

Clairvoyance

by

C.W. Leadbeater

The possession of clairvoyant power is a very great privilege and a very great advantage, and if properly and sensibly used it may be a blessing and help to its fortunate holder, just as surely as, if it is misused, it may often be a hindrance and a curse. The principal dangers attendant upon it arise from pride, ignorance, an impurity, and if these be avoided, as they easily may be, nothing but good can come of it.

Pride is the first great danger. The possession of the faculty which, though it is the heritage of the whole human race, is as yet manifested only very occasionally, often causes the ignorant clairvoyant to feel himself (or still more frequently herself) exalted above his fellow, chosen by the Almighty for some mission of worldwide importance, dowered with the discernment that can never err, selected under angelic guidance to be the founder of a new dispensation, and so on. It should be remembered that there are always plenty of sportive and mischievous entities on the other side of the veil who are ready and anxious to foster all such delusions, to reflect and embody all such thoughts, and to fill whatever role of archangel or spirit guide may happen to be suggested to them. Unfortunately it is so easy to persuade the average man that he really is a very fine fellow at bottom, and quite worthy to be the recipient of a special revelation, even though his friends have through blindness or prejudice somehow failed hitherto to appreciate him

Another danger, perhaps the greatest of all because it is the mother of all others, is ignorance. If the clairvoyant knows anything of the history of his subject, if he at all understands the conditions of those other planes into which his vision is penetrating, he cannot of course suppose himself the only person who was ever so highly favored, nor can he feel with self-complacent certainty that it is impossible for him to make a mistake. But when he is, as so many are, in the densest ignorance as to history, conditions and everything else, he is liable in the first place to make all kinds of mistakes as to what he sees, and secondly to be easy prey of all sorts of designing and deceptive entities from the astral plane. He has no criterion by which to judge what he sees, or thinks he sees, no test to apply to his visions or communications, and so he has no sense of relative proportion or the fitness of things, and he magnifies a copy-book maxim into a fragment of divine wisdom, a platitude of the most ordinary type into an angelic message. Then again, for want of common knowledge on scientific subjects he will often utterly misunderstand what his faculties enable him to perceive, and he will, consequently, gravely promulgate the grossest absurdities.

The third danger is that of impurity. The man who is pure in thought and life, pure in intention and free from the taint of selfishness, is by that very fact guarded from the influence of undesirable entities from other planes. There is in him nothing upon which they can play; he is no fit medium for them. On the other hand all good influences naturally surround such a man, and hasten to use him as a channel through which they may act, and thus a still further barrier is erected about him against all which is mean and low end evil. The man of impure life or motive, on the contrary, inevitably attracts to himself all that is worst in the invisible world which so closely surrounds us; he responds readily to it, while it will be hardly possible for the forces of good to make any impression upon him.

But a clairvoyant who will bear in mind all these dangers, and strive to avoid them, will take the trouble to study the history and the rationale of clairvoyance, who will see to it that his heart is humble and his motives are pure--such a man may assuredly learn very much from these powers of which he finds himself in possession, and may make them of the greatest use to him in the work which he has to do.

Having first taken good heed to the training of his character, that can observe and note down carefully any visions which come to him; let him patiently endeavor to disentangle the core of truth in that from the various accretions and exaggerations which are sure at first to be almost inextricably confused with them; let him in every possible way to test and check them and endeavor to ascertain which of them are reliable, and in what way these reliable ones differ from others which have proved less trustworthy--and he will very soon find himself evolving order out of chaos, and learning to distinguish what he can trust and what he must for the present put aside as incomprehensible.

He will probably find in course of time that he gets impressions, whether by direct sight or only by feeling, in reference to the various people with whom he comes into contact. Once more the careful noting down of every such impression as soon as it occurs, and the impartial testing and checking of it as opportunity offers, will soon show our friend how far these feelings or visions are to be relied on; and as soon as he finds that they are correct and dependable he has made a very great advance, for he is in possession of a power which enables him to be a far more use to those among whom his work lies than he could be if he knew only as much about them as can be seen by the ordinary eye.

