

CHILD MEDIUMS

By Ella Groves

Introduction

Silver Birch says, “A medium is one on whom there has been bestowed the gift of the Spirit which are ably described by the apostle Paul in your Bible. These gifts are divinely bestowed. Their recipients, as they unfold them, are able to be used as channels for the divine beneficence to flow through them.”

Mediumship is a gift that is usually associated with adults. However, the gift of discerning and communicating with spirit is also bestowed on children. It is important that these gifts are understood and supported so that they grow and flourish. The following article gives accounts of children and adolescents who were born with sensitivity to the presence of Spirit. In some cases, these psychic gifts were not understood and as a result these childhood gifts were delayed until adulthood. In other cases, children who grew up in a home environment that accepted and understood psychic gifts were understood and the development of these gifts was encouraged from an early age.

Stories of Misunderstood Child Mediums

Joan of Arc

One of the most famous child mediums was a thirteen year old French country girl named Joan – Joan of Arc. While standing in her father’s garden, she heard a voice coming from the direction of the church. She then beheld a radiant being that with gentle words of wisdom revealed to her the mission she was to fulfil.

Joan faithfully carried out her mission by following the guidance she was given from a Spirit source. She raised an army and led a series of military campaigns against the English occupiers. Her success and military genius rallied more countrymen and her forces grew in strength. It was amazing that such a young person, and especially a female, could do what others were unable to accomplish. She was victorious in battle and eventually helped restore French sovereignty.

Today, Joan of Arc would be recognized as a child medium. She had the gift of clairaudience because she could hear Spirit voices, and she had the gift of clairvoyance because she could see her Spirit guides. The clergymen of her day did not understand Joan’s military genius, her gift of leadership and her supernatural psychic abilities. Her claim that she spoke directly with God conflicted with the church edict that only priests could communicate with God and any other form of communication was the work of the Devil. Because Joan would not deny her own truth, she was condemned to death. She paid dearly for her gift of mediumship.

Estelle Roberts

Estelle Roberts, the medium who channelled "Red Cloud", also had unhappy experiences as a child because her parents misunderstood her psychic faculties. Estelle received her first highly significant psychic manifestation when she was seven years old. It occurred at about eight o'clock on a sunny May morning when she and her sister Dolly were getting dressed for school. While standing before a mirror, she became aware of a movement beyond the window. Looking up she saw a dazzling vision of a knight in shining armour poised in the sky. Though his face was covered by a visor she could see a pair of piercing eyes shining through the eye-slits. He held a two-handed sword pointing to the sky. His right hand grasped the hilt, which was studded with gems, while his left hand gripped his right wrist in support. The whole figure, and particularly the sword, glinted dazzlingly like sunlight reflected by snow. As Estelle watched the knight, he slowly lowered the blade of the sword and extended the point towards her as though in salute. This action must have released powerful vibrations towards her body, for suddenly she felt weak at the knees and her stomach seemed to turn over.

The vision persisted. Three times she looked away, to find it still there when she looked back. Then she called to her sister, "Dolly, come and look!" Dolly looked, and a moment later, she had collapsed in a faint. The vision then disappeared as mysteriously as it had come. Alarmed by Dolly's fainting fit, Estelle called out to her parents, who rushed in and carried the little girl away. When her sister had recovered sufficiently, her father questioned her and she described seeing the figure of the knight. Her sister described the knight exactly as Estelle had seen it. This left an impression on her because it was the first time that another family member had seen or heard any of the Spirit people she knew so well. Estelle's parents were most disturbed and puzzled by the occurrence, and their response was to scold her for making such fantastic claims and told her that she had an overly active imagination.

Estelle Roberts said, "My parents were good, kindly people, typical of the Victorian age. They had a family of eight children, five girls and three boys, and we all lived in Kensington in comfortable but not affluent circumstances. In company with my brothers and sisters, I grew up a very ordinary, unremarkable child with the sole exception that from the moment of my earliest recollections I heard voices which the other members of the family could not. Though I knew nothing of Spiritualism I soon came to recognize them as the voices of the Spirit people, and knowing myself to be part of them as they were part of me, I never had the slightest fear of them. My father, however, had no understanding of such things and, although he was always a just man, he nevertheless frequently felt it his duty to correct my allegedly riotous imagination by means of his leather belt! I was repeatedly told that such things were evil, and because of this until the day of my enlightenment, I was haunted by the fear that perhaps my mind was a little *touched*."

Estelle Roberts did not shut down her psychic gifts despite her parent's deliberate attempts to suppress her tendencies. She just never told anybody about hearing Spirit

voices. Estelle never blamed her parents for their treatment of her gifts because they knew nothing about Spiritualism and Spirit communication.

Gladys Osborne Leonard

As a child, Gladys Osborne Leonard was aware of the presence of Spirit and often saw beautiful visions of the Spirit World while playing in the nursery. One morning while in the breakfast room, she asked the family if they could see the Happy Valley, the beautiful vistas and the lovely happy people clothed in flowing drapery. The family did not take kindly to Gladys' unusual visions, and she was discouraged from ever seeing that sort of thing again! The visions soon faded.

During her teen years, Gladys discovered a Spiritualist church in the next town and used to sneak out to the Thursday evening services. She received a message that she would be doing this kind of work. Gladys was so excited to know that there were others who spoke to dead people. She later received a very evidential message from her cousin Charley who had drowned as a child. This changed Gladys' life—she burst home to tell her mother that dead people really lived! But again she was sternly forbidden to go to such a church again.

