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(1840 – 1923)

The Mediumship of Mrs. Cora LV Richmond

Cora Richmond was known by a number of names, Miss Cora Scott, which was probably her maiden name, Mrs. Cora LV Tappan, Mrs. Cora LV Tappan-Richmond and then finally Cora Richmond. She was profoundly the greatest and most famous American inspiration speaker and healer of her time.

In 1851, as a child of eleven she spent some months in Adin Ballou's community at Hopedale. Passing into trance she was controlled by the spirit of young Ballou and two years later you find her on the platform as a public speaker. By the time she was sixteen she was famous and had travelled throughout the United States where she often lectured to scientists on random selected subjects of which she had little or no knowledge. In 1873 she came to England and stayed for several years. At that time she had given in excess of 3000 lectures.

"That the flow of verbiage never fails" writes the arch-critic, Frank Podmore, in Modern Spiritualism, "Is a small matter; Mrs. Tappan's trance utterances surpass those of every other automatist in that there is a fairly coherent argument throughout. Two at least of the

subjects set to her in 1874, 'The Origin of Man' and 'The Comparative Influence of Science and Morality on the Rise and Progress of Nations', may have been presumed to have been little familiar. But the speaker is never at a loss...we find none of the literary artifices by which ordinary speakers are wont to give relief – there is no antithesis, no climax, no irony of humour in any form. And the dead level of style reflects a dead level of sentiment; there is no scorn or indignation, no recognition of human effort and pain, no sense of the mystery of things. The style is clear, as jelly is clear; it is the protoplasm of human speech; and it is flavoured throughout with mild, cosmic emotions. Frequently at the close of an address Mrs. Tappan would recite an impromptu poem, again on a subject chosen at the moment by the audience. Some of these poems are strikingly melodious and it is interesting to note how the melody continually overpowers the sense."

In later years Mrs. Richmond became Pastor of the First Society of Spiritualists in Chicago. After the war she was assisted in founding the National Spiritualist Association and became its Vice-President and National Lecturer. A position she retained until her health gave way.

Mrs. Richmond was equally renowned for her healing power as for her trance utterances. Of her excursions into the spirit world during her trance states she brought back recollections of an absorbing interest which are told in her book; 'My Experiments out of the Body', and as an author she was prolific and popular.

'Discourses through the Mediumship of Mrs. Cora LV Tappan', London, 1878, is a reprint of her trance addresses. 'Soul – Its Nature, Revelations and Expressions', 1887, is one of her most important books. The story of her life is well told by HB Barrett in the 'Life and Work of Cora LV Richmond, 1895.

Credits:

Nandor Fodor – Encyclopaedia of Psychic Science 1933.