If, for example, his sight includes the auras of those around him, he can judge from what it shows him how best to deal with them, how to bring out their latent good qualities, how to strengthen their weaknesses, how to repress what is undesirable in their characters. Again, this power may often enable him to observe something of the processes of nature, to see something of the working of the non-human evolutions which surround us, and thus to acquire most valuable knowledge on all kinds of recondite subject. If he happens to be personally acquainted with some clairvoyant who has been put under regular training he has of course a great advantage, in that he can without difficulty get his visions examined and tested by one upon whom he can rely.

Generally speaking, then, the course to be recommended to the untrained clairvoyant is that of exceeding patience and much watchfulness; but with this hope ever before his eyes, that assuredly if he makes use of the talent entrusted to him it cannot but attract the favorable notice of those who are ever watching for instruments which can be employed in

the great work of evolution, and that when the right time comes he will receive the training which he so earnestly desires, and will thus be enabled definitely to become one of those who help the world.

Special training should be arranged from early childhood for clairvoyant children. The modern system of education tends to suppress all psychic faculties, and most young people are overstrained by their studies. In Greece and Rome the psychic children were promptly isolated as vestal virgins or postulants for the priesthood, and specially trained. There is a natural tendency in the present day, apart from education, to repress these faculties. The best way to prevent the loss of these to the world is to put the boys into some sort of monastery where the monks know about a higher life and try to live it, for family life is not suitable for this development. Where such clairvoyance appears it ought to be encouraged, for many additional investigators are wanted for the Society's work, and those who begin young are likely to adapt themselves to it most readily.

People who are psychic by birth generally use the etherically double the great deal. People possess what has sometimes been called "etheric sight"--that is, sight capable of observing physical matter in a state of exceedingly fine subdivision, though not yet capable of discerning the subtler matter of the astral plane--frequently see it, when looking at any exposed portion of the human body, such as the face of the hand, multitude's a tiny forms, such as dice, stars, and double pyramids. These belong neither to the thought-plane neither to the astral, but to the etheric part of the physical. There simply is the exceedingly minute physical emanations from the body--the waste matter, consisting largely of finely divided salts, which is constantly being thrown out in this manner. The character of these tiny particles varies from many causes. Naturally loss of health often alters them entirely, but any wave of emotion will affect them to a greater or lesser extent, and they even respond to the influence of any definite train of thought.

Professor Gates is reported as saying that the material emanations of the living body differ according to the states of mind as well as the conditions of the physical health; (b) that these emanations can be tested by the chemical reactions of some salts of selenium; (c) that these reactions are characterized by various tints or colours according to the nature of the mental impressions; (d) that forty different emotion-products, as he calls them, have already been obtained.

People sometimes see the animated particles quivering with intense rapidity, and dashing about in the air before them. This again shows the possession of much increased etheric vision, not of mental. It is unfortunately only too common for the person who gains for the first time a glimpse of astral or even of etheric matter to jump at once to the conclusion that he is at least upon the mental level, if not upon the nirvanic, and holds in his hand the key to all the mysteries of the entire solar system. All that will come in good time, and these grander vistas will assuredly open before him one day; but he will hasten the coming of that desirable consummation if he makes sure of each step as he takes it, and tries fully to understand and make the best of what he has, before desiring more. Those who begin their experience with nirvanic vision are few and far between; for most of us, progress must be slow and steady, and the safest motto for us is *festina lente*.

I should not advise anyone to allow himself to be thrown into mesmeric sleep for the purpose of gaining clairvoyant experiences. The domination of the will by that of another produces effects that few people realize. The will of the victim becomes weaker, and is more liable to be acted upon by others. In the scheme of things no man is *forced* to do anything; he is taught by receiving always the result of his actions; and it is better to allow clairvoyant powers to come gradually in the normal course of evolution, rather than to try to force them in any way.

