic" in its place, whilst occultists are renegades, who would "roll back the car of progress" (a favorite expression, by the way, of those who deny the right of any one to progress beyond their own standard of knowledge) and presume to add to the sublime philosophy enunciated through the table-tipping and trance-speaking media for "spirits of the seventh sphere." the antiquated stuff of Oriental cabalists, Chaldean astrologists, Hindoo, Egyptian, and Persian magi, Greek philosophers, Arabian alchemists, and medieval Rosicrucian mystics. Of course all these are mere ignoramuses, who for thousands of years have been blundering through the mysteries of occult science, which the aforesaid table-tipping and seventh-sphere-inspiring spirits instantly sweep away with the knock-down argument of "What I don't know isn't true; and what I can not explain has no existence."

That the author of "Ghost Land" has attempted to explain occultism, or present a concrete scheme of occult philosophy in these pages, must not for one moment be assumed. He has simply introduced such scenes in his own life experience as will show what a vast amount of phenomena remains to be explained, which the spiritual philosophy of the present day has not touched, and which many modern Spiritists, following out the rude and

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Frontmatter

[More information](#)

AUTHOR'S PREFACE.

9

illogical example of their own materialistic opponents, find it easier to deny altogether than to elucidate. No one has more faithfully, humbly, and reverently sought for truth wherever it may be found than the author of "Ghost Land;" yet he is fain to confess the table-tipping and trance-inspiring spirits of America and England have not, to his blundering apprehension, covered the whole ground of the experiences which he has ventured to detail in this volume. When he adds that an additional score of years' experiences still more wonderful and occult yet remain to be accounted for, and that during his wide wanderings over the world he has encountered hundreds of individuals who have an array of equally occult testimony to render, the Illuminee of the modern spiritual movement may forgive him if he ventures to question whether there may not be some few things, scenes, and persons more in the spiritual universe than their seven spheres of purely human intelligence can account for.

The author could have wished that his esteemed editor had dispensed with the chapters interpolated by their mutual and highly valued friend, "John Cavendish Dudley;" not that any portion of this gentleman's writings are lacking in that strict fidelity to truth which has been the ruling genius of the entire work, whilst in style and interest they far surpass the attempts of a foreigner to express his ideas in an unfamiliar language; but the author has marked with deep regret the many eulogistic allusions to himself with which Mr. Dudley's diary is seasoned; and whilst he knows they are dictated in all sincerity by a too partial friend, he feels their association with auto-biographical sketches will subject him to a charge of vanity which is equally repulsive to his habits of thought and action. On this point he has no other excuse to offer than the all-potential will of his editor. Mrs. Hardinge Britten alleges that the diary of Mr. Dudley was given to her in the same unconditional spirit as the "Ghost Land" papers; also, that it was not until she came to examine the MSS. separately that she discovered how intimately they were related and how impossible it would have been to continue the narrative after the eleventh chapter without the assistance of Mr. Dudley's journal.

When Mrs. Hardinge Britten further added I will to I wish, the author of "Art Magic," himself the strongest possible pleader for the omnipotence of will, found all his arguments on the per contra of the question silenced.

With a final allegation that though the style of composition is

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978-1-108-06794-2 - Ghost Land: Or Researches into the Mysteries of Occultism

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Frontmatter

[More information](#)

10

AUTHOR'S PREFACE.

all too faulty, the details are a faithful representation of facts known to and witnessed by many most honorable persons in the present generation, the author gives his work to the winds of public opinion. Blow hot or cold as they will, they only represent the source from whence they come, but cannot make or mar the work they ban or bless.

Puentes Grandes,
The Havana, Isle de Cuba, 1876.