In her adult years, Gladys, despite the disapproval of her family, developed her mediumship. For upward of fifty years, Gladys was one of the most studied mediums of the twentieth century. Gladys became acquainted with the prominent British scientist, Sir Oliver Lodge when she channeled his son Raymond who had been killed in action during World War I. This led to Sir Oliver's famous book, *Raymond*. Sir Oliver urged Gladys to proceed with psychic research for SPR—the Society for Psychic Research. Rev. Charles Drayton Thomas who was one of Gladys' most constant researchers wrote many articles and three books about his experiences with her trance mediumship.

Edith Clements

Edith Clements was another child with psychic abilities who was misunderstood by her parents. She would overhear her mother telling her friends about her strange ways, and they came to the conclusion that it would be best to humour her. Unfortunately, sensitive children pick up their parent's tone, and they know at some level that their experiences are being discounted.

Her parent's negative reactions to her unusual gifts became a bit more severe as time went on. Edith's brother had tragically died in an accident and several weeks after the funeral she "saw" her brother appear before her, looking exactly as he did before his death. She related that she was simply terror stricken at the vision and rushed screaming into her mother's arms telling her that the wrong person had been buried. "Harry is not dead!" she cried. "I have seen him!" Alarmed at Edith's behaviour, her mother took her to the doctor. Poor little Edith was promptly ordered to be kept in bed in a darkened

room and given a bottle of soothing medicine. Her parent's reaction was to treat the situation as an illness.

Margery Lawrence

Margery Lawrence, an author who wrote about Spirit realms, explained that she had come into the world with a very definite consciousness of the other side and the beings that lived there. As a child, she innocently told her elders about the things that she saw and heard. They either laughed at her or flatly labelled them as lies. She soon learned not to say anything about her "other world" contacts. Her family received her experiences in a negative way so her early sensitivities became temporarily obscured. Margery Lawrence did not lose her psychic abilities but their development was delayed until much later in her life.

Stories of Child Mediums Who Were Understood

Nettie Colburn

Nettie Colburn was another child who grew up in a family who fostered her mediumship. As an adolescent she was introduced to President Abraham Lincoln. When she met with him at the Whitehouse, he told her that he had heard good accounts of her psychic abilities. During their first meeting, Nettie went into a deep trance state for one hour. During this time she passed under the control of the Spirit of Daniel Webster who wanted to converse with Lincoln on matters pertaining to making laws to free the slaves.

Nettie was told later by others who attended the meeting that the President was directed in the most solemn manner to stand firm to his convictions and fearlessly perform the work he had been raised up by Providence to do. Bringing an end to the evils of slavery in America was not an easy task because the country was deeply divided on the issue. He was told by Webster not to abate the terms of the forthcoming Emancipation Proclamation and not to delay its enforcement as a law beyond the first of the year.

Lincoln was under a lot of pressure to put off enforcing the Proclamation that would set the slaves free, and it was taking all his nerve and strength to withstand the political forces that wanted him to delay that action. At the end of his meeting with Nettie Colburn, he knew what he must do. He said to her, "My child, you possess a singular gift, I have no doubt. I thank you for coming here tonight. It is more important than perhaps anyone present can understand." A short time after that meeting Lincoln abolished slavery.

Nettie had many subsequent sittings with Lincoln. All through the difficult years of the Civil War he was given wise counsel from the Spirit World. At one point in the war the Union troops were struggling and losing momentum. Spirit told him to go and visit the troops on the battlefield. This had a positive effect on troop morale and this helped to turn the tide of the battle.

It was also Nettie that warned Lincoln of plots against his life and told him that he should take precautions. Lincoln seemed unconcerned and said to her, "I shall live until my work is done and no earthly power can prevent it. And then it doesn't matter so long as I am ready – and that I ever mean to be." A few weeks later, Lincoln was assassinated.

Grace Cooke

Grace Cooke, an outstanding channel-medium, saw clairvoyantly at the age of seven. Her parents were Spiritualists so they understood her gifts and helped her develop them. Grace learned that it was perfectly natural and normal to see those who had passed over. She was familiar and comfortable with spirit communication. For over half a century, Grace Cooke channelled the teachings and wisdom of "White Eagle" and has left a legacy of books on higher-level spiritual teachings.

Closing Remarks

What kind of interpretation do children make of psychic encounters when the parents are unable to properly guide and interpret their experiences? What kind of association do children make when they are punished or discounted because they have psychic experiences? Children look to their parents to help them interpret their world. For example, if a two-year-old child encounters an animal that is different from the family cat or dog, the child looks to the parents for cues as to how to react. If the mother in this incident goes up to this new animal and says 'rabbit', pats it and shows the child that it is safe to touch, the child understands and appropriately interprets the situation. The development of psychic abilities in children can be confusing and delayed when their parents can't give them clear explanations of what they are experiencing or label their encounters with other realities as 'bad' or not real.

By presenting the stories of child mediums, it is easy to see how important it is for parents to understand and not be fearful of their children's psychic gifts. Parents play an important role in determining the development of psychic gifts whether they are mediumship, channelling, healing and other forms of Spirit interaction. There are many adults who come to the Calgary First Spiritualist Church seeking to understand the psychic experiences that they have had since childhood or have developed later in life. A Spiritualist church offers programs for them to explore and develop their gifts.

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