

The Picture of Raymond Lodge

— Case 62 —

In the telling of evidential stories, there is often a direct correlation between the confusing and the convincing. The more witnesses, the more percipients, the more spirits, the more events there are, the stronger the evidence but the harder the explaining. This is why some cases fail to make an impression equivalent to their value. This is why the following case — which involves two spirits, three mediums, six sessions, and an entire family of sitters — is just now being rated, even though I first read the testimony decades ago. I shall attempt to minimize any confusion by relating the pertinent events in strict chronological order.

We begin on the 8th of August, 1915, at a session with the famous trance-medium, Leonora Piper at her home in Greenfield, New Hampshire. A message came through for Sir Oliver Lodge,¹ despite the fact that Lodge was not in attendance at the session; in fact, being at home in England, Lodge was not even on the same continent. The message purported to be relayed from the spirit of Frederic Myers: “Myers says you take the part of the poet and that he will act as Faunus.”

Piper had no idea what this statement might mean, and neither did her daughter, who had been taking notes during the session. But, since Myers was one of the founders of the Society for Psychical Research and was known to have been a good friend of Sir Oliver, the message was duly sent on to England.

Lodge had no clue either, but he knew that Myers had been a scholar of Greek and Roman literature, so he inquired among those with expertise in the classics. He was told that the message was a reference to a passage by *Horace*² and that it seemed to suggest that Lodge was about to suffer a terrible blow and that Myers would attempt to lighten its impact.

A little over a month after the cryptic message had been transmitted, and only two weeks after it was interpreted, Lodge’s youngest son, Raymond, was killed. A Second Lieutenant in the 3rd South Lancashires, he had been in the army for just short of one year when he was struck down by a shell fragment during an assault on a German-held hill in Flanders,³ on September 14th, 1915.

On September 25th, Sir Oliver’s wife anonymously attended a session with Gladys Osborne Leonard, a new but promising medium in London. She was there merely to accompany a grief-stricken friend, but the spirit of her own son came through. He asked his mother to tell his father, “I have met some friends of his.” When asked if he could name one, Raymond said, “Yes, Myers.”

Lady Lodge informed her husband of this communication and, two days later, he attended a session with Leonard. As with his wife before him, he never identified himself to the medium. Nevertheless, the spirit of Raymond immediately recognized his father and once again mentioned that he was now with

¹ A professor of physics and mathematics in England and a Fellow of the Royal Society. See also Case 10.

² Quintus Horatius Flaccus (65 - 27 B.C.E.), a Roman poet. Reference is from *Carmen Saeculare II*.

³ In Belgium, near the northern border of France.

Myers. "I feel that I have two fathers now," said Raymond, who had been only twelve when Myers passed over.

Later on the same day, Lady Lodge attended a session with another London medium, Alfred Vout Peters. Once again she came to the medium as an unidentified stranger and, once again, Raymond came through. This time, Raymond spoke of a photograph in which he sat, holding a walking stick, among a group of other men. At the time, the Lodges knew of no such picture.



Two months later, the mother of a young soldier who had served with Raymond sent the Lodges a letter in which she mentioned a group photograph that had been taken a few weeks prior to Raymond's death. Of course, they immediately thought that this might be the photo that Raymond's spirit had mentioned, so they wrote back and asked for a copy. While waiting for a response, Lodge had

another session with Gladys Osborne Leonard. He asked Raymond for more details about this picture. Raymond said that it was taken out-of-doors, and that someone behind him was leaning on him.

When the copy of the photograph arrived, it proved to be exactly as described by the spirits. Raymond is second from the right in a row of men sitting on the ground, his walking stick laid on his crossed ankles. Another row of men sit on a bench behind him with a third row standing in the rear. The officer sit-

ting immediately behind Raymond is resting his right arm on Raymond's left shoulder — the only one to so pose.

As if this wasn't convincing enough, over the ensuing months, Raymond's parents and his siblings (Lionel, Norah, Alec, Honor, and Rosalynde) all participated in one test or another of the medium's abilities and Raymond's authenticity. Sir Oliver concluded:

“The number of more or less convincing proofs which we have obtained is by this time very great. Some of them appeal more to one person, some to another; but taking them all together every possible ground of suspicion or doubt seems to the family to be now removed.”⁴

Discussion

If the original communication from Myers had been a straightforward warning of Raymond’s impending death, Piper (or any other reputable medium) would have been unlikely to pass it on to his father. Also, if the warning had not been couched in an arcane metaphor, nothing within it would have indicated Myers as its source.

The impact of the photograph hinges on two conditions: first, that none of the Lodge family had seen it prior to it being described by Raymond, and second, that the family could and would have an opportunity to see it in the

near future. If either of these conditions were untrue, there would be no reason to even mention the picture; since both *were* true and the picture was discussed on two occasions through two different mediums, the involvement of a perceptive spirit with a calculating mind is strongly indicated.

This presentation of the Raymond case has been necessarily brief, but few cases have been examined and reported more extensively. Sir Oliver Lodge wrote about 200 pages on the subject in his book — *Raymond or Life and Death*⁵ — and Lodge must be ranked among the most trustworthy men who ever lived.



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⁴ Lodge, Sir Oliver, *Raymond or Life and Death*, George H. Doran Co., 1916, page 279.

⁵ The entire book is over 400 pages. As of this writing, a few used reprints are available on Amazon.com