We must not always assume that a man who sees something pertaining to higher planes is necessarily becoming clairvoyant. By clairvoyance, for example, we may undoubtedly see an apparition, but on the other hand there are various other ways in which a man may see or suppose himself to see something which to him would be exactly the same as an apparition.

The apparition of a dead person may be (a) one's own imagination, (b) A thought form produced by another person, (c) or by the person seen, (d) an impersonation, (e) the etheric double of the person, or (f) the real person actually there. In the last case one of three things must have happened--that is, supposing that the apparition is dead or sleeping and in his astral body, and that the man who sees him is himself in the physical body and wide awake. Either (a) the dead man has materialized himself, and is for the time a physical object, which may be seen by any number of people with ordinary physical sense; (b) the dead man is in his astral body, in which case only those possessing astral sight can perceive him; he has probably succeeded by some special effort in temporarily opening that sight for the person to whom he wishes to show himself, and is therefore most likely visible to that one person only, and not to any others who may happen to be present; or, (c) the dead man has mesmerized the living, so as to impose upon him the idea that he sees a figure which is not really visible to him, though it may be really present.

If the apparition be an etheric double, it will not stray far away from the dense body to which it belongs or used to belong. An unpracticed apparition--one who is it new to the astral plane--often shows traces of the habits of his earth-life. He will enter and depart by a door or window, not yet realizing that he can pass through the wall just as easily. I have even seen one squeeze through the crack of a locked door; he might as well have tried the keyhole! But he moves as he has been accustomed to move--as he thinks of himself as moving. For the same reason an apparition often walks upon the earth, when he might just as well float through the air.

It is a mistake to think that if you see a vision, it must necessarily mean something for you, or be specially sent to you. If you for the moment become sensitive, you see what ever happens to be there: Suppose I am sitting in a room, and the curtain is drawn across the window, so that the street outside is invisible to me. Suppose the wind lifts the curtain for a moment, so that I get a glimpse of the street, I shall then see what ever happens to be passing at that moment. Let us imagine that I see a little girl in a red cloak, carrying a basket. The little girl is probably going about her own business, or perhaps her mother's; should I not be foolish if I chose to fancy that she had been sent there especially for me to see, and began to worry myself as to what could be symbolized by the red cloak and a basket? A flash of clairvoyance is usually just the accidental lifting of a curtain, and generally what is seen has no special relation to this seer. There may occasionally be

instances in which the curtain is intentionally lifted by a friend because something of personal interest is passing; but we must not be too ready to assume that that is the case.

Among the real psychic powers, however, which are attained by slow and careful self-development, there are some which are of very great interest. For example, for one who can function freely in the mental body there are methods of getting at the meaning of a book, quite apart from the ordinary process of reading it. The simplest is to read from the mind of one who has studied but this is open to the objection that one gets not the real meaning of the work but that student's conception of the meaning, which may be by no means the same thing. A second plan is to examine the aura of the book--a phrase which needs a little explanation for those not practically acquainted with the hidden side of things.

An ancient manuscript stands in this respect in a somewhat different position from a modern book. If it is not the original work of the author himself, it has at any rate been copied word by word by some person of a certain education and understanding, who knew the subject of the book, and had his own opinions about it. It must be remembered that copying (done usually with a stylus) is almost as slow and emphatic as engraving; so that the writer inevitably impresses his thought strongly on his handiwork. Any manuscript, therefore, even a new one, has always some sort of thought-aura about it which conveys its general meaning, or rather one man's idea of its meaning and his estimate of its value. Every time it is read by anyone an addition is made to that thought-aura, and if it be carefully studied the addition is naturally large and valuable.

This is equally true of a printed volume. A book which has passed through many hands has an aura which is usually better balanced than that of a new one, because it is rounded off and completed by the divergent views brought to it by its many readers; consequently the psychometrization of such a book generally yields a fairly full comprehension of its contents, though with a considerable fringe of opinions *not* expressed in the book, but held by its various readers.

On the other hand, a book used in a public library is not infrequently as unpleasant psychically as it usually is physically, for it becomes loaded with all kinds of mixed magnetism, many of them of a most unsavory character. The sensitive person will do well to avoid such books, or if necessity compels him to use them he will be wise to touch them as little as may be, and rather to let them lie upon a table than to hold them in his hand.

Another factor to be remembered with regard to such books is that a volume written upon a special subject is most likely to be read by a particular type of person, and the readers leave their impress upon the aura of the volume. Thus a book violently advocating some sectarian religious views is not read except by persons who sympathize with its narrowness, and so it soon develops a decidedly unpleasant aura; and in the same way a book of an indecent or prurient nature quickly becomes loathsome beyond description. Old books containing magical formulae are often for this reason most uncomfortable neighbors. Even the language in which a book is printed indirectly affects its aura, by limiting its readers largely to a man of a certain nationality, and so by degrees endowing it with the more prominent characteristics of that nationality

In the case of a printed book there is no original copyist, so that at the beginning of its career it usually carries nothing but disjointed fragments of the thought of the binder and bookseller. Few readers at the present day seem to study so thoughtfully and thoroughly as did the men of old, and for that reason the thought forms connected with a modern book are rarely so precise and clear cut as those which surround the manuscripts of the past.

The third method of reading requires some higher powers, in order to go behind the book or manuscript altogether and get at the mind of its author. If the book is in some foreign language, its subject entirely unknown, and there is no aura around it to give any helpful suggestion, the only ways to follow back its history to see from what it was copied (or set up in type, as the case may be) and so to trace out the line of its descent until one reaches its author. If the subject of the work be known, a less tedious method is to psychometricize that subject, get into the general current of thought about it, and so find a particular writer required, and see what he thinks. There is a sense in which all the ideas connected with a given subject may be said to be local--to be concentrated around a certain point in space--so that by mentally visiting that point one can come into touch with all the converging streams of thought about that subject, though they are linked by millions of lines with all sorts of other subjects.

Another interesting power is that of magnification. There are two methods of magnification which may be used in connection with the clairvoyant faculty. One is simply an intensification of ordinary sight. It is obvious that when in common life we see anything, and impact of some sort is made upon the retina--upon its physical rods and cones. The effects there produced, or the vibration set up, are transmitted, in some way by no means thoroughly understood, by the optic nerve to the gray matter of the brain. Clearly, before the true man within can become conscious of what is seen, these impressions made upon the physical brain-matter must be transmitted from that to the etheric matter, from that in turn to the astral, and from that to the mental--these different degrees of matter being, as it were, stations on the telegraph wire.

One method of magnification is to tap this telegraph wire at an intermediate station--to receive the impression upon the etheric matter of the retina instead of upon the physical rods and cones, and to transfer the impression received directly to the etheric part of the brain. By an effort of will the attention can be focused in only a few of the etheric particles, or even in one of them, and in that way a similarity of size can be attained between the organ employed and some minute object which is to be observed.

A method more commonly used but requiring somewhat higher development, is to employ the special faculty of the center between the eyebrows. From the central portion of that can be projected what we may call a tiny microscope at the etheric level, having for its lens only one atom. In this way again we produce an organ commensurate in size with the minute objects to be observed. The atom employed may be either physical, astral or mental, but whichever it is it needs a special preparation. It must be opened up and brought into full working order, so that it is just as developed as it will be in the seventh round of our chain.

This power belongs to the causal body, so if an atom of lower level be used as an eyepiece a system of reflecting counterparts must be introduced. The atom must be adjusted to any

sub plane, so that any required degree of magnification can be applied in order to suit the object which is being examined. A further extension of the same power enables the operator to focus his own consciousness in that lens through which he looks, and then to project it to distant points. The same power, by a different arrangement, it can be used for diminishing purposes when one wishes to view as a whole something far too large to be taken in at once by ordinary vision.